

## Along the Coast



Seaside Deli cashier Audrey Bazil rings up a purchase by Andrew Estevez as others wait at an appropriate distance. The deli refuses to admit people without masks and limits the number of customers in the store, near Briny Breezes. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

## Delray Beach

### Cost to fix reclaimed water system almost \$1M and counting

By Jane Smith

After five months of emergency repairs to the city's botched reclaimed water system, 90% of the customers should have been back on line by June 30, the city said.

As of June 17, the cost of the repairs had grown to more than \$850,000 in labor and materials and more than \$100,000 in overtime pay for city employees, city spokeswoman Gina Carter wrote in an email response to questions from *The Coastal Star*.

Fixing the rest of the system could push the bill over \$1 million.

"That's a lot of money to fix a system that was working fine for most people," said Bill Petry, a barrier island resident who did not yet have his reclaimed service restored.

For Mayor Shelly Petrolia, the cost was unfortunate, but necessary.

"We cannot put a price on the health and safety of our citizens," she said. "The city had to scrutinize the entire system at great cost in both time and expense."

The system was poorly designed and maintained and has been

**Commission suspends city manager. Page 24**

**Investigation must go on. Editorial, Page 2**

See **WATER** on page 24

## Staying safe to stay open

### County masks up in renewed effort to contain virus

By Charles Elmore

Within days of summer's formal start, hopes for a season of easing restrictions on daily life collided with a wave of troubling reports of COVID-19's spread, spurring Palm Beach County to make masks mandatory for customers at businesses like Annie Blake's restaurant in Delray Beach.

She hopes people understand, and maybe also accept an "air hug" instead of a traditional embrace.

"It goes against the nature of us being hospitable, but it's the new normal," said

Blake, who co-owns Death or Glory on Northeast Sixth Avenue.

She knows people want to relax, get together and enjoy life a bit after months of strain. Yet the situation has forced the rethinking of even the simplest human impulses, such as blowing out candles on a birthday cake that guests are about to eat.

Now masks in public no longer can be left to personal choice, as far as county commissioners are concerned. Palm Beach County was slower to take that step than other big counties in South Florida, but then went on to announce it would mail masks to all households in the county of 1.5 million people.

"From a guest perspective, it will be interesting," Blake said. "I guess we will have to do some mask policing if people don't wear them. On the other hand, it's

a little easier if we can blame someone as bad cop."

Employees were already wearing masks, she noted, and now patrons are required to do the same under county rules passed June 23.

County Vice Mayor Robert Weinroth said he "hates" the idea of requiring people to wear masks. It goes against his grain, he said.

But Weinroth, whose district includes communities along the county's southern coast, said he felt compelled to join fellow commissioners in a 7-0 vote to make masks compulsory.

"The numbers we saw this week were just out of this world," he said.

Those numbers grew more challenging in the days after the vote, with Florida

See **MASKS** on page 17

## Along the Coast

### Sea turtle nesting season off to robust start

By Larry Keller

South Florida beach closures because of the coronavirus pandemic may have annoyed some people, but if sea turtles could talk, they likely wouldn't complain.

The turtles' nesting season along South County beaches is off to a strong start,

and false crawls — incidents where turtles come ashore at night to lay their eggs but turn back without doing so — are down.

"So far this has been a very busy and successful season," said David Anderson, Gumbo Limbo Nature Center's sea turtle conservation coordinator. He oversees monitoring of sea turtle activity over 5 miles of Boca Raton beach.

False crawls can occur when turtles are disturbed by things like bonfires, flashlights, cellphone lights and beach furniture. With beaches closed for several weeks, those impediments all but vanished.

This season began with a success ratio of up to six nests to every four false

See **TURTLES** on page 10

Most stretches of South County beaches are experiencing higher than normal nesting success, as evidenced by these markers. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star



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**Property values rise**  
County sees 5.9% increase; residential sales, rentals remain strong. Pages 12-13

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## Coastal Star

# Special-needs clients find friend in Best Buddies chairman

By Charles Elmore

Isolation. Loneliness. Underemployment or no job at all.

Millions are grappling with that reality in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, hoping that threats to health, lives and livelihoods subside and better days lie ahead.

But such challenges are not new for many people that Best Buddies was created to serve — those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, said Ocean Ridge resident Robert “Bobby” Kane III.

In January, Kane was named chair of the county’s Best Buddies advisory board.

The organization promotes one-on-one friendships and inclusion. It works to explore job possibilities for people whose unemployment rate ranks among the highest in society, often exceeding 75%.

“A lot of people have a family member with IDD,” Kane said. “I just feel like too much of the burden gets placed on the families. We as a society should be the ones helping.”

Kane, 34, handles complex commercial litigation, among other things, as a shareholder in the law firm of Greenberg Traurig. On the way to earning undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Florida, he suited up for national championship football teams with the Gators.

“I walked on,” Kane said, meaning he joined the team without an athletic scholarship. “It was right when (coach) Urban Meyer got hired. I was a backup. I got on the field some as a special teams player. We won two national championships in four years with Tim Tebow at quarterback. The talent we had ...” he laughed before adding, “Not myself. But the talent was just unbelievable.”

Kane calls his role in Best Buddies ([www.bestbuddies.org/florida/](http://www.bestbuddies.org/florida/)) a “natural progression.” He joined volunteer programs in college and undertook free legal aid work during his professional career, with the blessing of an employer he said encouraged it.

Since 2017, Kane has been a member of the local Best Buddies board.

With headquarters in Miami, Best Buddies International describes itself as the world’s largest nonprofit devoted solely to “providing opportunities for friendship, employment, leadership development and inclusive living” for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Founded in 1989, it counts nearly 3,000 chapters around the world, serving 1.3 million people. Best Buddies has chapters in 30 schools in Palm Beach and Martin counties.

Theresa Colandrea, a senior at Olympic Heights High



Bobby Kane of Ocean Ridge with his wife, Lynsey; son, Bobby, 3; and daughter, Ellie, 20 months. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

School in Boca Raton and a Best Buddies member, shared online that growing up watching her older brother, Michael, contend with multiple disabilities “inspires me to pursue a purpose-driven life.”

Best Buddies is having to adapt to a world with the coronavirus. A June 20 Best Buddies Friendship Walk in Palm Beach County and other locations around the state became a “virtual walk,” with participants connecting online, not gathering in large groups.

The virus also has complicated job initiatives. Local participants have found employment from bagging groceries to working in companies’ social media campaigns over time, Kane said.

Best Buddies in Palm Beach and three other regions in the state is supporting 155 adults and youths with disabilities in Florida who are either seeking or successfully employed in jobs.

In some cases, job participants placed by Best Buddies were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 because they were often the first to get terminated or furloughed. The organization has also wrestled with budget constraints during a time of economic uncertainty.

Still, it’s a program worth fighting for, Kane said.

“To our Buddies, their jobs help provide a sense of belonging, independence and accomplishment,” he said.

Kane said his role would not be possible without his wife, Lynsey, who is active with community work, including Best Buddies.

In his free time, you will likely find him boating with his family, including son Bobby IV, 3, and daughter Ellie, 20 months. The couple are expecting their third child in October. Kane likes to sneak out before work to go fishing at sunrise on his Conch 27 center console.

He donates fishing excursions in the Florida Keys for honorees in the Best Buddies Champion of the Year Gala, which is virtual this year on Oct. 23. He also plays an organizing role with the Palm Beach County Bar Association’s Nonprofit Fishing Tournament, which benefits the Legal Aid Society’s Education Advocacy Project for children.

“Best Buddies is something we do together as a family,” Kane said. “It’s important for me to expose my children to people from all walks of life and encourage inclusion. They need to see life through other people’s prisms and experiences.” ★

## Editor's Note

# Delray commission owes taxpayers the truth

On Feb. 4, the city of Delray Beach was told by the Florida Health Department that it must implement a citywide boil water order after receiving complaints that the city’s drinking water had become contaminated with reclaimed water.

The order was avoided only by an agreement to shut down the reclaimed water system while the problems were identified and repaired.

Move forward to late June. About 90% of customers are back on line, and the cost for fixing the system is nearing \$1 million.

Yes, you saw that right: \$1 million. Add that to the \$8 million budget shortfall already facing the city.

Taxpayers have a right to know who is to blame for this expensive debacle. After all, they are going to pay for it.

City Manager George Gretsas did the right thing in his first few months on the job by contracting with a consultant to analyze what went wrong, and hiring a highly respected director for fresh oversight of the Water Utilities Department. The DOH supports these decisions.

Then, on June 24, city commissioners voted 3-2 to suspend Gretsas and file a notice to terminate, even before an independent counsel released results of an investigation into a personnel matter that alleged bullying, gender bias and emotional abuse by Gretsas.

According to one complaint, Gretsas was irate over how the reclaimed water project repairs were being managed.

Is that a surprise?

Management failures have long plagued City Hall. There have been five city managers and three interim managers since the water project began in 2006.

That leadership void at the top allowed a revolving door in the department overseeing the project. Mismanagement and a lack of oversight were the result.

Whether anything criminal occurred has not been determined.

At press time, it was not clear if Gretsas’ termination is warranted, but there’s little doubt it would be dramatic, divisive and expensive for the city.

The residents of Delray Beach have had their health jeopardized by systemic mismanagement.

The truth must be known. Investigations begun by Gretsas must not be abandoned because of his suspension, and Hassan Hadjimiry, the new Water Utilities director, must be retained and given authority to assure confidence in the water system.

Elected officials owe

taxpayers that much, and more.

— Mary Kate Leming,  
Editor



The next edition of *The Coastal Star* will be distributed the weekend of Sept. 5

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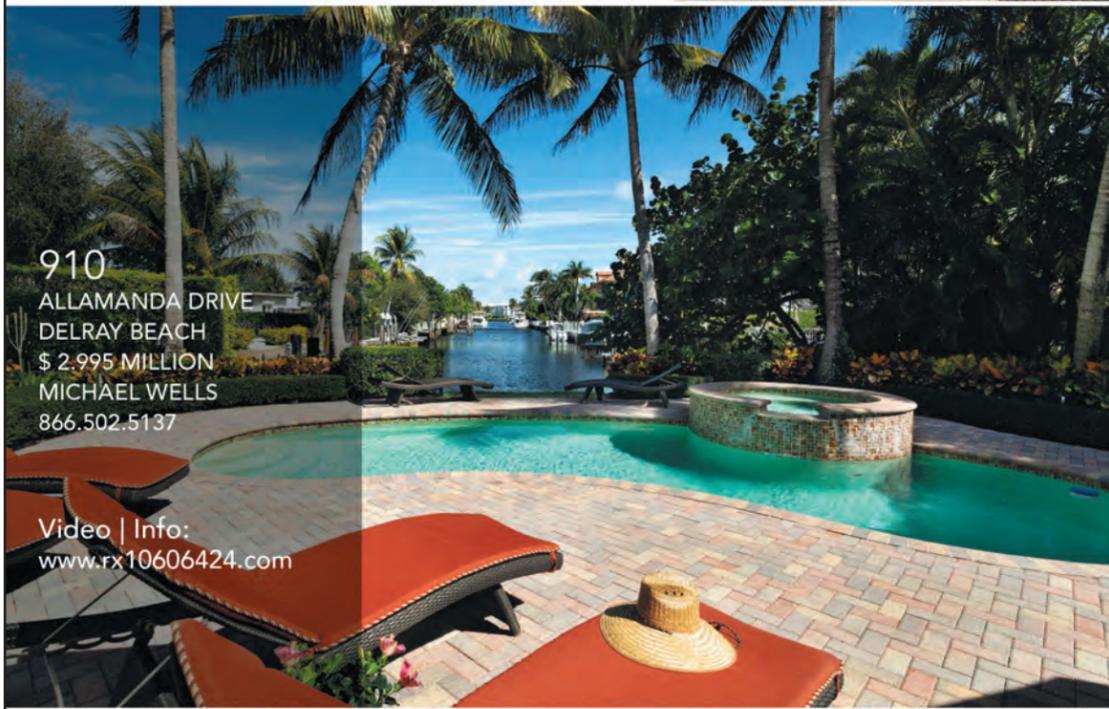
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## Boca Raton

## Navy calls up deputy mayor for overseas mission

By Mary Hladky

Deputy Mayor Jeremy Rodgers, a lieutenant in the U.S.



**Rodgers** who announced his deployment at the June 23 City Council meeting, said he

Navy Reserve, will deploy in August to Qatar in support of NATO operations in Afghanistan.

Rodgers, who announced his deployment at the June 23 City Council meeting, said he

wants to complete his term of office by attending city meetings remotely.

If that cannot be accomplished, Rodgers, 41, said he would submit a leave of absence and council members would appoint someone to temporarily fill his seat until his term ends on March 31, 2021.

But he will step down as deputy mayor, saying that position should be held by a council member physically present in the city. He asked

that his colleagues make the selection at the next council meeting on July 28.

The job of a reservist is to be ready for active deployment, he said.

"Recently, I received that call," Rodgers said. "It is my turn to serve and I am needed. The military selected me for deployment and I stand ready."

Rodgers was elected to a three-year council term in 2015 and won re-election in 2018.

In an interview, Rodgers said

he had planned to mobilize after his term ended but was selected earlier than he expected.

Rodgers, a cryptological officer, will manage an intelligence team for missions in Afghanistan. His position may entail travel to that country, he said.

Rodgers, the father of four children, has worked at IBM for almost 20 years and now leads a technical sales engineering team for IBM's security product.

He comes from a military

family.

Rodgers' father was an Army master sergeant, and his two grandfathers served in the Navy. While he has not served in the active-duty military, he joined the Navy Reserve in 2011.

Council members wished Rodgers well.

"I just request that you please stay safe," said Monica Mayotte.

"We will miss you, Deputy Mayor Rodgers," said Andy Thomson. "Godspeed, sailor."★

## Boynton Beach

## Riverwalk has finished parking lot, most landscaping

By Jane Smith

Within a week of receiving Boynton Beach City Commission approval in mid-June, Riverwalk Plaza had finished landscaping the parking lot and entrances off

Woolbright Road.

"The easternmost entrance had a weird S-curve shape," said Luke Therien, who reopened his family's Prime Catch restaurant on June 24.

"Now you can drive south to Jo-Ann Fabric and Crafts store

or turn left to Prime Catch."

Therien closed his restaurant in mid-March when all nonessential businesses were shut down to limit the spread of the coronavirus. He did not reopen Prime Catch in May for takeout orders because

the parking lot was torn up to install storm drains. He waited until that work was finished.

"Now the parking lot in the whole center is paved," Therien said. "All the landscaping is done, and new storm drains have been installed."

Riverwalk Plaza, owned by Isram Realty, sits at the southeast corner of Federal Highway and Woolbright Road in Boynton Beach. It has city approval to replace the main building with a 10-story apartment project.

The Hallandale Beach-based company paid \$9.5 million for the aging center in March 2011. The nearly 10-acre plaza contained a Winn-Dixie grocery store that closed in January 2015.

Throughout 2019, Isram built a dual-space Federal Highway building, which houses a Chipotle's fast-casual restaurant and has space for another tenant.

Isram renovated another building in the plaza that houses Walgreens drugstore, Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft, Sushi Simon restaurant and Bond Street Ale and Coffee.

At the same time, Isram had to update the underground utilities, fix the drainage for the complex and raise the parking lot, creating driving challenges for shoppers and diners.

Isram has submitted its building plans to the city

for the 10-story apartment complex, said Baruch Cohen, chief operating officer for the firm. Construction will start Sept. 1 and take two years to finish.

The rainy weather and the coronavirus shutdown are not responsible for the delayed start, Cohen said. The parking lot work was complex, he said.

Initially, Isram had wanted to use the part of the westernmost parcel of two it owns on the plaza's south side for a construction staging area for the project. But because the parcels contain mangroves, their use must be approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Isram plans to donate the easternmost parcel, about 5.8 acres, along the Intracoastal Waterway to Boynton Beach.

On June 9, Isram supplied additional information that still must be reviewed, according to the Army Corps spokeswoman in Jacksonville.

**In other action** at the June 16 meeting, city commissioners approved the rezoning of the 108-acre Boynton Beach Mall. It went from the community mall category to a suburban mixed-use category. The city became the petitioner on the second reading while the five owners try to create a master plan for the property. The site plan will come up for approval in the future.★

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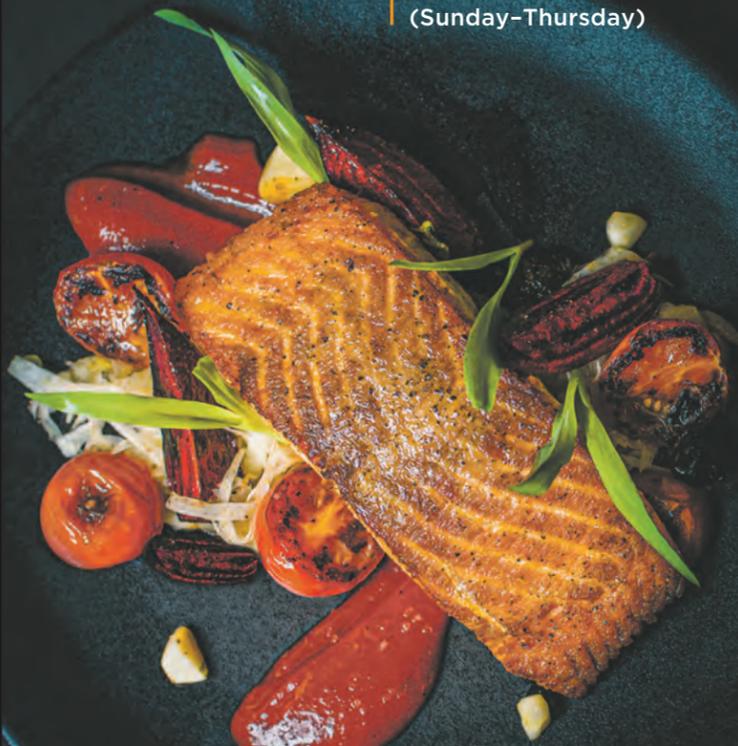
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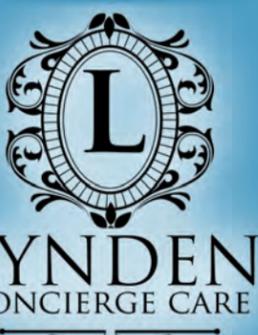
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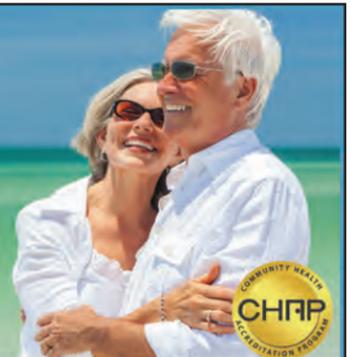
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## Ocean Ridge

# Aug. 18 ballot issue to affect decision on future of police

By Dan Moffett

Ocean Ridge commissioners want to make it a lot more difficult for the town to merge its Police Department with another law enforcement agency.

With a unanimous vote on June 12, the commission gave final approval to a charter amendment proposal that requires voters to pass a ballot referendum before any police merger can move forward.

Beyond the consent of voters, the proposal would mandate a four-vote supermajority from the Town Commission just to get a merger referendum measure on the ballot.

Taken together, the two requirements suggest it would take a groundswell of popular support — both in the commission chambers and at the polls — before a major overhaul of the town’s policing could happen.

“The ordinance hopefully establishes a clear message to the PBA that at this time we’re not interested in making a change,” Mayor Kristine de Haseth said, referring to the police union.

The proposed town charter change still needs the approval of the town’s voters to become law. It will be on the ballot for the Aug. 18 Florida primary election, and de Haseth said she is concerned residents might not be paying attention.

“With the combination of it being in summer, and people not being comfortable going to public places because of COVID, this could get lost,” the mayor said. “People need to get their absentee ballots early and plan to vote by mail if they don’t want to go to the polls.”

In recent weeks, the Police Benevolent Association and the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office have made overtures to Ocean Ridge officials and residents about the sheriff’s taking over the town’s law enforcement. Some officers in the department have expressed support for the idea and floated it to commissioners.

Last year, South Palm Beach disbanded its department and contracted with the Sheriff’s Office, citing a potential savings perhaps as high as \$1 million over five years.

Facing a tight budget year and rising personnel costs, Ocean Ridge commissioners have heard from supporters of a merger, who argue that the cost of maintaining the department has grown too high and a larger agency might deliver better service.

Before the final vote on the ordinance on June 12, David Hutchins, a member of the Planning and Zoning commission, offered a defense shared by many for keeping the department and its small-town approach to policing.

“The main thing in my mind that allows Ocean Ridge to



De Haseth

**“People need to get their absentee ballots early and plan to vote by mail if they don’t want to go to the polls.”**

Kristine de Haseth  
Ocean Ridge mayor

maintain its unique character doesn’t go to architectural standards, doesn’t go to building that’s going on — it’s our police force,” Hutchins told the commission. “The police force is an excellent safety department. They look in on elderly people. They know almost all of us by name. And they’re here for us.

“I’m greatly concerned that if we ever change the situation and go to another department, we’d lose that ability — we’d lose the friendliness of the police.”

De Haseth said the ordinance

shows that commissioners “have our finger on the pulse of our residents.” She said requiring a four-vote commission majority to put a referendum on the ballot is warranted for major decisions, such as those concerning public safety or septic-to-sewer conversion.

“The supermajority has to be used sparingly,” de Haseth said, “but it is very important to maintaining the character and financial stability of the town on very large issues.”

Vice Mayor Steve Coz and

Commissioner Phil Besler had expressed reluctance to support the ordinance’s supermajority requirement. Coz said he was “very, very uncomfortable with the concept of a supermajority” and worried it could set a troublesome precedent.

Besler said he changed his mind from an earlier “no” vote and concluded that the supermajority stipulation could

end up saving the town money over the long run. Both Besler and Coz voted for the ordinance at the final reading.

“The supermajority is not something I take very lightly,” said Commissioner Susan Hurlburt. “But this is a specific situation where without it we could have some political overtones. This extra layer of defense I think is necessary.” ★

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## Ocean Ridge

# Septic-to-sewer study funds take backseat to budget woes

By Rich Pollack

With the town's budget still in flux, Ocean Ridge's septic-to-sewer citizens advisory committee has agreed to hold off on requesting funds for a cost analysis from an outside firm.

Voting unanimously, the five-member committee, charged with studying the feasibility of replacing septic systems with a sewer system, agreed that it would be premature to request funding for a study to be conducted by Raftelis Financial Consultants.

The committee did, however, agree to seek \$6,000 in the town's upcoming budget for assistance on uncovering possible grant opportunities that could help cover some of the initial costs as well as \$3,000 for engineering costs and \$1,000 for legal fees.

In addition, the committee asked the Town Commission to allow funds coming to the community from the countywide 1-cent infrastructure sales tax to stay earmarked for the septic-to-sewer conversion, should the town decide to go forward with such a project.

That fund has close to \$400,000, according to Town Manager Tracey Stevens, and it initially was expected to grow to about \$1 million during its 10-year lifespan.

But that is likely to change.

"We have seen a sharp decrease in sales tax revenue due to COVID-19, so that number is expected now to be lower," Stevens said.

An expected shortfall in the town's overall revenue for the coming year was one of the factors behind the committee's decision to delay going forward with a financial analysis, which would include a rate study and identifying funding sources.

In a memo to members of the committee, Stevens said that the town is likely facing an \$800,000 budget shortfall in the coming fiscal year. She later told the committee that the cost for the financial study by Raftelis was estimated to be around \$30,000.

Committee members, citing the shortfall, agreed that there was no need to rush for the financial study.

"I see little value in using money for Raftelis," committee Chairman Neil Hennigan said. "I don't think anything they're going to give us would be urgent."

The committee, which has not yet made a recommendation on whether to proceed with a septic-to-sewer conversion, agreed to wait for additional direction from the commission before meeting again in August. ★



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## Boca Raton

# Virus and grant application slowing down Virgin Trains station

By Mary Hladky

Virgin Trains USA has pushed out the expected completion of its Boca Raton station to early 2022, about a year later than company officials anticipated when the City Council approved a station construction deal in December.

Among the reasons for the delay are the impact of COVID-19 and Virgin Trains' request that the city file an application for a federal grant to offset some of the costs of building the station and a parking garage, Virgin Trains Chief of Staff Ali Soule said in an email.

Virgin Trains suspended its South Florida passenger service due to the coronavirus pandemic on March 25. The company has not set a reopening date but released a statement in May that said it did not anticipate resuming operations in the coming months.

Ridership plummeted as Gov. Ron DeSantis issued a stay-at-home order except for essential activities and people began working from home or hunkering down there.

The for-profit company said in the statement that it remained focused on building new stations in Boca Raton, Aventura and PortMiami, as well as building new tracks for service from West Palm Beach to Orlando.

While city officials have directed much of their effort over the past four months to the closing and gradual

reopening of city facilities and services in response to the pandemic, they have moved ahead on the station and parking garage plans for city-owned land east of the Downtown Library.

City staff has completed several reviews of the station and garage site plan submitted by Virgin Trains, and the city's Community Appearance Board conducted a preliminary review of the station and garage design on June 16, focusing only on building aesthetics.

"We believe we will be prepared to break ground at the beginning of next year," Eric Claussen, Virgin Trains senior vice president for design and development, told the CAB.

Of those CAB members who commented, John Kronawitter and Krsto Stamatovski liked the project design, but Tiery Boykin said it was "not as exciting as I thought it would be."

The project could be considered by the Planning and Zoning Board in August or September.

On June 9, the City Council approved without comment two Virgin Trains requests.

The company asked the city to apply for a \$20 million grant from a U.S. Department of Transportation rail program that would help fund the Boca Raton station and garage.

If the grant is awarded, city officials and Virgin Trains said it would reduce

the amount the city would spend to build the 455-space garage from \$11.4 million to \$9.9 million. Virgin Trains, which is paying for the station, had previously pegged the station cost at \$25 million.

Virgin Trains was awarded a \$2.3 million grant in 2018 for rail crossing safety improvements along its South Florida rail corridor. The grant requires 20% matching funds from cities along the corridor that are getting safety improvements.

Since then, the cost of the improvements has increased. The Boca Raton City Council agreed to increase its matching amount from \$76,288 to \$153,298.

In another Virgin Trains development, the company has floated the idea of building five train stations between Miami and Aventura for a commuter rail system.

If Miami-Dade County commissioners agree, Tri-Rail's long-standing goal of building a Coastal Link commuter system on the Florida East Coast Railway tracks likely would be doomed.

Tri-Rail Executive Director Steven Abrams sent commissioners a letter blasting the idea. Tri-Rail, he said, could launch the commuter line at a much lower cost while also offering ticket prices far below those charged by Virgin Trains.

On June 2, the Miami-Dade County Commission tossed out a memorandum of understanding proposed by Virgin Trains after complaining about how much the rail company wanted to charge the county. But the commission agreed to give County Mayor Carlos Giménez 90 days to negotiate a better deal.

The proposal marks yet another change of direction for Virgin Trains, formerly known as Brightline. The company had long insisted that it would build only three South Florida stations, in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, before deciding it wanted more stations, in Aventura, PortMiami and Boca Raton.

Company officials also repeatedly said that they did not want to operate a commuter rail line until they made the overture to the Miami-Dade commission.

In its latest financial disclosure dated May 31, Virgin Trains said it does not expect the coronavirus will have an adverse financial impact on the company.

"The suspension of service is not expected to have a material net financial impact on our business and we have access to ample operating liquidity to withstand a protracted slowdown in the travel market," the report said. ★

## Mayotte criticizes Rodgers' coronavirus activism

By Mary Hladky

City Council members often disagree on issues, but the debate is usually confined to what policy is in the best interests of Boca Raton and its residents.

So council member Monica Mayotte's June 9 rebuke of Deputy Mayor Jeremy Rodgers' advocacy for lifting COVID-19 restrictions in Palm Beach County was a notable departure from the long-standing practice of not criticizing colleagues.

At issue was Rodgers' activism on social media and in communications with county commissioners in which he pushed for reopening businesses and recreation areas.

Other council members have been more restrained, with Mayotte and Andrea O'Rourke cautioning that reopening should be done carefully to avoid a spike in COVID-19 cases and a rise in hospitalizations.

Rodgers' actions caused confusion and led others to think he is speaking for the entire council, Mayotte said at a council meeting held before the number of coronavirus cases in the county sharply increased.

"There has been much confusion created by your actions as deputy mayor recently," she said. "Certainly you have a right to your opinion. But there is no question your personal

advocacy has conflicted with the perceived position of this council.

"I, for one, simply have not agreed with your aggressive lobbying to the county and timeline for opening. ... People assume you are speaking for the entire council regardless of the number of times you state that your words are your words alone.

"My issue is not personal, Mr. Rodgers," she concluded. "I consider you my friend."

Rodgers thanked Mayotte for "voicing your concerns."

He said he had stressed at a County Commission meeting that "I am speaking on my own behalf," later adding, "I never said this is what the city of Boca feels."

"Clearly we disagree on this matter," he said, adding that he would not back off. "I will continue speaking out on my own behalf and for those who ask me to speak out for them."

O'Rourke supported Mayotte, noting that Rodgers' deputy mayor Facebook page shows a photograph of the entire council.

Even if he is speaking for himself, "it does look like a

representation of the group," she said.

"People do get confused. I have had many questions about it."

Contacted after the council meeting, Rodgers didn't have much to add to what he said to council members.

"She certainly is entitled to her own opinion," he said of Mayotte.

Rodgers first raised eyebrows when he led a car caravan from Boca Raton to Delray Beach on April 19 as part of a push by a Hollywood couple to reopen the county. More than 100 people from various cities participated.

Many of the vehicles sported Trump signs and paraphernalia. The *South Florida Sun Sentinel* reported that those in attendance included supporters of Q-Anon, a far-right conspiracy theory of a secret plot by the "deep state" against President Donald Trump and his supporters.

Rodgers said at the time that he was acting as a private citizen.

In a June letter to county commissioners, Rodgers asked

them to hold a special meeting to urge Gov. Ron DeSantis to allow Palm Beach County to ease restrictions under the governor's Phase 2 reopening plan. He also asked them to allow the resumption of youth activities and the reopening of playgrounds.

He signed the letter as Boca Raton's deputy mayor.

Many commenters on Rodgers' Facebook page have thanked him for sharing

information on COVID-19 statistics and for his advocacy.

"Thank you for this info devoid of fear mongering and histrionics," one person said.

But Rodgers also has faced pushback from people worried that reopening would lead to a rise in coronavirus cases.

"Cases out of control according to county health director! And yet all you wanna do is open open open ..." said another commenter. ★

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## Highland Beach

# Commission balks at Delray plan to add four paramedics

By Rich Pollack

Highland Beach commissioners, faced with a 10.3% increase in how much they're charged for fire service from Delray Beach, are questioning why they are being asked to pay for four additional firefighter/paramedics to be assigned to the station in town.

Under a 20-year agreement signed in 2016, Highland Beach pays for the salaries of 22.5 firefighter/paramedics assigned to the station next to Town Hall — a staffing level that includes two personnel on the one rescue vehicle operating out of the station.

In its latest projection of costs to Highland Beach, however, Delray for fiscal 2021 included the addition of four firefighter/paramedics, helping to push the cost from \$4.43 million to \$4.89 million, an increase of about \$458,000.

The increase sent shock waves through Highland Beach residents who for years have contended the fire contract was unfair because there was little town input into how much it is being charged.

"We can't afford this, we don't have flexibility," Commissioner Evalyn David said after hearing of plans to add four personnel. "They may not have taken into account that

we don't want this or need it."

While the request to add staff took the town by surprise, Delray Beach Fire Chief Keith Tomey said his department has been telling Highland Beach officials this would be coming for the last three years.

Delray Fire Rescue administrators say that the city already has three paramedics assigned to each rescue truck at all of the stations it operates, with the exception of Highland Beach.

Currently all medical calls in Highland Beach require that a rescue wagon and the ladder truck assigned respond so that a paramedic/firefighter is available should one be needed to assist while a patient is being treated and taken to a hospital.

With a third person on the rescue wagon, the ladder truck would not be needed and could be available to respond to a simultaneous call, Tomey said.

Helping to cover the cost of the additional staffing — at least for three years — is a Safer Grant that Delray received from the Department of Homeland Security to pay for eight additional firefighter/paramedics. Four would be going to the Highland Beach station.

During the first two years, the grant would cover about 75% of the cost but only

about 35% of the cost the following year. After that the communities would have to cover the full cost.

That will add to Delray's already projected operational costs, which increased even more in June when Delray commissioners voted to approve the first contract for four department battalion and three division chiefs.

The contract with the chiefs includes a special stipend of \$82 an hour for working special events such as parades or festivals outside normal hours. The cost to taxpayers was estimated to be \$189,000 annually.

Highland Beach leaders say they too are facing financial challenges and having to pay for four additional personnel will create a hardship for the town both in the short term and the long run.

Town officials said they were given no opportunity to discuss the addition of four personnel prior to being given the cost estimate for the upcoming year.

"We are customers of Delray Beach Fire Rescue and the Delray Beach commission and we were not brought into the discussion," said Highland Beach Mayor Doug Hillman. "This is not treating us as a partner or a customer."

The mayor said he and

other commissioners also were concerned about what they were told would happen if Highland Beach didn't agree to pay for the additional four staff members.

"We were informed that if we didn't accept this, the Delray Beach commission would cancel the contract," he said. "Is this the proper way to treat a customer?"

In an unusual move, the Highland Beach commission held off on voting to reject Delray Beach's request to amend the contract to include the additional staffing. Instead they dispatched Vice Mayor Greg Babij to meet with three Delray Beach commissioners who voted for the Safer Grant and share with them why voiding the contract would not be in Delray Beach's best interest.

Highland Beach commissioners and residents have repeatedly pointed out that the vehicles and crew at the station in town often respond to calls in Delray Beach. From May of last year to May of this year, the staff at the station responded to about 750 calls in Highland Beach and about 600 calls in Delray.

Hillman said that should Delray cancel the contract, it would lose the staff to respond to those calls outside of the town and it would lose about

\$5 million a year in revenue from Highland Beach.

Tomey agrees that the relationship between the two communities is mutually beneficial and pointed out that since Highland Beach is considered part of Delray's service area, it has access to all of Delray Fire Rescue resources.

"When Highland Beach residents dial 911 and the crew at Station 116 is dispatched to a call, the town's residents are getting access to more than they may realize and more than they pay for," he said. "From backup vehicles such as ladder, rescue and special operations trucks to extra personnel such as battalion chiefs, a medical director, fire investigators, human resources, purchasing and logistics specialists, they have the support of the entire department."

Highland Beach officials said they want to continue the contract with Delray but need more input in how their bill is determined.

"We would like to maintain our partnership with Delray Beach," Town Manager Marshall Labadie said. "One way to do that is take a serious look at the financial elements of the contract and improve collaboration." ★

## TURTLES

Continued from page 1

crawls. That is a significant improvement from previous years, where the ratio was the reverse. Anderson said the ratio has dropped lately, with false crawls now exceeding the number of nests since people have been back on the beach.

It has been a similar story in Delray Beach. Last year, there were 290 nests and 538 false crawls, said Joseph Scarola, senior scientist at Ecological Associates Inc., which monitors nests on the 3-mile beach for the city. That's a ratio of 65% to 35%, false crawls to nests. As of mid-June, Delray Beach recorded 170 nests and 180 false crawls — a ratio similar to that of Boca Raton at the time.

### Impact of closings uncertain

Nobody can say for sure if closed beaches resulted in the reduction in false crawls or the robust number of nests so far.

Jackie Kingston, president and founder of Sea Turtle Adventures, is skeptical. Her organization monitors a 3-mile expanse of beaches in Gulf Stream, Briny Breezes and part of Ocean Ridge and has noticed fewer false crawls this year.

But, Kingston said, turtles "nest where they want to nest."

In Highland Beach, there have been about 50% more nests than last year at this time, and fewer false crawls, said Barbara



Turtle nest monitor Jim Jolley passes four marked nests on the beach in Ocean Ridge north of Beachway Drive. **Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

James, the marine turtle permit holder there. Since the beach has no public access, she said she couldn't attribute this to fewer people being on the beach.

Sea turtle nesting season is March 1 to Oct. 31, although small numbers of nests are dug before and beyond those dates. The first nest discovered this year in Boca Raton was on Feb. 23. It was a leatherback.

That was less than a week before a nourishment project began with beach bulldozers widening the northern 1.5 miles of Boca Raton's beach from 50

to 250 feet. One early nest was moved to an unaffected area. The first loggerhead in Boca Raton was spotted on April 21, just after the beach nourishment project was finished.

"It went really fast, was really successful," Anderson said.

Green turtles could be most affected by the wider beach. "Greens are notorious for nesting in the dunes," Anderson said. Now "it's a long crawl, but it doesn't seem to matter to turtles."

Green turtles have alternating high and low

seasons. Last year, a record 393 nests were spotted, but there were only 19 the year before that. This season, 35 had already turned up by June 29. They usually continue to come ashore through September.

### All local species are 'listed'

Five sea turtle species nest on Florida beaches. All are listed as either endangered or threatened.

Only loggerheads, greens and leatherbacks typically deposit eggs in South County, and very few of the latter, which are the largest of the species, sometimes

weighing 1,500 pounds or more.

By late June only 13 nests of leatherbacks had been discovered this year on Boca Raton's beach. They usually finish nesting before June. Still, it's no cause for concern. Only 18 leatherback nests were found in each of the past two years.

Boca Raton's modest numbers were more than offset elsewhere. Delray Beach recorded 21 leatherback nests, surpassing last year's record of 15, Scarola said.

And 20 leatherback nests were found on the beaches that have been surveyed by Kingston's group for 21 years. That too was a record, topping the previous high of 16 in 2009, she said.

Leatherback nests are more common to the north. There were 397 nests for all of Palm Beach County, and 380 in Martin County in 2019, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. That was 70% of all leatherback nests statewide.

There have been more nests overall so far this year on the beaches Kingston monitors. They include about 400 loggerhead nests, well above the total for the same time last year, she said.

"I think it will be a pretty good year," Kingston said.

It's been a banner year for loggerhead nests in Boca Raton too. There were 495 by June 29, putting that beach on track for a strong season, Anderson said. ★

Along the Coast

Peaceful rallies show support for justice, police

DELRAY BEACH, RIGHT: A group of about 100 gathered May 31 at Veterans Park to peacefully protest the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, while he was in the custody of a white Minneapolis police officer. By the end of June the protests had largely stopped in South County. They were peaceful, according to police.



DELRAY BEACH, ABOVE: As Dan Allen and Mary Adams joined dozens of others at a May 6 protest in Delray Beach, they started talking, realized they shared many of the same concerns, and decided to start dating. He has lived in a variety of places, including Boca Raton, she in Boynton Beach. Ten days later they were planning a vacation together. 'We have been talking every day; can't believe it, it never happens this way,' Allen says.

BOCA RATON, LEFT: A group of nearly 400 people, including supportive police officers, marched from 100 NW Second Ave. to Federal Highway on June 6 in a peaceful protest.

Photos by Tim Stepien and Jerry Lower/  
The Coastal Star



BOCA RATON, ABOVE: Nearly 120 people rallied in front of the Boca Raton Police Station on June 22 to demonstrate their support for law enforcement and President Donald Trump's administration.

BOYNTON BEACH, LEFT: On May 31, dozens of protesters gathered around the city, including this group that traversed the Ocean Avenue bridge into Ocean Ridge a few times. The sign paraphrases Martin Luther King Jr.: 'It's not the violence of few that scares us, it's the silence of the many.'

## Along the Coast

# PROPERTY VALUES RISE

## Appraiser likes 5.9% growth as county awaits impact of pandemic

By Mary Hladky

The taxable value of Palm Beach County properties has increased for the ninth year in a row, although the rate of growth continued a multiyear trend of slowing down.

The numbers, however, do not reflect any impact from the coronavirus pandemic since they are based on market conditions as of Jan. 1.

Countywide taxable property values jumped 5.9% from 2019 to 2020, down from last year's 6.2%, according to the 2020 preliminary tax roll that the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser's Office submitted to the state.

The total taxable value of countywide properties is \$210.3 billion, up from \$198.9 billion last year.

The total market value of countywide properties increased to \$288.6 billion from \$277.6 billion in 2019.

New construction added to the tax rolls totaled \$3 billion, up from \$2.6 billion in 2019.

The taxable value rise "is very healthy," said Property Appraiser Dorothy Jacks. "It is not too high and not too low."

It is too early to predict what impact COVID-19 will have on next year's values, Jacks said, but she expects hotels, non-essential retail and restaurants will take a hit.

"A lot of that property is a tenant-landlord relationship," she said. "If tenants don't return, or tenants ask for some dispensation from their rent for a period of time, all that impacts the owner's income. Their income will be reduced."

As of mid-June, she had not seen an impact on the

### Taxable values up across area

The 2020 preliminary tax roll from the Palm Beach County property appraiser includes increases in existing property values and adds the value of new construction to help municipalities prepare their budgets and set tax rates.

	2019	2020	% change
Boca Raton	\$25 billion	\$26.1 billion	4.75
Boynton Beach	\$6.2 billion	\$6.6 billion	6.8
Briny Breezes	\$53.8 million	\$59.7 million	11.1
Delray Beach	\$11.1 billion	\$11.9 billion	7.6
Gulf Stream	\$1.2 billion	\$1.2 billion	2.8
Highland Beach	\$2.6 billion	\$2.6 billion	2.5
Lantana	\$1.1 billion	\$1.2 billion	6.8
Manalapan	\$1.4 billion	\$1.4 billion	1.5
Ocean Ridge	\$1.0 billion	\$1.1 billion	4.8
South Palm Beach	\$361.5 million	\$439.6 million	21.7
Palm Beach County	\$198.9 billion	\$210.3 billion	5.9

SOURCE: Palm Beach County property appraiser

residential market. "But what it will be over the next six months is the real rub. We are just not sure if there is going to be a larger recession that will cause a decline in residential."

So far, signs are hopeful.

Lots of Realtors report people from New York and the surrounds are looking, maybe making decisions to move up retirement, or work from home. A lot of people have ties to this area. They may choose to move on their plans sooner rather than later. That helps the market, Jacks said.

Since 70% of the county's taxable value comes from residential, a solid residential market would offset commercial market losses, she said.

Despite the pandemic, the Palm Beach County median home sales price was holding steady at \$365,000 as of May, Jarrod Lowe, president of the Broward, Palm Beaches and St. Lucie Realtors, announced on June 22.

That's virtually the same as last year. Yet the median sale price usually increases year over year. Last year's increase was 3.1%.

But Lowe was upbeat. "Most would assume that the market would be derailed after the past few months, but this just goes to show how resilient our county is," he said. "If you are looking to sell, there are also fewer competing properties right now and fewer days on market."

Closed sales decreased by 47% because many closings were postponed due to the coronavirus, he said, adding that he expects to see the market begin to normalize this summer.

Like last year, new apartment complexes, hotels and warehouses bolstered the rise in new construction.

Boca Raton's taxable property value, which increased \$1.1 billion from last year's \$25 billion, continues to outpace

every other city in the county. The city's value rate was up 4.75%, compared with 4.9% last year.

"We are continuing to see robust investment and steady growth in our assessed values," Mayor Scott Singer said in an email. "Even with the COVID-19 downturn, residential properties are selling briskly and we are seeing even more interest from people and companies from other states."

Delray Beach's taxable value jumped 7.6%, up from last year's 6.6%. Boynton Beach's value increased by 6.8%, down from 7.4% in 2019.

Delray Beach added \$225.6 million in new construction to its tax roll, narrowly besting Boca Raton's \$223.7 million.

High-value redevelopment projects in the city's eastern communities and downtown added to the tax roll, said Anthea Gianniotis, Delray Beach's development services director.

"We are growing like crazy," she said. "A lot of this is a realization of a lot of the hard work that went into revitalizing our downtown over the last 20 years. We have created a beautiful downtown."

Gianniotis said next year's new construction numbers would be strong as well, as the iPic theater building, Ray Hotel and portions of the Atlantic Crossing project will be added to the tax roll.

The overall taxable value percentage growth leader in south Palm Beach County was South Palm Beach, which jumped a whopping 21.7%.

Town Manager Robert Kellogg attributed that to the

addition to the tax roll of 3550 South Ocean, a seven-story oceanfront luxury condo, as well as a new single-family home on the ocean.

That's a one-year boon for the town, as Kellogg said he does not expect any new construction to take place in the foreseeable future.

Property values increased by 11.1% in Briny Breezes, 2.8% in Gulf Stream, 2.5% in Highland Beach, 6.8% in Lantana, 1.5% in Manalapan, and 4.8% in Ocean Ridge.

The largest Boca Raton projects added to the tax roll this year were a new \$57 million headquarters for prison and immigrant detention center operator GEO Group at 4955 Technology Way, new construction at Cade Boca Raton apartments at 950 Broken Sound Parkway NW, and a six-bedroom, nine-bathroom mansion at 1160 Royal Palm Way.

Delray Beach's largest were the 66-condo 111 First Delray Beach at 111 SE First Ave., the Aloft Hotel at 202 SE Fifth Ave., and a Courtyard Marriott at 135 SE Sixth Ave.

Boynton Beach's biggest were the 324-unit Pacifica apartment complex at 1080 Audace Ave., The Club at Boynton Beach assisted living facility at 623 S. Federal Highway, and an Aldi supermarket at 3452 W. Boynton Beach Blvd.

Local governments use the taxable value numbers to calculate how much property tax money they can expect in the coming year so they can set their annual budgets and 2020-2021 tax rates.

The overall increase in taxable values was welcome news for municipal leaders since a decline would have meant less tax revenue coming in and forced difficult budget decisions.

But as the coronavirus pandemic continues, cities will see a decrease in other expected income, including sales tax revenue. As of late June, it was not yet clear how big those losses would be. ★

### LETTERS:

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## Along the Coast

# Agents say residential market shows recovery in sales, rentals

By Rich Pollack

June is normally when real estate professionals — who help connect sellers and buyers of luxury homes along South Florida's coast — can relax a little and catch their breath.

This was not a normal June, however, and instead of kicking back, many real estate professionals went into July working overtime as the residential home market kicked back up.

"This has been the busiest June we've had in my 17-year real estate career," said Nick Malinosky, executive director of luxury sales for Douglas Elliman Real Estate. "I'm three times busier than I would normally be this time of year."

The driving force behind this seeming real estate boom — with increased demand for rentals as well as condo and single-family home sales — may be COVID-19.

Pent-up demand in the real estate market, which all but dried up early in the pandemic, combined with people's desires to flee urban areas hit hard by the virus, made for busy phones in local real estate offices.

"I've never seen it like this," said Steven Presson of the Corcoran Group, who specializes in coastal homes in South Palm Beach County. "Every day I'm seeing homes that were on the market for a long time being sold."

In Palm Beach County, there were 138 closed sales of homes over \$1 million in March, down 25% from the previous year, and only 93 in April, down 37% from April 2019.

But from May 1 through late June there were about 250 closed sales of homes over \$1 million. That's still down from the 392 similar sales during the same period last year, or 36%, but it shows that a recovery is taking place.

"The fact that we're that close and that high considering the pandemic is indicative of how quickly we've recovered," said Jarrod Lowe, president of the Broward, Palm Beaches and St. Lucie Realtors. "It's a testament to how much of a thriving market we're in."

Lowe said the trend crosses all aspects of the residential home-buying market in Palm Beach County. "The residential market is just on fire," he said.

### Rentals also heating up

Demand also is high for rental properties, especially from residents of the Northeast and the Chicago area. Demand began growing soon after the number of coronavirus cases began rapidly increasing in those areas, according to agents.

"We started getting an incredible amount of calls from people looking for rental properties," Malinosky said.

That helped push the price of rental units up — in some cases dramatically.

To illustrate the point, Presson highlights a coastal home that rented for \$25,000 a month for three months.

Normally, he said, that same home would have rented for about \$10,000 a month during the same time period. Even higher offers came in after the first offer had been accepted.

Real estate agents will tell you that the market could be even hotter were it not for some unexpected obstacles.

"Our biggest problem right now is low inventory," says Patricia Towle, a sales associate at Sotheby's International Realty in Palm Beach who sees the market on track to make a strong come back. "Sellers pulled their homes off the market because of uncertainty."

Buyers were a little nervous as well.

Towle says she had a buyer who put in an offer on a home prior to the pandemic but pulled it once conditions deteriorated.

The buyer stayed in touch with her and came back after the

slowdown with the same offer on the table with no conditions and a quick closing.

Towle, who specializes in Point Manalapan and Hypoluxo Island, said that in mid-March there had been seven closings and three sales pending. After a lull in activity during April and May, sales picked back up, with 12 closings by mid-June.

One area where there's not as much activity as there is with single-family homes is in the condo and townhouse market — with restrictions brought on by the pandemic having a lot to do with that.

### Condo buyer frustrated

Many condo associations, according to Malinosky, didn't allow showings, while others restricted access so that even after a unit was purchased the new buyer could not move in right away.

That proved to be frustrating for 84-year-old Tom Carr, who closed on a condo in Highland Beach on March 9 but

discovered two days later that the condo association would not allow his furniture to be delivered.

"The virus made it impossible for me to move in," he said.

Carr, who had to be out of his nearby rental unit by the end of April, ended up living in a neighbor's apartment and overseeing some repairs while the neighbor was away. He was able to move into his new condo in mid-June, with all of the deliveries coming in one day.

Another challenge for those selling condominiums and townhouses has been travel restrictions and a reluctance of prospective buyers to fly in.

To get around that problem, some agents have been offering virtual tours and have seen units sold without the buyers' ever stepping foot inside.

Malinosky says there were still quite a few sales in the condo market as well as inquiries, and he foresees improvement as restrictions are loosened. "The demand is

there," he said.

The demand is especially high, he believes, for spacious condos where residents can work from home, perhaps with a window view of the ocean.

Privacy is also an issue, with some buyers looking for units that come with a private elevator and even private pools.

When it comes down to it, what buyers of both condos and single-family homes are looking for is the same thing — the Florida lifestyle.

"People are figuring that if they're going to be anywhere, they would rather be in Florida," said Malinosky, adding that some see it as a more open and safer environment.

It doesn't hurt, either, that taxes in Florida are more affordable than those in many parts of the Northeast.

Presson says a lot of buyers he's seeing these days are people who have been indecisive about moving to Florida.

"COVID pushed them off the fence," he said. ★

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# Highland Beach

## Condo hostage situation resolved with no injuries

By Rich Pollack

A standoff between police and a 37-year-old man armed with a gun and holed up in a Highland Beach condo closed off large sections of State Road A1A for several hours, while police ensured the safe release of three others held in the apartment.

In the June 24 incident, Jacob Geller barricaded himself in a room while police and medical personnel escorted his grandparents and a health care aide to safety.



Geller

Geller was arrested the next day, following negotiations with sheriff's detectives,

and charged with false imprisonment while armed with a firearm.

"The incident ended safely with nobody injured," said Highland Beach Police Chief



Delray Beach paramedics remove the grandmother of the suspect from the condo about four hours after the standoff with police started. Since she has mobility issues, she was transported to a safe location. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Craig Hartmann. The standoff, which

involved police from Highland Beach, Delray Beach and Boca

Raton, began shortly after 4 p.m., when police got a call from the daughter of the aide who was in the apartment in the 39-unit Villa Mare condominium at 3211 S. Ocean Blvd.

The daughter, according to court records, said she was contacted by her mother, who was in fear for her safety after Geller pointed a rifle at her while he was arguing with his mother.

During the argument, Geller's mother tried to make a call, but Geller used the rifle to knock the phone out of her hand.

The mother, who owns the unit and lives with the older adults, was able to leave the

apartment while police tried to reach Geller by phone.

Highland Beach police, after assessing the situation, determined that additional resources were needed and reached out to both Delray Beach and Boca Raton police.

Police on the scene learned that Geller had locked himself in a room, enabling them to safely remove the grandparents and the aide from the apartment, leaving Geller — who refused to speak with the police — inside.

Hartmann said police determined that Geller was no longer a threat and agreed to avoid using force to remove him.

"We determined that the best way to end this safely was to discontinue contact with the suspect," Hartmann said.

Geller remained in the apartment overnight but police and sheriff's detectives, armed with an arrest warrant, returned the next evening and talked Geller into safely surrendering.

In addition to filing charges, police have asked a judge to issue an order preventing Geller from having access to firearms for up to a year. ★

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## Highland Beach

# Told that beach is 'stable,' town aims to keep it so

By Rich Pollack

After shaking a finger at Boca Raton for removing offshore sand as part of a beach restoration project, Highland Beach commissioners are now discussing working with that city to solve short-term sand issues and possibly long-term environmental concerns.

Following calls from residents complaining that sand from off Highland Beach's coast was being used to enhance Boca Raton's north beach, town commissioners in June invited coastal engineer Gordon Thomson to help them get a better understanding of the impact of the sand removal and of the state and federal permitting processes.

Some of what they heard — from both Thomson and Town Manager Marshall Labadie — was unexpected.

While residents have complained for years about a shrinking Highland Beach shoreline, Thomson said that the northern and central part of the beach has actually increased, while the southern portion of the beach has gotten smaller.

"Overall, the beach is stable and growing," he said. "There is more sand on your beach and more sand offshore."

Thomson also told the commission that the removal of sand from off Highland Beach for the recent project and upcoming restoration projects in Boca Raton will have very little impact on the Highland Beach coast.

"It's really only the massive storms in which you'll see a change," he said.

Commissioner John Shoemaker said that information may come as news to residents who were worried about the impacts of the dredging.

"I think a lot of people are going to be surprised by this," Shoemaker said.

During the meeting, Thomson explained to commissioners that state and federal regulators have strict guidelines that must be followed and that as part of the permit there must be public notice given that the project will be

taking place.

Labadie said that contrary to what many believed, Boca Raton notified Highland Beach of the project as it went through the permitting process.

He has also said that Highland Beach may follow up on a recommendation from Thomson that it possibly piggyback with Boca Raton on future beach projects and use some of the sand to reinforce beach dunes.

While the coastal engineer said that the environmental impact of dredging offshore is closely monitored by state and federal officials and should be minimal, commissioners expressed concerns about reef damage and the long-term impact of removing millions of tons of sand from offshore.

Working with Commissioner Peggy Gossett-Seidman, Labadie proposed that the town contact an environmental lawyer to see what steps Highland Beach — perhaps in conjunction with other coastal communities — can take to minimize the impact of removing beach-compatible sand from the ocean floor.

"It's about coastal resiliency," Labadie said. "Why are we working so hard to deplete a finite resource?"

Although Thomson said there is enough beach-compatible sand in the specific area off Highland Beach to last decades, Labadie and commissioners say it's important to look over the regulations and processes that have been in place for decades in an effort to mitigate future environmental damage.

Labadie said an environmental attorney would be able to provide the town with a better understanding of the statutes and regulations so Highland Beach and other communities could be effective in bringing concerns about dredging to legislators.

"From a public policy perspective you have to constantly re-evaluate how you do things," he said.

Mayor Doug Hillman said the town will add the idea of hiring an environmental attorney to a list of proposed projects that will be prioritized in the coming weeks. ★



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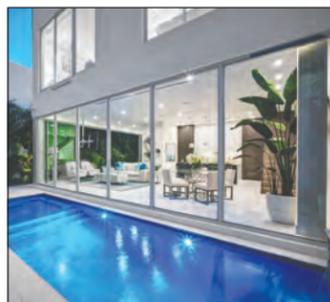
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Along the Coast

Brinyites, neighbors line up for COVID-19 testing

By Dan Moffett

It lasts about 10 seconds, demands some careful nasal navigation and nearly always leads to a snotty, yet relatively happy ending.

People are really happy to get it over.

As of the summer of 2020, testing remains the most effective weapon in the fight against the growing COVID-19 pandemic.

On June 16, a steady stream of residents and neighbors came to the Palm Beach County Health Department's medical truck parked outside the Briny Breezes Clubhouse to be tested for coronavirus infection.

"It's a little uncomfortable," said Briny resident Nancy Signorielli. "But, you know what? It's something we should do to protect ourselves and to protect everybody else."

The truck with a half-dozen county health care workers and hundreds of nose swabs spent seven hours administering the free tests to anyone willing. By day's end, 151 people had been tested.

Town Council President Sue Thaler arranged to bring the mobile unit to Briny. She heard complaints from a few residents who thought that it was unnecessary because the town has had no confirmed COVID-19 cases. Testing is how to keep it that way, the skeptics



Briny Breezes resident Ann Carmody receives a COVID-19 nasal swab test from Palm Beach County Health Department nurse practitioner Guerlyne Estime during the one-day testing June 16. **Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

were told.

"We have a fair number of people who find it difficult to get to the other testing sites," Thaler said. "I heard they had the unit in other towns. I called right away and asked, can you bring it to Briny?"

Thaler said she showed up

when the truck opened at 9 a.m. to be first in line. "There were already people here waiting to be tested," she said.

The unit has the capacity to test about 300 people a day, said Wendy Shields, a member of the county crew who was soon to graduate with a degree in health

care management from South University in West Palm Beach.

"The line moves pretty fast," Shields said. "We've been to Boynton Beach, Palm Springs, Lantana and Lake Worth — all around the area."

No news is good news when it comes to COVID-19 tests. If your results are negative, you will hear nothing from the Health Department. If the test comes back positive, then the department will contact you in three to four days.

Brinyites James and Brenda Dooley were among the first to be tested.

"It's like they told us — uncomfortable but not at all painful," James said.

"There is no pain involved," said Brenda. "It was nice of the county to set this up for us."

Longtime County Pocket resident Stuart Malin walked

over to take advantage of the testing next door. Thaler put the word out to neighboring communities, and people from Ocean Ridge, Lantana and West Palm Beach came to the Briny test site.

"What they told us was right," Briny resident Peter Theodoroff said after exiting the swab tent. "It's uncomfortable but bearable. I've had many worse operations than this."

Ann Carmody rose from the test seat laughing. "I wasn't screaming," she said.

Having lived in Briny for 31 years, Carmody, 85, has witnessed her share of crises, natural and manmade, local and global. But 2020 is a year unlike any other in the last three decades.

"I've seen a lot, but never a world like this," she said. "Isn't it awful?" ★



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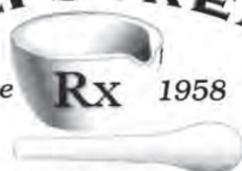
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## Along the Coast

# Municipal grants help small businesses smacked by virus

By Mary Hladky and Jane Smith

As small-business owners reeled from shutdowns mandated to stop the spread of COVID-19, South County cities pitched in to help them offset calamitous revenue losses.

Responding to Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce pleas, the City Council on May 27 authorized spending \$500,000 in city money on a Small Business Recovery Relief Grant program that would provide \$5,000 grants to small businesses with at least three employees and no more than 25.

Council members debated over many weeks how to structure the program, and then were stunned when city officials said they would not be able to get the money out the door until late July — far too late to do much good, council members reasoned.

After they simplified the program so money could be doled out in June, the city began accepting applications online for grants that could be used for salaries, rent, utility payments or personal protective equipment.

But the expected deluge of applications didn't happen, possibly because business owners applied for larger grants offered

by Palm Beach County from federal CARES Act money it received, or because the city's grant criteria were too strict.

City Manager Leif Ahnell said that as of June 5, the city had received 104 applications, but 80% did not meet the criteria. For example, 12% didn't have a business in the city, 40% had too few employees, and 33% had received county or federal funding that made them ineligible.

The number of applications had grown to 119 by June 24, and the city had disbursed money to seven businesses. Two more would get grants soon, and Boca Raton was continuing to process applications.

Boynton Beach and its Community Redevelopment Agency gave out \$1.06 million in loans that became grants if businesses showed they spent the money on rent, payroll or utilities within six months.

Under the programs approved by the CRA and City Commission on April 21, the CRA distributed \$1 million to businesses within its borders in \$10,000 allotments. The city gave out \$60,000 in \$3,000 allotments.

Boynton Beach also found another source of money to help businesses. It

made available \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grant money awarded to the city by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through the CARES Act.

Officials offered businesses \$10,000 grants that could be used to cover payroll, utilities, rent or mortgage and COVID-19-related expenses such as personal protective equipment and lost inventory. Businesses within the CRA area are not eligible to receive that money.

Businesses are qualified to receive the money if they have gross receipts under \$3 million and 25 or fewer employees, and if they had not received any other coronavirus-related assistance. They could apply online beginning June 26, and David Scott, the city's director of economic development and strategy, expected the money to go quickly.

The Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority on June 19 awarded 30 small businesses affected by the coronavirus shutdowns with \$1,000 grants.

To be eligible, a business must have operated for at least five years, have 25 or fewer employees and be locally owned and operated.

The grant application period opened at 8 a.m. June 16 and ended at 11:59 p.m. June 17. The first to apply that met requirements were awarded the grants.

Mayor Shelly Petrolia said at the June 2 City Commission meeting that she preferred to use city tax dollars to support group ad buys.

"The grants to businesses are not really fair. They are more about who has the fastest computers," she said. "Advertising for all would be better."

The executive directors of the DDA and Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce will return with marketing options in July.

Lantana did not launch a grant program but did implement certain fee waivers.

They include:

Fees for new permit applications are waived until Sept. 8; business tax receipt delinquency fees for fiscal 2020 are waived for businesses that become compliant before Sept. 8; restaurants can apply for temporary outdoor seating permits for surrounding off-street parking; and the city suspended penalties and stopped turning off water service due to non-payment. ★

Mary Thurwachter contributed to this story.

## MASKS

Continued from page 1

setting daily records of new cases including 9,557 by June 26. Four days later, the state reported more than 152,000 total cases.

In Palm Beach County, 18.2% of those tested were confirmed as positive for the virus on June 23, spiking above an average that has typically landed in single digits.

Palm Beach County had more than 14,000 cases reported by June 30, with 13% of those resulting in hospitalization and 4% in deaths, state records show.

The death rate, disproportionately affecting those 65 and older, has been falling as more people become infected. New infections are increasingly occurring among younger people, ages 25 to 34, who are statistically less likely to need hospitalization.

Still, county officials noted two 17-year-olds have died in Florida and many younger people have experienced painful symptoms. And in the larger picture, each new case increases the risk of spreading the virus to others of varying ages and health conditions, and it can take weeks or months to know how many cases of initial infection might end in hospitalization or death.

"This is our wake-up call, folks," Palm Beach County Mayor Dave Kerner said June 26.

### Local officials voice support

The county's mask order introduced a new layer of governmental authority to a range of policies that businesses, organizations and municipalities already had adopted.

Catholic churches in the Diocese of Palm Beach, for



Jess Lee and Bridgette Smith of Delray Beach talk with hosts Terraine Dowles and Alec Leonardo at Tin Roof in Delray Beach prior to entering the food, drink and music establishment. Tin Roof requires all patrons to wear masks upon entry, exit and while moving around the premises. Customers are not required to wear masks while sitting at tables. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

example, announced in a May 11 letter from Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito that "it is highly recommended that face masks be utilized while in church except for the reception of Holy Communion."

The return of Sunday and daily Mass was accompanied by precautions, including social distancing of 6 feet and the "use of every other pew."

Under the county order, exceptions exist for people with medical conditions such as asthma, those eating and drinking, children aged 2 or younger, those exercising while social distancing, and people "for whom a facial covering conflicts with their religious beliefs or practices."

The diocese "will follow the directives of the county commissioners and the CDC," said Jennifer Trefelner, director of communications.

Before the county move, Ocean Ridge reopened its town

meetings to the general public, with restrictions.

"Chairs are spaced out by 6 feet for proper social distancing and masks must be worn in Town Hall," said Town Manager Tracey Stevens. "No-touch hand sanitizer stations have been installed. Teleconference is still available for those that wish to attend from home."

Mayor Scott Singer in Boca Raton said he supported the county's mask policy "instead of potentially confusing measures to be enacted city by city."

Law enforcement officers are expected to issue warnings and correct people first, but fines start at \$25 for individuals, \$50 for a second offense and \$100 after a third, under rules

approved by county officials June 29. Businesses face fines starting at \$250, and up to \$500 after repeat offenses.

"Of course, some individuals cannot wear a mask because of health concerns, and it is our hope that neighbors continue to act with kindness and respect," Singer said in an email to constituents. "If you see someone not wearing a mask, there's no need to be confrontational."

He asked residents not to call 911 to report someone not wearing a mask, saying that should be reserved for emergencies.

Instead, concerns about compliance can be relayed to covidcompliance@pbcgov.org or 561-242-6843, where county staff will track such matters, he said.

It all leaves businesses coping with a new form of hospitality that might not feel entirely comfortable to either customers or staff. But the alternative could mean a higher risk that someone ends up in a hospital.

"Some people say, 'Hey, take off your mask and give us a hug,'" Blake said in Delray Beach. "I hope they are not offended. I would hope it would make us all hyper-aware." ★

## Beaches closed for holiday weekend

An emergency order puts beaches out of bounds for the Fourth of July weekend across Palm Beach County.

The county's order to temporarily close beaches joined similar decrees in Miami-Dade and Broward counties aimed at avoiding large gatherings during the three-day weekend to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Palm Beach County Mayor Dave Kerner told media outlets it would be "highly irresponsible" to keep beaches open and said the county's priority remains "public health first and foremost."

Beaches are set to close from 12:01 a.m. Friday,

July 3, until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, July 5, reopening Monday.

The order applies to "all public, municipal and private beaches," according to a county statement.

Individual violators face potential civil fines of \$25 for a first offense, with subsequent offenses drawing \$50 to \$100, according to the order.

Restaurants and retail establishments within beach parks are allowed to remain open if they follow rules on mandatory masks and social distancing, officials said.

— Charles Elmore

## Along the Coast

# Lantana votes to postpone fireworks, joining other municipalities in exercising caution

By Mary Thurwachter

Lantana reversed course during the June 22 Town Council meeting, postponing its Fourth of July fireworks show. Until then, the town had planned to have the pyrotechnics display from a barge in the Intracoastal Waterway next to Bicentennial Park but without the traditional celebration in the park.

With the coronavirus pandemic lurking, one by one towns and cities up and down the coastline have been putting the kibosh on fireworks.

Boca Raton, Delray Beach, Deerfield Beach, Boynton Beach, Lake Worth Beach and North Palm Beach canceled or postponed fireworks and other Independence Day gatherings for fear of community spread of COVID-19. Like cities nationwide, they have been advised by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention not to hold events with large crowds.

Since March, council members in Lantana said they wanted the \$30,000 Zambelli fireworks show to go on, even if the party in the park wouldn't be part of it. Residents were being encouraged to watch from their homes. All town parks in the vicinity — including Sportsman's Park across the street from Bicentennial; Lyman Kayak Park just around the corner; and the beach, a short hike over the bridge — would be closed, blocked off with police officers standing guard.

Then on June 29, Palm Beach County Mayor Dave Kerner announced that all beaches — including Lantana's — would be closed for the July 4 weekend, as well.

Before making the decision

to postpone fireworks, Lantana officials were asking people not to cram together to watch the show from the bridge — or anywhere.

But Police Chief Sean Scheller said keeping people off the bridge — historically a favorite spot for watching the fireworks — would be a problem. He said he was concerned about crowd control.

He wasn't the only one worried about unruly crowds. Dave Arm, president of the Lantana Chamber of Commerce, begged the Town Council to cancel the fireworks. He said he feared mayhem on East Ocean Avenue, the town's downtown restaurant and shopping district.

"Considering what's going on in the country, where people are using different circumstances as an excuse to make trouble, I don't want to see windows broken from my member businesses on Ocean Avenue," Arm said. "I don't want to see people hurt. And I don't want to see Lantana in the national news because we were stupid enough to have fireworks."

Arm said it would be "insane and irresponsible" to have fireworks this year.

Council member Malcolm Balfour, who made the motion to postpone fireworks until a later date — perhaps New Year's Eve or next April for the town's centennial celebration — said he thought fireworks should not be held, especially with the number of COVID-19 cases steadily increasing.

Vice Mayor Lynn Moorhouse said he couldn't second the motion for postponement — the thought of it made him sad, he said — but inevitably he voted in favor of delaying fireworks, as did all council members.

### Fireworks a go in WPB

One city you can find fireworks is West Palm Beach. The Flagler event at the waterfront will not happen this year. Instead, fireworks will be launched from two different and undisclosed north and south locations so as many people as possible can see them.

Residents are encouraged to have a "POP" — a party on the porch. The city created a series of videos to help patriots party at home. Content includes how-to videos for recipes, decorations and games.

While many will be able to see the fireworks from their homes, anyone can watch by tuning into WPBF 25. Through a special partnership, the Hearst Television-owned ABC affiliate will broadcast the fireworks live to everyone in the station's viewing area. Hubbard Radio's seven West Palm Beach stations will broadcast fireworks music in concert with the event.

West Palm Beach Mayor Keith James said that, while Fourth of July plans might look a little different, they are no less significant for the city. "In fact, I'd say they are more significant this year than in years past," James said. "We are celebrating the culmination of 125 years strong and pushing through this pandemic together."

Residents and others from the area are encouraged to partake in a full afternoon of at-home entertainment, with the 15-minute show as the grand finale. Before the fireworks show begins, residents are encouraged to support local businesses by ordering takeout through West Palm Beach Eats, a restaurant delivery service, and stage their POPs. The DIY Event Guide

(www.wpb.org/government/community-events/diy-event-guide) content will help people host their own events, using common and inexpensive household items. The videos were released on June 14. People are encouraged to post pictures and videos of their POPs to social media, using #WPBTogether, to join the virtual DIY Fourth of July celebration.

### Other holiday plans

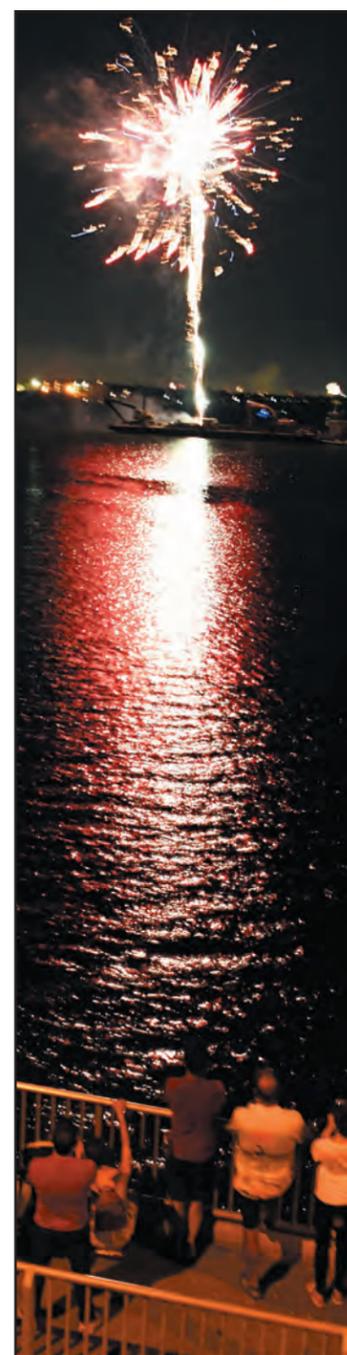
**Delray Beach:** Although the city canceled its fireworks display on the beach and Atlantic Avenue festivities leading up to the main event, some family-friendly festivities remain. They include: adorning houses and yards with red, white and blue decorations to compete for the Most Patriotic House honor; submitting favorite patriotic family or pet photos, and family recipes for the Fourth of July Digital Scrapbook; and joining the first virtual Independence Day Parade on July 4.

For more ideas, visit [www.delraybeachfl.gov/our-city/things-to-do/4th-of-july](http://www.delraybeachfl.gov/our-city/things-to-do/4th-of-july).

**Boca Raton:** The Recreation Services Department will present "Red, White & Blue in Boca," a weeklong virtual celebration ending on July 4, on the Boca Raton Recreation social media pages and the city's YouTube channel.

"In lieu of our annual Fabulous Fourth of July Celebration, we will be celebrating virtually as a community all week long," said Monika Amar, community events coordinator. "Families are welcome to join in on any of the activities to create their own fabulous and festive Fourth of July holiday from home."

Throughout the week,



Crowds that gather on the Ocean Avenue Bridge and its fishing pier helped leaders decide to postpone this year's fireworks in Lantana. 2019 photo by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

several patriotic-themed videos will be posted, including how-tos, festive craft and game ideas to do at home, backyard grilling tips, recipe and drink tutorials and much more. A few of the features include: the Children's Science Explorium with a fireworks experiment; Mizner Park's Cielito Artisan Pops with a patriotic popsicle demo; Tomasso's with a patriotic pizza how-to; and blogger Heather McMechan from Local Mom Scoop with a recipe for making a Star Spangled Watermelon Salad with your kids.

For details, follow Boca Raton Recreation on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

**Boynton Beach:** The city postponed its fireworks celebration, which was supposed to include city centennial-related events during the day. The fireworks will be rescheduled when Zambelli, the fireworks supplier, has time to suggest options to the City Commission. Stay tuned.

**Lake Worth Beach:** The city postponed its Fourth of July fireworks and celebration until Labor Day. ★

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Along the Coast

# History in the making

Stories from pandemic are being preserved for posterity

By Ron Hayes

On July 3, 1918, a Boca Raton pioneer named Frank Chesebro made a brief notation in his diary: "Got out egg plant seed," he wrote. "Buried a boy named Rogers in cemetery."

Three days later, he made another notation:

"Buried second Rogers boy. Got out pepper seed. Picked pines."

The cemetery was a single acre then, situated at what is now an entrance to the Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club, just across the roundabout from the Boca Raton Resort & Club.

We know Frank Chesebro had donated that acre in 1916. We know John E. Rogers was only 10 years old when he died, and we know his brother, Jasper H., was 8.

But we don't know what killed them.

Could it have been the Spanish flu pandemic, which appeared that spring and would claim about 50 million lives, including as many as 800,000 in the U.S., before subsiding the following summer?

"We've always wondered," says Susan Gillis, curator at the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum. "Could they have died of the Spanish flu? But we haven't been able to document that."

Now, a century later, another pandemic is sweeping away lives throughout the world. This time, area curators and archivists want to make sure that people 100 years from now will know what life was like for us during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

In addition to the Boca Raton Historical Society, the Boynton Beach City Library and Delray Beach Historical Society are asking residents to share memories, photos and other memorabilia of their lives under quarantine.

"We've been getting a lot of photos, a donation of face masks, and student submissions from the schools," says Patricia Fiorillo, the assistant curator at the Boca Raton Historical Society, who's leading its campaign. "We've had a lot of photos of graduation signs in front of houses. I'd like one of those signs."

A fourth-grader named Jacob took the lockdown with grown-up patience.

"My cousin Chris graduated," Jacob wrote, "so we celebrated at our house. Quarantine changed our lives but there is still joy to spread; we're in this together."

**How to contribute**

• **Boca Raton Historical Society:** Send submissions to [research@bocahistory.org](mailto:research@bocahistory.org) with the subject line "Letters to the Future," or mail to the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum, 71 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton, FL 33432.

• **Boynton Beach City Library:** Go to [boynton-beach.org/library/share-your-covid-19-stories](http://boynton-beach.org/library/share-your-covid-19-stories) for instruction and links.

• **Delray Beach Historical Society:** Email video diaries, essays, poems, photos and artwork to [info@delraybeachhistory.org](mailto:info@delraybeachhistory.org)

At the Boynton Beach City Library, archivist-librarian Georgen Charnes wants residents to know they don't have to be a doctor on the front lines of the virus or an ICU nurse to have a story worth saving.

"We tend to think of history as famous people or wealthy people," Charnes says, "but it's the stories of ordinary people that give people in the future a sense of what life was really like now."

Hudson Hilburn arrived in Fort Pierce on April 8, a healthy baby girl born during an unhealthy time.

"This is not how I expected to bring a baby into the world," Julia Christy Hilburn wrote the Boynton library's project. "I pictured a waiting room full of family all anxiously awaiting Patrick to tell them Hudson has arrived and how much she weighs."

"Instead we asked a friendly neighbor to FaceTime so my grandma could see her first great-grandchild. Instead, we nervously told everyone we were headed home only to tell them they couldn't stop by."

Winnie Edwards, executive director of the Delray Beach Historical Society, began soliciting donations in early March.

"When you're researching things like an old hurricane, you go to mainly the newspapers, but it's really hard to find those personal stories unless somebody wrote them down. With this pandemic happening in our lifetimes, I know everybody's got stuff on their phone, and I thought we'd better collect it now."

So far, Edwards reports, she's gathered more than 100 contributions, including this optimistic essay from Kenya Spear of North Swinton Avenue.

"I swim about four times weekly, participate in Yoga/Meditation at The Delray Beach



The collections of local historians include these photos. **ABOVE:** Members of the staff of Cornell Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine at Bethesda Hospital in Boynton Beach. **TOP LEFT:** Kenya Spear of Delray Beach shows her crocheting. **LEFT:** Delray's Jim Chard in mango season. **Photos provided**

pandemic of 1918, history.

And this time, that history will have been preserved.

The Rogers boys did not stay in Frank Chesebro's cemetery. When Addison Mizner began to build his resort, the cemetery was moved to 10 acres on the northeast corner of Second Avenue and 16th Street. And in 1943, they were moved again, to the present cemetery on Southwest Fourth Avenue. Their graves are still there.

Did they die of the Spanish flu?

Perhaps. But in 1918, the entire state of Florida had fewer than 1 million residents, and fewer than 1,000 deaths were reported statewide.

"Palm Beach County was not super densely populated, so there was a lot of space between people in 1918," Patricia Fiorillo of the Boca Raton Historical Society said. "Social distancing wasn't that hard back then." ★

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Boca Raton

# Ehrnst retains beach-park commission seat; two spots up for grabs

By Steve Plunkett

Craig Ehrnst will serve a second term as a Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District commissioner, but two colleagues and their challengers will fight it out on the Aug. 18 ballot.

Ehrnst, who has dubbed himself “The Parks Guy” on Facebook, said his passion for the job helped him fend off possible rivals for Seat 1, which he retained unopposed.

“Voters deserve a choice, but it helps



**Ehrnst**

to have a passion for our community,” he said. “I am happy to serve my role until the next passionate parks person chooses to take over.”

In the Seat 3 race, amateur golfer and retired teacher Nancy-Jo Feinberg will face District Vice Chair Erin Wright. The Seat 5 contest features three candidates: two-term incumbent Steve Engel, lawyer Eric Pendergraft and

insurance agent William “Billy” Vale.

Ehrnst, who turns 56 in July, said his priorities for the next four years are to implement a short-term plan for Ocean Strand and develop a long-term plan, to build an observation tower at the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, to build the planned Boca National Golf Course, and improve communications with the city.

District commissioners meeting on June 15 approved issuing a request for bids to develop the Ocean Strand parcel after increasing the construction budget

from \$75,000 to \$100,000.

Ehrnst, who has a master’s in business administration and is treasurer of a Boca Raton-based corporation, is married and has three children. The district, he said, has a “very unique” role in the community.

“Gumbo Limbo, SABR (the Soccer Association of Boca Raton), Boca Hoops (youth basketball) and others would not exist if not for the volunteers and district support,” he said. ★

The Greater Boca Raton Beach and Park District, governed by a board of five nonpartisan commissioners, will hold an election on Aug. 18 for Seat 3, open to candidates living within Boca Raton, and Seat 5, open to candidates living inside the district but outside city limits. Newly elected commissioners will each serve a four-year term commencing Jan. 5, 2021, and receive \$80 for each meeting they attend.

### Seat 3



**Erin A. Wright**  
(incumbent)

**Age:** 41

**Occupation:** Small-business owner and

project manager for a green consulting firm

**Education:** Bachelor’s degree in biology from Stetson University, master’s in exercise science from Florida Atlantic University

**Marital status:** Married, two boys

**Political/community service experience:** Has served as beach and park commissioner for the last four years; was on Boca Raton’s Green Living Task Force and Green Living Advisory Board

**Goals:** “When I originally ran four years ago, it was to improve the communication between us and the city. I feel that in the past six months we’ve really been working on that hard. I will continue to do that in my next term and get some projects done such as Ocean Strand Park, working with the city to get that opened for the community. Hopefully the phase one opening will be done by the end of the year.”

**Website:** [www.voteerinwright.com](http://www.voteerinwright.com); [www.facebook.com/voteerinwright](http://www.facebook.com/voteerinwright)



**Nancy-Jo Feinberg**

**Age:** 73

**Occupation:** Retired social studies teacher

at Boca Raton High School

**Education:** Bachelor’s degree in history and government from Arcadia University outside Philadelphia, master’s in educational leadership from Florida Atlantic University

**Marital status:** Married, three children

**Political/community service experience:** First time running for public office; was on the board of governors of the Broken Sound Club. She signed up with Larkin Community Hospital in South Miami to work on contact tracing of the COVID-19 virus.

**Goals:** “I first got involved in this election when I learned the board wanted to dramatically raise the millage rate to pay for the golf course. I have played golf competitively and can bring some expertise to that discussion. Also, the commission has owned Ocean Strand for 26 years and done nothing with it. They’ve kept people off of it. It was padlocked. Now they’re rushing to open it up as a pedestrian park because two commissioners are being challenged. It’s a prime area for people to enjoy walking along A1A. The board needs some guidance and that’s what I’d like to provide. I’d like to see it developed into a nice place for recreation.”

**Website:** None

### Seat 5



**Steven M. Engel**  
(incumbent)

**Age:** 70

**Occupation:** Ad sales for the

Sun Sentinel

**Education:** Bachelor’s in business administration from Baruch College in New York City

**Marital status:** Married, two children, one grandchild

**Political/community service experience:** Has served as beach and park commissioner for eight years; community service includes the Alzheimer’s Walk, the American Heart Association Walk, beach cleanups, blood drives and coaching Little League

**Goals:** “I want to protect the park legacy that we have. A lot of people would like to see our parks developed commercially. My No. 1 priority is to prevent that. I would also like to see improvement in our facilities and have them kept up to date. Right now we’re planning the opening of Ocean Strand as a passive park, which should happen later this year. I’d like to see us acquire park property outside the city limits and get the Boca National Golf Course up and running. I’d also like to see us expand the Gumbo Limbo environmental complex. It’s important to maintain our partnerships with local youth and adult sports organizations.”

**Website:** [www.steve4bocabeachesnparks.com](http://www.steve4bocabeachesnparks.com)



**Eric Pendergraft**

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Attorney

**Education:** Bachelor’s in political science at the University of Florida; JD at Florida State University College of Law

**Marital status:** Married, one daughter

**Political/community service experience:** First time running for public office; has participated in the Glass Leadership Institute program at the Anti-Defamation League and chaired the Palm Beach Bar Association’s South County Bankruptcy Committee

**Goals:** “I want to put some new blood on the commission. I’ve got a young family and we enjoy the outdoors. We enjoy the parks. Until last March, I spent seven years living at the beach just south of Spanish River Park. I want to see Ocean Strand Park turned into an actual park. Right now it’s just sitting there unused. No one gets to enjoy it, even though the district has owned it for over two decades. Also the park district is committed to overpaying for a replacement golf course on the east side of Boca. I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

**Website:** [www.slp.law/attorneys/eric-s-pendergraft](http://www.slp.law/attorneys/eric-s-pendergraft)



**William “Billy” Vale**

**Age:** 53

**Occupation:** Insurance agent

**Education:** Bachelor’s in management from Florida State University, master’s in international business from Nova Southeastern University

**Marital status:** Married, one son

**Political/community service experience:** Unsuccessful run for County Commission in 2018; a director with the Boca Del Mar Improvement Association since 2011, overseeing a \$1.2 million budget with over 9,000 property owners

**Goals:** “It’s my aim to acquire and preserve as much of the remaining green space in our district as possible. I also want to increase the level of service throughout our district but within our budget. Fiscal responsibility is key.”

**Website:** None

— Compiled by Steven J. Smith

## Boca Raton

# New rules for signs meant to streamline approvals

By Mary Hladky

After at least five years of on-again, off-again effort, the City Council has repealed the city's ordinance regulating signs and replaced it with a new one.

The new sign code, approved unanimously on May 27, is intended to streamline byzantine rules that made getting sign approval difficult and time-consuming.

"What a remarkable improvement to our code," said architect Doug Mummaw, who often works with downtown commercial landowner Investments

Limited. "The aesthetics of our community are now elevated to the highest level. You will soon see signs replaced by high-quality signage."

"This ordinance will produce much higher quality signs in the city," said former city Planning and Zoning Board member Glenn Gromann. "Staff did a fantastic job of creating a top-shelf city ordinance."

One impetus for change was a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that sign regulations must conform to the First Amendment and cannot be based on the content of words on the sign. That largely limited governments

to scrutinizing signs for aesthetics and traffic safety, prompting many across the country to revamp their sign codes.

Beyond that, the old sign code was criticized for being difficult to understand and apply and outdated because it did not account for new types of signs created since the code was adopted.

The sign approval process also was inefficient. The Community Appearance Board reviewed sign approval applications, which dominated its agenda. CAB decisions not to approve signs frequently were appealed to the City Council, which could overrule

the CAB.

Under the new sign code, city staff has authority to approve or disapprove proposed signs to speed up the process. The CAB would weigh in only in certain circumstances. Sign variances would be granted by the CAB, rather than the City Council.

The new sign code limits permanent signs to a maximum of three colors, not including black and white, although the CAB could increase the number. For signs listing multiple tenants of a building or shopping center, a maximum of four occupant panels would be allowed, with the CAB allowed to increase

the number to six.

The code includes new rules for temporary real estate signs advertising a property for sale, rent or lease.

It also controls election signs, saying that in the 45 days leading up to an election, as many as six signs can be displayed in a homeowner's yard. It requires the signs to be removed within five days after the election.

A companion ordinance, also approved unanimously, updates rules for subdivision entrance features to ensure they are consistent with the new sign code, and strengthens regulations for flags and flagpoles. ★

By Steve Plunkett

City Council members gave the go-ahead June 23 to seek bids to build a connected Wildflower/Silver Palm park after staff and their outside consultant trimmed \$2.75 million from the plan.

Gone are a small stage and "some other tweaks" at the Wildflower site, at the northwest corner of the Palmetto Park Road bridge over the Intracoastal, city senior planner John Lindgren said.

Removed on the Silver Palm portion of the park just south of Wildflower were a fitness trail with exercise stations, a small storage building and "a few other minor tweaks as well," Lindgren said.

Also deleted were a third of Silver Palm's "shade sails." But consultant Kona Gray of EDSA Inc. assured council members the site still would have "ample" protection from the sun.

"We have the whole area covered," he said.

Council members were shocked on May 26 to hear the estimated cost of the project had ballooned to \$11 million from a budgeted \$8.25 million.

"Our hope is that we will be working with a contractor that is going to give us the best value at the lowest cost and not

## Council agrees Wildflower plan is ready to bid

try to give us a number that is right at the top of our budget," Gray said then.

Council member Andrea O'Rourke was "very disappointed" both with the 33% price boost and the pace of the project.

"You know how every day you get a Facebook memory pops up for you? Coincidentally or ironically, the Facebook memory that came up for me today was that I posted that the sign got put on the property that Wildflower/Silver Palm park is coming. That was one year ago today," O'Rourke said. "I feel totally disheartened about this."

Council members decided City Manager Leif Ahnell should cut park features to get the cost back to the budgeted \$8.25 million. "We think you can get a very nice project with that money," Ahnell promised.

The timeline to start construction of Wildflower/Silver Palm is now "January-ish," Ahnell said at the June 23 meeting. The completion

date will depend on which company wins the bid and the schedule it proposes, he said.

Construction of a new sea wall at the Wildflower parcel should begin in October or November and take six months.

Planning for Wildflower began in April 2017 when EDSA held an outreach session

with city residents to develop a comprehensive waterfront park plan. Gray presented his firm's initial ideas to the council in February 2018, held another outreach session in September 2018 and two months later showed the council plans for connecting Silver Palm Park and the Wildflower parcel. Boca Raton bought the

2.3-acre Wildflower site for \$7.5 million in 2009 and spent years negotiating to put a restaurant there. But a voter initiative in November 2017 banned commercial uses of city-owned property along the Intracoastal Waterway.

The combined Wildflower/Silver Palm park will measure 6.4 acres, Lindgren said. ★



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10 Questions

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: Lisa Marie Browne

An invitation to a Dreyfoos School of the Arts luncheon 15 years ago proved to be more than an eye-opener for coastal Boca Raton resident Lisa Marie Browne. It was a revelation.

“The last board chairman, Simon Offit, invited me and he told me how successful these students were and how hard they work,” said Browne, who was recently named to succeed Offit as board chair of the Dreyfoos Foundation.

“At the luncheon a girl named Ariel, who weighed about 98 pounds, got up and belted out these songs from Broadway,” Browne recalled. “And then two pianists sat down and played side-by-side and I couldn’t believe what I was experiencing. I found myself sitting there saying, ‘These are students. These are students.’”

Browne was so intrigued she asked to take a tour of the school, after which she was invited to serve on the board. A few years later she became vice chair, a position she held 10 times prior to succeeding Offit, who retired after serving as chairman for 23 years.

“At the time Louis was about 9, and I found myself getting more and more involved,” Browne said of her son. “It was, ‘OK, you’re having an event, I’ll do this. You need someone to tutor, I’ll do that.’”

Her observations made her admiration for the school grow.

“I learned how hard the students work, and how they come from every walk of life imaginable. From the student whose mom is bagging groceries at Publix, to ones coming from other countries — we even had students we took care of during hurricanes. It’s a great public high school.”

Browne’s loyalty to the program was tested a few years ago. She was involved with the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, had close friends in Broward County and was considering a move to get closer to both.

“But I have to live in Palm Beach County to be on the board,” she said of Dreyfoos. “Ultimately I knew if I moved that would no longer be the case. So, it played into my decision to stay.”

Browne, 60, is the single mother of Louis, now 24, an aspiring actor living in Manhattan.

Dreyfoos is not her only passion. A trip to Florence, Italy, years ago introduced her to the Uffizi Gallery art museum and



Lisa Marie Browne, standing in front of a mural inside Dreyfoos School of the Arts, fell in love with the mission of the school. Her involvement grew to the point that she now chairs its foundation. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

she’s been closely connected ever since. Today, she serves as executive director of Friends of the Uffizi Gallery, a U.S.-based nonprofit whose mission is one of art conservation, historic preservation and education.

An opera lover, she is a lifetime member of the Florida Grand Opera. She is also a member of the Highland Beach chapter of UNICO, the largest Italian-American service organization in the country. In February she accompanied six friends on a three-week trip to Australia and New Zealand.

“I enjoy experiencing firsthand new customs and cultures,” Browne said. “This time we were extremely lucky, to make it back before our country shut down” because of the coronavirus.

— Brian Biggane

**Q:** Where did you grow up and go to school? How do you think that has influenced you?

**A:** I grew up in the small peninsula town of Bayonne, New Jersey, and attended Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic School in a community dominated by Italian-Americans. It was there that I developed my lust for travel.

In the 1980s, I moved to Boca Raton and attended Florida Atlantic University, earning a B.S. in developmental

psychology. During an art therapy master’s course I was invited to join a docent program at the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, which changed my course of study to this day. I was enchanted with the arts and how art reveals history, both past and present. I have been supporting and teaching the arts on a daily basis ever since.

**Q:** What professions have you worked in?

**A:** My very first work experience was at Burger King ... my dad called me the Burger Queen. I then worked in business in different office positions. My favorite position found me 14 years ago when I was asked to become the executive director of the Friends of the Uffizi Gallery, a 501(c)(3) U.S.-sanctioned organization created in Palm Beach County supporting the preservation of the artwork in the Uffizi in Florence, Italy.

**Q:** What professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

**A:** *Laocoön and His Sons* was a monumental yearlong onsite restoration at the Uffizi Gallery set behind a plexiglass barrier allowing museum visitors to see the restorers at work. Leonardo Da Vinci’s *Adoration of the Magi* was a 6-year-long restoration

project that at completion revealed never-before-seen areas on the masterwork.

In 2019 my friends and family supported the Uffizi’s newest room, The Titian Room, featuring the *Venus of Urbino*.

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

**A:** Never be afraid to embrace a second chance.

**Q:** How did you choose to make your home in coastal Boca Raton?

**A:** I remember vividly the first time I entered Boca Raton via A1A from Deerfield Beach. The street screamed out to me as the asphalt changed from black to white upon entry. I was enchanted at that moment and still today I am thankful to be a Boca Raton resident.

**Q:** What is your favorite part about living in coastal Boca Raton?

**A:** The sunshine and easy access to everything — especially the beach, parks, the turtles, the Boca Raton Museum of Art, the proximity to airports and the smiles on the face of every tourist that enters our magical world.

**Q:** What book are you reading now?

**A:** I am reading *Art in Renaissance Italy* for an art and architecture class I am taking online.

The “Crazy Rich Asians” series was my last fun read, so much so that I read it twice. Historical fictions are my all-time favorites.

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

**A:** Andrea Bocelli for relaxation and soulful pop for inspiration.

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

**A:** Yes, I was blessed with strong, intelligent and kind parents as my first mentors. One girlfriend that inspired me was my friend Davey, who is now in heaven. Davey’s wisdom was worth writing in books. During a crisis she traveled to Florence, Italy, to study art. Years later, I mimicked her therapy during my own change in life. Studying art history in Italy for me was life-changing.

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

**A:** Julianna Margulies. She’s someone I admire as an actress.

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## Boynton Beach

# Restored mural coming to new fire station after controversy

By Jane Smith

Boynton Beach held a soft opening of its new Fire Station 1 on June 3. As part of the city's Public Art program, a mural featuring a collage of photos of the city's fire rescue staff had been installed in the station's lobby windows the day before, facing Northeast First Avenue.

Elected leaders, development partners and the media joined the walk-through of the new station, as mural artist Lynn Doyal enthused about her first public art project.

The next day, the mural was removed.

The reason? The mural was altered from what had initially been approved by the city's Arts Commission. The faces of two Black ex-fire-rescue leaders had been whitewashed and made indistinguishable. Photos of the altered mural were posted on Twitter and Facebook starting on the afternoon of June 3.

The altered mural created an uproar in the community at the same time as widespread unrest over race and policing followed the May 25 death of George Floyd, a Black man who died while in the custody of Minneapolis police.

In Boynton Beach, Black people make up nearly 32% of the population, according to the July 2019 U.S. Census estimates.

Retired Deputy Chief Latosha Clemons, whose mural images were altered, grew up in and still lives in Boynton Beach. She and local Black church leaders say her legacy as the city's first Black woman firefighter was erased.

"I sincerely apologize this occurred and will take every measure necessary to ensure this never happens again," wrote Lori LaVerriere, city manager, in a public apology issued late June 4. "Please understand that this unfortunate incident is not indicative of our values."

At the Arts Commission's



**ABOVE:** The new Fire Station No. 1. **Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

**LEFT:** The top half of the image shows the altered portion of the mural and the bottom shows the photo used by the artist.

**Photo provided**

of the altered mural, she felt bad for herself and the Black girls in Boynton Beach.

"I had a sense of pride as the first and only Black female in the department. It was bigger than me. It was for the whole community to be able to walk by the mural," she said. "The hopes and dreams are shattered of the young girls."

She wants to know why it happened and who made the changes. She also wants to see a thorough investigation. Clemons and her attorney, Nicole Hunt Jackson, filed a public records request with Boynton Beach to find the answers.

"We're reviewing all of our options," Hunt Jackson said, when asked if Clemons was planning to sue.

Clemons did not apply to be the chief after Glenn Joseph left that position in late November. As the city's second Black fire chief, his face also was whitewashed. He did not respond to numerous phone messages seeking comment.

Little information has been revealed about why the mural was modified, and many questions remain.

At its November meeting, the city Arts Commission members approved a mural called *Community Heartbeat*. The mural is a collage of firefighters in action and at city events with a red heartbeat line running through. Doyal was paid \$7,500 for her work.

Commission member Clovis Moodie, who is Jamaican American, wanted to ensure the photos represented the city's culture and diversity.

The members did not see the altered mural that was installed. Coles-Dobay, the fired Public Art manager, wrote in a June 4 email to the city manager that the mural was modified in April at the direction of Petty and Fire Marshal Kathy Cline.

Cline was also a participant in the April 20-23 emails with

June 11 meeting, members agreed to reinstall the mural they approved in November, restoring Clemons' image.

But the controversy led LaVerriere to fire Debby Coles-Dobay, the Public Art director, and seek the resignation of Fire Chief Matthew Petty on June 6. Both former staffers are white.

Still, the Black community was outraged.

Rae Whitely, spokesman for the Boynton Coalition of Clergy, said someone sent him photos of the doctored mural on the

morning of June 4.

"I was upset because I know Latosha personally, knew her passion for the job and firefighting," Whitely said. "Throughout history there were examples of Black history being erased. Here, it was happening in our backyard."

Whitely immediately called Woodrow Hay, a Black city commissioner for District 2, where the new fire station sits. Hay promised to do something, according to Whitely.

As the clergy spokesman, Whitely sent the city a massive public records request on June 8.

"It doesn't make sense," Whitely said. "A lot of people are wondering: What is the full story? We are not jumping to conclusions. We want to know what happened."

For Clemons, her emotions ranged from shock when she first saw photos of the altered mural to hurt to disrespect to outrage.

"I was on the committee that created the artwork," she said at a June 17 news conference held outside her West Palm Beach attorney's office.

She explained how she came to be a Boynton Beach firefighter. Back in 1995, she met with the city's first Black fire chief, Floyd Jordan. He stood 6 feet 7 inches, and Clemons' height is barely over 5 feet.

"Chief, think I have what it takes to do the job?' He rose from his chair. He takes hold of my shoulder and says, 'Latosha, you can do this,'" she said.

When Clemons saw photos

Petty and Coles-Dobay about the mural changes, but Cline's role was not described.

Cline referred questions to the new Assistant City Manager Kathy Matos. Matos sent the questions to the city spokeswoman, who declined to explain Cline's role in the altered mural.

On June 19, Coles-Dobay told *The Coastal Star* that senior fire rescue staff assured her the city manager would approve the changes.

Petty did not return cellphone messages.

Matos said she heard that retired Fire Chief Joseph did not want to be in the restored mural. Nicole Banks, the assistant Public Art manager, will contact the current and former firefighters who appear in the mural, in case they change their minds about wanting to be in it.

The results will be given to the Arts Commission members at their July 9 meeting.

At the City Commission meeting on June 16, LaVerriere announced that Ray Carter, retired fire chief, has agreed to lead the Fire Department for the rest of the year.

"That will allow us to do a nationwide search," she said.

The commission had received numerous emails in support of Coles-Dobay's contribution to the city's Art in Public Places program and her professional role as a mentor to artists locally and internationally, Mayor Steven Grant said.

"Please reconsider her firing," said artist Barb Lentz, who owns the ArtSea Living Studio in Boynton Beach. Lentz was one of 13 artists who spoke at the webinar-style meeting.

Despite the pleas, the commission supported the city manager's decision to fire Coles-Dobay and seek the resignation of Petty.

"Two prominent Black individuals were removed. One still lives in District 2 and has family here. I am offended," Commissioner Christina Romelus said at the June 16 meeting. "I'm grateful for the work of Coles-Dobay in helping put us on the map for the arts. But erasing and defacing people is not an excuse." Romelus is Haitian American.

"Debby Coles-Dobay became a close friend of mine when I entered the political world in 2007," Commissioner Hay said. "It still boggles my mind — what was she thinking that this would not come out?"

The new fire station is part of the city's ambitious Town Square project, estimated to cost \$250 million. The city's estimated share is \$118 million. The station began operating on June 10 and provides service in east Boynton Beach and the barrier island towns of Ocean Ridge and Briny Breezes.

The city has announced that the new City Hall and Library building will open on July 7. ★



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## WATER

Continued from page 1

mismanaged practically from its inception in 2006.

The city has hired a firm run by Fred Bloetscher, an associate dean at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, to conduct a total review of the city's reclaimed water program, Carter said. Bloetscher's firm will receive a maximum of \$20,000 under an emergency order. The forensic engineering investigation will be finished in September.

These costs and ongoing system repair costs come at a time when Delray Beach has an \$8 million deficit for the current budget year, Petrolia said. The city lost revenue from business tax receipts, parking meter income, parking violations, valet stand income and rental income from city-owned properties during the coronavirus shutdown.

"It's in bits and pieces, but it all adds up," she said.

In early May, City Manager George Gretsas apologized to the City Commission and residents and graded the program a D-minus. The only reason he didn't give it an F was the initial good intention to

stop piping raw sewage into the ocean.

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.

The city must reuse 3.85 million gallons a day by 2025, according to the settlement. Its current level is 2.85 million gallons a day.

Most of the city's water customers on the barrier island have reclaimed water service for lawn irrigation. Golf courses, city parks and facilities, and master-metered communities west of the interstate also use reclaimed water. There are about 1,500 reclaimed water customers citywide, according to Gretsas.

On Feb. 4, the city shut down Delray Beach's reclaimed water program to avoid a citywide boil water order. The Florida Department of Health wanted that drastic move after it began an investigation into complaints that the city's drinking water had become contaminated with reclaimed water.

In late April, the city discovered 30 barrier island homes had reclaimed water

lines installed within three feet of the drinking water lines. The city requested that it be allowed to restore the reclaimed water service to the homes soon, instead of waiting for the lines to be moved in six months.

The close proximity of the lines was thought to be a potential Florida Department of Environmental Protection violation. In Florida, the local DOH enforces the DEP rules.

But when the local DOH leaders met with their counterparts at the Florida DEP, they "determined there was a distinction between the mains and service lines," Steven Garcia, a DOH environmental supervisor, wrote in a May 28 email to his supervisor.

Delray Beach is inspecting each reclaimed location at the behest of the local DOH.

As the city made the inspections, it found 268 locations without any backflow prevention devices, which prevent the wastewater from mixing with drinking water. Slightly more than 71% served barrier island residences.

The city has not found records indicating why the backflow preventers were not installed.

Garcia has written that the

DOH is waiting for the entire Delray Beach reclaimed water system to be restored before possible violations will be forwarded to the DOH legal team.

### Pressure devices an issue

As of June 17, five condominium buildings on the barrier island were still not reconnected to the reclaimed water service, Carter wrote. One required a reduced pressure zone device, which is the owner's responsibility to install, she wrote.

The RPZ is a type of high-hazard backflow device that protects the drinking water system by disposing of any backward-flowing water if check or relief valves fail.

Two other condo buildings have installed their RPZ devices and are ready for inspection, according to Carter. The other two are waiting DOH approval.

"However, all commercial accounts and when a larger than 2-inch meter is required, water customers must install an RPZ at their own expense and provide the city with annual testing and recertification of the RPZ," Carter wrote.

The RPZs cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000 each, not

including installation or testing. Basic backflow devices used with single-family homes vary in cost from \$50 to \$500, depending on quality and size.

Chris Heffernan, who lives in a seven-unit condo complex on Thomas Street, fought the installation of the RPZ device at his building. He thought the city was creating a two-tiered level of service on the barrier island when forcing the high-priced backflow devices on condominium buildings.

"Within two hours, city workers were at my condo," he said. They installed a lower-cost dual check valve at the city's expense.

His condo building likely was able to use a dual check valve because the meter size was less than 2 inches, according to Carter.

The Dorchester, with 20 units at 200 N. Ocean Blvd., never was connected to the reclaimed water program. The reclaimed water main sits on Thomas Street and is available to serve this property, according to Carter.

"There are no records to indicate why they were not connected," Carter wrote in a June 19 email. ★

## Delray Beach

# City manager's sudden suspension stirs controversy

By Jane Smith

During an often contentious meeting, a divided Delray Beach City Commission voted 3-2 on June 24 to oust City



Gretsas

him.

Gretsas had been less than six months on the job and was the fifth full-time city manager in the past eight years.

Voting to proceed with termination were Mayor Shelly Petrolia, Deputy Vice Mayor Shirley Johnson and Commissioner Juli Casale. Voting against were Vice Mayor Ryan Boylston and Commissioner Adam Frankel.

The virtual meeting started an hour late because of technical difficulties and to give Gretsas and his attorney, Carmen Rodriguez, time to review a resignation offer from the city attorney.

Rodriguez said they submitted on June 29 a demand for a public hearing.

"Mr. Gretsas has not done anything wrong and wants an opportunity to present his side in front of the City Commission," Rodriguez said.

At the June 24 meeting, Gretsas said he had already spoken with the city's outside counsel, who had given him a package with terms of a

resignation.

"The city's labor counsel said if I didn't accept the 20 weeks [of severance pay], a bad report would be released," Gretsas said. "There are credibility issues with the employees involved. What is the rush?"

Frankel, a lawyer, said the timing of the vote denied Gretsas "due process and fundamental fairness."

Gretsas was suspended with pay. City Attorney Lynn Gelin said Gretsas cannot be terminated for a minimum of 120 days from June 29, the day of delivery of the demand to see written charges and have a public hearing.

Hired last October, Gretsas did not start until Jan. 6. He replaced Mark Lauzier, who was fired March 1, 2019.

Jennifer Alvarez, the city's purchasing director, became the interim city manager by a 4-1 vote, with Boylston voting no.

Johnson nominated Alvarez, who joined the meeting by telephone and gave her background as being responsible for the capital budget for Miami-Dade County and having 21 years of city and county service.

Boylston preferred another city employee, Assistant City Manager Allyson Love. She had run Fort Lauderdale after Gretsas' city manager contract was not renewed there.

Johnson, though, said Love was a Gretsas ally and couldn't support her.

Frankel asked if Alvarez was a witness in the investigation.

"Yes," Gelin said. "But you would be hard-pressed to find anyone in the city at the department head level who was not interviewed."

### Two complain of bullying

Gelin said on June 30 that the investigative report, done by an independent counsel, was not ready and that she hoped for its release July 3.

The investigation began after two city staff members filed bullying complaints against Gretsas.

Assistant City Manager Suzanne Fisher claimed the bullying forced her to take a medical leave on May 15 for mental and emotional distress, according to her June 10 complaint.

One situation reported involved Gretsas' calls over the city's reclaimed water problems, where Fisher claimed Gretsas began screaming at her and the assistant Public Works director in a tone that Fisher described as irrational, belligerent and profanity-laden.

"Good employees have to be treated well," Casale said on June 25. "And what he was doing?" she asked, based on Fisher's complaint.

Boylston told *The Coastal Star* on June 27 that Fisher has credibility problems.

Her bullying complaint was filed against Gretsas five days after he had sent her a notice of termination for "misusing her office." Fisher had hired boyfriends twice for city jobs they were not qualified to do, according to the June 5

termination notice that Gretsas emailed to Fisher. The most recent hire was March 28.

Her current boyfriend, Andy Reeder, began working as the food and beverage/clubhouse manager at the city-owned Delray Beach Golf Club, according to the email.

"Both you and your direct subordinate, the Director of Parks and Recreation, are responsible for judging your boyfriend's work product and therefore you had an obligation to inform me of your conflict of interest and to recuse yourself from all matters related to the Delray Beach Golf Course," Gretsas wrote.

The other employee who has claimed Gretsas bullied him is Sam Metott, who replaced Fisher as Parks and Recreation director when she became an assistant city manager. His complaint has not been made available because it is part of the ongoing investigation by the city's outside counsel.

Metott, though, gave Boylston a different impression.

The parks director sang Gretsas' praises from mid-April through May, Boylston said.

"Every Wednesday while I volunteered at the city's Feeding South Florida food giveaway, Metott told me the commission had chosen well with Gretsas," Boylston said. He said Metott seemed pleased that Gretsas was holding people accountable.

### Fisher had previous run-ins

Fisher has filed bullying complaints in the past. In

October 2016, she filed a complaint against Michael Coleman, who was then the director of Neighborhood and Community Services. He had complained that her lack of oversight and mismanagement of maintenance alongside the city's gateway feature on the east side of Interstate 95 had allowed the grounds to deteriorate.

An outside firm hired to review Fisher's complaint found she had "fomented fear and discontent among her staff by telling them outright lies to strengthen her position."

In August 2019, Coleman filed a whistleblower lawsuit against the city, saying he was forced to resign two months earlier because he had exposed mismanagement in the parks department headed by Fisher in 2016. The suit alleges Fisher engineered his firing when she became an assistant city manager three years later.

Also in 2016, Fisher had a run-in with Tennille Decoste, then the city's Human Resources director. Decoste filed a bullying, discrimination and harassment complaint against Fisher, who then filed similar charges against Decoste.

An outside firm investigated and found Fisher did bully Decoste and that Fisher's counter-allegations were not true.

The outside investigator recommended that Fisher be subject to disciplinary actions "up to and including

Continued on the next page

## Boca Raton

# Underperforming Boca Resort & Club aims to reclaim former glory

By Mary Hladky

The new owner of the Boca Raton Resort & Club is planning a massive makeover of the iconic property.

In a frank admission that the 337-acre luxury resort has lost its luster, MSD Partners said in documents filed with the city that improvements are needed.

Despite renovations over the years, the resort “is not the global player in the luxury hotel market that it once was,” the company said in submissions filed by the Dunay, Miskel and Backman law firm. “Significant renovations internal to the building ... improvements to the property and new world-class amenities are required to transform the property back to such a world-class resort.”

MSD Partners, formed by billionaire Michael S. Dell’s private investment firm, bought the resort last year for \$875 million in Palm Beach County’s biggest-ever property deal.

While the planned changes will touch most parts of the resort, key elements include the demolition of the nearly 42,000-square-foot Great Hall and construction of a 10,000-square-foot Mizner Ballroom. The plans emphasize making better use of the resort’s location on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Built in 1969, the Great Hall is now dated, said John Tolbert, the resort’s president and managing director. What he and MSD Partners envision is the “most elegant” ballroom for all types of celebrations.

They also want to better connect members and guests to water views. “One of the most underutilized parts of the club is the 800 feet of waterfront,” he said.

Meeting and conference space will decrease, but “we will have better, more flexible and more relevant space,” he



The proposed Mizner Ballroom will occupy 10,000 square feet and house conference and meeting facilities now in the resort’s Great Hall. **Rendering provided**



Tolbert

said, that is part of “revising our conference space for today’s market.”

The improvements “will allow us to have the foremost club and hotel and resort in the country,” he said.

Members of the city’s Community Appearance Board got their first look at the designs at their June 16 meeting.

Scott LaMont, principal of the planning and design firm EDSA, said the resort had “fallen behind” other resorts and that “we are trying to bring the resort back to its former glory.”

CAB members liked what they saw.

“I think you guys have done a crazy good thing,” Tiery Boykin told architects Jorge Garcia and Peter Stromberg of GarciaStromberg/GS4Studios in West Palm Beach. “I really like this project.”

Once the Great Hall is gone, its conference and meeting

facilities would be relocated to the Mizner Ballroom, which will be located adjacent to the existing Mizner Center.

The Great Hall space would be redeveloped as a new luxury pool club and amenity area. The existing Flowrider wave simulator, slide, cafes and cabanas, now located north of the Great Hall, would relocate to this area.

The company also plans to upgrade the main resort entrance with new landscaping and add a new porte cochere, allowing improvements to valet service.

The Morimoto restaurant, which is open only to members and guests, will move and replace the existing Monkey Bar. The Lucca, Garden room and Palm Court restaurant area will be enhanced.

MSD Partners also plans renovations to hotel rooms and common areas.

The company’s plans were submitted to the city on May 12, and some of the changes will require city approval. The Planning and Zoning Board

will review them on July 9 and will make a recommendation to the City Council. More presentations also will be made to the CAB.

A Fitch Ratings report one year ago said MSD Partners planned to invest \$75 million over four years.

Tolbert said the cost of the project is still being calculated, but \$75 million is the minimum. He said it would be “one of the most significant capital investments into a resort and club in the world.”

The project completion date is not yet set. Tolbert said the work would move forward as quickly as possible but will be done in a way that minimizes disruption to resort and club operations.

Tolbert, a high-profile member of the city’s business and philanthropic community, will depart in July after accepting an executive position with BRE Hotels & Resorts, Blackstone’s hospitality platform. An affiliate of Blackstone acquired the resort in 2004 and invested more than \$300 million in the property

before selling to Dell.

While the Fitch report described the resort as well maintained, it said the resort’s room revenues underperform those of its competitors, including PGA National Resort in Palm Beach Gardens, The Breakers in Palm Beach and Eau Palm Beach resort in Manalapan.

About 60% of the resort’s demand in 2018 came from meeting and group business, compared to 49% for the overall hotel market. Meeting and group bookings are at lower rates than leisure bookings.

That brought down overall room revenue. But the resort’s total revenue per available room in April 2019 was \$620, “which is considered strong,” the report said.

The resort dates to 1926, when famed architect Addison Mizner opened the Cloister Inn on the shore of Lake Boca Raton.

It has since grown to 1,047 hotel rooms, two 18-hole golf courses, a 50,000-square-foot spa, seven swimming pools, 30 tennis courts, a 32-slip marina, 13 restaurants and bars and 200,000 square feet of meeting space.

The Boca Raton Resort & Club partly reopened on June 4 with new safety protocols after the coronavirus pandemic forced the closure of hotels and resorts in March.

While he is pleased with the number of people booking rooms, Tolbert said “our emphasis is on quality and luxury and not quantity at this time.”

Like other properties, the resort is offering incentives to lure back guests. Its website announces a “Your Summer Restored” package that offers a fourth night’s stay at no charge and a waiver of resort fees. ★

## GRETSAS

Continued from page 24

termination.” Fisher remained with the city.

### In defense of Gretsas

Despite the bullying allegations against Gretsas, Boylston remains his supporter.

Gretsas walked into a City Hall that had relatively new department heads, according to Boylston.

“Then the world was hit by a pandemic not seen in a century and people took to the streets protesting against mistreatment of Blacks,” he said.

If the bullying allegations are true, Boylston said, he is inclined to suggest leadership training or other disciplinary measures not as severe as firing.

A previous city manager, David Harden, offered to step in as the interim city manager, according to a June 26 email Frankel sent to

his commission colleagues, but as of press time, Gelin told Frankel that commissioners had not come to a consensus on that option. Still, the offer might come up at a July 7 commission meeting.

Harden served as the Delray Beach city manager for 22 years until Jan. 3, 2013. He was long seen as bringing stability to the city, but in his last year residents criticized him for renewing contracts, such as garbage collection and beach cabana services, without going through the bid process.

If Harden is not selected, the city will ask the International City/County Management Association for an applicant from its pool of retired city managers.

“Gretsas has 20 years of experience in two cities — Fort Lauderdale and Homestead,” Boylston said. “I have no idea why anyone would want to come and work here if we fire a city manager in the middle of pandemic.” ★

## Virus forces another delay for Haynie’s trial

By Mary Hladky

Former Boca Raton Mayor Susan Haynie’s trial on public corruption charges has been postponed until Sept. 21 due to disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Prosecutor Brian Fernandes and Bruce Zimet, Haynie’s criminal defense lawyer, agreed to cancel a scheduled July 20 trial and to set the new trial date because the pandemic has made it difficult to complete pretrial discovery.

They also were concerned that not enough potential jurors would be available in July.

Palm Beach County Circuit Judge Jeffrey Gillen agreed to the new trial date on May 28.

A March trial date also was postponed.

Compounding the difficulties of setting Haynie’s trial date is that the main courthouse in West Palm Beach, where her trial would be held, has been all but shut down since April due to the pandemic.

Only essential hearings, such as pleas and bond reduction motions, have been held in

person or through video-conferencing.

Jury trials have been postponed, and on June 17 Florida Chief Justice Charles T. Canady ordered the postponement extended until at least July 17.

Haynie, 64, was arrested on April 24, 2018, on charges of official misconduct, perjury, misuse of public office and failure to disclose voting conflicts. She faces more than 20 years in prison if she’s convicted.

Prosecutors contend that Haynie used her position on the City Council to vote on six matters that financially benefited James Batmasian, the city’s largest downtown commercial landowner, and failed to disclose income she received from him.

Haynie has pleaded not guilty to the charges. Zimet has repeatedly said she will not accept a plea deal.

Then-Gov. Rick Scott suspended Haynie from office, but she never resigned.

Her option to reclaim the mayor’s post ended March 31 after Boca Raton voters elected Scott Singer, who was elevated from deputy mayor to replace Haynie during her suspension, to a full term as mayor succeeding her. ★



Haynie

## Business Spotlight

# Iconic Atlantic Avenue shoe store shutter after 68 years

**M**ark and LaRonda Denkler, owners of longtime family-run Atlantic Avenue store **Vince Canning Shoes**, announced that it was closing in June.

The Denklers have owned the store since 1994, buying it from Mark's uncle, Vince Canning Jr., when he retired. Canning took the reins from his father, Vince Sr., in 1957, and Vince Sr. bought the shoe store in 1952.

"It was a timing thing," Mark said. "The lease came up. We still have the lease on **Tootsies** just across the street, which we bought in 2015." That shoe store will continue to operate with the best selections from both stores.

In 2015, the Denklers decided they could run both stores in the 300 block of East Atlantic and share staff. Tootsies carried styles with a more contemporary vibe, such as 3-inch heels, a little different from the more "mature, sensible shoes" that Vince Canning sold, Mark said. "But once we figured out what the market was, we don't have 3-inch heels anymore." It's the 1.5-inch heel that appeals, he's learned.

In addition to the lease's ending, "we really didn't want to fight the coronavirus slowdown," he said. "We missed out on our two biggest months and we were overstocked in both stores. We got caught with tons of inventory."

Nonetheless, it's sad to see Vince Canning close, he said. "It's a family legacy. My family has owned it since 1952. We tell our customers — they are sad, too — that Tootsies will have a lot of the brands that they liked. We've taken the best of both stores, molding them into a shoe store to service our clients."

Remaining shoes from Vince Canning are being sold at a discount at Tootsies. Employees at Tootsies wear masks or face shields; surfaces are sprayed clean; employees wash their



Mary Ford, manager and employee of Vince Canning Shoes for over 14 years, helps Judy Uhrman, a customer of seven years, try on shoes during a going-out-of-business sale. The family's store Tootsies remains across the street. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

hands often; and customers are limited to 20 at a time. "We are trying to operate as safely as we can for our customers and ourselves," Mark said.

Other nearby retail businesses in Delray Beach that closed when their leases were up include **Fresh Produce** and **Shining Through**. Two new restaurants are **Hawkers Asian Street Fare**, 640 E. Atlantic Ave., and **End of the Ave.**, 1155 E. Atlantic Ave. **A Blast from the Past** moved to 812 E. Atlantic Ave. and **Johnnie Brown's**, 301 E. Atlantic Ave., reopened after renovations.

"The downtown is currently still in a reopening phase based on the current order," said Laura Simon, executive director of the Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority. "We have several businesses that

have not renewed their leases — some based on timing and others related to closure due to the pandemic. The vacancy rate is still very low considering the situation, and rests at 7%, which is where we normally hover."

**U.S. Construction** is proposing its second oceanfront condo project in Delray Beach.

The city's Site Plan Review and Appearance Board on June 24 approved plans for **Echelon** at 1625 S. Ocean Blvd. A subsidiary of U.S. Construction, 1625 South Ocean LLC, purchased the 1.17-acre site for \$12.3 million in January from the owners association of the Delray South Shore Club. The 15-unit timeshare would be demolished to make way for construction.

The three-story Echelon will have 14 units ranging from

2,745 to 3,543 square feet, each with three bedrooms. The development will have a pool deck facing the ocean, a fitness center and 35 parking spaces, two underground for each unit and seven for guests. There will be a 24-hour concierge.

Prices have not been announced, but condos at Ocean Delray, which National Realty Investment Advisors and U.S. Construction are building nearby at the former Wright by the Sea, are listed from \$5.7 million to \$9 million.

The site is a block north of Linton Boulevard and just south of Atlantic Dunes Park. Part of the project is east of the Coastal Construction Control Line and will need approval to build from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, city staff said.

Four former timeshare

owners unhappy with losing Delray South Shore are continuing a lawsuit seeking to unwind the sale.

The 10,154-square-foot waterfront home owned by Lars Nilsen at 1428 N. Ocean Blvd., Gulf Stream, sold for \$10.5 million to Matthew H. Peltz, a board member of Wendy's Co. The sale was recorded June 9.

The seller, a real estate investor from Norway, was represented by **Candace Friis** of the Corcoran Group. **Devin Kay** of Douglas Elliman represented the buyer. Nilsen paid \$8.7 million for the property in 2008, and then built a new home situated on 1.87 acres, with highlights that include a home theater, a gym, a massage room, a guesthouse and a dock.

**Crocker Partners**, a company that owns, operates and develops office and mixed-use projects, donated 1,500 square feet of space at its Boca Raton Innovation Campus to **The Junior League of Boca Raton's** diaper bank, which serves 5,000 children annually and has distributed over 4 million diapers since 2011.

"This incredibly generous gift will help us provide diapers to local families in need, enabling babies and toddlers to attend day care, thus allowing their parents to go to work," said Cristy Stewart-Harfmann, president of the Junior League.

Crocker Partners' **Angelo Bianco**, managing partner, and **Giana Pacinelli**, marketing director, were instrumental in arranging the lease and partnership agreement in May.

The diaper bank recently distributed 100,000 diapers to 19 nonprofits that help needy people.

Typically, the group



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Plans for Echelon received preliminary approval from Delray Beach in June. The proposed three-story condominium will have 14 units and be just south of Atlantic Dunes Park. **Rendering provided**

distributes 600,000 diapers each year, but the demand has grown because of the economic repercussions of the coronavirus. Some of the diapers were secured through the organization's Amazon wish list and some were made possible through monetary donations.

Some 280,000 diapers were donated by the National Diaper Bank Network, to which the league belongs. **All My Sons**

**Moving & Storage** delivered them.

"We are glad we were able to help with this large shipment that will in turn be delivered to so many families in need during these challenging times," said **Jameson Olsen**, the company's director of marketing and business development.

To donate diapers, email [diaperbank@jlb.org](mailto:diaperbank@jlb.org) and a volunteer will pick up the donation. Or use the Junior

League's Amazon wish list and have diapers shipped directly to the organization's headquarters. The link for the wish list is <http://a.co/6hoQI8P>.

The Senada Adzem team of **Douglas Elliman** recently delivered more than 1,000 washable children's masks and several infrared thermometers to **Florence Fuller Child Development Centers** in Boca Raton, which reopened its

doors June 1.

Adzem's team turned to a second nonprofit, one based in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for assistance with its contribution to Florence Fuller. Adzem commissioned the Association of Persons with Cerebral Palsy and Dystrophy in Goražde to produce the face masks for children of different ages. The nonprofit employs family members of patients with cerebral palsy and dystrophy.

**National Council on Compensation Insurance** recently donated almost three tons of food to **Boca Helping Hands**, which is seeing an average of 2,025 new families and individuals needing food services each day. Its pantry bag distribution has risen from 150-180 bags per day to more than 230, and it now serves an average of 324 meals per day — double what the organization usually serves.

NCCI employees recommend and select the charities that the company supports each year through the NCCI Cares program, which has helped many charities near the company's Boca Raton headquarters.

The program also has generated community support that included more than \$460,000 raised in the last two years for the **United Way of Palm Beach County**; more

than \$15,000 donated to **Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse**; more than \$20,000 raised to support hurricane relief efforts; 263 pairs of shoes donated to children in need; and care packages totaling 260-plus pounds sent to **Kids' Chance of Florida** scholarship recipients.

A Delray Beach-based company, **Safe Space Scan Technologies**, recently made available its new infrared temperature scanning technology. It complies with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention standards for business reopenings.

The 3S07T scanner, which features proprietary technology, is FCC certified and can scan for elevated temperature and mask compliance in less than one second. People without masks and/or with elevated body temperatures will receive audio alerts, as will business or building management. The Safe Space Scanner sells for \$1,499.

For more information, visit [www.safespacescan.com](http://www.safespacescan.com) or call 888-819-7226.

*Steve Plunkett contributed to this column.*



*Send business news to Christine Davis at [cdavis9797@gmail.com](mailto:cdavis9797@gmail.com).*

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# Around Town

July/August 2020

The Coastal  Star

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John Boden of Highland Beach served in Vietnam as a Marine helicopter pilot. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

# What freedom means to me

By Janis Fontaine

July 4 is Independence Day. America's most significant holiday. But what is independence? And what is freedom?

As Americans, we talk about freedom as a "right," something we are entitled to like the air we breathe.

But the truth is, many of us are more confused than ever about what freedom really means. So, we asked our neighbors: "What does freedom mean to you?"

This is what they said.

"What a wonderful time to reflect on freedom while we have been less free than we are used to. "Being free has never meant we can do as we wish without regard to those around us. The Boy Scouts said it best in their oath. We need to help others, stay physically strong, mentally awake

"I have always taken my freedom for granted. I thought I was born with that privilege and carried it with patriotic zeal. Now, I have never felt so threatened.

"With an out-of-control pandemic, civil unrest seeking justice and racial equality, justly so, a government with a political agenda to serve their own good, not we who need their guidance, I am shaken.

"I fear for the next generations who inherit

and morally upright.

"Today we are being asked to follow rules that benefit ourselves and others. This is what freedom is all about."

— John Boden, Highland Beach, a former Marine helicopter pilot who served in Vietnam



Cook

our country. How can I assure my grandchildren that all will be fine? They trust me."

— Barbara Cook of Ocean Ridge, a Garden Club member who was instrumental in putting up the Blue Star Highway monument at the Ocean Ridge Town Hall

More thoughts on freedom, Page AT3

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## Philanthropy Notes

# Ballroom Battle will have live telecast instead of audience

The George Snow Scholarship Fund's 13th annual event will look a little different this year, or at least come to its audience a different way. The Ballroom Battle will be broadcast at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 26 on WPTV-TV, as well as live-streamed from both the station's and the nonprofit's websites.

Previously, fans watched the show at the Boca Raton Resort & Club, but in keeping with federal guidelines prohibiting large gatherings during the coronavirus pandemic, the production took an alternative tack. It will take place at the WPTV studios in West Palm Beach.

Organizers of Ballroom Battle hope the televised showdown will resemble — more than it ever has before — *Dancing With the Stars*, the hit TV series after which it is modeled.

"It is like developing an entirely new event, but we think it will be great for our dancers and our community," said Debi Feiler, the fund's vice president of program services.

The evening pits eight local dancers and their professional partners from the Fred Astaire studios in Boca Raton against each other in a quest for the coveted Mirror Ball trophy, which goes to the top male and female fundraisers.

Seven of the dancers have been announced: Steven Bernstein of SBA Communications, Boca Raton attorney Robin Bresky, Dr. Gwenesia S. Collins, from Boca Raton Regional Hospital, William Donnell of NCCI, Tara Lucier of integrated supply chain company Inspirage, Kirsten Stanley of Tammy Fender Holistic Skin Care, and Kyle Stewart of Wells Fargo.

The money raised by the dancers benefits aspiring college students.

For more information, call 561-347-6799 or visit [www.ballroombattle.com](http://www.ballroombattle.com).

### Gift to benefit marine biology program at FAU

Florida Atlantic University has received a \$1.125 million gift from the Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation.

The gift will establish the Glenn W. and Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation Marine SEA Scholars Program at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science's Marine Science Laboratory at the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center in Boca Raton.

"This gift will allow for the next generation of marine scientists to ensure that important work and discovery will continue for generations to come as evolving impacts to the marine ecosystem continue," said Ata Sarajedini, the college's dean.



Ballroom Battle contestant Kirsten Stanley shared this photo with Facebook friends of her first in-person practice.

Jeanette Wyneken, director of the laboratory, said the funds are going to bring "amazing opportunities for marine biologists in training to gain hands-on experiences in the science and the communication of science."

For more information, call 561-297-2676 or visit [www.fau.edu](http://www.fau.edu).

### Impact 100 names winners of grants

Impact 100 Palm Beach County named the nonprofit winners that took home a combined total of \$565,000 in high-impact grants.

The five organizations that received \$100,000 apiece are CityHouse, Community Greening Corporation, Florida Atlantic University Foundation, GIVT, and Roots and Wings.

Five finalists received \$13,000 apiece. They are Boca Helping Hands, Coastal Conservation Association, Compass, Junior Achievement of the Palm Beaches & Treasure Coast, and Spady Cultural Heritage Museum.

"These grantees began the application process for funding nearly a year ago," President Kathy Adkins said. "Given these uncertain times, we know that receiving these high-impact grants is more critical to our finalists than ever."

Impact 100 Palm Beach County is a women's 501(c)(3) dedicated to funding South County initiatives. It consists of members who donate \$1,000

annually.

For more information, call 561-336-4623 or visit [www.impact100pbc.org](http://www.impact100pbc.org).

### COVID-19 emergency fund set up to feed families

Achievement Centers for Children and Families, which serves 900 clients annually from three Delray Beach locations, has mobilized its resources in the wake of the coronavirus.

While learning programs are closed for the safety of students and staff members, the organization is helping with such challenges as loss of employment and food security as well as other critical needs.

"We are committed to doing everything we possibly can, in any way we can, to help our children, families, staff and partners," CEO Stephanie Seibel said, noting that the newly created COVID-19 Emergency Fund is seeking donations. "Also, in our efforts to support the community as a whole, we are partnering with local restaurants and suppliers to provide meals for our families and are offering opportunities for the community to sponsor meals and support local restaurants."

ACCF has distributed more than 3,500 meals since making the quick pivot from being an after-school center to feeding people in its aid.

"The demand for our services is greater than ever," Seibel said. "Our partners

and supporters have been instrumental in our efforts to serve meals for over 200 families each week all while supporting local restaurants and their employees."

For more information, call 561-266-0003 or visit [www.achievementcentersfl.org/coronavirus](http://www.achievementcentersfl.org/coronavirus).



Lois Pope encourages others to help the food bank. Photo provided

### Pope donates \$1 million to county Food Bank

Philanthropist Lois Pope of Manalapan has donated \$1 million to the Palm Beach County Food Bank to support and expand its Food4OurKids program.

The program, a year-round weekend and summer initiative designed to fill nutritional gaps when children are not in school, now is needed every day.

"No child should ever go hungry, here in Palm Beach County or anywhere else in this country," Pope said. "Children need food. They need proper nutrition to learn and thrive. But now, during this coronavirus pandemic when they are not in school, they are especially at risk of going hungry. So I invite others — in fact, I urge others — to join me in this vitally important, essential effort."

For more information, call 561-582-8083 or visit [www.life-edu.org](http://www.life-edu.org).

### Mentoring program gets boost from Boynton

The \$200 donation that the Boynton Beach City Commission made to the Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service is helping the nonprofit's Mentoring 4 Kids program prosper.

The program provides same-gender role models for children ages 6 to 14 who live in single-parent homes. Mentors provide friendship, guidance and support and take the youths to a wide range of community activities.

Studies show mentoring decreases school dropout rates, enhances self-esteem and confidence and strengthens

relationships with family members, peers and teachers.

For more information, call 561-238-0285 or visit [www.mentoring4kids.org](http://www.mentoring4kids.org).

In other news, the Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service celebrated its inaugural "Road to Resilience" luncheon, which drew a pre-COVID-19 crowd of more than 200 to witness a virtual chat between Dr. Jennifer Ashton in New York and Dr. Elaine Rotenberg, the nonprofit's clinical director.

Their conversation focused on the need to shine a light on addiction, mental illness and suicide and to debunk myths and remove the stigma attached to behavioral health problems.

All attendees received a complimentary signed copy of Ashton's book *Life After Suicide*, which recounts how she and her children picked up the pieces following her husband's death.

Event proceeds will benefit the service's annual fund. For more information, call 561-684-1991 or visit [www.alpertjfs.org](http://www.alpertjfs.org).

### Community Foundation leader to retire

After seven years of dedication to the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, Brad Hurlburt, president and CEO, is retiring.

Hurlburt will stay with the agency through June 2021



Hurlburt

to ensure a smooth transition for his successor. "Brad has done an outstanding job building the organization into an invaluable resource for our community and beyond, and he will certainly be missed," Chairwoman Sherry Barrat said.

During Hurlburt's tenure, combined assets have grown to more than \$200 million, up from \$150 million. The board will engage an executive firm this summer to conduct the search for a new leader.

"This was the opportunity of a lifetime for me, and I will forever treasure partnering with outstanding board members, community leaders, donors and organizations in our community that make a meaningful difference," he said.

For more info on the foundation, visit [www.yourcommunityfoundation.org](http://www.yourcommunityfoundation.org) or call 561-659-6800.



Send news and notes to Amy Woods at [flamywoods@bellsouth.net](mailto:flamywoods@bellsouth.net).

# What freedom means to me

“Freedom is ethereal; freedom is existential. Years ago in the midst of a project I had a discussion with some tradesmen. The first was Russian — all he ever knew was living in a totalitarian state. He missed the order of it. He thought we have too much freedom here. The other man was a Polish



**Heffernan**

Muslim. He had been in a concentration camp until the Nazis learned he was a plumber. Then he became forced labor. He never broke my eye contact and the look in his eyes expressed a sadness that this Russian had no idea what freedom means. The plumber, with his look, told me the equivalent of ‘freedom is never having a knee on your neck.’”

— **Chris Heffernan, Delray Beach, a financial analyst**



Freedom means responsibility to John Miller, former chairman of the Historic Preservation Board in Delray Beach.

“Freedom to me means responsibility. When a person or society has the freedom to make choices about how, when, where and what they say, do, live, love, work, play, etc., then those choices can determine how much more or less freedom they will enjoy.

“The fastest way to lose

freedoms is to either take them for granted or take advantage to the point where we start to infringe on others’ liberties and opportunities.”

— **John Miller, Delray Beach, a former chairman of the city’s Historic Preservation Board**

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Freedom is ‘a layered state of being’ for Charlene Farrington, executive director of the Spady Museum in Delray Beach. **Photos by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

“Each time I ask myself what freedom means, I come up with a different answer. Freedom is a layered state of being, and I have come to the realization that, as a child, I felt like I was free. As an adult, I know that I never have been. I am committed to my own education, and I am trying to influence the future by sharing history with others. In this way, I

comfort myself by believing freedom may, one day, be attained by future generations.”

— **Charlene Farrington, Delray Beach, executive director of the Spady Museum in Delray Beach and president of the South Florida branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History**

“Freedom is the unique product of liberation and the birth of free will.

“It has a unique self-governance quality, an ideal of independence and a vision of living on your own terms, regardless of ethnic background or political affiliation. Freedom is the God-given song of



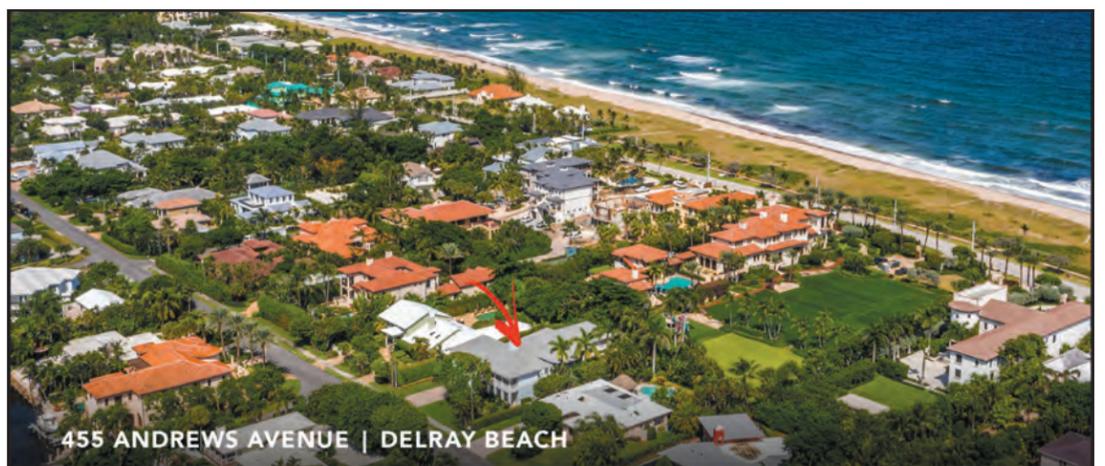
**Newman**

individual self-determination. To peacefully pray, vote, speak, and believe without fear of reprisal.

“Freedom is a blank canvas, without any group infringing on your right to hold the

paintbrush. Freedom is a vision of broken chains and turning hope into reality.”

— **Cameron Newman, Boca Raton, a soon-to-be junior at Saint Andrew’s School and an advocate for social justice and his Jewish faith**



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# Graduations

Members of *The Coastal Star* website at [www.thecoastalstar.com](http://www.thecoastalstar.com) submitted photos of their new graduates. Congratulations to them all!



**Graduate's name:** Charlotte Yates Rowley

**Hometown:** Boynton Beach

**School:** Saint Andrew's School

**Awards and accomplishments:** Model UN grades 9-12 (president 11, 12), grades 9-12 varsity tennis, grades 9-12 Pre-Med Club (also was a cofounder), 10-11 Red Key Club

**What's next:** Georgetown University

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** David and Darlene Rowley



**Graduate's name:** Lila Connors

**Hometown:** Niskayuna, New York

**School:** Miss Porter's School

**Awards and accomplishments:** Lila was Head of School and played varsity lacrosse and basketball. Her basketball team was champion of the New England Founders League.

**What's next:** Colgate University

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** Her grandparents Gordon and Cuppy Kraft



**Graduate's name:** Catherine Biagiotti

**Hometown:** Boca Raton

**School:** Boca Raton High School

**Awards and accomplishments:** National Honor Society, Boca High Leadership, and worked at Addison Mizner Elementary School as an after-school counselor and camp counselor all four years of high school

**What's next:** University of Central Florida to study communications

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** Parents, Chrissy and Carl Gibson, and grandparents Gayl and Jim Hackett



**Graduate's name:** Giordina Ritota

**Hometown:** Ocean Ridge

**School:** G-Star School of the Arts

**Awards and accomplishments:** Dance captain for four years during X-Scream; worked special effects makeup for law enforcement disaster simulations

**What's next:** Florida Atlantic University

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** Dr. Ted and Lisa Ritota



**Graduate's name:** Rick Garcia

**Hometown:** Wellington

**School:** Bowling Green State University graduate school

**Awards and accomplishments:** M.A. in College Student Personnel; member of Association for Orientation, Transition and Retention in Higher Education

**What's next:** Working at University of South Florida as a coordinator for New Student Connections

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** Zury Garcia



**Graduate's name:** Jayden Mazer

**Hometown:** Delray Beach

**School:** Eagles Landing Middle School

**Awards and accomplishments:** Jason Beame Award and Outstanding Academic Achievement

**What's next:** Olympic Heights High School

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** Tiffany Mazer

— Student bios compiled by Owen Plamann



**Graduate's name:** Jillian Chapman

**Hometown:** County Pocket

**School:** Imagine-Chancellor, fifth grade

**Awards and accomplishments:** Fifth-grade principal's list; made soccer and cheer teams for 2020-2021 school year

**What's next:** Continue at Imagine-Chancellor. Hopes to be a doctor when she grows up.

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** Dr. Glenn and Marie Chapman and her brother, Finn.



**Graduate's name:** Charlotte Marie Donelan

**Hometown:** Delray Beach

**School:** St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic School

**Awards and accomplishments:** Historian on the Student Council; member of the National Junior Honor Society; volunteered 175 hours (the most in her class) and was given the Talents To Service award; Principal's Award for straight A's all four quarters; St. Genesius Award for Drama; Physical Education Award; girls varsity lacrosse Defensive MVP Award, 2019; varsity volleyball Coach's Award, 2019; varsity basketball Coach's Award, 2019; Girls varsity soccer In It To Win It Award, 2020. Charlotte was also chosen to be the lead voice in charge of a "Philanthropy Tank" project in the Glades.

**What's next:** She has accepted the Merit Scholarship Award from Saint John Paul II Academy and will begin in the fall.

**Family in The Coastal Star area:** Patrick, Alicia and Riley Donelan

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# Graduations

## Gulf Stream graduates enjoy unique celebration

Given the historic impact of the coronavirus, the 24 students in the class of 2020 may never forget the ceremony honoring their last year at the school



A car for each student and family provides ample social distancing as a camera beams the June 7 ceremony online.



Gulf Stream School teachers and staff honored graduates with clappers and cowbells. From left are Deborah Handler, Danielle Cooper, Michael Mahady and Megan Bogert.



Aidan Grubman fist-bumps teachers and staff members after receiving his diploma and ringing the school's bell.



Dr. Gray Smith, the head of school, told the graduating eighth-graders that 'today's ceremony is reaching uncharted territory. I hope this is the first, last and only mixed virtual and live graduation ceremony the school and students ever have to endure.'

ABOVE: Board of Trustees President Penny Kosinski, student Tessa Sorenson and Smith.

LEFT: An SUV with a sun roof proved to be the perfect graduation vehicle for Brooke Konrad.

Photos by Rachel S. O'Hara/The Coastal Star

## Highland Beach

# Town recognizes graduates as they celebrate end of school

By Rich Pollack

Soon after she and close to 570 other Wellesley College students received their degrees in a Sunday afternoon virtual celebration, part-time Highland Beach resident Diane Schrenzel strolled across State Road A1A to join friends and family in a celebration.

At the beach party overlooking the ocean, Schrenzel had a chance to wear the cap and gown that she would have worn on the prestigious school's Massachusetts campus had it not been for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the gown, however, she dressed for the environment, wearing a brightly colored bikini that helped her blend in with others on the beach.

"Only in Florida would you be able to graduate in a bikini," she said.

After the cupcakes and macarons were gone, Schrenzel posted pictures on social media and received more than 150 likes.

"I just thought it was fun to wear a bikini under the gown," she said. "But it was also practical."

In addition to the accolades she received during the May 31 celebration, Schrenzel — along with some other young Highland Beach residents — is getting recognition from town leaders for reaching an academic milestone.

On its website, the town has listed the names of about 15 graduates, ranging from those who completed kindergarten to those who earned college degrees.

Highland Beach is also displaying a banner in front of Town Hall praising the students, and each will receive a letter of congratulations for the achievement.

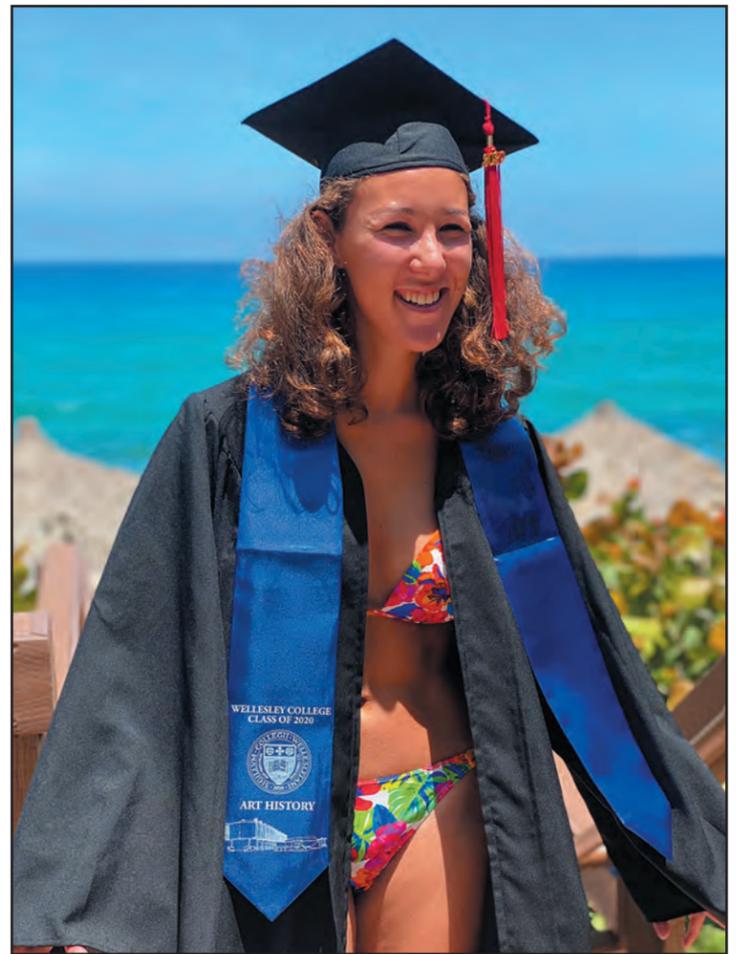
Commissioner Peggy Gossett-Seidman, in response to a resident's request, brought up the idea to have the town do something for graduates in a year when traditional graduations went by the wayside.

The town put out an email call and learned that six residents had received college degrees, two graduated from high school, four from middle school and three from elementary school or kindergarten.

"We had so many more than we expected," Gossett-Seidman said.

Vice Mayor Greg Babij, whose son and step-daughter have their names on the banner, said he is glad the town is offering the recognition.

"I think the parents are more excited about it than the kids are," he said. "They're just happy school is over." ★



Diane Schrenzel celebrated her graduation from Wellesley by donning a bikini under her cap and gown. Photo provided

## Tots and Teens Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 6/24. Many events are in flux, please check with organizers before making plans to attend.

### JULY 4

**Saturday - 7/4 - Sensory Saturdays: Special Exploration Hours** at South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, 4801 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. For families affected by autism spectrum disorder. No heavy crowds; softened general lighting, decreased noise level/visual stimulation on interactive exhibits wherever possible. 1st Sat 9-10 am. \$8.50/adult; \$7.50/senior; \$6.50/child 3-12; free/member & child under 3. 832-1988; sfsiencecenter.org

### JULY 5-11

**Monday - 7/6 - Virtual Kindergarten Readiness Story Time with Ms. Tea** presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age Pre-K. Every F 10 am. Free. 266-0197; delraylibrary.org

**7/6 - Beginning Acting Class** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 8+. Every M through 7/27 4:30-5:30 pm. \$100/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

**7/6-10 - South Florida Science Museum Summer Camp** at 4801 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. Themed weeks: science lessons, laboratories, crafts, outside activities. 9 am-4 pm M-F. Age 7-12 7/6-8/7 \$230-\$305/week. 832-2026; sfsiencecenter.org

**7/6-10 - One-Week Camps** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 8-14. Wonder Craft Camps weekly 7/6-7/31 M-F 9 am-4 pm, \$150/week; Wonder Theatre Camp 7/6-10 & 7/20-24 M-F 9 am-4 pm \$210/week; Musical Theatre Camp 7/20-7/31 M-F 9 am-4 pm \$420/2 weeks. Before-/after-care available for a fee. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

**7/6-10 - Artist Camp** at Armory Art Center, 811 Park Place, West Palm Beach. Age 6-18. Art education in various media. Weekly through 8/7. M-F 9 am-4:30 pm. \$255-\$305/week. Online registration: 832-1776; armoryart.org/youthartcamps

**7/6-17 - Virtual Theatre Camp** presented by Old School Square and Florida Children's Theatre brings drama camp straight to your living room. Different theme each session; final performance features songs/scenes from favorite shows, streamed for friends & family. Held again 7/20-31. M-F 10 am-3 pm. \$250/2-weeks. 954-863-6882; flct.org

**7/6-8/7 - Virtual Environmental Camp** presented by Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Grades 1-9. Registration for camp experience includes a camp pack w/supplies for crafts, activities, exploration. 10 am-1 pm. Grades 1-2 every M through 8/3; Grades 3-4 every T through 8/4;

## Summer camps open

Delray Beach — June 19



With restrictions eased, summer camps have been opening. One of them is the Delray Beach Surf Camp. (L-r) Alex Rachlin, 11, Riley Fitzgerald, 11, Sean Boyle, 10, and Harrison Berney, 13, catch a wave together during a camp session near the shore at Casuarina Road in Delray Beach. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Grades 5-6 every W through 8/5; Grades 7-9 every Th through 8/6; Family camp every F through 8/7, time TBD. \$62.50-\$78 per child/5 session + family camp. Registration call Christie at 544-8611; collins@myboca.us

**7/6-10 - Virtual FOTOCamp** presented by Palm Beach Photographic Centre, 415 Clematis St, West Palm Beach. Age 10-17. All areas of photography from basics to state-of-the-art digital imaging. 10 am-noon & 1:30-3:30 pm. M-F through 8/7. \$125-\$395. 253-2600; workshop.org

**Tuesday - 7/7 - Coral Reef Shark & Alligator Feedings** at Sandoway Discovery Center, 142 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. Several small feedings throughout the day. T-Sat 10 am-4 pm. Free w/\$6 admission. 274-7263; sandowayhouse.org

**7/7 - Virtual BeTeen the Lines Readers Club** presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13+. 1st & 3rd T 3 pm. Free. 819-6405; delraylibrary.org

**7/7 - Intermediate Acting Class (Act II)** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 10+. Every T through 7/28 4:30-5:30 pm. \$100/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

**7/7-10 - Art-Sea Living Summer Camp**, at 412 E Ocean Ave #1, Boynton Beach. Ages 5-13. T-F through 7/31 10 am-2 pm. \$200/4 days.

371-1009; artsealiving.com

**Wednesday - 7/8 - Musical Theatre Voice for Kids Class** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 10+. Every W through 7/29 4:30-5:30 pm. \$100/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

**Thursday - 7/9 - Musical Theatre Jazz for Kids Class** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 8-14. Every Th through 7/30 4:30-5:30 pm. \$100/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

**Friday - 7/10 - Improv Fun for Kids Class** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 10-14. Every F through 7/31 4:30-5:30 pm. \$100/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

**Saturday - 7/11 - Boca Ballet Theatre Dance Classes** at Boca Ballet Theatre, 7630 NW 6th Ave, Boca Raton. All classes 7/11, 18 & 25: Creative Movement 9-10 am \$60; Pre-Ballet 10-11 am \$60; Beginner/Intermediate Ballet Package 10-11:30 am \$80. Registration required: 995-0709; bocaballet.org

### JULY 12-18

**Monday - 7/13-24 - Boynton Beach Recreation & Parks Department Summer Camps** at Carolyn Sims Center, 225 NW 12th Ave. Age 5-12. Held again 7/27-8/7. M-F 8 am-5 pm. 2-week session \$120/resident; \$150/non-

resident; \$25 registration fee/child. 742-6650; boynton-beach.org/recreation

**Tuesday - 7/14 - Virtual TAB (Teen Advisory Board) Meeting** presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 3 pm. Free. 266-0197; delraylibrary.org

### JULY 26-AUGUST 1

**Tuesday - 7/28 - Virtual GEMS Club: Can you Code?** at South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, 4801 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. Empower young girls to explore STEM fields. Girls grades 3-8. High school girls can volunteer to be mentors. 5-7 pm. Free; \$5/suggested donation. Virtual registration: 370-7710; sfsiencecenter.org/gem

**Friday - 7/31-8/2 - First United Methodist Anchored At Home Weekend Vacation Bible School** presented by First United Methodist Church of Boca Raton, 625 NE Mizner Blvd. Age 3 to 5th grade. Pickup of Box of Awesome is 7/30 5-6:30 pm at MECE Preschool or at East Campus church office 7/27-30 9 am-5 pm. \$10. Registration deadline 3 pm 7/17: 395-1244; funcbocaraton.org

### AUGUST 2-8

**Friday - 8/7-9 - 2020 Florida Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday**

### AUGUST 23-29

**Tuesday - 8/25 - Virtual GEMS Club: Science of Magic** at South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, 4801 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. Empower young girls to explore STEM fields. Girls grades 3-8. High school girls can volunteer to be mentors. 5-7 pm. Free; \$5/suggested donation. Virtual registration: 370-7710; sfsiencecenter.org/gem

**Wednesday - 8/26 - 3D Design and Printing 102 Workshop** at Stiles-Nicholson STEM Education Center (across the parking lot from the South Florida Science Center), 4800 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. Age 8-14. 5-7 pm. \$50/per session. Registration required: 832-2026; sfsiencecenter.org

### AUGUST 30-SEPT. 5

**Thursday - 9/3 - Tail Waggin Tutor Stella** at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Elementary school children read to certified therapy dog Stella. Grade K-5. Every Th 3-4 pm. Free. Register: 393-7968; bocalibrary.org

**Friday - 9/4 - Tail Waggin Tutor Louie** at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Elementary school children read to certified therapy dog Louie. Grade K-5. Every F 3-4 pm. Free. Register: 393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Dining

# How eateries new and old are meeting demands of pandemic

The dining scene has become a mix of offerings — dine in, takeout, delivery — as the coronavirus pandemic has forced restaurateurs to navigate uncharted waters and follow ever-changing rules.

**Jamie Hess**, owner of the newest Atlantic Avenue restaurant, **End of the Ave**, has “pivoted. We’ve adapted,” he said, describing his opening strategies, planned since last fall.

“The day we went for our beer and wine license is the day they shut down everything,” he said. All was delayed or put on hold from early February to June 25 as the restaurant worked to restructure its takeout business and then finally opened in Delray Beach.

Set in a small former surf shop at 1155 E. Atlantic Ave., it’s a spot serving tacos, hot dogs, beer and wine for beachgoers.

A condiment bar that was to offer dozens of toppings is now a behind-the-counter station, with add-ons for the tacos and cooked-in-beer dogs applied by masked and gloved workers.

The restaurant also expanded its offerings, “selling coolers and ice,” Hess said, as a way to make up for slower food traffic now at the beach.

He initiated summer Happy Hour with a BOGO deal of anything on the menu 4-7 p.m. daily and decided to begin catering Taco Tuesday parties or Hot Dog Night for neighborhoods, he said.

Hess also shifted hours, closing at 9 p.m.; the plan to capture a bar crowd later at night was suspended while bars remain closed.

**Adjustments made by all**

In established restaurants, what was once a social scene of full dining rooms and mingling crowds is now rooms of small tables properly spaced and limited numbers of diners at one seating. Outside seating has been added to many spots, including the **Station House** in Lantana, which reopened in time for lobster season.

Deep cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces between guests’ arrivals are now the norm at **Caffe Luna Rosa** in Delray Beach, which has indoor and outdoor seating. Paper menus are used at night and during the day menus are sanitized after each use. Condiments are by request and wiped down between uses.



DeBlasi

**Ernesto DeBlasi**, chef and partner, said masks are worn both in front of house and by kitchen staff.

Staffers have their temperatures checked daily. Anyone showing

a hint of a symptom is sent to a doctor, and a doctor’s note is required before the worker can return.

DeBlasi takes care of his 93-year-old father, delivering meals and groceries to him each week. He said he is especially conscious of spreading the coronavirus to vulnerable people.

“We take it very seriously,” DeBlasi says, and he is “absolutely worried about the inconsistency” he sees elsewhere, especially downtown. His restaurant is on State Road A1A south of Atlantic Avenue.

“I drive down the avenue after work. I go home late some nights, and the avenue is tightly packed. There’s no social distancing and not that many wearing masks.”

That may change after the Palm Beach County Commission in June made masks mandatory in public settings.

“It’s a double-edged sword,” DeBlasi said. Restaurants want to be busy again, but must also abide by the rules.

“It’s an uncomfortable situation sometimes because different people have different points of view on this whole pandemic.”

“But I feel it’s our job if there is a lot of people grouped together in an area especially that aren’t of the same party and they are coming in to dine. We let them know in a nice way that we’re trying to observe the rules that are given to us, and we’re passing them on so we can stay in business and keep giving them the service we’ve been providing them.”

A takeout plan initiated from the start saved the restaurant. “It was slow at first. But after social media kicked in, and I started posting

pictures, it really took off,” DeBlasi said.

At one point, he said, 75% or more of his food was takeout. Now, it’s 60/40 with diners coming in outpacing takeout.

Food orders surprised him. Instead of the family-friendly Italian meals he had planned, his customers wanted items off the regular menu — special foods they wouldn’t cook at home.

“I sold a lot of halibut, but the scallops really took off. It was pan-seared diver scallops with cannellini beans, organic spinach and lemon confit,” DeBlasi said. “It’s a \$42 dish and we sold a gallon of scallops in just four hours after I posted the picture on our Facebook page.”

DeBlasi discovered that some of his followers online are new customers who had never heard about the beachfront



Brewer

icon. “We’ve been here since 1997 and there are still people in Delray who’ve just found us,” he said. “I’m amazed at

that.”

Social media have been a savior for some restaurants in that regard, and Facebook and Instagram have fostered whole clubs of diners locally.

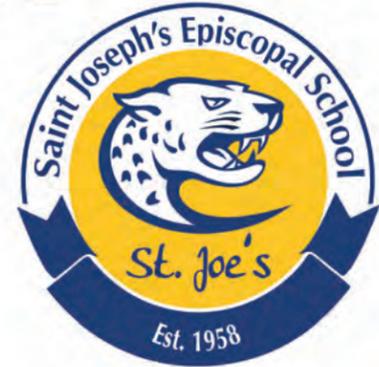
**John Brewer**, a real estate agent in Delray Beach, helped initiate the **Socially Distanced Supper Club**, posting special takeout menus for restaurants daily.

“Restaurants have asked us to stay around,” Brewer said. “We need this going forward,’ they told us. We’re trying to find a way to see if there’s a sustainable model for

See DINING on page AT8

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**DINING**

Continued from page AT1

it, whether it's a membership thing or something like that. Everybody who is volunteering has other jobs."

The club took off beyond all expectations, expanding into other cities and drawing attention to hundreds of restaurants in the county.

Restaurants use a catering method. They take orders for pickup a few days before delivery. That allows them to control the staff and inventory with no waste, knowing exactly how much food is to be served.

The club helped restaurants reopen, bringing back kitchen staff and others, Brewer said, and enabled some to keep their leases or fend off creditors.

The free program has been especially helpful to smaller restaurants that didn't have social media savvy or PR groups behind them.

Virtual parties also are part of the shift in dining practices.

At **The Addison** in Boca Raton, a special occasion restaurant that was booked solid for weddings and parties over the summer, a new way of engaging guests is in place.

**Zoe Lanham**, Addison vice president, said the business put a focus on smaller wedding parties and events because of social distancing and capacity limits. People are encouraged to use live video to stream events

online, especially to include the "grandmas and grandpas" who are more vulnerable to the virus and need to remain in place, she said.

"We're telling the brides they can still have a lovely small wedding now. As a couple, you're still getting married. Get married on the regular date you chose, then celebrate your first anniversary as a big celebration."

The restaurant will even deliver the reception food to grandparents or people with small children who are homebound so they can experience the dinner, too.

The Addison observes social distancing and asks customers to wear masks and have their temperatures taken at the gate to protect the staff, Lanham said. Staffers are checked daily and list anyone they have contacted who might have the virus. They are paid for two weeks if they need to be out, and the restaurant pays for all virus testing.

Servers provide everything tableside. There are no shared bread baskets, no condiments on the table, and no "leaning in" to take orders or fill water glasses. In a way, Lanham said, the Addison is practicing the civilized fine service that gave way to casual restaurants a couple of decades ago.

Servers underwent three sessions of video training while on hiatus. "We had time

to focus on things and set up a fictitious dining room, and recorded videos of our guest experiences. Then we set up a remote training day, so all the servers could learn the new protocol," Lanham said. "It's all to give our guests an elevated dining experience while maintaining safety and health."

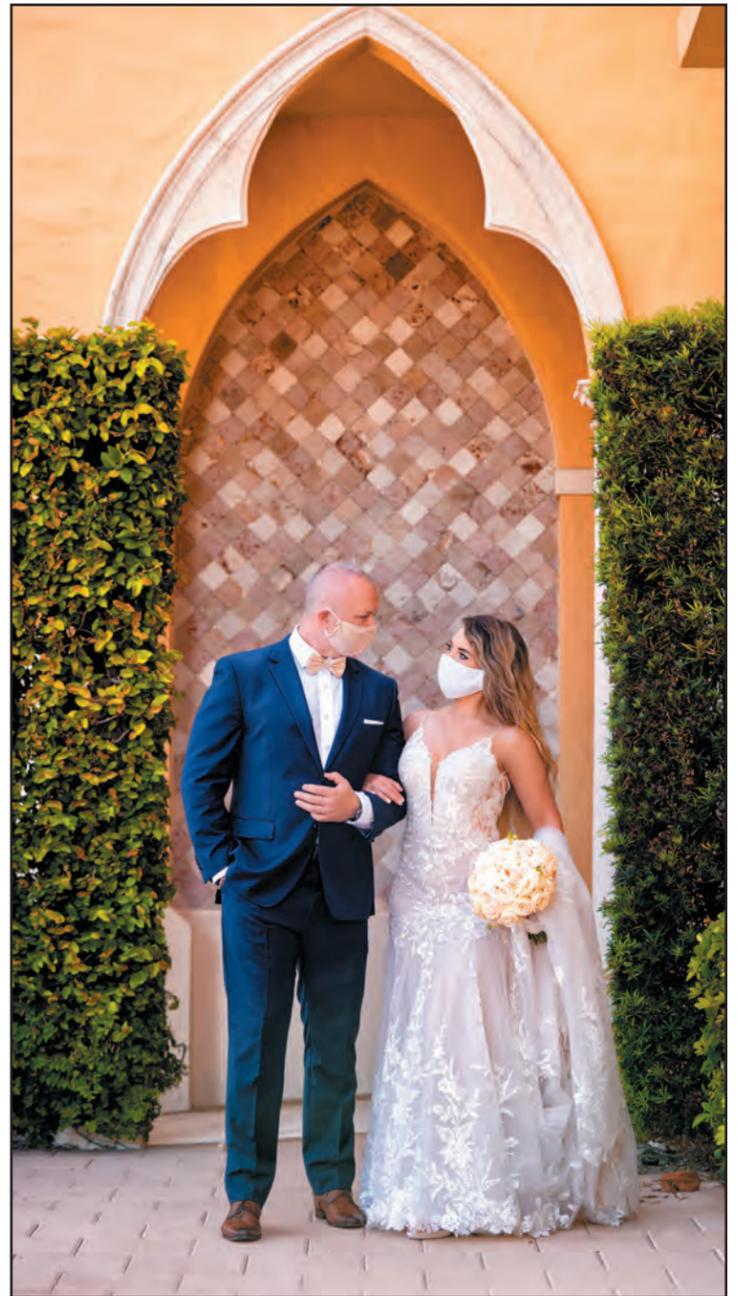
The restaurant also pitched in to help the community. During its closure, it cooked and delivered meals for Boca Helping Hands. "We provided 700 meals a week for 13 weeks," Lanham said. "At the end of the day, we have a responsibility to take care of one another."

**In brief:** Restaurants coming in with Plan B include **The Butcher and The Bar** at 510 E. Ocean Ave., Boynton Beach. Eric Anderson, a partner, said plans for an early summer opening were moved to early July. Only the butcher shop is open, serving sandwiches and meats for home cooks. Opening in the same building are **Guaca Go**, a takeout shop with design-your-own guacamole dishes, and soon, **Popo**, a South American restaurant. ...

Delray now has **Hawkers**, an Asian street food shop doing takeout at 610 E. Atlantic.



Jan Norris is a food writer who can be reached at [nativefla@gmail.com](mailto:nativefla@gmail.com)



The Addison is encouraging people to wear masks during scaled-down weddings and other parties. **Photo provided**

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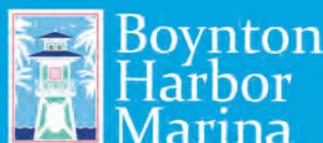
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## Art



The 40 pieces in the *Paper Dolls* exhibit by Rick Lazes are part of a larger showing on art and fashion. Photo provided by Cornell Museum of Art

## CUTOUT COUTURE

Greek sculpture gets a modern makeover in Cornell exhibit

By Sandra Schulman  
ArtsPaper Art Writer

Inspired by both Greek sculptures from the Hellenistic era and the outrageous fashion-forward designs of the late provocateur Alexander McQueen, multimedia artist Rick Lazes has created something new — a series of three-dimensional sculptures of paper dolls.

As part of the *Art Couture: The Intersection of Art and Fashion* exhibit at the newly reopened Cornell Museum at Old School Square, these hand-painted, wall-mounted sculptures create a new kind of very grown-up toy, one that zips from antiquity to modernity.

The 40 pieces in the *Paper Dolls* collection are in varying fashionable styles and poses, a select few inspired by the iconic work of McQueen. Lazes works in a variety of media, including wood, plaster, stainless steel, glass, plexiglass, and marble. He lives and works on Lake Norman near Charlotte, North Carolina.

Lazes is beyond just a visual artist; his impressive résumé includes his work in the entertainment industry, where he has produced hundreds of concerts and live music festivals in collaboration with concert giant Live Nation, as well as TV shows for HBO and Cinemax. He recently directed a feature-length documentary about the heavyweight-boxing champion Lennox Lewis titled *Tough Love* that screened at the Tribeca Film Festival.

As in the classic Greek tradition, the sculptures are headless, mainly due to centuries of religious and political censorship. During Lazes' extensive study of these ancient sculptures, he became enamored by a

See CUTOUTS on page AT11

## Theater

### The plot thickens for area playhouses planning their futures

By Hap Erstein  
ArtsPaper Theater Writer

Optimism tempered by uncertainty is the mood of area theater companies, which project several possible scenarios for reopening their playhouses and getting back to producing shows, based on what the government will allow. While the companies are champing at the bit to be up and running, to have subscribers and single-ticket buyers return, their plans to restart — with one significant exception in Boca Raton — vary over time, with options that stretch into next year. Such is “the new normal.”

The **Maltz Jupiter Theatre** was having a banner year, completing its fundraising for a \$32 million expansion to its

physical plant and about to open its season-ending musical, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, when the coronavirus pandemic brought its business to a screeching halt.

Obligated to a sizable subscription base to deliver the show, artistic director and chief executive officer Andrew Kato mentally slotted *How to Succeed* as his fall season opener. “Of course we were going to have a fall season,” Kato assumed at the time. Now, he is not so sure. “At that time, that was pretty horrible. But yesterday’s horrible is today’s ‘Well, that’s not so bad.’”

“The issue isn’t about whether we’ll be ready to do a season or not — I think everyone is dying to do shows,” he says. But will the audience



Julia K. Harriman and Austin Scott in the national tour of *Hamilton*, which wowed at the Kravis Center. Photo by Joan Marcus

be ready to return?

The issue is the cost of productions. “Because of the expense, you almost need a guarantee that they’ll come back.” And like most of the area’s theater executives surveyed, Kato feels firmly that “social distancing is not a

possibility, because the finances of doing that are not there.”

In his 617-seat theater, Kato says he can need as much as 80% capacity to break even on his larger musicals, like the previously announced *Sweet Charity* and *Sunset Boulevard* for the 2020-2021 season. No

wonder he is contemplating downsizing his productions or, in a worst-case scenario, scrapping next season entirely, going dark for 15 months until the audience’s safety can be assured. “In terms of emerging out of this, I think that we’re going to have to be super-conservative,” he concludes.

Still, with the status of the virus changing daily, Kato says, “Everything remains on the table, including the possibility of doing a build-out” expansion, rather than a season of shows. “I want to produce a show. This is horrible. Really the reason why the build-out might be the best thing right now is because the idea of doing nothing is not in my DNA.”

See THEATERS on page AT11



*Alone Together: A Coronavirus Crisis Collage. ... A Socially Distant Installation* by artist Sharon Koskoff is on view at the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County's website. Photo provided

## Arts

# Cultural Council turns to virtual world

By Jan Engoren  
Contributing Writer

Like many art institutions and organizations in this time of COVID-19, the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County has shifted its offerings online, with a summer lineup of free virtual programming, including art exhibitions and the performing arts.

Its six-performance music series began in June with *A Jazz Tribute to Musicals* featuring Yvette Norwood-Tiger and continues with Jill & Rich Switzer and Friends performing *A Latin Affair*, on July 11, *The Man with the Horn* on Aug. 1, and *Cheek to Cheek* on Sept. 15.

On Aug. 15, West Palm Beach vocalist Meri Ziev performs *In Other Words*, a New York-style cabaret performance, followed Aug. 29 by *One Love: A Tribute to Bob Marley*, featuring Soda Pop and the Insiders.

Because it's a virtual performance without a live audience, Keith "Soda Pop" Squire, whose ultimate goal is to play Bob Marley in a film, says it's a chance to exercise extreme creativity and give it his all.

"I'm so honored to perform for the Cultural Council," says Squire, a West Palm Beach native who began his career in school as a "positive rapper." "Bob Marley's message of peace and bringing people together resonates today with the movement for social justice and Black Lives Matter."

During the quarantine, he's been active caring for a new daughter and gardening, where he says he mines his creative inspiration.

On Sept. 12, the focus shifts to dance with *Art Shift: An Evening of Dance*, featuring Demetrius Klein and his Demetrius Klein Dance Company; Donna Goffredo Murray; Anna Nunes, AGWA Dance Company; Ericka Squire, Natural Movers/Dance Project; and Elizabeth (Libby) Faber, Arise Dance Collective.

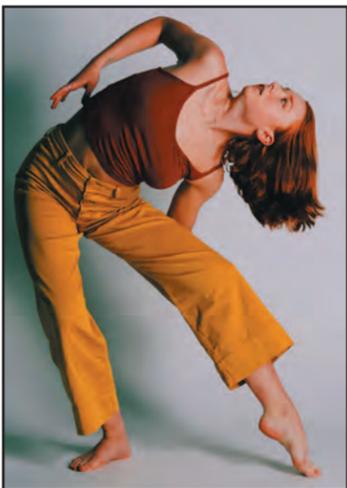
Faber, a Palm Beach Gardens native and recent Juilliard graduate who finished her final semester on Zoom thanks to COVID-19, will create an original seven-minute contemporary dance piece for the Cultural Council.

Inspired by her classmates ("my biggest inspiration and motivators"), Faber will collaborate with a jazz musician and utilize improvisation as a catalyst to generate her movement vocabulary.

"Performing online is a



Jill and Rich Switzer will provide three of the musical programs that will be streamed by the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County this summer. Photo provided



really great way to reach people who wouldn't be able to attend a live performance," says Faber. "It can reach more people and people have time now to watch. Nothing can replace live theater or live performance, but virtual performance is the best option and a good way to stay involved with the arts community."

Exhibits range from Ken Davidoff's photographs of the 1969 Palm Beach Pop Festival; Lake Worth photographer Philip Paritsky's *Kodachrome or iPhone?; Summer Abstraction* by Petrina Easton and Easton Art Galleries; to Delray Beach artist Sharon Koskoff's *Alone Together: A Coronavirus Crisis Collage. ... A Socially Distant Installation*.

As soon as the stay-at-home orders were issued in mid-March, Koskoff put out a call for submissions to the local arts community and spent the next three months creating a 30-foot-by-5-foot art installation reflecting life in the time of quarantine.

"I was living inside this mural for three months — it took over my living space," joked Koskoff from her home, where she has been working nonstop Photoshopping, cropping, printing, matting, collecting 139 relevant headlines from local newspapers and composing the

### If You View

All performances start at 7 p.m. and will be streamed on YouTube and the Council's website, [palmbeachculture.com](http://palmbeachculture.com). While there is no charge to participate, donations to the Council and directly to the artists are encouraged.

Performers in the dance series include Libby Faber and her Arise Dance Collective. Photo provided

installation.

Of this labor-intensive endeavor, she says her intent was to reflect the opposite of the chaos of the virus, creating an orderly, precise and mathematical work.

More than 100 artists submitted 164 images of animals, food and veggies, landscapes, sunsets and items with personal meaning. Koskoff added her own keepsakes to the piece, including photos of Jell-O reminding her of her mother and images from family photos.

She took four days to compose the larger installation. Grateful with the results, Koskoff says, "I love every single square."

Coincidentally, the show opened June 13, a symbolic day for Koskoff and the anniversary of her mother's passing.

"It doesn't get more personal than this," said Koskoff.

Making the comparison to viewing the Statue of Liberty in person or exclusively as an image, Koskoff says seeing her installation in person is "spiritually overwhelming."

"It brings you right back to this moment in time, with all the pain, sadness and joy," she says. "It tells the story of what it is to be alone, disconnected and trying desperately to stay connected."

## Arts Briefs

### Chamber Fest goes virtual

The Palm Beach Chamber Music Festival, a summer institution for classical fans for nearly 30 years, has joined the Zoom generation: Its concerts will be presented on video.

The concerts, filmed in late June at Delray's Crest Theatre, will consist of three taped programs (instead of the usual four) lasting about a half-hour and featuring a mix of well-known and unusual music for chamber groups.

The concerts will be available on Fridays beginning July 17 with music by Dvorak, Milhaud and Robert Muczynski. Weber, Glinka and Paul Schoenfeld are featured on the July 24 concert, and the events end July 31 with pieces by Saint-Saens, Beethoven, Handel and Brahms.

The concerts will be presented on [oldschoolsquare.org](http://oldschoolsquare.org) beginning at 7:30 p.m. Concerts are \$10, and will be available for unlimited viewing for a month. For more information, call 561-547-1010 or visit [pbcmf.org](http://pbcmf.org).

### Norton's director resigns after 15 months

WEST PALM BEACH — Elliot Bostwick Davis, CEO and director of the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach since March 2019, has resigned.



Davis

"The events of the past months have impressed upon me the importance of being closer to my family and I'm

looking forward to returning to Boston and beginning the next chapter of my life," she said in a prepared statement.

Davis joined the Norton a month after the art venue reopened following a \$100 million expansion and renovation crafted by the famed British architectural and design firm, Foster + Partners.

### Carbonell ceremony to be streamed Aug. 3

FORT LAUDERDALE — The 44th Annual Carbonell Awards, postponed from April because of the pandemic, will be presented virtually, said Donald R. Rogers, board president of the theater and arts honors.

The awards will be streamed on the Carbonell Facebook page and website at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 3, hosted through the YouTube channel of the Broward Center for the Performing Arts.

"We are determined to present a fun and exciting event virtually," said Walters.

Carbonell Awards will be presented in 20 competitive categories. For a complete list of this year's nominees, visit [carbonellawards.org/news/44th-annual-carbonell-award-nominations/](http://carbonellawards.org/news/44th-annual-carbonell-award-nominations/).

### Ballet Palm Beach's Smith wins Frank Prize

WEST PALM BEACH — The 2020 Randolph A. Frank Prize for the Performing Arts was awarded June 25 to Ballet Palm Beach founder



Smith

and artistic director Colleen Smith during a ceremony streamed live. "In addition to being a brilliant choreographer,

Colleen has taught more than 5,000 Palm Beach County students and awarded in excess of \$200,000 in scholarships to deserving dancers since creating the Ballet Palm Beach Academy in 1993," said Palm Beach Symphony CEO David McClymont.

As sole winner, Smith received the entire prize purse of \$10,000.

### Festival BOCA presents 'virtual' gala Oct. 8

Festival of the Arts Boca is planning a 15th anniversary virtual gala Oct. 8 to raise money for music education initiatives.

"We are looking forward to going virtual and delivering our message globally," said Joanna Marie Kaye, the festival's executive director.

Festivities begin at 7 p.m. when guests will join co-hosts Kaye and Festival Board member Olivia Hollaus live on Facebook, YouTube, and the festival's website for an evening of entertainment and visits by festival artists of the past, present and future.

Already scheduled are presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, former U.S. poet laureate Robert Pinsky, superstar violinist Joshua Bell, classical guitarist Milos and Festival Music Director, Constantine Kitsopoulos.

The 15th Annual Festival of the Arts Boca will return to the Mizner Park Amphitheater March 5-14, 2021.

### Shakespeare fest to present Bard on video

JUPITER — The Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival will mark its 30th anniversary this summer with a COVID-19-revised agenda. The show, normally presented in July at Carlin Park, will be moved to August, when a videotape of a Shakespeare performance will be shown online.

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be available at [pbshakespeare.org](http://pbshakespeare.org). It is being presented through the help of a PNC Bank grant.

Festival producers are planning virtual watch parties, encouraging families and couples to gather blankets, chairs, picnic baskets and coolers and enjoy the show outdoors to recreate the Shakespeare Festival experience while continuing safe social distancing.

— Staff reports

## THEATERS

Continued from page 9

The **Kravis Center** was also having one of its most successful seasons, led by a lucrative, beyond-sold-out engagement of *Hamilton*.

"We were very fortunate to have gotten our *Hamilton* run in," says chief executive officer Judith Mitchell.

Still, with two other shows in the Kravis on Broadway series — *Come From Away* and *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* — and many other attractions she had to scratch, Mitchell estimates the center lost some \$4.2 million in cancellation refunds.

The staff has been working on rebooking canceled shows, but the long lead time of performing arts venues makes that challenging. "We work two and three years out. Next season has been long booked," says Mitchell. "But many of the shows we've been able to reschedule to next spring. Hopefully we'll be open and able to do it by then."

The Kravis is moving attractions that were booked for the fall, but do not interpret that to mean it expects to open by December. "We're certainly not announcing any reopening yet," says Mitchell. "Safety is our top priority for our artists, our staff and our audiences. So I guess the answer is we're going to open when it is safe to do so."

For the sake of planning, the Kravis currently has three financial models: one reopens at the end of November, one in January and the third in March. "In that last scenario, we would have sort of a mini-season that would probably carry on through the summer. So we're trying to be open and flexible, as far as what authorities would let us do, but even beyond that, we're sort of taking our own slow rollout on this," she says.

In many respects, the Kravis was ahead of the curve when it comes to state-

of-the-art sanitation. "We long ago put in UV lighting on our air handlers. We've already outlined a protocol for enhanced cleaning. We'll probably be increasing, not decreasing, our staffing in areas of both security and housekeeping, our custodial team," explains Mitchell. "The real comfort, I think, for the public is to know that we're going to continue to follow CDC guidelines."

The coronavirus also will probably affect the Kravis's programming choices.

"Initially, you may end up seeing more single-performer shows, more recitalists, more Jay Lenos, that don't have the concerns about social distancing," says Mitchell.

Many of these changes will happen without Mitchell, who announced her retirement in January.

"In some ways, it's as good a time as any (to leave) because all of us, in whatever performing arts center you are, are going to have to be re-imagining and perhaps working with a new business model. So it'll be kind of a fresh start for whoever takes my place. And I'm still committed till the end of the year, but obviously if they need me longer, I'm going to be available."

**Palm Beach Dramaworks** had to cancel two of its productions because of COVID-19 — one of its most ambitious musicals, *Light in the Piazza*, and Kenneth Lonergan's *Lobby Hero*. But according to producing artistic director Bill Hayes, they will both be part of the company's next season.



Hayes

"*Piazza* was mostly built. Because it was such a massive undertaking, we started the set much earlier than normal," he says. "Rather than scrap that production, I decided to put it

in storage. It is our intention to mount it, but of course I can't tell you when because there's just too many unknown factors.

"The same with *Lobby Hero*, although we hadn't built anything yet. We're shelving it to next year or perhaps the following."

Asked what the disruption to Dramaworks' schedule cost, managing director Sue Ellen Beryl estimates it at half a million dollars.

As to when the theater is likely to reopen, Hayes is necessarily vague. "We have worked out many different scenarios — the what-ifs. What if you open in the fall, what if you open after the first of the year, how many productions can we squeeze in. ... You have to work through the worst and hope for the best," he says.

"Fortunately, we've spent 19 years operating in the black, so we had a very healthy reserve fund. That's how we've always operated, to be conservative in our thinking."

He is adamant, however, that social distancing will not be feasible in his 218-seat theater. "If you consider the people on each side of you and behind you and in front of you, we would have 20 people in the audience," says Hayes.

Because of its size, productions at Dramaworks do not make money. The venue relies on donations. "We'd have to fill every seat for twice as much in order to break even or increase donations in the same ratio. That would be impossible," says Beryl.

"But we are exploring other options, working with the city," says Hayes. "There are outdoor venues. When the time is right, if I can't open up our doors, we're looking to provide entertainment outdoors."

"Things are going to change. Things have to change. You've got to take this as an opportunity," he says. "It's not only about surviving this, but it's finding a way that we can actually thrive."

While the theater has been dark, Hayes has been experimenting with streaming live readings of new scripts, free of charge. The program built a following over time and Hayes thinks it could be a precursor of pay-per-view videos of the company's full productions.

"I think people will always prefer to be in the building and on the premises," he says. "This would be an alternative for people who aren't comfortable going out, people who can't go out, whether they're too old or too sick, or people that don't live in our region. It's really plus-plus, there's no downside."

Still, the emphasis at Dramaworks will continue to be the live productions and Hayes is already adjusting the schedule to suit audience tastes in the time of a pandemic.

Acknowledging that so many fine local actors have been put out of work by COVID-19, Hayes also anticipates selecting material that can be cast with area talent. In that sense, the company would be harkening back to its roots.

In contrast to other theaters' wait-and-see attitude, Boca Raton's **Wick Theatre** not only opened its doors to patrons for cabaret performances the first week of June, but also has announced a firm schedule of seven mainstage productions beginning in September.

The Wick got in one weekend of performances of *A Chorus Line* in early March when it decided to close the theater "over an abundance of caution." Box office losses for that musical and for the postponed *Nunsense* were "monumental," says executive director Marilynn Wick. "It's definitely a huge, huge loss for the theater."

Still, on Sept. 7, she fully expects to open *Nunsense*, featuring Cindy Williams of *Laverne & Shirley* acclaim.

The only evidence of the pandemic in the theater's programming is a front-loading of small cast shows — five

performers or fewer — until January. Following *Nunsense* will be *Breaking Up Is Hard to Do* (Oct. 15-Nov. 15), a jukebox musical of the pop hits by Neil Sedaka. The Wick's holiday show will be *The Fabulous Lipitones* (Nov. 27-Dec. 20), a barbershop quartet revue in the vein of *Forever Plaid*.

For 2021, the Wick brings in the new year with a couple of large-scale musicals — *Mamma Mia!* (Jan. 7-Feb. 21) and *A Chorus Line* (March 4-April 4). They will be followed by *Smokey Joe's Café* (April 15-May 16), and *Pump Boys and Dinettes* (May 27-June 20).

The Wick also intends to practice social distancing in the main auditorium and cabaret. Although its theater normally seats 341, "we can seat 183 people within the guidelines of



Wick

the governor's requirements," Wick calculates.

From the feedback she gets, "people are very excited to get back to the theater and they will feel very safe when they get there."

Still, keeping out of red ink for this season will be "extremely challenging," she concedes. As she candidly comments, her subscription revenue has almost been cut in half and requests for refunds have been plentiful.

Nevertheless, she insists that her patrons' health is her top priority, not the bottom line. "We don't want anyone sick on our watch. So we're taking their temperatures when they come in. They all get a face mask."

This will be The Wick's seventh season, the one she once felt could turn the corner for her financially. Now she just wants to keep the doors open. "I've been through some times in my 44 years of business, but I've never been through anything like this," Wick says. "No one has."

## CUTOUPS

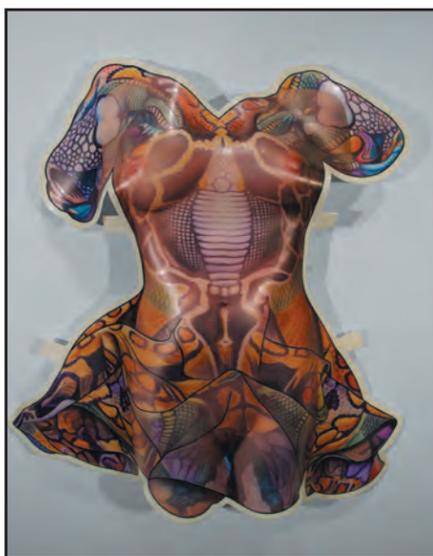
Continued from page 9

stylization called "wet-drapery," a term used to describe cloth that clings to the body in soft folds while it reveals the form beneath.

Lazes' sculptures take modern clothing and ape the classic wet-drapery styling. This gives the impression of a body both clothed and naked, complete with tabs to fold around the model's body that was usually included with a paper doll set for children.

"Six years ago, I started on a series of sculpture influenced by famous fashion designers; people like Versace, Pierre Cardin, Ralph Lauren, Vera Lang, Anna Sui and Stella McCartney," Lazes says, explaining how he came to create this art. "Then on my birthday five years ago, a friend gave me a book about Alexander McQueen and I read about McQueen's *Savage Beauty* show at the (New York) Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"I instantly realized that McQueen on his worst day was better than most of the rest on their best. I began to study McQueen and immediately became consumed with his life story. He was an incredible artist who lived his life



to extremes. He had amazing highs and depressing lows and one of his sources of angst was that he was never accepted as a true 'artist,' but was always delegated as a fashion designer.

"I decided to pay homage to McQueen's art and dedicated hundreds of hours to creating a series of sculptures that would pay tribute to his significant contributions to the fashion industry."

As for what he wants viewers to take away from the paper dolls, he says:

### If You Go

The **Art Couture** exhibit will remain on view through the summer at the Cornell Museum, 51 N. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach. **Hours:** 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

**Admission:** \$8, \$5 seniors, free for children under 12, veterans and members.

**Info:** 243-7922 or [cornellartmuseum.org](http://cornellartmuseum.org).

Some of the sculptures by Rick Lazes, such as the one at left, were inspired by the designs of Alexander McQueen. **Photo provided**

"I hope that the viewers will be inspired by the beauty of the work and taken by the sensuality of the images. McQueen was criticized for being a misogynist but in fact his goal was to empower women and used their sexuality to show their strength. ... I decided to use paper dolls as a metaphor to interweave antiquity, nostalgia and contemporary fashion and to contrast a child's plaything with adult fantasy."

Lazes and his studio partner, Paul

Veto, developed an unusual process to create the dolls. Drawings of the outfits from a London fashion show on a body are laminated onto acrylic sheets, then hand-painted. The sheets are then oven-heated, which makes them pliable, and then hand-molded over wooden forms to create further 3-D shapes.

Lazes exhibited *Paper Dolls* in New Orleans for the annual Art for Art's Sake weekend. After New Orleans, Lazes jetted to Texas, New York, and then to Europe to complete the Fashion Week circuit in Paris, Milan, and Dubai.

Back in the States he is working on his Broadway show about McQueen, also titled *Paper Dolls*. The project has expanded in the years since its inception, an idea born from a stray action figure doll in the studio and his seeing the film on McQueen's tragic, dramatic life (he committed suicide by hanging in 2010 at the age of 40).

"I am a visual artist whether it is expressed through film, music or my sculpture," Lazes said. "My passion is to tell stories that entertain and inspire audiences through art, theater and film and to help viewers imagine and explore their own creativity."

## Along the Coast

# Barrier island, mainland Boca are magnets for Tesla cars

By Steve Plunkett

It's not your imagination: You're more likely to see a Tesla electric vehicle in Boca Raton or on State Road A1A than anywhere else in Palm Beach County.

Despite being Florida's 23rd-largest city, Boca Raton has the state's third-highest cluster of Tesla EVs, behind only Miami and Fort Lauderdale, the California-based automaker says. The concentration continues up the barrier island to South Palm Beach and Palm Beach, making a short skip over Ocean Ridge and Manalapan.

"Two years ago we didn't see a lot of Teslas. Now when we go to Boca we see 50," said Craig Henne of South Palm Beach, who bought the company's premium SUV, a white Model X, in 2017.

Tesla boasts on its website (Tesla.com/carbonimpact) that its vehicles have saved a cumulative 3.6 million tons of carbon dioxide from getting into the atmosphere. Until March it also listed the top cities and top ZIP codes where its cars are saving on greenhouse gases.

Its figures showed Teslas in Boca Raton and west Boca saved the equivalent of 35,979,242 pounds of carbon dioxide that vehicles with internal combustion engines would have emitted, or a per-capita average of 386 pounds.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, that's a significant amount. Greater Boca's Tesla owners have saved the equivalent emissions of:

- Burning 216 tanker trucks full of gasoline, or
- The CO2 equivalent from burning enough coal to fill a mile-long coal train, or
- The emissions that would be produced from driving the average U.S. gas car far enough to get to the moon and back — 101 times.

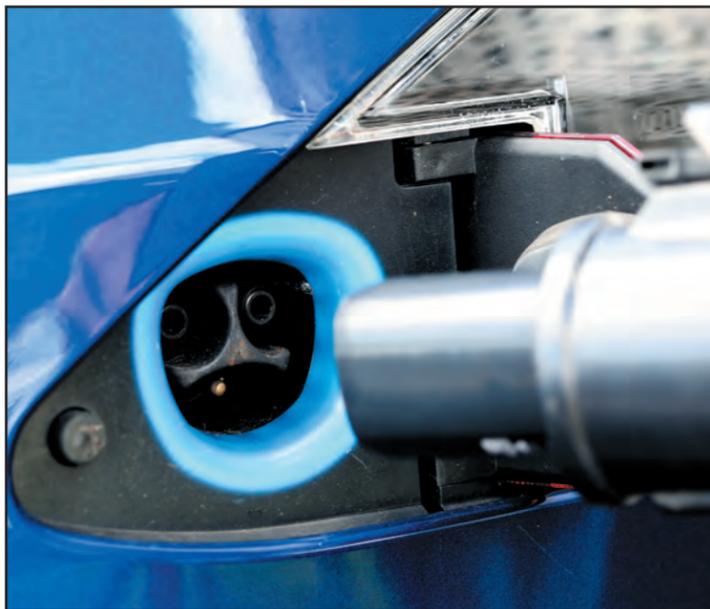
Boca Raton also ranks No. 27 on the automaker's list of the nation's top 50 cities, ahead of much-larger Phoenix and Denver. Miami is 8, and Fort Lauderdale is 23. Tampa, Orlando and other Florida cities are no-shows.

Jeremy Rodgers, the city's deputy mayor, jumped on the bandwagon for Tesla's mass-market sedan, the Model 3, as soon as he could, sending his wife and kids to Town Center mall to wait in line and make a down payment on March 31, 2016, the first day reservations were accepted. Almost two years later the company emailed him to say it was ready to accept his order.

"It's probably the first one in the city," Rodgers said.

Another Boca Raton resident who owns a Tesla is Michele Peel, past president of the Friends of Gumbo Limbo.

"This is the most fun car I've ever had," Peel said. "It drives



**ABOVE:** Michele Peel of Boca Raton says her Tesla is the most fun car she has ever owned. 'It drives like a dream,' she says.

**LEFT:** Peel plugs in her Tesla at work, where she gets free charging.

**BELOW:** Boca Raton Deputy Mayor Jeremy Rodgers shows off his Tesla sedan, the Model 3, in Silver Palm Park. He had to wait two years to get the car after he placed the order.

Photos by Tim Stepien/  
The Coastal Star

like a dream."

She bought her blue Model S, the automaker's premium sedan, in 2016 after years of owning a Toyota Prius hybrid, which used electric power, gas or both.

Even though the Prius gave Peel 50 miles per gallon of fuel, "I do not miss going to gas stations one bit," she said.

The Model S is actually Peel's second Tesla, she said. The first was a stuffed doll she bought at a museum of Serbian-American

engineer and physicist Nikola Tesla, who invented the first alternating-current motor.

Tesla's list of the top 50 ZIP codes in Florida leads off with Miami's 33156, followed in second place by 33496 (roughly the northern part of west Boca). Other Boca ZIP codes on the list are 33432 (the eastern part of the city south of Red Reef Park); 33433 (the south-central area of west Boca); 33487 (Highland Beach and the northeast part of the city); and

33431 (the east-central part of Boca Raton).

Other top ZIP codes are 33480 (South Palm Beach and Palm Beach) and 33483 (coastal Delray Beach and Gulf Stream).

Six California cities top the national list, with Atlanta at No. 7, Boca Raton at No. 27, Phoenix at No. 28 and Denver at No. 31. California cities claim 31 of the top 50 spots.

Henne, the South Palm Beach owner, said he is "not a global warming guy."

 Tesla's lowest-price electric vehicle, its Model 3 Standard Range Plus, provides 250 miles of driving range between charges and costs \$37,990. Tesla's luxury Model S sedan, with 402 miles of range, starts at \$74,990.

### Top cities for Teslas

- (1) Los Angeles
- (2) San Jose
- (3) San Francisco
- (7) Atlanta
- (8) Miami
- (23) Fort Lauderdale
- (27) Boca Raton
- (28) Phoenix
- (31) Denver

### Top area ZIP codes

- (2) 33496 Boca Raton
- (5) 33432 Boca Raton
- (25) 33480 South Palm Beach
- (30) 33433 Boca Raton
- (36) 33487 Boca Raton
- (40) 33431 Boca Raton
- (49) 33483 Delray Beach/Gulf Stream

"A lot of people think they're saving the planet," said Henne, whose previous vehicles include an electric smart car and a Chevrolet Corvette. "I just think it's such an awesome piece of equipment."

The best part of owning a Tesla "is we pay nothing to get it charged," said Henne, who picked up his car two weeks before the manufacturer ended its policy of lifetime free charging. New owners of a Model X or S today get only one year of free charging; Model 3 owners are on their own.

"The car is an absolute rocket," Henne said. "It'll do 150 — but not with me behind the wheel."

Peel, a strategic marketing manager for environmental consultant Geosyntec, gets free charging at work as a tenant at 900 Broken Sound Parkway NW. Other EVs charging at the office building are a BMW, another Model S and two Model 3s, she said.

People know it's Peel when she drives up, she said. "You don't see that many bright blue ones."

In March, Tesla opened a new supercharger station at the Wawa store on Hillsboro Boulevard just west of Interstate 95 in Deerfield Beach. Owners who don't qualify for free charging pay 26 cents per kWh, a little more than double what they would pay to charge at home.

The company says it will open another supercharger station somewhere in Boca Raton this year, but has not released details on its location or opening date.

A map on its website suggests it will be close to the Town Center showroom. ★

## Health & Harmony

# Therapist offers tips on coping with depression during pandemic

By Linda Haase

The CDC's prediction of 130,000 deaths in the U.S. from COVID-19 by July 4 is downright depressing. After all, we expected to be celebrating the nation's independence, not lamenting a historic loss.

The pandemic's physical toll is well known, but the emotional impact is less publicized.



Feuerman

A Kaiser Family Foundation poll revealed that nearly half of Americans feel the

COVID-19 threat is harming their mental health. That number skyrockets to 65% for frontline health care workers and their families and people with income loss.

"The pandemic has had a tremendous impact on mental health and we're probably only seeing the tip of the iceberg," explains Marni Feuerman, a Boca Raton licensed psychotherapist. "We're in a collective trauma that has us all living in fear."

While grief is an overwhelming symptom, others include anxiety, depression, insomnia, loneliness and substance abuse.

"Struggles that clients may have had prior to the pandemic are now magnified. There are also more complaints around marriage problems, parenting due to kids being home 24/7, and financial worries, particularly among those who have lost their jobs," says Feuerman, who is also a licensed clinical social worker and licensed marriage and family therapist.

"The biggest impact seems to be hitting those who are middle- to lower-income and those with young children. These are the ones who tend to not have a lot of savings and if they've lost their jobs, are experiencing a domino effect from the loss of income and the inability to effectively find new employment. A significant impact has also been for spouses or children in a home with domestic violence. The stress plus being together all the time with the perpetrator has put victims in serious danger."

Social distancing has added to the tension.

"Being confined to home or not being able to do routine schedules and to have to restrict other normal day-to-day activities is incredibly difficult. Social distancing and the lack of contact with others is also deeply affecting

### Where to find help

• Faulk Center for Counseling's New Connections Zoom support group.

**When:** 6-7 p.m. Tuesdays  
**Call:** 561-483-5300 for link

• Real Talk, virtual support group for teens sponsored by Palm Beach County Youth Services Department's Youth and Family Counseling program.

**When:** 4:30-5:30 p.m. Wednesdays  
**Call:** 561-242-5714 to register

• 211 Helpline provides support, suicide prevention and help locating available resources.

**When:** 24/7  
**Call:** 211

• Disaster Distress Helpline: crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress related to any disaster.

**When:** 24/7  
**Call:** 800-985-5990

• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

**When:** 24/7  
**Call:** 800-273-8255

• Palm Beach County School District hotline for student mental health

**When:** 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday  
**Call:** 561-432-6389

people's mental well-being," Feuerman says.

Simply put, people are not wired for isolation.

And, Feuerman notes, the usual support system — friends, family, coworkers and in-person support groups — can't always assist these days.

But there are other ways you can cope, she says, and it's important not to wait.

"There are so many compassionate therapists ready to help," she says, adding that many insurance companies pay for telehealth visits and that crisis phone lines are free.

"I also advise people to limit the news, create a routine even if confined to the home that includes daily exercise, and stay connected to others via calls, texts and videoconferencing. People should search meditation or relaxation apps or those that help with general coping skills. We have the gift of time right now and if there is something you haven't had the time to do in the past, now is your opportunity."

Other experts suggest writing down your fears, creating artwork, doing puzzles or playing games, taking an online course, gardening, trying a new recipe and planning virtual events.

She hopes post-pandemic changes will include increased funding for mental health.

"The mental health industry has always needed more funding, but after the pandemic they need it more than ever," she says. "If there's any way to better prepare for the mental health fallout, I hope it happens. I anticipate more people with complaints of trauma and perhaps even meeting criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder."

Above all, don't give up hope, Feuerman implores. "There's much growth that comes out of hardship." ★

## Health Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 6/24. Many events are in flux, please check with organizers before making plans to attend.

### JULY 5-11

**Tuesday - 7/7 - New Connections: A Zoom Support Group** presented by Faulk Center for Counseling, 22455 Boca Rio Rd, Boca Raton. T 6-7 pm. Free. 483-5300; faulkcenterforcounseling.org

### JULY 12-18

**Thursday - 7/16 - Project C4OPE: A Forum Series for Families in the Opioid Crisis with Zoom** presented by Hanley Foundation, Project COPE (Connect for Overdose Prevention and Education) designed to connect people in our community who share the experience of a loved one who has died of opioid overdose, survived an overdose, or are at high risk for overdose. 3rd Th 6-7:30 pm. Free. RSVP online: 268-2357; hanleyfoundation.org/project-c4ope

### JULY 19-25

**Sunday - 7/19 - Blood Drive** at St. Mark Church, 643 St. Mark Pl, Boynton Beach. Free wellness check includes blood pressure, iron count, temperature, cholesterol. ID required. 8 am-1 pm. Free. Make appointment; use sponsor

code #497: oneblooddonor.org

### JULY 26-AUGUST 1

**Saturday - 8/1 - E4 Life: Green, Health & Wellness Expo** at South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, 4801 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. In partnership w/West Palm Beach Mayor's Office of Sustainability. Fun, educational activities promote healthy living, sustainable initiatives, environmental conservation through vendor exhibits, demonstrations, giveaways, tastings, more. All ages. 10 am-4 pm. Free w/admission: \$11.95/adult; \$9.95/senior; \$7.95/age 3-12, free/member. 832-1988; sfsiencecenter.org

### AUGUST 16-22

**Thursday - 8/20 - Project C4OPE: A Forum Series for Families in the Opioid Crisis with Zoom** presented by Hanley Foundation, Project COPE (Connect for Overdose Prevention and Education) designed to connect people in our community who share the experience of a loved one who has died of opioid overdose, survived an overdose, or are at high risk for overdose. 3rd Th 6-7:30 pm. Free. RSVP online: 268-2357; hanleyfoundation.org/project-c4ope

## Religion Calendar

Note: Many places of worship are holding virtual services. Below are a sampling from our area:

### SATURDAYS

**Temple Beth El Live-Stream Shabbat Service.** 333 SW 4th Ave. Boca Raton. 9:30 am. Free. 391-8900; tbeoca.org

**Temple Sinai Shabbat Live-Stream Service.** 2475 West Atlantic Avenue. 10 am. Free. 276-6161; templesinaipbc.

### SUNDAYS

**Ascension Catholic Church Live-Stream Mass.** 7250 N Federal Hwy. Boca Raton. 10 am. Free. 997-5486; accboca.net

**First Presbyterian Church of Boynton Beach Virtual Service.** 235 SW 6th Ave. 11 am. Free. 732-3774; fpcboynton.org

**First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach Live-Stream Service.** 33 Gleason St. 10:30 am. Free. 276-6338; firstdelray.com

**St. Joseph's Episcopal Church Live-Stream Service.** 3300A Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. 9:30 am. Free. 732-3060; stjoesweb.org

**St. Mark Catholic Church Recorded Mass.** 436 St. Mark Pl, Boynton Beach. Free. 734-9330; stmarkboynton.com

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church Virtual Service.** 188 S Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. 10 am. Free. 276-4541; stpaulsdelray.org

**St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church Live-Stream Mass.** 840 George Bush Blvd, Delray

Beach. 9 am. Free. 276-6892; stvincenferrer.com

**Unity of Delray Beach Church Virtual Sunday Service.** 101 NW 22nd St. Free. 276-5796; uninityofdelraybeach.org

### FRIDAYS

**Temple Beth El Live-Stream Shabbat Evening Services.** 333 SW 4th Ave. Boca Raton. 7:30 pm. Free. 391-8900; tbeoca.org

**Temple Sinai Erev Shabbat Live-Stream Service.** 2475 West Atlantic Avenue. 7:30 pm. Free. 276-6161; templesinaipbc.

## Religion returns next edition

Janis Fontaine writes about people of faith, their congregations, causes and events. Contact her at [janisfontaine@outlook.com](mailto:janisfontaine@outlook.com).



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Health Notes

New visitor guidelines announced at Boca, Bethesda hospitals

Want to visit a friend or family member in the hospital during the COVID-19 outbreak? Check the new rules first, like these for **Baptist Health South Florida**, which operates Boca Raton Regional Hospital and the Bethesda hospitals in Boynton Beach.

As of June 15, for inpatient units, one adult visitor at a time is allowed from 3-9 p.m. Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 will not be allowed visitors except under exceptional circumstances.

For labor and delivery and maternity, one partner may stay continuously with a patient.

For outpatient facilities, including emergency department and urgent care centers, one adult visitor may accompany patients at all times.

At physician offices with enough space to accommodate visitors, one adult visitor may accompany a patient.

At the Lynn Cancer Institute at Boca Regional, no visitors will be able to accompany adult patients for the duration of the pandemic. This is to protect immuno-compromised cancer patients and the center's employees from the risks of COVID-19.

Limited exceptions may allow a single adult visitor for new patients, pediatric patients, adult patients with identified neuro-cognitive impairments, and patients with physical impairments that require special assistance from their caretakers, as determined by their clinical teams.

All visitors must be 18 or older and will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure. Anyone displaying symptoms or risk of exposure will not be allowed to visit.

Masks are required to be worn at all times, and will be provided upon entry. All visitors will need to follow social distancing guidelines, and waiting rooms and other common areas will be monitored to ensure social distancing. For more information, visit [www.baptisthealth.net/coronavirus](http://www.baptisthealth.net/coronavirus).

**HCA Healthcare** hospitals, which include JFK Medical Center in Atlantis, continue with precautions against spreading COVID-19.

They include limited entrances where screening and temperature checks will be performed; a separate tower for COVID-19 patients; masks that exceed federal guidelines required for all; and limited visitation with social distancing. One visitor (screened negative and wearing a mask) is permitted to accompany each patient during procedures; the hospital also offers virtual visitation. Common areas have been reconfigured to ensure adequate spacing.

**JFK Medical Center**, as well as its north campus and Palms West Hospital, now offers an insurance hotline. For people who need insurance coverage option assistance, call 833-867-8771 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Hotline advisers can discuss eligibility and advocacy services such as continuing on an employer's existing plan after job loss; applying for coverage through a spouse's benefit program; resources that may help offset the costs of health insurance; Medicaid resources; and state and federal health insurance exchanges, such as the Affordable Care Act, and how to enroll due to a changing

life event.

The hospital network is not representing companies or selling insurance plans, and there is no cost for this service.

**Tenet Healthcare's Palm Beach Health Network** hospitals, which include Delray Medical Center, have relaxed visitation policies to allow one designated support person to accompany each elective surgery, pediatric and maternity patient. Visitors will be screened for fever, respiratory symptoms or travel to high-risk locations before entering the hospitals, and they are required to wear visitor identification, face masks, and to sanitize their hands.

In mid-June, Delray Medical Center's Imaging Center at Palm Court resumed its outpatient and diagnostic services with safety standards in place.

"We understand that many of our patients were unable to schedule, or had to postpone their diagnostic appointments due to state orders and social distancing. They can now reschedule these important screenings and tests at our Palm Court location," said Maggie Gill, chief executive officer of the Palm Beach Health Network and Delray Medical Center. "We are making sure safety protocols are in place for our patients so they can feel safe and confident about getting the care they need."

DMC Imaging Center at Palm Court is at 5130 Linton Blvd., Suite I-1, Delray Beach.

**Delray Medical Center** received the Healthgrades 2020 Patient Safety Excellence Award for the third consecutive year.

"It is an honor to be recognized for our commitment to providing safe care, especially at a time when our community needs us most," Gill said.

"We are seeing cases where people are delaying care for things like strokes and heart attacks, which can lead to life-threatening illnesses, and we want our patients to understand that our hospitals are safe places. We have always cared for patients with infectious diseases, and we are prepared. We have taken the appropriate steps, and we have the supplies needed to ensure appropriate safety standards are in place."

**SBA Communications Corp.** has rolled out a new wellness program with its exclusive corporate wellness partner, **Boca Raton Regional Hospital**. The arrangement encompasses services that include on-site and off-site doctor's appointments, blood pressure checks and blood screenings, mobile mammograms, yoga, meditation and mental health

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services, nutrition, lectures and other services, many of which are available to SBA's entire 1,500-person workforce by video.

In other news, SBA made a gift of \$1 million to support Boca Raton Regional Hospital's Keeping the Promise campaign.

**Sun Capital Partners Foundation Inc.**, with founders Rodger R. Krouse and Marc J. Leder and their families, donated \$1 million to Boca Regional's Keeping the Promise campaign in May.

"As local residents operating a global business headquartered here for the past 25 years, we and the Sun Capital family truly appreciate the dedication and hard work that frontline health care professionals do every day to keep community residents safe and healthy," Leder said.

To identify patterns and symptoms of COVID-19, a team of scientists from **Florida Atlantic University's Schmidt College of Medicine** launched a study using the Oura ring, a device that tracks body temperature, movement and sleep data. Led by Janet Robishaw, Ph.D., senior associate dean for research and chair of the Department of Biomedical Sciences, the university's research team is part of the TemPredict global study spearheaded by the University of California, San

Francisco.

The Oura ring, which looks like a wedding band, is worn around-the-clock to provide data in real time. The data alerts the user and the researchers of physiological changes.

The FAU research team has taken TemPredict to the next level by incorporating two additional phases: determining if study participants go on to develop acute COVID-19 infections, and to garner an understanding of the prevalence rate. At six and 12 weeks, the researchers will conduct blood tests to identify whether the study participants have developed immune responses to COVID-19.

Also, the FAU research team members, who have developed a COVID-19 test that uses a saliva sample instead of a sample obtained with a nasal swab, will conduct weekly saliva tests.

Once they've gathered the data, they will work with scientists of Machine Perception and Cognitive Robotics Lab in FAU's Charles E. Schmidt College of Science to use artificial intelligence for predictive purposes. They also will be able to correlate their data to the TemPredict study of more than 2,000 health care workers who are caring for COVID-19 patients.

**Ethan Strikowski, Rylie Lougher and Megan Lougher**, students from Park Vista

Community High, started a project through their Facebook page, "Feeding our Heroes," to raise money to purchase food from restaurants to bring to frontline workers caring for COVID-19 patients.

In May they began to deliver lunches from Long Island Bagel and Deli to health care workers at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, and they brought food to workers at JFK Medical Center, purchased from In Good Taste Catering and Gourmet Café and Nature's Corner Café.

**BeWellPBC**, a countywide behavioral health initiative, has launched "Be Well Do Well Mini-Grants," which will fund creative projects with awards up to \$5,000.

Applicants must be Palm Beach County residents or organizations with ideas to build behavioral health support, promote workforce wellness, and/or focus on residents most in need. Applicants are not limited to nonprofit organizations.

Residents of all ages, community groups, religious organizations, for-profit businesses, schools, other educational facilities and local municipalities are eligible to apply through July 11 at [bewellpbc.org/dowellgrants](http://bewellpbc.org/dowellgrants).

Send health news to Christine Davis at [cdavis9797@gmail.com](mailto:cdavis9797@gmail.com).

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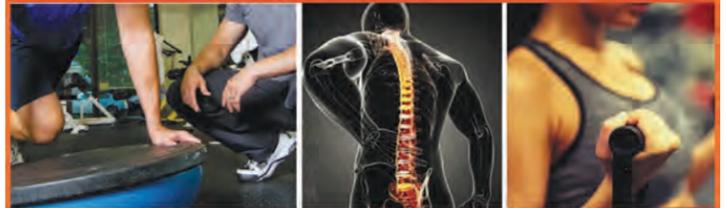
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## Paws Up for Pets

# Surge in adoptions helps old or injured animals find homes

There is a silver lining to this coronavirus that has limited us for months. Cici, Cooper and Daisy know firsthand.

All three — two sporting gray muzzles and one missing a front leg — languished unadopted in area animal shelters. It's tough to compete with cute puppies and young, healthy dogs.

Today, this trio of tail-waggers is sheltering in place in happy homes, getting lots of treats, cuddle sessions and comfy bedding.

Credit creative strategies by the teams at Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League in West Palm Beach and Tri-County Animal Rescue in Boca Raton for ensuring that high numbers of dogs and cats in their shelters have found temporary and permanent homes during the pandemic.

"We never closed the doors to the public," says Suzi Goldsmith, Tri-County co-founder and executive director. "We just changed the way we did business. With few exceptions, any dogs we got in during this time got adopted. And, we were able to foster animals with special needs who are older or require medication."

At Peggy Adams, Executive Director Rich Anderson reports that adoption inquiries have spiked nearly 250% compared to this time last year. He said in the past, the shelter faced a tough task to find homes for hundreds of kittens born each spring. This year, kittens at the shelter have been adopted as soon as they were deemed old and healthy enough.

"The outpouring of support from the community has been amazing," says Anderson, "to the point we struggled to keep up with inquiries from people asking to become foster volunteers."



Carl Case, of Boca Raton, adopted Cici, a three-legged corgi mix, from Tri-County Animal Rescue. Photo provided

Which brings us back to the tales of Cici, Cooper and Daisy.

Carl Case, of Boca Raton, quickly bonded with three-legged Cici, a 2-year-old corgi mix who had been transferred from a shelter in Miami-Dade. Cici needed amputation surgery at Tri-County on her right front leg, damaged from possibly being struck by a vehicle while she was a stray.

"I told the people at Tri-County that I wanted to adopt a special-needs dog after fostering dogs for a long time," says Case, who owns a software billing company. "When I met Cici in the parking lot at the shelter, she was a little hesitant as I was wearing gloves and a mask, but now, she is so happy and loving and doing really great with me."

At age 11, Cooper, a beagle, proved to be the perfect dog for retirees Janice and Vic Romley, of West Palm Beach. The couple were looking for another dog after their last one passed away.

"We really missed having a dog in our lives and told the people at Peggy Adams we were willing to take a large dog or an older dog," says Janice Romley. "Cooper is a very loving dog and although he is 11, he has a lot of energy. He keeps us on a healthy walking schedule. He has added so much joy to our lives, especially during these challenging and isolating times."

Divorced and with a college-bound son, Ana Kieckbusch, of Boca Raton, contacted Tri-County about fostering an older dog. The staff told her about Daisy, a 10-year-old terrier mix who had been at the shelter for two years.

"I didn't want a crazy pup as I work from home and didn't want a dog who barked a lot," says Kieckbusch, a marketing strategy consultant. "Daisy had been at Tri-County a long time and was like their beloved mascot. She is low key and has a heart problem, but she takes her pills easily every day. She also has benign tumors on her chest and was chubby when I got her, but she has already lost two pounds."

Kieckbusch adds, "Holding her and looking at the way she looks at me is the best medicine for loneliness and for any ailment. I am grateful for her."

### How you can help

Tri-County Animal Rescue and Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League have canceled major fundraising events and community activities since March and are taking a wait-and-see approach to events scheduled for later this year, based on whether the pandemic wanes or accelerates. "Our biggest fundraiser of the year — the Doggie Kitty Ball on April 5 — was canceled, but we never stopped rescuing during this time, and we are following safety measures to the letter of the law," says Suzi Goldsmith of Tri-County. "We have a happy place here and welcome people willing to adopt, foster or donate."

Rich Anderson says that Peggy Adams was able to secure a Paycheck Protection Program loan to pay staff, but worries that the shelter's major fundraising events — the Young Friends of Peggy Adams gala set for Nov. 28 and the Christmas Ball set for Dec. 3 — may be in jeopardy. However, he is grateful to supporters. "Our caring donors never forgot about all of the lost, abandoned and injured animals who need our help here every day."

If you are interested in fostering or adopting pets or donating supplies or money to help these local shelters, contact Peggy Adams Rescue League in West Palm Beach at 561-686-3663 or [www.peggyadams.org](http://www.peggyadams.org). Contact Tri-County Animal Rescue in Boca Raton at 561-482-8110 or [www.tricountyanimalrescue.com](http://www.tricountyanimalrescue.com).

Case knows his life has perked up since the arrival of the fun-loving Cici.

"To me, dogs are the most trustworthy beings on the planet," he says. "If you adopt a dog, it is a big commitment, but definitely well worth it. I love Cici and can't wait for the time when I can travel the world with her."

Arden Moore, founder of [fourleggedlife.com](http://fourleggedlife.com), is an animal behavior expert and host of the *Oh Behave!* show on [petliferadio.com](http://petliferadio.com). Learn more at [www.ardenmoore.com](http://www.ardenmoore.com).



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## On the Water

Kathy Sullivan emerges from the vehicle Limiting Factor on June 7 following a dive that took her to the deepest known spot on the planet, nearly 7 miles below the surface. At left is Ticer Pfeifer, an engineer with Triton Submarines who acted as swimmer during recovery of the submersible.



The diving support and supply vessel Pressure Drop, shown holding Limiting Factor, sits at the dive site near Guam.

## Out of the pool business and into the challenges of the deep

By Willie Howard

Ocean Ridge native Jonathan Pugh graduated from the Florida Institute of Technology in May with a degree in ocean engineering and is already part of a team that's making deep-diving history.

Working for Sebastian-based Triton Submarines, Pugh, 21, became a member of the deep-diving expedition team that in early June sent astronaut/oceanographer Kathy Sullivan more than 35,000 feet below the surface of the Pacific Ocean into the deepest known spot on the planet. Sullivan was the first woman to reach that depth.

According to a *New York Times* report, Sullivan, 68, descended 35,810 feet (about 6.8 miles) below the surface into the Challenger Deep, the lowest point in the Mariana Trench, on June 7 in the Triton-built deep submergence vehicle Limiting Factor.

Victor Vescovo, an equity investor and explorer who paid for the mission, accompanied Sullivan.

Sullivan became the first American woman to walk in space in 1984 and later served as administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Pugh grew up fishing and diving in Ocean Ridge and is the son of former mayor and



pool company owner Geoff Pugh, an avid scuba diver and ocean aficionado.

The Pugh family fished together on most Sundays. As a boy, Jon went snorkeling regularly and earned his scuba diving certification at age 12.

He also enjoyed taking things apart to figure out how they worked.

"To the dismay of my mother, I had everything from rocket engines to 3-D printers and old computer parts laying around, which caused my room to look more like a garage than anything," Pugh said via email from the expedition's support ship, Pressure Drop.

Pugh started working for Triton Submarines as an intern

in January, spending days at the company on Mondays and Fridays while completing his engineering degree at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne.

After he graduated in May, Triton hired him as a mechanical assembly engineer. Soon thereafter, the company asked Pugh to join the team

Engineer Jonathan Pugh, of Ocean Ridge, worked with Triton Submarines on the dive team that sent Sullivan more than 35,000 feet below the surface. Photos provided by Enrique Alvarez/Caladan Oceanic

that supported Vescovo and Sullivan during the Challenger Deep dive.

As one of Triton's five support crew members, Pugh worked primarily with "lander" operations.

Pugh said landers are rectangular boxes that go into the water before the submarine to carry equipment such as hydrophones, water samplers, lights, cameras and soil samplers.

"They provide crucial data such as density and temperature, which help determine how much weight needs to be attached to the sub," he explained.

"Working at sea is tough but rewarding work, especially when you're making history in the process," Pugh said, noting that he learned about hard work through his father's pool business.

"I can say without a doubt that tying steel, cleaning pools, and digging ditches for my father when I was younger at Pugh's Pools has helped instill a work ethic that has helped me immensely." ★

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## On the Water

# Sargassum brings mahi mahi close to shore during summer

Summer is prime time for South Florida anglers to search the ocean for dolphinfish, better known by their Hawaiian name, mahi mahi, or simply mahi.

Floating mats of sargassum, the tan-colored marine algae that holds small fish and serves as feeding grounds for mahi, often appear along the coast of South Florida during the long, hot days of July and August.

Sargassum mats are floating habitat. They harbor tiny crustaceans and attract small fish such as almaco jacks, triggerfish and filefish, which mahi find tempting.

Many offshore anglers enjoy searching around sargassum mats for mahi, especially in the relatively calm seas of summer. Brightly colored, mahi are easily spotted in the clear Gulf Stream water. They fight hard, jump high and make excellent table fare if handled properly after being caught.

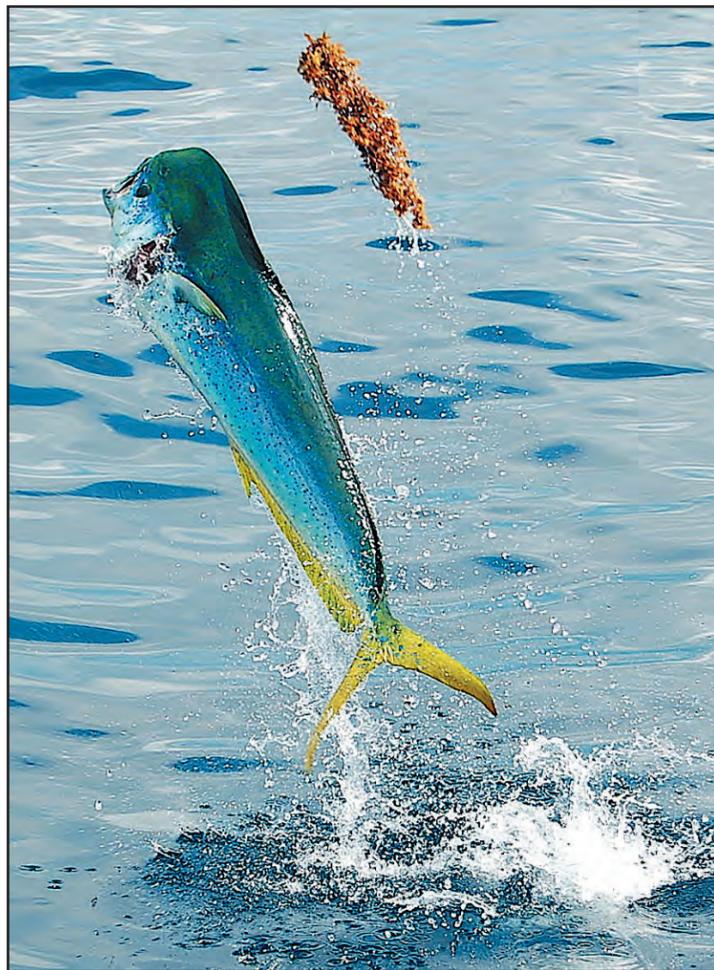
Unlike many other places where mahi reside, they're often caught relatively close to shore in the waters off South Florida — though runs of 10 miles or more into the Atlantic are not uncommon for anglers searching for mahi during the summer.

Dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) are renewable resources compared with other ocean fish. They start reproducing at a young age and can grow several pounds a month, which is one reason fisheries regulators allow anglers to keep a generous 10 mahi per person daily. (Minimum size: 20 inches to the fork of the tail.)

Anglers searching for summer mahi can troll along lines of sargassum that form along bands of current, or stop near sargassum mats and pitch out jigs, plugs and chum such as chunks of sardines or squid.

Mahi trolling baits include the classic rigged ballyhoo (often dressed up with a hooded skirt such as an Ilander) and trolling lures such as Billy Bait's Mag Turbo Whistler or the C&H Rattle Jet.

If you catch a mahi while trolling, consider leaving it behind the boat and casting out jigs or hooks holding chunks of



dead sardine or hunks of squid. Other mahi often approach the boat and linger around a hooked fish in the water.

Another popular method for finding mahi is running from one sargassum mat to the next, favoring larger, thicker mats that shelter lots of small fish. Cast out jigs, dead baits (pieces

of sardines, ballyhoo or squid) and splash the surface with topwater plugs to attract mahi.

If no fish show up around the weed mat, move on.

Show courtesy to other anglers while fishing for mahi. Don't invade a spot already occupied by another boat. Wait for the boat to leave or hunt

**ABOVE:** Doug O'Neal and Chris Deen hold a 30-pound bull dolphinfish, or mahi mahi, that Deen caught using a live goggle-eye near a large sargassum mat off Palm Beach in July 2019. Mahi mahi fishing tends to be good during July and August in the waters off Palm Beach County.

**LEFT:** A small dolphinfish leaps from the water after being hooked east of the Boynton Inlet.

**Photos by Willie Howard/The Coastal Star**

elsewhere.

Similarly, don't cut in front of a boat that's trolling.

Keep an eye out for floating objects such as logs, wooden pallets or even buckets. They could be sheltering small fish that attract mahi. Sea birds circling or swooping down to the surface can point the way to mahi, which often push flying fish and small baitfish to the surface where the birds can snatch them.

Once you've caught a legal-sized mahi and decided to keep it, ice it well. Try leaving the plug in the fish box or cooler and adding ocean water to create an icy slush. Proper icing will make mahi easier to clean and better at the dinner table.

Any anglers planning offshore fishing trips should leave some type of float plan telling where they're headed, who is on the boat and when (and where) they're due back on land. A simple text message to a friend or relative will do.

For safety, boaters headed into the open Atlantic should carry quality life jackets, plenty of drinking water and a ditch bag holding a satellite beacon (an EPIRB) and hand-held VHF radio to use in case of trouble.

Anglers interested in tagging and releasing mahi for research can get started by going to [www.dolphintagging.com](http://www.dolphintagging.com).

**CCA/Florida's STAR tournament**

CCA/Florida is hosting its STAR summer fishing

tournament again this year, with big prizes for registered anglers who catch tagged fish and smaller prizes for anglers who submit photos of their catches to benefit fisheries research.

The first tagged dolphinfish caught by a 2020 STAR-registered angler wins \$10,000 or a scholarship. A registered angler who catches one of the tournament's tagged redfish could win a boat.

Participating anglers can win prizes by submitting photos of fish, including redfish, snook, sea trout, grouper, kingfish, dolphinfish or tarpon. Any fish photographed and submitted by registered anglers can be entered in the Power Pole Conservation Division.

To promote conservation, fish can be released after photos are taken.

Anglers are encouraged to collect plastic and garbage from waterways while fishing and to submit photos showing 5-gallon buckets of rubbish (photographed with the 2020 STAR fish measuring device).

Registered anglers who submit photos of collected trash will be entered in a drawing to win prizes, including a three-day trip to Key West to visit the Hemingway Rum Distillery.

The STAR entry fee is \$40. Participants download the CCA/Florida STAR smartphone app and must pick up a 2020 STAR measuring device at boating stores such as West Marine in Delray Beach, Marine Connection in West Palm Beach and Tuppen's Marine & Tackle in Lake Worth Beach.

To register or learn more, visit [www.ccaflstar.com](http://www.ccaflstar.com) or call 844-387-7827.

**FWC extends survey of reef fish anglers**

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission is extending its Gulf Reef Fish Survey to the waters of the Atlantic and Monroe County.

As of July 1, recreational anglers who fish on Florida's east coast for reef fish such as snapper, grouper, amberjack and triggerfish will be required to add a free "reef fish angler" designation to their saltwater fishing licenses.

The designations were not available until July 1, so law enforcement planned to take an educational approach to the requirement at first, FWC spokeswoman Amanda Nalley said.

"We suggest you get it as soon as possible," Nalley said.

The FWC plans to use the system to improve data collection about recreationally caught reef fish. Every month, a group of reef fish anglers will receive a short survey about their fishing trips in the mail.

Any place that sells fishing licenses can add the reef fish angler designation to a license,

## Coastal Seawall Caps

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**Before**

Don't just Raise your Seawall

Transform It into a beautiful rust-free, high performance

Wave Inverting Wall

- Reduce Over Splash • Prevent Erosion
- Protect Landscape • Beautify Existing Seawall
- Prevent Saltwater Damage
- No Rusting or Spalling

\$99 Per LF. or Less

Photos and video online at [www.seawallcaps.com](http://www.seawallcaps.com)

Call for an Appointment 561-827-9356

# Community Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 6/24. Many events are in flux, please check with organizers before making plans to attend.

## JULY 4

**Saturday - 7/4 - July 4th Sand Sculpting Contest** at the beach, A1A & Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach. 2 categories: adult & children. Bring your own tools, Social distancing required. 9-11 am. Free. Registration: mydelraybeach.com  
**7/4-31 - Free Museum Admission** at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real. Presented by PNC Bank. W-Sun 11 am-7 pm. 392-2500; bocamuseum.org

## JULY 5-11

**Sunday - 7/5 - Concert: Delray String Quartet Goes to Vienna** part of Music at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 188 S Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. 2:30 pm pre-concert lecture; 3 pm concert. \$20/adult; free/age 18 & under. 276-4541; music.stpaulsdelray.org  
**7/5 - Bob Carter & Kelly Dennehy's AWRC Sunday Evening Master Class** presented by Actor's Rep Theatre, 1000 N Dixie Hwy, West Palm Beach. For those currently working in the industry, those returning to class after a period of separation, those just beginning. Audition material, monologues, scenes, speech/diction, organic movement for the actor, developing a strong relationship w/voice, script analysis, scene breakdowns, concentrating on stage and film (TV). Online through Zoom; by invitation only, requires instructor approval. 5:30-8:30 pm. \$20 per class. Call to arrange interview/audition: 301-2588; bobcarter@actorsrep.org  
**Monday - 7/6 - Introduction to Directing Class for Adults** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 18+. Every M through 7/27 6-7:30 pm. \$150/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org  
**Tuesday - 7/7 - FX Makeup 101 Class for Adults** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 18+. Every T through 7/28 6-7:30 pm. \$150/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org  
**Wednesday - 7/8 - Virtual Video Editing with Adobe Premiere Pro** presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 2 pm. Free. Registration: 266-0196; delraylibrary.org  
**7/8 - League of Women Voters: Conversations on Covid.** Interactive ZOOM video session hosted by LWVPC President Ken Thomas w/Brent Schillinger MD, co-chair Healthcare Committee. Learn first hand how the Coronavirus is affecting our local community, what's up with testing, what we can expect in the weeks to come, what we need to do to increase the odds that we will survive in one piece. Focus on both physical and emotional components of the pandemic. Join Zoom meeting no sooner than 5:50 pm via link; 6-7 pm. Free. 968-4123; lwvpc.org/event/conversations-on-COVID-11  
**7/8 - Audition Intensive Class for Adults** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 18+. Every W through 7/29 6-7:30 pm. \$150/session.

586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org  
**Thursday - 7/9 - Musical Theatre Jazz Class for Adults** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 18+. Every Th through 7/30 6-7:30 pm. \$150/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org  
**Friday - 7/10 - Tap Class for Adults** at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 18+. Every F through 7/31 6-7:30 pm. \$150/session. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org  
**Saturday - 7/11 - Writers Zoom Workshop: From Inspiration to Paper** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Marcia King-Gamble. 10 am-noon. \$25. Registration: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

## JULY 12-18

**Sunday - 7/12 - The Sunday Sleuths Book Group Zoom Meeting: Nine Pre-Construct Strangers** by Liane Moriarty at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. 3 pm. Free. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com  
**7/12-19 - USTA Boys' 16s & 18s National Clay Court Championships** at Delray Beach Tennis Center, 201 W Atlantic Ave; The Club at Boca Pointe, 7144 Boca Pointe Dr, Boca Raton; Seven Bridges Tennis Center, 16701 Cabernet Dr, Delray Beach; Broken Sound Country Club, 2401 Willow Springs Dr, Boca Raton; Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Dr. Over 440 top-ranked players in singles & doubles play. Matches begin daily 8 am. Spectator admission free. Schedules/draw information: 330-6000; yellowtennisball.com/nationalclays  
**Wednesday - 7/15 - League of Women Voters Hot Topic Luncheon: Voting Rights in South Florida** at Atlantis Country Club, 190 Atlantis Blvd. Speaker Kelly James, Director, Florida Blue Center for Health Policy. 11 am doors open; 11:30 am lunch/program. \$25-\$35. RSVP: 968-4123; lwvpc.org  
**7/15 - Virtual Online Portfolios with Wix** presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 2 pm. Free. Registration: 266-0196; delraylibrary.org  
**Saturday - 7/18 - Writers Zoom Workshop: Great Beginnings** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Hank Phillippi Ryan. 10 am-noon. \$25. Registration: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com  
**7/18 - A Taste of League hosted by League of Women Voters Palm Beach County.** Zoom event for new members, others interested in the League. 10:30-11:30 am. Free. Register: 852-0496; dkostrub@aol.com

## JULY 19-25

**Sunday - 7/19 - German Beerfest** at American German Club of the Palm Beaches, 5111 Lantana Rd, Lake Worth. Noon-5:30 pm. \$25/all-inclusive for guests 21+; \$10/age 13-20; \$6/age 6-12; free/child 5 & under. 967-6464; americangermanclub.org

# Municipal Meetings

**7/6 & 8/3 - Ocean Ridge** - First Monday at Ocean Ridge Town Hall, 6450 N Ocean Blvd. 6 pm. Agenda: oceanridgeflorida.com  
**7/7 & 21, 8/4 & 18 - Highland Beach** - First Tuesday at Highland Beach Town Hall, 3614 S Ocean Blvd. 1:30 pm. Agenda: highlandbeach.us  
**7/7 & 21, 8/4 & 18, 9/1 - Delray Beach** - First & third Tuesdays at Delray Beach City Hall, 100 NW 1st Ave. 4 pm. Agenda: delraybeachfl.gov  
**7/7 & 21, 8/4 & 18, 9/1 - Boynton Beach** - First and third Tuesday at Boynton Beach City Hall, 100 E Ocean Ave. 5:30 pm. Agenda: boynton-beach.org.  
**7/10 & 8/14 - Gulf Stream** - Second Friday at Gulf Stream Town Hall, 100 Sea Rd. 9 am. Agenda: gulf-stream.org  
**7/13 & 27, 8/10 & 24 - Lantana** - Second & fourth Mondays at Lantana Town Hall, 500 Greynolds Cir. 7 pm. Agenda: lantana.org.  
**7/14 & 8/11 - South Palm Beach** - Second Tuesday at the South Palm Beach Town Hall, 3577 S Ocean Blvd. 4 pm. Agenda: southpalmbeach.com  
**7/23 & 8/27 - Briny Breezes** - Fourth Thursday at Briny Breezes Town Hall, 4802 N Ocean Blvd. 4 pm. Agenda: townofbrinybreezes-fl.com  
**7/28, 8/25 - Boca Raton** - Second & fourth Tuesday at Boca Raton City Hall, 201 W Palmetto Park Rd. 6 pm. Agenda: myboca.us.  
**7/28 & 8/25 - Manalapan** - Fourth Tuesday at Manalapan Town Hall, 600 S Ocean Blvd. 10 am. Agenda: manalapan.org

NOTE: Please check with municipality for information regarding streaming/archiving of meetings.

**Wednesday - 7/22 - Virtual Logo Design with Adobe Illustrator** presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 2 pm. Free. Registration: 266-0196; delraylibrary.org  
**Saturday - 7/25 - Writers Zoom Workshop: Mastering Plot Twists** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Jane Cleland. 10 am-noon. \$25. Pre-registration required: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

## JULY 26-AUGUST 1

**Tuesday - 7/28 - Friends Virtual Book Club: The Book of Lost Friends** by Lisa Wingate presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Email book club moderators at DTLbookclub@bocalibraryfriends.org for Zoom link information. Adults. 10:30 am. Free. 393-7968; bocalibrary.org  
**Friday - 7/31 - Boca Chamber's 50th Annual Golf Classic** at Boca Raton Resort & Club, 501 E Camino Real. 7 am registration; 8:30 am shotgun start; 12:30 pm lunch; 1:30 pm awards reception. \$200/player; \$800/foursome; \$40/lunch only. 392-3780; bocachamber.com  
**Saturday - 8/1 - Writers Zoom Workshop: Fingerprints: How Do They Really Work?** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Lisa Black. 10 am-noon. \$25. Pre-registration required: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

## AUGUST 2-AUGUST 8

**Saturday - 8/8 - Writers Zoom Workshop: How To Write A Story** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor John Dufresne. 10 am-noon. \$35/includes copy of the book *Storyville: An Illustrated Guide to Writing Fiction*. Pre-registration required: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

## AUGUST 9-15

**Friday - 8/14-15 - 7th Annual Delray Beach Retailers Summer Sale** at the Seagate Hotel & Spa, 1000 E Atlantic Ave. 10 am-5 pm. Free admission. 665-4940; seagatehotel.com  
**Saturday - 8/15 - Writers Zoom Workshop: Conflict** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Debra H. Goldstein. 10 am-noon. \$25. Pre-registration required: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

## AUGUST 16-22

**Sunday - 8/16 - German Beerfest** at American German Club of the Palm Beaches, 5111 Lantana Rd, Lake Worth. Noon-5:30 pm. \$25/all-inclusive for guests 21+; \$10/age 13-20; \$6/age 6-12; free/child 5 & under. 967-6464; americangermanclub.org  
**Wednesday - 8/19 - League of Women Voters Hot Topic Luncheon** at Atlantis Country Club, 190 Atlantis Blvd. Speaker Kelly James, Director, Florida Blue Center for Health Policy. 11 am doors open; 11:30 am lunch/program. \$25-\$35. RSVP: 968-4123; lwvpc.org  
**Thursday - 8/20 - Free Museum Admission** at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real. Presented by PNC Bank. 3rd Th 5-8 pm. 392-2500; bocamuseum.org  
**8/20 - Artists Guild Gallery Opening Reception** at Artists' Guild Gallery, 2910 N Federal Hwy, Boca Raton. Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments. 6-8 pm. Free. 278-7877; bocaguild.com  
**Saturday - 8/22 - Writers Zoom Workshop: Building Memorable Characters** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Reed Farrel Coleman. 10 am-noon. \$25. Pre-registration required: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com  
**8/22-24 - Annual USTA Summer Smash**

**Boys Sectional Championship Tennis Tournament** at Delray Beach Tennis Center, 201 W Atlantic Ave. One of the largest USTA amateur tournaments in Florida; more than 400 players in the Boys 12s, 14s, 16s and 18s divisions. Hosted by City of Delray Beach. Boys 14s Match Sites: Broken Sound Country Club, 2401 Willow Springs Dr, Boca Raton & Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Dr. Boys 12s Match Sites: The Polo Club Boca Raton, 5400 Champion Blvd & Delray Beach Tennis Center. Boys 16s Match Sites: Delray Beach Tennis Center & Delray Swim & Tennis Club, 2350 Jaeger Dr. Boys 18s Match Sites: Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Dr. Back-up sites for weather issues Delray Beach Tennis Center & Seven Bridges Tennis Center, 16701 Cabernet Dr, Delray Beach. Matches begin daily 8:15 am. Spectator admission free. 330-6003; yellowtennisball.com/summersmash

## AUGUST 23-29

**Monday - 8/24 - Little by Edward Carey** part of Afternoon Book Group at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 1 pm. Free. 266-0196; delraylibrary.org  
**Tuesday - 8/25 - Friends Virtual Book Club: American Dirt** by Jeanine Cummins presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Email book club moderators at DTLbookclub@bocalibraryfriends.org for Zoom link information. Adults. 10:30 am. Free. 393-7968; bocalibrary.org  
**Saturday - 8/29 - Writers Zoom Workshop: Self-Publishing: The Perils, Pitfalls And Profits Of Self-Publishing (Plus The Fun)** part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Paul Levine. 10 am-noon. \$25. Registration: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com  
**8/29-31 - Annual USTA Summer Smash Girls Sectional Championship Tennis Tournament** at Delray Beach Tennis Center, 201 W Atlantic Ave. One of the largest USTA amateur tournaments in Florida; more than 400 players in the Girls 12s, 14s, 16s and 18s divisions. Hosted by City of Delray Beach. Girls 12s Match Sites: Delray Beach Tennis Center & Delray Swim & Tennis Club, 2350 Jaeger Dr. Girls 14s Match Sites: The Polo Club Boca Raton, 5400 Champion Blvd & Delray Swim & Tennis Club, 2350 Jaeger Dr. Girls 16s Match Sites: Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Dr. Girls 18s Match Sites: Broken Sound Country Club, 2401 Willow Springs Dr, Boca Raton & Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Dr. Back-up site for weather issues Delray Beach Tennis Center. Matches begin daily 8:15 am. Spectator admission free. 330-6003; yellowtennisball.com/summersmash

## AUGUST 30-SEPT. 5

**Tuesday - 9/1 - Socrates Café** at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Philosophical discussions. 1:30-3 pm. Free. 393-7852; bocalibrary.org

including the phone-based system, 888-347-4356, or the online fishing license portal, www.gooutdoorsflorida.com.

### Restrictions eased on dive boats, pier anglers

Palm Beach County eased coronavirus-related restrictions slightly on operators of commercial dive boats and on pier fishing.

Effective June 11, county officials amended earlier restrictions to allow dive boats to operate with the same capacity as other recreational commercial boats, meaning they must comply with CDC social distancing guidelines.

Restrooms on commercial recreational boats must post CDC guidelines and offer soap, water and/or hand sanitizer for patrons.

Operators also must mark seating areas with tape to separate passengers by at least 6 feet.

All boaters still must maintain social distancing. Boats still must remain at least 50 feet apart and cannot raft up or engage in other activities that result in gatherings of 10 or more people.

A previous restriction that required dive shops to fill tanks by appointment and deliver tanks curbside has been lifted.

Anglers at fishing piers must stay 6 feet apart under the updated order. A previous order required pier anglers to stay 10 feet apart.

Details on the latest emergency order can be found at www.pbcgov.org.

### Coming events

**July 11:** Second leg of West Palm Beach Fishing Club's Full Moon Wahoo Tournament Series. (Third leg set for Aug. 1.) Entry fee \$60 per boat. Catches must be verified on video. Weigh fish 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 6 to 9 p.m. at Sailfish Marina in Palm Beach Shores. Each team must include at

least one fishing club member. Entry fee \$60. Call 561-309-1397 or register at www.westpalmbeachfishingclub.org.

**July 11:** Big Dog & Fat Cat KDW Shootout fishing tournament is planned, based at Sailfish Marina in Palm Beach Shores. Captain's meeting July 10 at Sailfish Marina. Entry fee \$200 per boat through July 6 or \$250 thereafter. Details: www.bigdogfatcat.org.

### Tip of the month

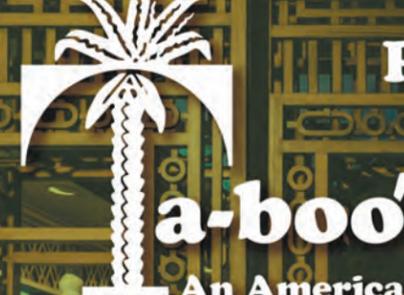
Summer is nesting time for shorebirds and seabirds. They often nest on mangrove islands and other relatively quiet beaches. Boaters and

beach-goers can do their part by staying at least 300 feet away from posted nesting areas and trying not to disturb nesting birds, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission advises.

If birds become agitated or leave their nests, you're too close. Birds calling loudly or dive bombing are signs that you should back off.



Willie Howard is a freelance writer and licensed boat captain. Reach him at tiowillie@bellsouth.net.



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- » Sold for \$13.9M
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- » 136' of Private Waterfront
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- » Built-In Grill, Custom Pool with Hot Tub + Spa
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- » McCormick Mile Beach Club Membership



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MEDITERRANEAN WATERFRONT ESTATE  
6 BR | 7.2 BA | 12,460 SF | \$7.985M



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MODERN WATERFRONT NEW CONSTRUCTION  
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