

Delray Beach

Sediment in drinking water was linked to neglected maintenance

By Rich Pollack and Jane Smith

One morning in late March residents throughout a large portion of Delray Beach woke up to find water coming out of their taps that just wasn't right. Some complained of a

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Utilities director praises fixes to reclaimed water system.
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yellowish or reddish tint to the water while others complained

of a strong odor.

Residents Reeve and Anne Bright noticed that even the ice coming out of their ice maker looked strange.

"There was black and brown stuff, like little pieces of dirt, that came out with it," Reeve Bright said.

Concerned, the Brights threw away the ice. They now suspect the discoloration may have been the result of a series of system failures at Delray Beach's water treatment facilities that resulted in what the industry refers to as a "slug" getting into the city water lines.

A "slug" is sediment that gathers at the bottom of storage tanks and is unintentionally released. It does not generally pose a health threat to those using the water, according to people in the water treatment industry.

See **WATER** on page 27

Reflections from the front line

This Labor Day, essential workers reveal how their jobs have changed to meet the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. These are the folks who protect us from fires, comfort our souls, teach our children, deliver food and mail, and treat those who have fallen ill to COVID-19.

Meet them, Pages 20-21

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Overdose deaths double during pandemic. Page 22



Kindergarten teacher Julie O'Brien, the Rev. D. Brian Horgan, Dr. Bill Benda, Battalion Chief Kevin Saxton, restaurant manager Sue Brown, postal clerk Valerie Jacoby and Shipt shopper Michael Varesio. Seven photos shot individually at a COVID-19 safe distance and assembled into this composite by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Delray Beach

Feds accuse doctor of \$681 million fraud in substance abuse treatment billings

By Larry Keller

Coastal Delray Beach osteopathic doctor Michael Ligotti was a man in whom investigators had long been interested as they probed fraudulent practices in one of Palm Beach County's largest industries — substance abuse

treatment centers.

Numerous people have been charged and sentenced in recent years in connection with abuses at halfway houses — or sober homes — including medical insurance scams. Now some of them have turned on Ligotti.

The doctor was arrested at home in

late July. The U.S. Justice Department charged him with conspiracy to commit health care fraud and wire fraud — fraudulently billing private insurance companies and Medicare of around \$681 million, for which they paid \$121 million over a span of nine years. His attorney said Ligotti "looks forward to

establishing his innocence."

A federal judge Sept. 1 in West Palm Beach conducted a preliminary hearing and concluded that the government's evidence established probable cause for the case to move forward.

Ligotti, 46, is free on a \$1.5 million

See **DOCTOR** on page 10

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Developers pitch mixed-use downtown Boynton project. Page 28

\$98,000 in grants Lantana praises work of new librarian. Page 19

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Send letters, opinions and news tips to news@thecoastalstar.com

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Editor's Note

Bee sting spurs renewed thanks to essential workers

I stepped on a bee. A tiny, industrious bee. This stinging encounter — on the beach, of all places — put me into bed for a day with a purple, swollen foot iced-down and elevated on a pillow.

The bee died, of course, so obviously its experience was worse than mine. In my case, Benadryl cream worked wonders, and I was back on my feet the following day. I didn't even miss a day at work, but it got me thinking:

What if I couldn't wear flip-flops to the office, but instead had to pull on steel-toed work boots, or lace up foam-soled nurses' shoes or slog through damp places in rubber waders?

What if I didn't get paid if I didn't put on that footwear and punch the time-clock?

What if one brief encounter with an angry bee had kept me home for a day and made it difficult to pay the rent or the phone bill or buy groceries? Even one day's pay makes a big difference to people living paycheck-to-paycheck.

And right now, that may

be many more people than we here realize.

As Labor Day comes around, I'm thinking of all the people who put on work shoes, masks and other COVID protection to go to work and allow our community to feel "normal" in very abnormal times.

In this edition, you'll meet some of these hardworking people. In their professions, they see the best of us and the worst — especially during trying times. I am grateful for their efforts to keep us healthy, safe and informed during this unprecedented pandemic.

This Labor Day, as you're making plans for your own long weekend, please pause for a moment and say "thank you" to our neighbors on the front lines.

And if you make it over to the beach, be sure to watch where you step. ...



— Mary Kate Leming,
Editor

Coastal Star

Dancing a challenge for this savvy entrepreneur — but not fundraising

By Mary Thurwachter

Steven E. Bernstein conquered the corporate world a few decades ago. The company he started in 1989 — SBA Communications Corp. — owns and leases communications towers to the cellular and wireless industry.

SBA went public in 1999 at \$9 per share on Nasdaq. Today, the company owns more than 30,000 towers in 12 countries, has more than 1,000 employees, boasts revenues approaching \$2 billion and has a stock price of about \$240 per share.

But how will this savvy Highland Beach businessman — chairman of the board at SBA — fare on the dance floor Sept. 26 as one of eight contestants in the Ballroom Battle, a spinoff of *Dancing With the Stars* that raises money for the George Snow Scholarship Fund? The evening pits eight local dancers and their professional partners against each other for the Mirror Ball trophy, awarded to the top male and female fundraisers.

"I can't dance, have no rhythm and I'm not fond of dancing," the exec admits. "But I'm always up for a challenge and a good cause and I'm dedicated to nailing it."

To that end, Bernstein, 59, rehearses three times a week at the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Boca Raton with his professional dance partner, Sayra Vazquez-Brann.

He is making strides, he says, but it's not easy.

"I find it more of a mental workout than a physical workout because learning the steps and learning the routine and then improving that just takes time," he says. "And when you're not a natural at it, it just seems to take longer. But my instructor is great, and we are breaking it up into pieces and we've gone through the routine. Now we're cleaning it up — meaning having the proper embellishments, the proper hand moves, the proper facial moves."

This year, because of the pandemic, dancers are training while wearing masks.

"When you're dancing and moving and breathing heavy and doing it with a mask on it adds another element," Bernstein says.

Unlike previous years, the event will not be held at the Boca Resort ballroom. Instead, it will be televised live at 7 p.m. Sept. 26 from the WPTV-TV studios, with viewers calling in pledges for their favorite dancers.

Last year's dance-off raised \$650,000.

The whole process has given



Steven Bernstein and instructor Sayra Vazquez-Brann show one of their dance moves. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

Ballroom Battle

What: Eight community leaders compete in a ballroom dance competition paired with professional dancers from Fred Astaire Dance Studios.

When: 7 p.m. Sept. 26

Where: Broadcast on WPTV Ch. 5 and livestreamed on WPTV and George Snow Scholarship Fund websites.

Donations: To financially support to your favorite dancer or purchase raffle tickets, visit scholarship.org/ballroom-battle/ or scholarship.org/ballroom-battle/

Bernstein, who was born in New York, a new respect for dancers. Tennis or golf is more his style.

"Being a dancer is one heck of a sport," he says. "You're an athlete if you're a dancer, but it's so underrated. There's a lot of work to dance. My hat's off to anybody who does dance as a profession."

Dancing is only part of what it takes to win the Ballroom Battle. The other is fundraising, something Bernstein finds much less arduous. By the end of July, he had already collected more than \$70,000 in pledges. His goal is \$100,000 — and he intends to match every dollar

he raises, so if he meets his goal, he'll have amassed an impressive — perhaps record-breaking — \$200,000.

He doesn't really care about winning, he insists, but he does care about giving back to the community, especially children. His foundation, the Steven E. Bernstein Family Foundation, has been the most rewarding part of his journey, he says. He and his daughter Abby run it.

"The philosophy of the foundation is not to just give money where it is needed, but to give of your time," Bernstein says. The foundation has donated to many nonprofit organizations, and Bernstein sits, or has sat, on the boards of several local charities.

Bernstein, who is single, received his bachelor of science degree in business administration with a major in real estate at the University of Florida and has served as an adjunct professor at Lynn University.

The other dancers are Boca Raton attorney Robin Bresky, Dr. Gwensia 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, Kyle Stewart of Wells Fargo and Ross O'Connor, a financial adviser at Morgan Stanley. ★



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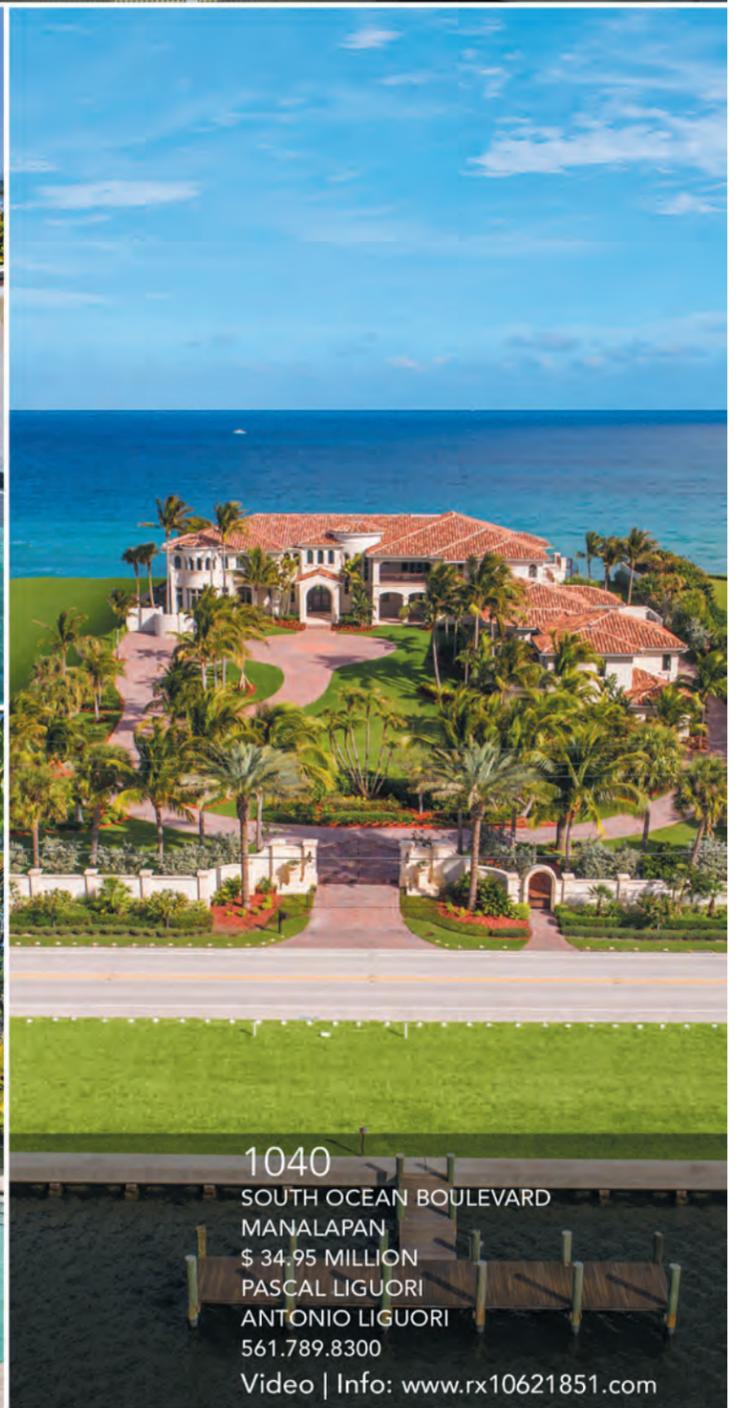
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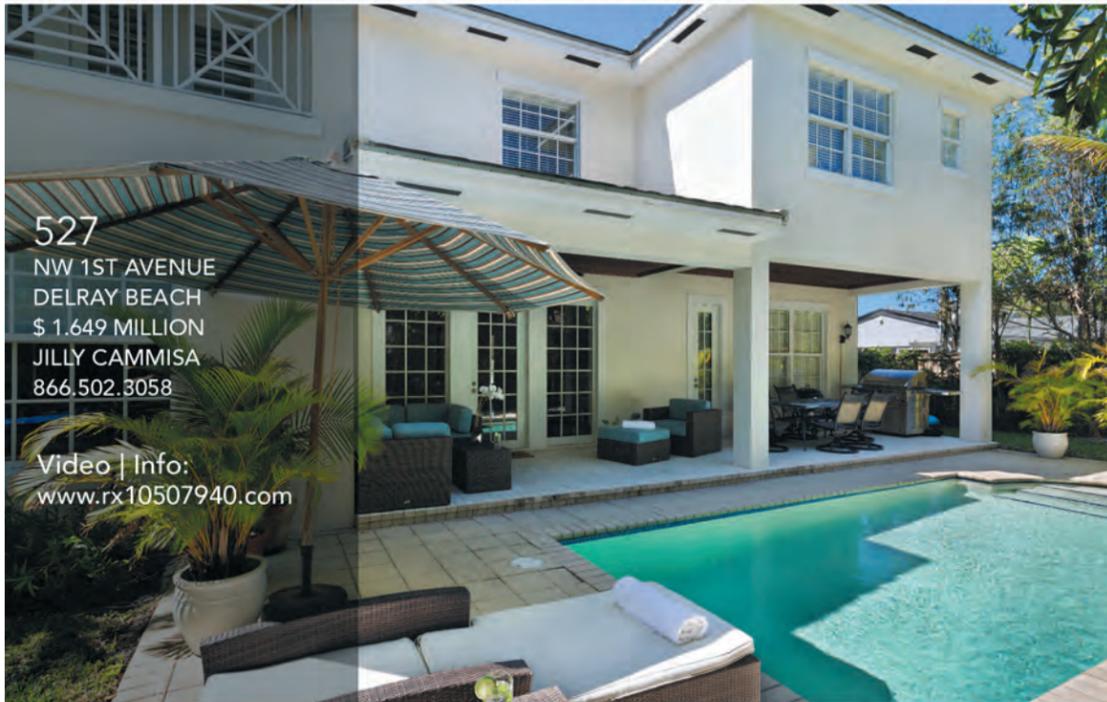


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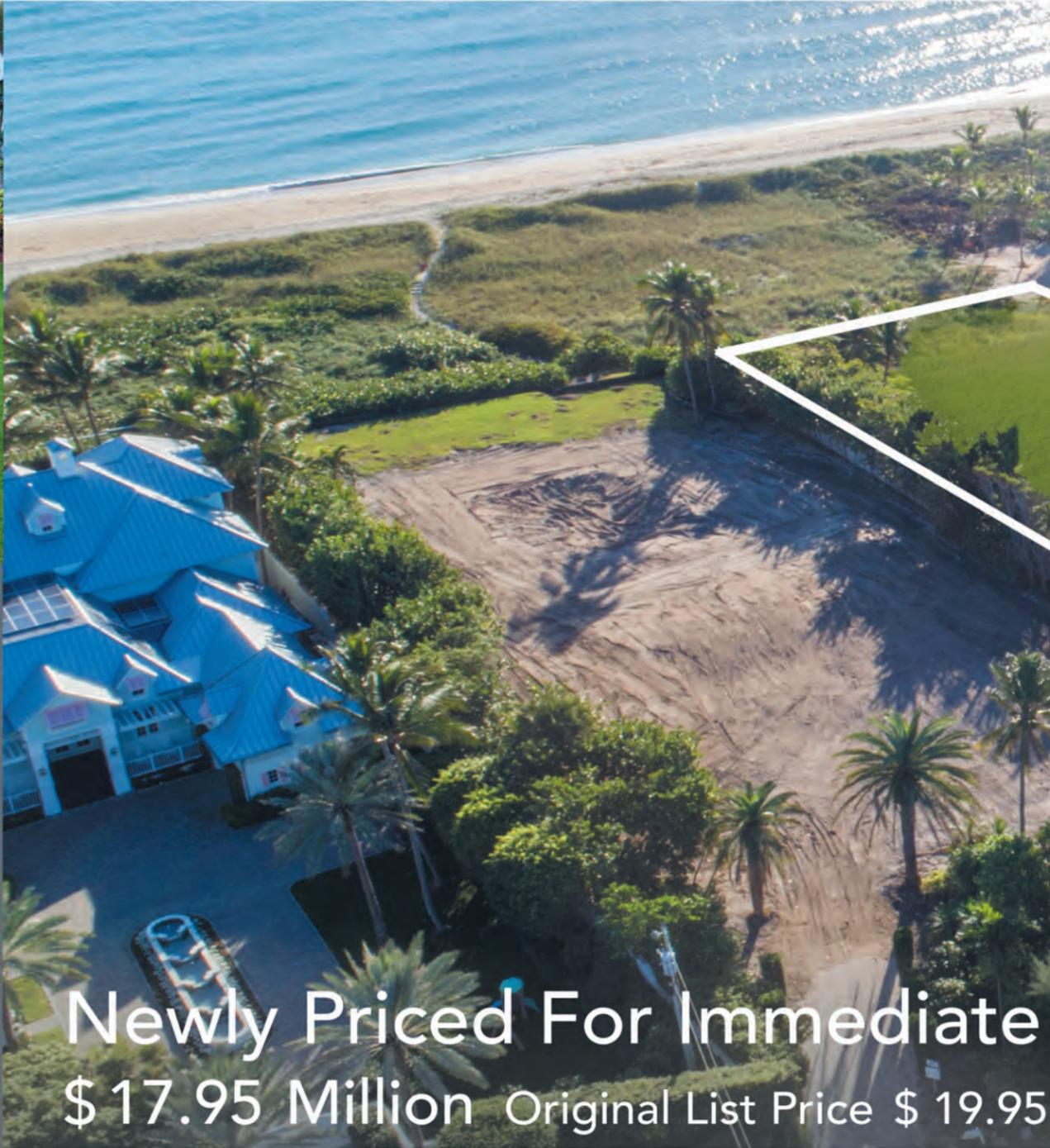
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Ocean Ridge

Town to use aggressive cuts, reserves to erase budget deficit

By Dan Moffett

Several Ocean Ridge commissioners have suggested that this could be the town's most challenging budget year since the Great Recession.

That probably would have been the case even without the COVID-19 pandemic. But with the public health crisis, and the resulting depletion of state and county revenue contributions to the town, the fiscal picture gets more challenging still.

Ocean Ridge finds itself trying to close a \$725,000 hole in the 2020-2021 budget. A resident sent a written question asking Town Manager Tracey Stevens what cuts the commission was looking at making.

Stevens answered with a long list of slashed expenses: travel, training, vehicle maintenance, postage, phone service, office supplies, uniforms, gas, oil,

equipment, holiday event downsizing and yes, even electricity. Employees are mindful to turn off lights when they leave a room.

Ocean Ridge taxpayers do have some hopeful news, however. Stevens said the town could wind up with unspent dollars at the end of this fiscal year: "Stab in the dark, maybe \$300,000, or maybe \$250,000."

That surplus could take a sizable chunk out of next year's shortfall. Also, the town has been fiscally prudent for years. It has general fund assets that exceed committed expenses by about \$5.4 million; in other words, plenty of financial firepower in reserve to easily cover next year's rising costs.

Mayor Kristine de Haseth said one of her goals was to base the level of the town's reserves more on the amount needed for emergency operation, such as disaster response, rather than

adhering to a predetermined percentage of the overall budget. She said the town has made a "herculean" effort to reduce the looming deficit to where it is.

During their July workshop, commissioners agreed to continue the aggressive cost-cutting, keep the millage at last year's \$5.35 per \$1,000 of taxable property value, and cover the shortfall from reserves.

With the town's property values up about 4.26%, the proposed millage maximum is well above the rollback rate of \$5.17 that would hold taxes flat year-over-year. The first public budget hearing is Sept. 8 at 5:01 p.m.

The increased expenses the town faces include:

- A proposed \$395,000 for legal services, up about \$250,000 or 172% over last year, largely because of civil litigation against Ocean Ridge and revisions to the town's charter and codes.

- A proposed increase of about \$127,000 or 3% over last year for police and fire-rescue services, caused by incremental hikes in contracts with Boynton Beach and the police union.

- A salary increase of about \$26,000 for town administration, including a pay raise for the manager, who transitioned from an interim position to permanent status.

- About \$45,000 in new costs for stormwater drainage improvements, landscaping and pest control, an increase of about 10% over last year.

In other business:

Ocean Ridge voters made a strong statement in the Florida primary on Aug. 18 that they like their town's Police Department and aren't in the market for mergers with outside agencies.

By an overwhelming margin, 87% to 13%, voters approved a

charter amendment that makes it considerably more difficult to change the department's independent makeup.

The new law requires a ballot referendum to approve a merger, and it requires a four-vote supermajority of the Town Commission to put the issue on the ballot in the first place.

"I'm delighted," de Haseth said. "I totally support the voters having a voice in what happens to their Police Department."

Turnout was relatively high as 567 residents voted, or 34%, compared with 26.5% overall in Palm Beach County.

- Town officials have spent weeks studying and debating what to do about code violators — in particular, residents who don't cut back their coconut trees before storm season. Dozens of the trees are in violation, officials say, and many encroach on the town's rights of way.

After a lengthy debate on Aug. 3, the commission unanimously voted to approve the second reading of an ordinance mandating coconut tree maintenance. However, commissioners also decided not to send violators to a magistrate hearing until staff develops a tiered plan for code enforcement penalties.

- In July, the town hired Durrani Guy, 45, as its new building official, replacing Wayne Cameron, who resigned to take a similar position in North Palm Beach.

Guy comes to Ocean Ridge from C.A.P. Government, the building services company that works for numerous South Florida municipalities. Guy has an associate's degree in building environment from the Caribbean School of Architecture and two decades' experience in the construction industry. Guy will earn \$89,250 annually. ★

Letter to the Editor

Australian pines are invasive, not historic

In your recent edition, *The Coastal Star* stated about a Gulf Stream issue of AT&T requesting more funds to preserve "the historic Australian pines" roots due to construction work.

The Australian pine is an invasive species that needs to be eradicated, not designated as historical.

This tree hugger living in Boynton Beach directly west of said history watches evolution bring more and more pines that now line the FEC tracks — much like the Burmese python in the Everglades heading east!

Christopher Utkus
Boynton Beach



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South Palm Beach

Council seeks to take bigger role during town emergencies

By Dan Moffett

In March, South Palm Beach voters overwhelmingly approved a charter amendment that gave the mayor the power to declare emergencies.

When the Town Council debated putting the referendum on the ballot late last year, the thinking was the charter change would allow town officials the latitude to react quickly to natural disasters — hurricanes, in particular.

No one saw the COVID-19 pandemic coming, however.

Now the council is poised to take a second look at the measure to see how to adapt it to deal with a broader range of emergencies beyond storms.

"It has to be reshaped and discussed," Vice Mayor Robert Gottlieb said during the council's meeting on Aug. 11.

"We don't want to rescind it," said Mayor Bonnie Fischer. "We want to revise and rewrite it."

Councilman Ray McMillan, who won his seat in the March election, has complained that the mayor's declaration of emergency has resulted in transferring too much power to the town manager.

Fischer declared a state of

emergency shortly after the election because of COVID-19. The council approved it in a resolution that gave the manager the authority to suspend town meetings and activities, reschedule events and close Town Hall, until the mayor declares the emergency ended.

"One person has a whole lot of power," McMillan said of the manager.

"And I have used the power very judiciously," said Manager Robert Kellogg, who told the council he wouldn't hesitate to "shut down Town Hall for the safety of the staff" again.

The mayor said the council should have a role in making decisions related to emergencies, and the language in the charter change doesn't cover this.

"We need to provide some oversight," Fischer said. "I don't think we're serving the town's people if we have one person managing every aspect of the town."

Town Attorney Glen Torcivia told the council he would look at possible revisions that might give the council more control and make emergency declarations flexible enough to deal with potentially long-running crises, such as the

pandemic may be. The council expects to discuss the issue again at its regular meeting on Sept. 8.

In other business, council members, during budget workshops this summer, had approved setting the 2020-2021 tentative tax rate at last year's level of \$3.59 per \$1,000 of taxable property value.

But that could change.

Gottlieb says he wants to push the rate lower and give taxpayers a break. "I'm in favor of a millage reduction as we have done in previous years," the vice mayor said.

The council scheduled its first public budget hearing at 5:01 p.m. on Sept. 8. By law council members can reduce the proposed \$3.59 millage between now and the beginning of the new fiscal year but cannot increase it.

Taxable values are up 22% in South Palm Beach, more than any other established municipality in Palm Beach County, thanks largely to the opening of 3550 South Ocean Boulevard, a \$72 million luxury condo building.

The council has lowered the town's tax rate in each of the last four years, Gottlieb said. ★

Along the Coast

Judges give 16 awards to 'Coastal Star' contributors

The Coastal Star brought home top honors in breaking news, local government reporting, sports photography and sports coverage in this year's Weekly Newspaper Contest sponsored by the Florida Press Association.

The newspaper also collected five second-place awards and seven third-place awards.

First-place trophies went to the staff and Ron Hayes in the breaking news story category for Hurricane Dorian coverage; to Jane Smith and Rich Pollack in local government reporting for their work on Delray Beach city managers; to Publisher Jerry Lower in the sports photo category for a surfing image; and to Willie Howard and Brian Biggane in the sports page or section category for stories on the outdoors, a college baseball player from Ocean Ridge and tennis in Delray Beach, including teenage phenom Cori "Coco" Gauff.

Coming in second place were: Tracy Allerton, page design; Rachel O'Hara, feature photo; Rich Pollack, Mary Thurwachter and Arden Moore, best obituary; Cheryl Blackerby, agricultural and environmental reporting; and Jan Engoren, arts, entertainment and review.

In third place were: staff, overall graphic design; Tim Stepien, portfolio photography; Mary Hladky and Jane Smith, business reporting; Charles Elmore, roads and transportation; Gretel Sarmiento, arts, entertainment and review; Rich Pollack, in-depth reporting (non-investigative); and Executive Editor Mary Kate Leming, serious column.

The Tallahassee-based press association announced the awards on July 31. *The Coastal Star* competed in Division A for the state's largest weekly and monthly newspapers with a circulation of more than 13,000.

— Steve Plunkett

The next edition of *The Coastal Star* will be delivered the weekend of Oct. 30

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Along the Coast

Census response rates lag with a month remaining

By Charles Elmore

With a sped-up 2020 U.S. Census deadline fast approaching Sept. 30, 11 towns and cities along Palm Beach County's southern coast risk what one mayor calls a "10-year hurt" as their response rates lag behind U.S. and Florida averages.

As of Aug. 23, response rates ranged as low as 42.4% for households in South Palm Beach, with Ocean Ridge and Highland Beach also under 50% and all 11 trailing Florida's average of 60.9%, federal records

More info

Check census response rates in your town: <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>
A statement about why census deadlines were moved one month earlier: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/delivering-complete-accurate-count.html>

showed. The U.S. average was 64.2%.

Lantana stood at 52.5%. Its lowest response levels came in

the town's easternmost census tract in its Hypoluxo Island neighborhood, where the rate was 41.4%.

The response snapshot can change with each passing day, but the stakes do not. Hanging in the balance is funding estimated at \$1,600 lost annually for each person missed, for roads, schools, environmental and other programs, not to mention Florida's chances to gain more seats in Congress. The effects last for a decade.

Lantana Mayor Dave Stewart had a message in an Aug. 24 meeting for any residents who have not acted because they don't care or think it is not important.

"It's going to hurt bad," Stewart said. "It is a 10-year hurt, that's what people don't understand. We're stuck with those numbers for 10 years."

Among other enticements, Lantana is raffling off a 65-inch TV for residents who show proof of responding to the census.

"Our message to residents is RESPOND NOW," Nicole Dritz, Lantana's development services director, said in an email. "Don't wait for the Sept. 30th deadline. If our residents respond now to the census, it will yield a favorable response rate for the town."

A federal review concluded about 94,000 people who should have been counted in Palm Beach County, or 7.2% of its population, failed to make it on census rolls in 2010.

In an eventful 2020, it's not immediately clear to local officials how much about the response rates can be explained by disruptions related to COVID-19, or seasonal residents who wound up in other places during the pandemic, or immigrants wary of being counted, or residents who are here but just forgot or did not bother.

"It's hard to say at this time what impact COVID-19 will have on the reporting since everyone is trying to navigate these new waters," Dritz said.

As of Aug. 23, Boca Raton showed a 60.8% response rate, within an eyelash of the state average.

"As a city we're not lagging, but I'd prefer we be leading," Mayor Scott Singer said. "That's why the city has continued to communicate the importance of responding. It takes a minute online and will avoid the need for enumerators to visit your home."

The 2020 census marks the first to allow wide-scale responses online as well as by mail or phone, but that had not raised overall participation rates by late August in southern Palm Beach County.

Things got even more urgent when the Census Bureau moved up the deadline for all self-responses as well as field visits by census workers to the end of September, a month earlier than previously announced.

"We will improve the

speed of our count without sacrificing completeness," U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham said in a statement Aug. 3. "Under this plan, the Census Bureau intends to meet a similar level of household responses as collected in prior censuses, including outreach to hard-to-count communities."

U.S. Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer questioned why officials were "rushing the census count in the middle of a pandemic" and called for an investigation into possible political pressure from the Trump administration. At a national level, Democrats have expressed concern that immigrants, lower-income residents and others might get undercounted on a faster timetable. At least one lawsuit by a coalition of urban groups has sought to extend the deadline.

But in South Florida this year, relatively affluent coastal communities are also struggling to reach their 2010 response rates.

Highland Beach, for example, showed a 45.6% response rate by Aug. 23, compared to 49.8% in 2010, according to 2020census.gov.

Census officials did not respond to requests to discuss how well they have met local hiring goals for workers to check on non-responsive households, or whether any problems have occurred with handling responses online.

An oversight report prepared for Congress in February noted the Census Bureau had, fairly late in the process, changed to a backup online system after the first one struggled with high-volume testing.

Whatever the reasons, response rates in the region have lagged.

With little more than a month to go, Delray Beach (51.8%) trailed its final 2010 response rate (61.3%) by nearly 10 points.

There's still time to change the numbers and things could look different as September unfolds.

But as of Aug. 23, Briny Breezes (54.2%), Boynton Beach (58.7%), Gulf Stream (54.2%), Hypoluxo (50.9%), Manalapan (50.2%), and Ocean Ridge (48.2%) had yet to match their final 2010 self-response rates. ★

Mary Thurwachter and Mary Hladky contributed to this story.

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Gulf Stream

Consultants price new sewer system at \$11 million-plus

By Steve Plunkett

Building a municipal sewer system will cost the town at least \$11.2 million, Gulf Stream's engineering consultants say.

But the price does not include roughly \$5 million to take over about 250 privately owned low-pressure "grinder pump basins" that now service the town's core district, said Jockey Prinyavivatkul, the project manager at Baxter and Woodman Consulting Engineers.

Those pumps send sewage to Boynton Beach for treatment via a 10-inch force main under

the Intracoastal. In Baxter and Woodman's plan, the 10-inch main would be upgraded to also handle waste from the area east of State Road A1A from the Gulf Stream Golf Club to Sea Road.

Sewage from the south part of the town and from Place Au Soleil would be treated by Delray Beach under the plan.

The new townwide system would also need approximately 35,000 linear feet of low-pressure mains, 2,000 linear feet of force mains and pump upgrades at three lift stations in Delray Beach.

Baxter and Woodman also looked at installing a gravity

sewer system — the most common type but in Gulf Stream's case also the most expensive — and a vacuum system that would have required three vacuum pump stations each the size of a small house.

"Imagine a 2,000-square-foot home with a basement, OK? So this is significant," Prinyavivatkul said.

Town commissioners made no decision at their Aug. 14 meeting on how to proceed with a sewer project. But Commissioner Paul Lyons asked whether the work could be done at the same time roads are being rebuilt and was assured that it

was possible.

Gulf Stream is in its second year of a 10-year, \$10 million capital improvement plan for streets and water pipes — and now is installing a new water main along the northern part of A1A.

In other business:

• The town will put "No Parking" signs at the western end of Golfview Drive to deter people from hopping over the guardrail to fish in the Intracoastal Waterway. "It's not constructed to have safe fishing like that in that area. I mean there's huge boulders and rocks there," Town Manager Greg

Dunham said.

• Gulf Stream will again hire Nowlen, Holt and Miner as its outside auditor. The firm has audited the town since 2000, and state law required that the contract go out to bid again after 20 years. Lyons, Manalapan Town Manager Linda Stumpf and Ocean Ridge Town Manager Tracey Stevens made up the auditor selection committee and reviewed two bids. The county Office of Inspector General scolded Gulf Stream in 2018 for renewing Nowlen, Holt's contract four times without competitive bidding. ★

Police take warnings of car thefts door to door

By Steve Plunkett

Prompted in part by a wave of car thefts, the town will soon hire an additional police officer to combat crime.

Police Chief Edward Allen reported two cases of grand theft auto at the Town Commission's July meeting. At the August meeting he said one had been recovered but three more were stolen, making a total of eight this year. Two other vehicles were burglarized.

"We've gone door to door really, requesting people, reminding them to be safe and remove their belongings and lock their cars," Allen said. Mayor Scott Morgan aimed some "finger-wagging" at residents who leave keys in their vehicles or leave them running or with doors open. Most late-model cars come with key fobs that make starting easy, he said.

"You leave it in the car — all you have to do is depress the brake and push a button and off they go," the mayor said. "We find them driving down the road, we catch them on the cameras either north or south. But there's nothing you can do after that point but locate the car at some point."

Last year Gulf Stream had only one automobile stolen and in 2018 none, Morgan said.

The budget for fiscal 2021, which starts Oct. 1, includes \$88,812 in salary and benefits for the new officer. The addition will allow three cruisers to be on patrol at the same time instead of two.

"That's a 50% increase in coverage in our town," Morgan said.

Commissioners also

approved spending \$28,058 from this year's budget for 12 body cameras for its police force. Last year they set aside \$25,000 to replace aging in-car cameras, but Allen and Town Manager Greg Dunham decided body cameras were more beneficial.

"With a car camera, if you do like a traffic stop and you step 2 feet out of the range, you're out of the picture, you have no more picture at all," Allen said. A body camera "stays with the person."

Commissioners also set a tentative tax rate for the coming fiscal year at the rollback rate, \$3.76 per \$1,000 of taxable value. It was the fifth year in a row they have set taxes either at or below the rollback rate. The levy will generate \$4.6 million for town operations, the same amount as the current fiscal year.

Big-ticket items include \$200,000 for "smart" water meters and \$200,778 for planning road and drainage work in the north Core area, part of the 10-year capital improvement plan. Virtual public hearings on the 2020-2021 budget will be at 5:01 p.m. on Sept. 11 and Sept. 22.

In other business, commissioners learned that the new water main on State Road A1A from Golfview Drive to Sea Road would need to go under the southbound lane instead of next to the highway. The area between the road and Gulf Stream's Australian pines was too crowded with other utilities, their engineering consultant said. The entire lane will be resurfaced as part of the project. ★

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DOCTOR

Continued from page 1

bond that requires him to be electronically monitored, observe a 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. curfew and surrender any passports.

He has shuttered his medical practice, Whole Health, at 402 SE 6th Ave. One of his homes and the medical building are for sale. A second home was recently taken off the market.

Investigators also executed a search warrant for computer hard drives, financial records, patient files and numerous other documents from Ligotti's office, as well as for his cellphone.

While he has not been charged in connection with any patients' deaths, Ligotti also recklessly prescribed 265,000 pills of buprenorphine to more than 2,800 patients, investigators say. A dozen of those patients died while still receiving the drug, and he repeatedly prescribed drugs to more patients than his license permitted, investigators contend.

Buprenorphine is an opioid approved for suppressing withdrawal symptoms and blocking the effects of other opioids. Like other opioids, it is addictive and can be misused.

"What we're investigating is culpability and responsibility," FBI special agent William Stewart testified at the daylong preliminary hearing.

Ligotti's attorney, Ben Curtis, said in a written statement before the hearing: "As is always the case with any criminal matter, the burden of proof rests entirely with the government. And in this instance, we do not believe the U.S. Department of Justice's claims — and that is exactly what they are at this point, just one-sided claims — will reconcile with actual evidence at a future trial.

"Dr. Ligotti thus looks forward to establishing his innocence."

FBI cites years of abuse

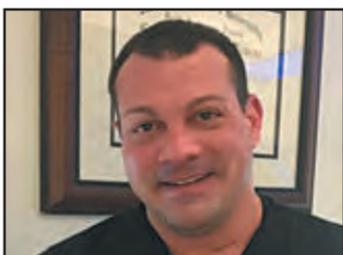
Ligotti's arrest is the latest development in federal and state efforts to thwart the insurance frauds and shams at sober homes that earned Palm Beach County in general, and Delray Beach in particular, a national reputation as the epicenter of these schemes.

While the alleged fraud in Ligotti's case wasn't limited to Palm Beach County, "we believe this to be the largest drug treatment/physician provider fraud in terms of dollar amount" locally, Alan Johnson, Palm Beach County chief assistant state attorney, said in an email.

Substance abuse treatment in Palm Beach County was once estimated to be a \$1 billion-a-year industry. Rampant misconduct led to the formation of a federal task force as well as a Sober Homes Task Force by the county state attorney's office. Ordinances



Michael and Christine Ligotti have listed their Whole Health building on Southeast Sixth Avenue for sale for \$4 million, and their home for nearly \$5.7 million. **Larry Keller/The Coastal Star**



The fraud charges against Michael Ligotti make the case one of the largest of its kind in dollar amount in Palm Beach County. **Photo provided**

enacted in Delray Beach were passed in an effort to stymie the opening of sober houses that were little more than flophouses.

Federal and state agencies combined efforts in the Ligotti case. The probe began in April 2014, FBI agent Stewart testified. Ligotti knew he was under investigation since at least October 2016, when he was served with a grand jury subpoena for Whole Health records. Yet the alleged conspiracy continued until "at least July of 2020," Stewart testified.

"Numerous former patients, employees and associates working with Ligotti have provided information to law enforcement regarding fraudulent activity being conducted" by him, his staff and others, according to the FBI's 62-page affidavit in support of establishing probable cause for Ligotti's arrest and a search warrant.

Ligotti was the only physician at Whole Health, which included nurse practitioners and other medical professionals.

Details of investigation

Investigators allege the scheme worked like this:

Ligotti would, for a nominal or no fee, become the medical director of sober homes and treatment facilities. He provided them with "standing orders" enabling them to require urine tests from their residents that investigators assert were medically unnecessary. Brokers often connected sober homes with laboratories that would do the urinalyses.

Sober home operators would bill patients' insurance companies for the urine tests authorized by Ligotti's standing order. The labs in turn billed insurers for the tests, and some paid kickbacks to the brokers and sober houses.

Ligotti profited by requiring businesses that received his signature on standing orders to send their insured patients to Whole Health for treatment, investigators allege. He charged for office visits and routinely ordered unnecessary urine and blood samples from patients at his own in-house lab, and billed hundreds of millions of dollars in fraudulent and unnecessary treatments, including nonexistent therapy sessions.

He billed one patient's insurer \$25,900 in tests during a single office visit, plus hundreds of dollars in additional fees.

Investigators say Ligotti billed another patient's insurer more than \$840,000 in a little over six years. Another insurer was billed \$707,000 in less than four years for a single patient.

Ligotti, who earned an undergraduate degree from Florida Atlantic University and his medical degree from Nova Southeastern University, was the purported medical director for more than 50 addiction treatment facilities, and signed 137 standing orders authorizing fraudulent tests, investigators say.

Business partner identified

One target of the probe, identified as a "business partner and close friend" of Ligotti, told the FBI last year that he was a "matchmaker" who introduced Ligotti to drug testing lab operators, according to the FBI affidavit. He was identified in court as Donte Stewart.

Stewart received about \$1.6 million from four labs over a span of 14 months, the complaint alleges. He invested the money in Arrow Passage Recovery, a drug and alcohol treatment center in Massillon, Ohio, in which he and Ligotti were co-owners, investigators say. The company's website says Stewart is the CEO. He lives in Fort Lauderdale, according to his Facebook page.

Patients were often brought to Ligotti's office in passenger vans — "druggy buggies" — a nurse practitioner told investigators, carrying 10 to 15 addiction treatment patients.

One patient said that he and others living in a Fort Lauderdale sober home in 2013 were required by the owner to be driven in a van to Delray Beach to see Ligotti.

The patient said that in October 2018, while he

lived in a sober home in Boynton Beach, patients were transported once a week in a van to visit Ligotti's office.

"I would occasionally see vans," Mark Armstrong, who lives in a townhome facing the Whole Health parking lot, told *The Coastal Star*.

"It actually was quieter than I expected. I've never seen more than three or four cars at one time."

A nurse practitioner who worked at Whole Health in 2016, however, told investigators that the practice saw more than 100 patients a day.

Urine tests were especially lucrative. One lab billed insurance companies about \$5,500 per test three times per week for urinalyses, the complaint states.

Investigators interviewed Whole Health patients who said that even though their urine was frequently taken at their sober houses and sent to labs, they nevertheless had to repeat the process on visits to Ligotti. The doctor got angry at nurse practitioners who didn't collect urine samples from patients, regardless of the reason for their visits, two of them told agents. One of them said that Ligotti insisted, "Even if you have to scoop urine out of the toilet, you have to do it."

Blue Cross Blue Shield and United Healthcare eventually placed Whole Health under "prepayment review" because of the clinic's billing practices.

"The evidence provided both by Whole Health patients ... and employees shows that Ligotti's primary concern was obtaining blood and urine from insured patients," the FBI affidavit states. Not for use in patient care, but rather "to make money from insurance companies."

The document cites five defendants, previously charged or about to be, in sober house insurance schemes who have cooperated in the case against Ligotti in the hope of receiving reduced sentences, favorable plea deals or lesser charges.

One of them is Eric Snyder, who owned a halfway house and treatment center and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit health care fraud and was sentenced last December to 10 years in prison. In pleading guilty, he agreed to testify against others suspected of involvement in patient brokering and insurance fraud.

Defense attacks FBI case

Ligotti wrote a letter to regulators in 2013 stating that he was "astonished and outraged" to learn that his name and license were being used by drug addiction treatment entities without his permission.

Ligotti may have written the letter as a "manufactured

defense" that he could point to later to show that he was unaware that treatment facilities were using his name and license to order expensive urine tests, according to investigators.

Defense attorney Curtis scoffed at this during the September preliminary hearing. He noted that the government's investigation of his client didn't begin until the following year, so it made no sense that Ligotti would draw attention to himself by drafting such a letter if he were breaking the law.

Throughout the hearing, Curtis got Stewart, the FBI agent, to concede there weren't written contractual arrangements between Ligotti and his alleged co-conspirators, nor was there evidence in the form of checks or cash paid to his client as kickbacks. He also questioned the veracity of former Whole Health patients who were interviewed by investigators, getting Stewart to concede that, "yes, as a general construct," drug addicts can be dishonest.

Four or five of Ligotti's staff helped in his scheme, including his office manager, according to Stewart. Former nurse practitioners at Whole Health said the office manager was the "pivot point" at the clinic and helped Ligotti interview job applicants and asked one of the nurse practitioners to write prescriptions for drugs that patients didn't need, the FBI affidavit states.

In addition to leveling the fraud charges, investigators suspect that Michael and Christine Ligotti, his wife, have tried to conceal assets.

In May, the seven-bedroom home the Ligottis own and live in with their three children on Seagate Drive in Delray Beach was listed for sale at nearly \$5.7 million. They paid \$3.3 million for the home in 2014. Records show that it features a chef's kitchen, media room, exercise room, library, wine cellar, air-conditioned garages, a tiled pool with hot tub, a half-basketball court and a batting cage.

The couple also owns a six-bedroom home on one acre west of Interstate 95 in Delray Beach, with a pool and slide and waterfall, a koi pond and a bocce court. It was listed for \$799,000, but was recently taken off the market. Michael Ligotti's parents and a pet pig live there.

The Ligottis also placed the Whole Health medical building up for sale in May for \$4 million. If all three properties fetched close to their listed prices, they would total more than \$10 million. The federal government, however, will seek to take the properties through forfeiture if Ligotti is convicted.

As part of his scheme, the complaint says, Ligotti even created a shell company named Kruger Industrial Smoothing.

Sound familiar? It's the name of the fictional company George Costanza worked at in Season 9 of "Seinfeld." ★

Delray Beach

City foresees more cuts to cover \$9 million budget shortfall

By Jane Smith

Delray Beach commissioners sent staff back to find more cost savings at an Aug. 11 budget workshop, even though the interim city manager advised that additional cuts could lead to layoffs. Commissioners were against using reserve money to cover the entire \$9 million budget shortfall.

The commission was opposed to balancing the proposed \$151.1 million budget by raiding the reserves by about \$4 million to pay for ongoing operations. But they did agree to take about \$4.6 million from reserves to pay for one-time expenses, such as the proposed \$1.05 million software purchase that will allow the city to begin doing online permitting.

City staff had found \$4.6 million in possible cuts, interim City Manager Jennifer Alvarez told commissioners, and suggested dipping into the reserves to cover the additional \$4.4 million in operating costs to make up the difference.

"We went back to the departments and asked them to cut more," Alvarez said. "We have a hiring freeze, trimmed contracts and reduced travel and training budgets."

"We may have to cut jobs to get it down (more)," Alvarez added. "It is what it is."

The reserves fund is expected to hold an estimated \$39.3 million at the start of the next budget year, Oct. 1.

The commission, though, insisted more cuts could be made.

"We still don't know all of the COVID effects on our economy," said Mayor Shelly Petrolia. Delray Beach and other cities statewide shut down on March 13 with gradual reopenings. Palm Beach County has a mandatory mask ordinance as part of the reopening, with restaurants and shops limited to 50% capacity during Phase 1.

"The timing is wrong to raid the reserves, which should be about 25% of the general fund, Petrolia said. "We do not have to have that level, but it is proper to carry that much because we are sitting along the coast and subject to hurricanes."

She pointed out that the city has been waiting nearly four years for reimbursement for Hurricane Matthew expenses. The hurricane brushed the coastline in October 2016.

Finance Director Marie Kalka said the coronavirus has cut into sales tax revenue by at least 15% during the current budget year, with impacts continuing into next year's budget. Parking revenue is down by \$960,000 this budget year, she said. The fee for metered parking was eliminated during the initial COVID-19-related closings, but the commission is considering charging again.

Commissioner Adam

Frankel suggested that staff go line-by-line through the budget to determine "what is necessary and what is a luxury."

Deputy Vice Mayor Shirley Johnson said a \$1 million economic development fund, not used since 2012, could be diverted to the general budget.

Commissioner Juli Casale applauded the Police Department because it is asking for only a 3.1% increase.

But she was unhappy that the Fire Department wants 12.8% more for the next financial year. Casale said cuts could be found in that department.

She compared Boynton Beach to Delray Beach in terms of size — both are approximately 16 square miles. Boynton Beach has 10,000 more residents. To make her point, she cited the number of battalion chiefs and captains each fire department has. Delray Beach has 42

battalion chiefs and captains, while Boynton Beach has 17 total.

Then, Casale launched into a critique of the SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. She called the grant "flawed and deceptive. We traded our hiring authority for five years for a \$1.6 million grant."

The grant covers partial salaries of eight firefighter-paramedics and expires in three years. But the grant requires the city to maintain the firefighter staffing level for five of the eight for two years beyond the grant period.

That's one reason Casale and Petrolia voted against accepting the grant retroactively in May. At the time, they were told four of the hires would be assigned to the Highland Beach station.

But the town of Highland Beach did not want the four extra firefighters because it could not afford the increased cost, Casale said.

Kalka told commissioners that FEMA gave them a one-year reprieve from not hiring five of the eight positions, saving the city \$305,000. But the city will be required to retain the positions the following year.

Both health insurance and pension costs are rising in Delray Beach, which has a large impact on budget planning.

Health insurance will increase by \$1.35 million, Kalka said, and union negotiations would be required to change how insurance plans are structured.

"To increase employee contributions, the extra cost would have to be negotiated by our unions," she said.

Pension costs are another

big-ticket item in the budget. Pension costs for police and fire went up \$2.03 million because of reduced rates of return on investments, Kalka said. The city is funding only about 60% of its retirement funds, she said.

Even so, the forecast for the next budget year is not entirely gloomy.

The city will still put up its 100-foot Christmas tree, Alvarez said. But the surrounding events may be canceled because of COVID-19 restrictions on crowd size.

In July, the commission approved using \$2.3 million from the reserves to cover unexpected shortfalls in the current budget year that ends Sept. 30. Most of the expenses were from coronavirus-related impacts.

The city's revenue was also reduced by franchise fees that it had to reimburse. ★

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Manalapan

Slight tax rate increase appears probable

By Dan Moffett

Manalapan's high property values likely won't be enough to insulate the town from a modest increase in the tax rate for the next fiscal year.

Like all Florida municipalities, Manalapan faces a reduction in state and county

revenue streams because of economic damage done by the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the biggest hit to the town's budget comes from its neighbor to the north.

This year South Palm Beach's property values shot up 22% because of the opening of the \$70 million 3550 South Ocean

building and its 30 luxury condos. While South Palm had the county's highest valuation increase, Manalapan had the lowest at a mere 1.23%.

The impact of the South Palm condo opening on Manalapan is a significant increase in the cost of paying for fire rescue services from Palm Beach County. The town and South Palm Beach partner on the same contract with the county, and it has an annual price tag based on property values. So, next fiscal year, the two towns' taxpayers will have to split evenly a bill for about \$3 million from the county. For Manalapan, that \$1.5 million represents a \$274,402 increase over last year.

"I have no control over the fire rescue cost," Town Manager Linda Stumpf told commissioners during their July budget meeting. "There's nothing I can do about reducing that number."

To cover the fire rescue increase, the Town Commission is considering raising the current property tax rate of \$3.03 per \$1,000 of taxable value to about \$3.17 and taking roughly \$175,000 from reserves to balance the 2020-2021 budget.

"My personal preference is not to raise the millage rate at all," said Mayor Keith Waters. "I

call that the September goal."

Waters and the commissioners grudgingly approved a tentative millage maximum rate of \$3.30 per \$1,000 of valuation and set the first public budget hearing for Sept. 18 at 5:01 p.m. The commission held no meeting in August.

Stumpf anticipates Manalapan's final rate to come in significantly lower, probably at around \$3.17. The rollback number, the rate that would hold taxes flat year-over-year, is \$3.01. She expects the current budget year to end with a surplus of about \$370,000, so there should be plenty of cash on hand to patch the holes in next year's fiscal plan.

The new proposed budget includes a 3% raise for town

employees and covers the full staffing of the Police Department, which has undergone a major expansion over the last two years.

In other business, commissioners unanimously approved an ordinance that revises the town's rules on signs.

The changes set new requirements for the size and placement of signs and satisfy constitutional concerns, said Town Attorney Keith Davis.

"The main thrust of the ordinance is to deal with temporary signs," Davis said.

Commissioners wanted to complete the changes before the election season, when the placement and size of campaign signs have often raised complaints in previous years. ★

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Tentative tax rates			
South County taxing agencies have proposed budgets for 2020-2021. Here are their tentative tax rates per \$1,000 of taxable value, the rollback rates and percent change.			
Boca Raton city*	\$3.68	\$3.35	6.6%
Boca Beach & Park	\$0.88	\$0.88	0%
Briny Breezes	\$10.00	\$9.02	10.8%
Delray Beach	\$6.85	\$6.40	4.2%
Gulf Stream	\$3.76	\$3.76	0%
Highland Beach	\$3.79	\$3.74	1.7%
Lantana	\$3.50	\$3.31	5.6%
Manalapan	\$3.30	\$3.01	9.1%
Ocean Ridge	\$5.35	\$5.17	3.48%
South Palm Beach	\$3.59	\$3.54	1.4%

* Boca Raton households also pay a \$145 fire assessment fee.



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Briny Breezes

Briny adjusting budget to account for revenue losses from pandemic

By Dan Moffett

When it comes to preparing municipal budgets, Bill Thrasher has seen about every extreme South Florida has to offer.

Before taking over as Briny Breezes town manager in January, Thrasher spent 21 years as the manager next door in Gulf Stream, one of the state's most affluent enclaves. Before that, he started his career in government as the financial director of Pahokee, a hardscrabble town next to Lake Okeechobee.

Now Thrasher has to deal with Briny's unusual marriage of municipal and corporate interests as the mobile home community tries to navigate through a period of often uncertain property valuations and unreliable revenue streams.

The COVID-19 pandemic added one more complication. Like municipalities across the state, Briny faces loss of revenue-sharing funds from state and county taxes because of coronavirus damage to the economy.

"We are targeting certain revenues to come in below the actual figures of 2019," Thrasher said. "I don't think anybody really has a clear idea of the financial effect this COVID-19 is going to have on all aspects of budgets and forecasting."

Because of COVID-19, county sales tax revenue is likely to be down from about \$35,000 last year to \$25,000. Revenue sharing from the state is also estimated lower.

Even with the losses, Briny has some costly repairs to make. The town has seven lift stations that pump stormwater from streets and need a major overhaul.

The work took on new urgency with the construction of the Gulf Stream Views townhouse project along Briny Breezes Boulevard.

Residents in Briny Breezes and the County Pocket say the development has

significantly contributed to worsening drainage problems in the neighborhood. In May, thunderstorms sent torrents of rainwater off the elevated property, flooding adjacent streets and yards.

The cost of repairing and rebuilding each lift station runs between \$10,000 and \$15,000, and the council wants to phase in the work over the next several years.

"It would be nice to make sure all of them are in tiptop condition," Thrasher said of the stations during the council's meeting on July 23. "I think this is a priority."

Briny has maintained the maximum tax rate of \$10 per \$1,000 of taxable value since 2009. The town counts on a contribution from the Briny corporation to cover its largest operational costs.

The corporation is expected to pay about 36% of the \$192,300 bill for police services from Ocean Ridge and 36% of \$417,451 for fire rescue services

from Boynton Beach.

Briny's property values were up 11.1% year-over-year, one of the largest increases among Palm Beach County municipalities.

"This is a positive thing we have that's going to help us offset some of our losses," Thrasher said.

Briny plans to use some of the \$60,000 set aside for legal services to pay lobbyists in Tallahassee to seek grants and persuade legislators to give more relief assistance to smaller municipalities.

"We're going to have increased expenditures to lobby for things we might get paid back on in the future," Mayor Gene Adams told Thrasher. "I support the direction you're moving in fully."

During the town's monthly meeting on Aug. 27, the council scheduled a first hearing on the tentative budget for 5:01 p.m. on Sept. 10 and a final budget hearing for 5:01 p.m. on Sept. 25. ★

Boca Raton

Haynie trial to start no sooner than late October

By Mary Hladky

Former Boca Raton Mayor Susan Haynie's trial on public corruption charges has been pushed back for the third time. The new trial start date is Oct. 26, but there is no certainty it will begin then.



Haynie

Palm Beach County Chief Circuit Court Judge Krista Marx in early July extended her suspension of all trials until further notice because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Circuit Judge Jeffrey Gillen set the new date on July 10 after both the prosecutor and Haynie's criminal defense attorney agreed on the change. They also agreed on the previous Sept. 21 trial date.

In both instances, they said the pandemic has made it difficult to complete pre-trial discovery and expressed concern that not enough potential jurors would be available.

The original date for Haynie's trial was March 23.

Haynie, 64, was arrested on April 24, 2018, on charges of official misconduct, perjury, misuse of public office and failure to disclose voting conflicts.

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.

She has pleaded not guilty. Her attorney, Bruce Zimet, has repeatedly said she will not accept a plea deal. ★

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Before

After

Delray Beach

Commission reviews charges against Gretsas, sets hearing date

By Jane Smith

Delray Beach city commissioners unanimously levied nine misconduct charges against suspended City Manager George Gretsas at their Aug. 24 special meeting.

The charges, though, do not include the bullying and intimidation accusations that led to his suspension on June 24. Gretsas allegedly badgered Assistant City Manager Suzanne Fisher so much that she went on medical leave May 15.



Gretsas

The new charges were made because the city was following the terms of its contract with Gretsas, City Attorney Lynn Gelin said. In October 2019, she had warned the commission of his lengthy termination process: notice to terminate, meeting 60 days later to decide written charges and then a special hearing 60 days later. He refused to come to Delray Beach without them, Gelin said. The City Commission plans to hold the public hearing at 10 a.m. Oct. 23.

Gelin outlined some of the charges against Gretsas:

- Improperly hired two people he knew at inflated salaries without going through the city's hiring process and providing written justification for paying them extra.
- Created potential violations of the state's Public Records Act by installing a private network in his office, outside the administration of the city's Information Technology Department. The department should have been involved to maintain the safety and security of the city's information.
- Wrote a 66-page presentation on Fisher that violated her privacy rights. Gretsas shared that document with certain staff members and one leaked it

to the media.

- Created a television studio at the Arts Garage, a city-owned property, to broadcast daily updates on the COVID-19 pandemic. To outfit the studio, Gretsas directed staff to buy various pieces of equipment, costing more than \$25,000 total. Even though it was an emergency, Gretsas did not document the reasons for the studio.

- Sent a 12-page letter on July 31 to the mayor and city commissioners, bashing Fisher, the reclaimed water program and the drinking water system. Fisher had supervised the Utilities Department. He wrongly compared the city drinking water quality to that of Flint, Michigan, where lead was found in the water. Gretsas widely distributed that letter to Delray Beach residents, who became fearful of drinking city water.

"The uncovering of what we have found is just mind-blowing," Mayor Shelly Petrolia said. "I can't understand how someone — in just six months — can get in so deep into the dark areas of nondisclosure."

Gretsas joined Delray Beach on Jan. 6. He is the fifth city manager in just eight years. The previous city manager, Mark Lauzier, was fired on March 1, 2019. He sued the city for breach of contract and filed a whistleblower's complaint on April 29, 2019. The whistleblower's complaint was dismissed, but the breach of contract count is proceeding.

"The machine gun is now aimed at me," Gretsas said Aug. 25. "This (proceeding) damages my reputation and creates a revolving door of city managers. ... The constant turnover is very damaging to the public."

His attorney, Carmen Rodriguez, spoke at the Aug. 24 meeting.

"The computer was purchased and installed through the city," she said. "You all have private networks, too. It's called a cellphone."

Rodriguez called the charges administrative issues, not fireable offenses. "They are more Mother-May-I issues," she said, referencing the kids game of asking for permission before moving.

The commission had voted on June 24 to suspend Gretsas, based on a summary of an investigation into bullying and intimidation charges brought up by Fisher. The vote was 3-2.

Fisher has since agreed to resign from the city on Sept. 7. Her attorney negotiated a separation package that includes payment for all her unused vacation days and 50% of her unused sick time. Until she leaves, she will be paid her salary of \$165,692.80. In return, Fisher agreed to not bash the city.

Vice Mayor Ryan Boylston and Commissioner Adam Frankel initially voted against suspending Gretsas. Both wanted the bullying accusation included in the charges.

The June investigation into Fisher's complaint "created a divisive and disruptive environment. It became a situation of whose team you are on," Gelin said. "Why put the city in a negative light when you have policy violations that are valid?"

Then, she added, "It's up to the commission whether to include the bullying charges."

The city issued a news release about staff intimidation after the June 24 meeting, but it is not legally binding, Gelin said.

"On July 7, the commission directed its internal auditor to lead the investigation," Gelin said, referring to Julia Davidyan.

Frankel called the whole process "troubling."

"We are here because of the bullying allegations. I understand Gelin's point that to add that charge would be too much stress on staff in the middle of a

pandemic," he said, then told Rodriguez, "But I believe your client's due process rights have been violated."

Davidyan cautioned about looking at just one charge. "Gretsas had a pattern of ignoring policies," she said.

As an example, she said, Gretsas had installed the Basecamp software program on his computer to discourage public access.

The project management program assigns tasks and deadlines to individuals and alerts the manager about the status of projects, including deadlines.

"After 30 days, all projects are deleted from their servers," Davidyan said she learned after emailing the Basecamp customer service people in the UK.

"She must not have asked the right question," Gretsas said on Aug. 25. "Basecamp has an archive function and it is searchable."

Boylston, who uses Basecamp daily in his marketing business, asked Gelin for some examples of public records not being filled because they were not accessible in Basecamp. Gelin said she would search for an example before the Oct. 23 hearing.

Gretsas said he has emails with the then-purchasing director about buying TV studio equipment quickly. She suggested an out-of-state vendor with the lowest price, but it would be held up in the mail because the Postal Service has special conditions for mailing electronics with lithium-ion batteries installed.

Staff then used the city's purchase cards to buy the equipment locally, Gretsas said.

Gretsas continues to receive his \$265,000 salary until his hearing Oct. 23.

"I don't see a genuine acceptance of the magnitude of this proceeding," Rodriguez said Aug. 24. "It's absurd to say we're going to give you notice that we intend to fire you and then we will figure out the charges." ★

Sea grape dispute

Delray Beach — mid-August



The iconic sea grape tunnels near the Atlantic Avenue pavilion likely will be spared from the chain saw, following an outcry from some Delray Beach residents. Conflicting environmental views and a wish to keep the beachscape character in place are the main issues. **ABOVE:** Elsewhere in the public beach dune, trimmed sea grapes soon will sprout branches and limbs. The trims kept with the decades-long belief that the sea grapes shade out other native plants that provide a more diverse habitat. **RIGHT:** One of the tunnels. At the end of a 6½-hour meeting on Aug. 18, one commissioner brought up a Beach Property Owners Association's email that supported trimming all sea grapes. Vice Mayor Ryan Boylston and two other commissioners agreed to this, but the next day Boylston asked the commission to reconsider the height of sea grapes, which it plans to do Sept. 10. In February an Aptim Environmental study advised leaving the tall sea grapes uncut to provide habitat for migrating songbirds and a buffer from streetlights for sea turtles. — Jane Smith



Commission votes itself large raise

By Jane Smith

Delray Beach city commissioners narrowly agreed on Aug. 18 to give themselves hefty pay raises.

They all said it was not the proper time to raise their pay in the middle of a pandemic. The vote was 3-2, with Vice Mayor Ryan Boylston and Commissioner Adam Frankel voting no.

"I don't disagree it's bad timing," Mayor Shelly Petrolia said. "But if we don't do this now, we will have to wait another 2.5 years."

The raises will take effect after the March 2021 elections, according to the city charter. That means Petrolia, Boylston and Frankel would have to be re-elected to receive the new salaries.

The commission salary increased from \$9,000 annually to \$24,000. The mayor's annual pay will go from \$12,000 to \$30,000.

Staff surveyed the annual salaries paid to elected officials in Boynton Beach and Boca Raton. Both cities pay their elected officials much more than Delray Beach does.

In Boynton Beach, commissioners are paid \$20,000 a year, and the mayor's annual salary

is \$24,000. In Boca Raton, council members receive \$28,000 annually and the mayor makes \$38,000.

Commissioner Juli Casale voted yes, as long as the pandemic situation eased at the beginning of next year.

Petrolia said they could vote to postpone the raises for six months if that was still the situation.

"The timing is bad," Boylston said. "We are freezing raises, looking at layoffs."

Interim City Manager Jennifer Alvarez said the city is not freezing raises. The city has a hiring freeze, she said.

Retired teacher Yvonne Odom told the commission "to vote your own conscience. That's what you were elected to do." Odom runs youth sports programs with her husband and is the grandmother of teen tennis star Coco Gauff.

"Make sure essential workers are paid well," Odom said. "But I'm not in favor of cutting personnel."

Frankel agreed with his fellow commissioners that they are "woefully underpaid" when he voted for the salary increase Aug. 11 on the first reading. He also said he wanted to think about it and changed his mind when voting Aug. 18. ★

Highland Beach

Consultant to examine cost of starting a fire department

By Rich Pollack

Faced with another year of rising costs for fire rescue service from Delray Beach, Highland Beach is once again exploring alternatives to the multimillion-dollar annual contract with the neighboring city, including starting its own fire department.

During an August meeting, town commissioners agreed to pay \$40,000 to have California-based Matrix Consulting Group look into the feasibility of Highland Beach providing its own fire department or having a hybrid system where it receives some services from a private provider.

“What we’re looking for is an appropriately funded fire-rescue response,” Town Manager Marshall Labadie said. “The costs should be proportional to the services provided.”

Since signing a new 10-year contract with Delray Beach for fire service in 2016, Highland Beach officials have raised concern about continued escalating costs that they fear could be unsustainable.

During fiscal 2019, for example, costs for service jumped 8.6% to \$4.26 million. During fiscal 2020 costs are expected to increase by about 5% to \$4.47 million. And for the upcoming fiscal 2021, costs are expected to jump between 5% and 7% to \$4.78 million.

Following a presentation by Robert Finn, a lead analyst for Matrix Consulting, commissioners agreed that looking at alternatives to fire service from Delray was a necessary step.

“We have no choice,” said Mayor Doug Hillman. “We’re obligated to our residents to do what’s best for our town.”

During a subsequent presentation to the commission, Delray Beach Fire Chief Keith Tomey said he welcomed the consultant study commissioned by Highland Beach.

“We’re happy to see you are hiring a consultant,” Tomey said. “We feel we are the best force for you and believe the consultant will point that out.”

Tomey noted that the town is considered part of Delray Beach’s service area and as such receives a long list of services both direct and indirect — ranging from backup vehicles in case of a major fire to apparatus repair.

Hillman, in responding to the fire chief, made it clear that Highland Beach is pleased with the quality of services it receives from Delray.

“The service we get is top-notch,” he said. “This is purely a financial situation. It’s nothing more than dollars and cents.”

Currently, Delray Beach provides all fire/rescue services in Highland Beach

and staffing for the town-owned fire station, with the town paying for the cost of 22.5 firefighter/paramedics and some administrative services.

Delray Beach had originally requested that Highland Beach amend the contract to add four more personnel, with part of the cost for the first three years being covered by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In all, the grant would have covered the partial cost of eight Delray Beach firefighters over three years — four assigned to Highland Beach — with the portion paid by Delray Beach and Highland Beach increasing each year.

Highland Beach rejected the amendment and Delray Beach appealed to FEMA, asking

for a hardship case because of the coronavirus pandemic. FEMA is now allowing Delray Beach to fill only three of the eight positions for the first year, a reduction of \$350,000 to the city’s expense, but will require the city to fill all eight positions — including the four in Highland Beach — the following year.

In addition to giving Highland Beach a detailed plan for forming its own fire department — and listing the expected cost — Matrix will review the services provided by Delray Beach over the last three years.

The audit will look at the costs and examine Delray Beach performance compared to the requirements in the agreement with the town.

“The commission wants to be sure we are being charged

correctly pursuant to the contract,” Labadie said.

Matrix, which several years ago was hired to explore the possibility of creating a barrier island fire department in South County, expects to have a study completed in three or four months. The barrier island fire department concept was dismissed as too costly.

Labadie believes the

findings of the new report could help the town decide how best to proceed and that could include finding a way to continue the relationship with Delray.

“We’re hopeful that the study will bring the parties together and we’ll come up with an amicable solution for a long-term partnership,” Labadie said. ★

Lucy Chernow Brown

Retired Judge 15th Judicial Circuit

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Big Dog Ranch Rescue	\$180,000
Pantry of Broward	\$170,000
The Soup Kitchen	\$170,000
Jack & Jill Children's Center	\$150,000
Little Smiles	\$150,000
Operation Lift Hope	\$150,000
The Lord's Place	\$140,000
The Humane Society of Greater Jupiter - Tequesta	\$135,000
Gateway Community Outreach	\$130,000
Hacer Ministry Corp.	\$128,000
Light of the World Clinic	\$125,000
Restoration Bridge International	\$125,000
100 Plus Animal Rescue	\$120,000
Caridad Center	\$120,000
American Association of Caregiving Youth	\$110,000
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Barkey Pines Animal Rescue & Sanctuary	\$105,000

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Farmworker Coordinating Council of Palm Beach County	\$100,000	Everglades Golden Retriever Rescue	\$40,000
Florida's Children First	\$100,000	Friends of Youth Services and Palm Beach County	\$40,000
Good Karma Pet Rescue	\$100,000	Showering Love	\$40,000
Living Hungry	\$100,000	Operation 120	\$38,000
Palm Beach Police and Fire Foundation	\$100,000	Kidsafe Foundation	\$37,000
Best Foot Forward Foundation	\$85,000	Kitty Karma of Delray	\$35,000
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Riviera Beach Community Outreach	\$84,000	Adopt a Cat Foundation	\$30,000
Abandoned Pet Rescue	\$80,000	Hands Together for Haitians	\$30,000
Back to Basics	\$80,000	Pet Project for Pets	\$30,000
Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation	\$80,000	Shepherd Help and Rescue Effort	\$30,000
Morningday Community Solutions	\$75,000	Doberman Rescue League	\$28,000
United Dog Rescue	\$75,000	Florida's Forgotten Felines	\$27,000
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McCarthy's Wildlife Sanctuary	\$62,000	Gentle Giants Great Dane Rescue	\$25,000
Covenant House Florida	\$60,000	Hospitality Helping Hands	\$25,000
DePorres Place	\$60,000	Milos Dog Rescue of South Florida	\$25,000
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Passion for Paws	\$60,000	Rising Star Rottweiler Rescue	\$25,000
Poverello Center	\$60,000	Communities in Schools of Palm Beach County	\$20,000
Wounded Veterans Relief Fund	\$57,000	Naia's Pet Rescue	\$20,000
Clinics Can Help	\$55,000	Paws South Florida Rescue	\$20,000
Humane Society of Florida	\$55,000	A Better Life Rescue	\$15,000
Our Father's Soup Kitchen	\$54,000	AHA Animal Rescue	\$15,000
Wheels from the Heart	\$53,000	Dogs Rule Rescue Group	\$15,000
Everglades Angels Dog Rescue	\$51,000	Glimmer of Life Foundation	\$15,000
Flamingo Gardens	\$50,000	Nuggetville Brigade	\$15,000
Seagull Industries for the Disabled	\$50,000	Feline Rescue	\$10,000
SAGE of South Florida	\$49,000	Genesis Assistance Dogs	\$10,000
Friends of Foster Children of Palm Beach County	\$48,000	Island Retriever Rescue of the Palm Beaches	\$10,000
Vets Helping Heroes	\$46,000	Forster Foundation	\$5,000
Animal Rescue Force of South Florida	\$44,000		
Boca Raton Society for the Disabled	\$40,000		

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10 Questions

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: Mason Slaine

In these trying times, hospitals need more friends like Mason Slaine.

Slaine moved from Greenwich, Connecticut, to coastal Boca Raton in 2014 and very quickly became involved with Boca Raton Regional Hospital, being named to its board of directors a year later.

"I wanted to participate in the community, which I've done in other places I've lived," he said. "I've always been interested in health care, and particularly in South Florida, where the predominance of elderly people makes the need for top-notch health care more intense."

Slaine has held a number of high-profile positions in the information and technology realm over the years, including CEO of business information publisher Thomson Financial (now Thomson Reuters) from 1994-96. He said conversations with medical professionals prompted him to become one of Boca Regional's most prominent donors.

His first significant donation went to the Marcus Neuroscience Institute at Boca Regional, where the adjacent courtyard bears his name. And his most recent gift, in the amount of \$1.5 million, has become a driving force in the hospital's ongoing fundraising campaign titled "Keeping the Promise."

"Mr. Slaine has been an extraordinary advocate and very active in our plans since he became involved with Boca Regional a few short years ago," said Lincoln Mendez, CEO of Boca Raton Regional Hospital. "We are delighted to have him as a member of our family, as a foundation board member and as a lead donor to our campaign."

Slaine, 67, said he has been involved in "some big decisions" since joining the board, including the hospital's aligning itself with Baptist Health South Florida a year ago.

"That was a big issue, and the building on the (Boca Raton) campus in the coming years is going to be significant," Slaine said.

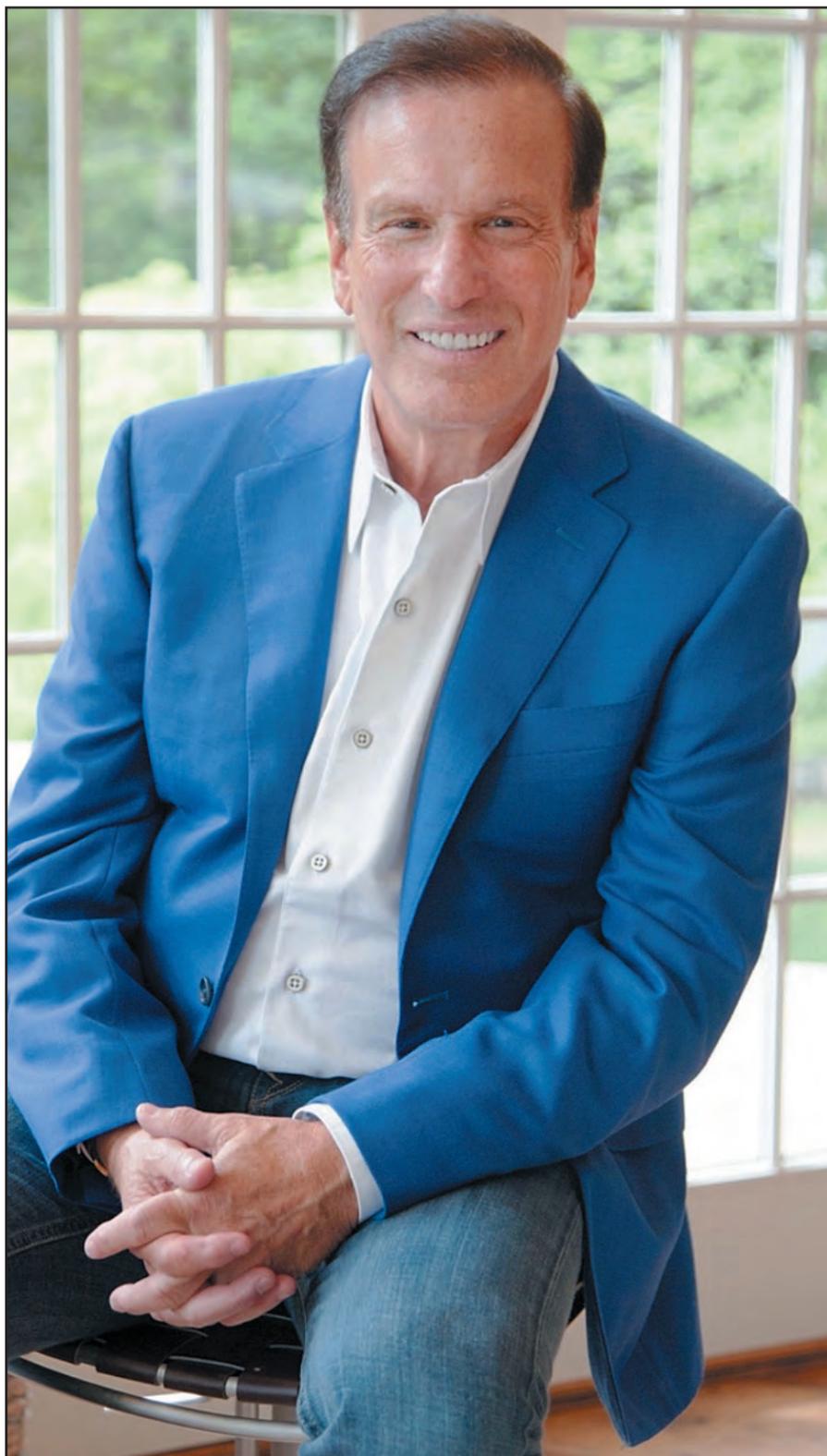
The ongoing pandemic has intensified the spotlight on Boca Regional and other area hospitals.

"Dealing with COVID-19 is a very serious thing," Slaine said. "So aside from giving my time I give energy, and I have an emotional interest in making sure we have good health care in the area."

Slaine's other investments include purchasing a 7% share in Tribune Publishing earlier this year. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Slaine spent \$13.9 million to buy 1.58 million shares of the company between Feb. 3 and March 17. The average price was \$8.79 a share; the stock was trading at almost \$11 a share in mid-August.

Slaine, who has expressed confidence in the future of newspapers as a digital entity, also attempted to buy the *Sun-Sentinel* from Tribune Publishing two years ago but was turned down.

Slaine, who is divorced, serves on the executive and audit committees at the



Mason Slaine of coastal Boca Raton serves on the board of Boca Raton Regional Hospital and recently donated \$1.5 million to the hospital's 'Keeping the Promise' expansion campaign. **Photo provided**

hospital, working as chairman of the audit committee. He is also active in Temple Beth-El of Boca Raton, where he serves on the finance committee.

— 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 Boston area in a blue-collar neighborhood. I was fortunate enough to attend Amherst College, majoring in political science, and graduate magna cum laude. I then received immediate acceptance into Harvard Business School and graduated at age 24.

Q: What professions have you worked

in? What professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

A: I have principally worked in the information/technology field for the past 35 years. I have participated in developing and building many businesses, including Iparadigms, the publisher of Turnitin.

Turnitin, which is an internet-based plagiarism detection device, is used in most colleges throughout the world and in many high schools.

I helped build Interactive Data Corporation, the leading provider of fixed income pricing data in the world. I was president of Thomson Financial (now Thomson Reuters) for many years.

Altogether I have built businesses in a broad range of areas, including tax

software, intellectual property, science, chemistry, medtech, fintech, health care, financial and trade publishing, energy analytics and private company databases.

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

A: Get the prerequisite training first and study hard and long!

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

A: I have friends and family in the area and like the weather.

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

A: Being near the water. Obviously, Florida has a great climate most of the year, and I love being outside as much as possible. I do a little boating and haven't gone fishing for a while, but I just like being there, walking on the beach, that kind of thing.

Q: What book are you reading now?

A: John Bolton's recent book, *The Room Where It Happened*; Nelson DeMille's latest novel, *The Deserter*; *The Stranger*, by Albert Camus, and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James.

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

A: I generally like '80s music and find Dvorak and Tchaikovsky inspiring.

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

A: I was fortunate to have had a mentor at the beginning of my career named Theodore "Ted" Lamont Cross. Ted was a brilliant businessman and was also a great fighter for justice. He was also a world-class bird photographer.

Ted marched with Martin Luther King Jr. and wrote two books on how to improve business opportunities for people of color: *Black Capitalism* and *The Black Power Imperative*. He also published *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education and Business* and *Society Review*. Ted was Caucasian. Learning from a true Renaissance man who combined interests in science, social well-being and business provided me with the "weltgeist" to become the person I have become.

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

A: Matt Damon — he would get the accent right!

Q: Is there something people don't know about you but should?

A: I am no longer interested in making money. I intend to spend more of my time and resources on public service endeavors, especially in health care and children's services.



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Lantana



Kristine Kreidler has received \$98,000 in grants for the library in less than one year on the job. Coastal Star file photo

Librarian making a name for herself by winning grants

By Mary Thurwachter

Kristine Kreidler hasn't even been at her job a year and already Lantana's new library director has amassed six grants worth \$98,000.

Her good work isn't going unnoticed. During a municipal meeting in July, Town Manager Deborah Manzo announced one of Kreidler's most recent wins, a Library Services and Technology Act grant awarded by the state from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

"Kristine, you have been such a tremendous asset since you've been here for the town, I really appreciate everything you've been doing," Manzo said. Kreidler started working for the town last November.

The grant money will be used to create a 21st century community library and to fund the LABtana concept with early literacy computers for the youngest patrons, coding robots for kids, and recording equipment and Apple computers for teens, according to Kreidler.

"For the adults, we will be purchasing a smartboard for the meeting room, along with a camera and podcasting equipment," she said. "The idea is that the space could be used for patrons who are trying to start small businesses, whether that is online or traditional brick-and-mortar businesses.

"We also want to hire instructors who mirror Lantana's population and create a thriving space where they can bounce ideas off of each other and more."

Other grants the library has secured this year are a Young Adult Library Association Collection Development Grant; a Public Library Association Inclusive Internship Initiative Grant, which funds a summer internship and travel for the mentor and student to attend workshops in Washington, D.C., and Chicago; an American Library Association Census Equity Fund Grant; Florida's State Aid to Libraries Grant; and a CARES Act grant

from Florida Humanities for COVID-related supplies and a virtual homework helper. It is designed for kids who may be having problems with distance learning.

Kreidler, 38, who grew up in Lantana and attended Lantana Elementary School, Lantana Middle School and Santaluces High School, said she enjoys the grant application process.

"I have always loved writing and once upon a time, I wanted to be a creative nonfiction/memoir writer. My bachelor's specialization was in English/creative writing and women's studies," she said. "I love grant writing and trying to find that unique angle that catches the eye of grant panels."

The library, at 205 W. Ocean Ave., is about to undergo a \$748,636 renovation expected to begin this fall.

"Hopefully, it will be complete in time for Lantana's centennial in April," Kreidler said. "If we are lucky enough to be through our COVID days, we would like to have an exhibit opening here and programs to help celebrate the centennial." ★

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Reflections from the front line



Julie O'Brien

Kindergarten teacher at St. Vincent Ferrer School in Delray Beach

There are no high-fives in Julie O'Brien's kindergarten class at St. Vincent Ferrer School. Ditto for circle time and close encounters.

Students, teachers and staff don masks, classes are smaller and there's social distancing — not the easiest concept to explain to 5-year-olds.

Despite many modifications, O'Brien is glad to return to the private Delray Beach Catholic school after more than five months.

Although students had plenty of resources for remote learning and she held frequent one-on-one Zoom sessions, it wasn't an ideal learning environment and she missed the in-person interaction.

"The toughest part was that my son was home watching me give my time to other kids and he couldn't play with me. It was very stressful trying to balance school and home life."

But being back on campus presents other challenges.

"My biggest concern is the crying child. My first instinct is to get on my knees and swoop in for a hug," says O'Brien, 43. "Human beings need to touch. It is something I am used to doling out in spades. I usually have someone on my lap and two right next to me. It's going to be different, but I will explain everything in ways they can understand."

Versatility is key, she says, including a mask with a clear strip over her mouth so students can see her pronounce words. "Teachers are nothing if not flexible and ingenious. We will make it work," she says emphatically.

Her message to others? "Teachers are doing the very best that we can. As scared as people are to send their children back to school, I have my own worries about going back and having my son start kindergarten."

But there is much to be grateful for: "I get to go to school and pray because I am in a Catholic school where we depend on each other, but we depend on God, too."

— Linda Haase



The Rev. D. Brian Horgan

Pastor of St. Lucy Catholic Church in Highland Beach

The Rev. D. Brian Horgan of St. Lucy Catholic Church in Highland Beach has been on the front lines of war before as a chaplain in the Air Force early in his pastoral career. Now, with COVID-19, he feels like he's in a war again.

The pandemic has changed how we worship God and the way we bury our loved ones, Horgan said. About 60% of parishioners attend socially distanced Mass each week, but funerals are a different story.

"Most funerals have been with just the funeral director and the deceased," Horgan said. "It's been challenging, but we can do tremendous work with the families at home."

In this small parish, which has lost more than a dozen members of its congregation to the virus, goodbyes are by telephone, and even clergy can't bridge that gap.

"Sometimes we get in and sometimes we don't," Horgan said. That means some don't receive last rites, an important final sacrament that includes confession and absolution.

"It wipes away all your sins" before death, Horgan explained, and "it brings great comfort to the dying."

Horgan can perform last rites weeks before a person dies or if someone is facing a serious medical procedure, but COVID usually arrives unexpectedly.

Loved ones' not receiving that final Communion weighs heavily on the hearts of some families. But Horgan finds a way to comfort his parishioners. A priest isn't needed for someone to be absolved of sins, he said, if he or she simply repents and asks forgiveness. "God is full of mercy and love."

Horgan, who earned medals for his work during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2008, says COVID-19 is "a clever enemy shrouded in mystery."

He senses an underlying fear that reminds him of war.

But "don't be afraid. Fear is a 'false experience appearing real,'" Horgan says, spelling out an acronym associated with the word. "I trust God and serving God's people is the most important thing I do. Fear won't hold me back."

— Janis Fontaine



Dr. Bill Benda

Emergency room physician at St. Mary's Medical Center, Bethesda Hospital East and Delray Medical Center; associate professor of emergency medicine at FAU

COVID-19 is far from done with Palm Beach County, but emergency room physician Dr. Bill Benda is less stressed than he was early on in the pandemic.

Doctors knew very little about the novel coronavirus or how to treat it in March. But the county's stay-at-home lockdown slowed the contagion, buying them time to learn.

When the county eased restrictions and cases spiked this summer, Benda, who lives in the County Pocket near Briny Breezes, knew much more about how to manage the disease.

"When this first hit, we had no idea how dangerous this was and how contagious this was," he said. "Now ... we are much more experienced with how it works, so it is not nearly as stressful as it was in the early days."

"When something is unknown, it is scary. Now we don't have that overarching fear we had initially."

As the number of infected people mounts, Benda, 66, said doctors and hospitals are better able to cope.

Hospitals now have special units for COVID-19 patients, which take pressure off ICUs. Several treatment options are available for the seriously ill. Doctors better understand when a patient must be hospitalized or can be sent home to recover.

The FAU associate professor estimates he works three to four 10-hour hospital shifts a week, supervising two residents and one four-year medical student per shift. He spends additional time on teaching and administrative responsibilities at FAU. He and the residents see about 30 patients each shift, of which about 20% have or are suspected to have COVID-19. Two of his residents fell ill, one gravely so.

The lack of adequate testing remains "a huge issue" that hinders patient care. "That is why we are in the mess we are today that almost no other country is in," he said.

Benda's advice: Follow epidemiologists' instructions to avoid crowds, wear masks and practice social distancing. "Not following what they say is insane and it will lead to more disaster."

— Mary Hladky



Kevin Saxton

Delray Beach Fire Rescue Battalion Chief

The threat of COVID-19 is always on Kevin Saxton's mind, but the Delray Beach Fire Rescue battalion chief won't let the highly contagious disease prevent him from fully serving the community.

"It's something I think about all the time," says Saxton, who is 38 and in his 17th year with the department. "I'm going to take the precautions I need to take, but I'm still going to do my job."

He is responsible for the overall operations of the department's six stations on the days when he is on shift. While he doesn't respond to most calls, he remains available. He monitors the radio and makes sure those who do answer a call are doing what's needed to adequately protect themselves and the rest of the crew from the disease.

"The virus has complicated our responses," he said. "It takes us a little longer to get ready and there's a lot more decontamination."

Along with changing the way the department handles calls, the virus has affected how firefighters interact with one another when they're not responding.

To minimize the spread of the virus, all are required to wear masks in the station while in common areas. And, instead of everyone eating at one long table, the shift is split by squad into two tables with everyone maintaining 6-foot separation.

"We're just not spending as much time together," Saxton says.

Even when they are on a call, firefighters and paramedics are maintaining a safe distance, especially on medical calls.

One member of the three-person crew will make contact with the caller and another will be available if needed. The third person remains in the truck.

"It's one fewer person who is exposed," Saxton says.

As shift supervisor, Saxton is vigilant to make sure everyone takes necessary precautions. "You want to make sure we don't put our guard down," he said.

— Rich Pollack



Sue Brown

Restaurant general manager at Oceano Kitchen in Lantana

Sue Brown has undoubtedly encountered nearly every challenge in the restaurant business.

But COVID-19 was a game changer. Brown, the general manager of Oceano Kitchen in Lantana, had a lot more to worry about than inventory when the eatery had to halt in-person dining.

The Ocean Avenue restaurant shifted to takeout — for the first time. "We weren't set up for it. It was a learning curve, but we figured it out pretty quickly," says the Hypoluxo Island resident, who did not want to reveal her age.

Everything was uncertain, but staff was buoyed by customers checking in with encouraging words, homemade masks and even monetary donations.

"Our customers tell us how grateful they are that we are open. We are even more grateful to them for coming in."

Dining on the open-air deck has resumed, but for Brown — along with other servers — things aren't the same: Masks are stifling, cleaning is constant, and hands are washed repeatedly.

"We are like anyone else, just doing our jobs. We might be a little slower because we have to wash our hands more, so patience is a good thing," she says.

"When we resumed dine-in it was a little nerve-racking, but I know the majority of my customers so there is a trust level," she says. "As time went on, I got more comfortable with it. I feel safe. I trust my fellow workers and customers."

The staff is conscious of health protocols when off-duty, she says. "We know if one of us goes down all of us go down. We are a team and in it together," Brown says. "It's been hard for everyone. But we still laugh a lot."

Although some customers are comfortable only with takeout, Brown looks forward to the day when she'll see them dining at one of her tables.

"When everybody feels comfortable coming back, then I will be happy."

— Linda Haase

These are just a few of your neighbors who are working on the front line to keep you safe from COVID-19



Valerie Jacoby

Lead postal clerk at the Highland Beach Community Post Office

During the 20 years that Valerie Jacoby has been behind the counter of the Highland Beach Community Post Office, she's gotten to know many of the residents.

Over the years, folks would come into the small-contract postal station, established in 1964 as a convenience for people who didn't want to cross the bridge to Boca Raton, and catch up on what was happening around them.

Some, who might bump into neighbors, would stay for a few minutes talking about everything from the impertinent to the important.

"One of my co-workers used to compare it to Mayberry," says Jacoby, 60.

Now, with COVID-19 as a backdrop, the atmosphere is more like that of a regular post office. Amid constant concerns about contagion, conversations have been converted to shorter chatter in an environment where safety is a top priority.

"It's just a little more clinical," says Jacoby, who worked for the U.S. Postal Service in Illinois for several years before moving to Florida.

Run by the town of Highland Beach, the post office behind Town Hall has offered residents — those wishing to buy stamps or mail packages — an alternative to visiting a larger, potentially more crowded postal station.

With the arrival of the virus, town leaders have made necessary changes and instituted precautionary measures while hoping to keep the post office open.

"They've really done a lot to keep everyone safe," Jacoby says.

One of the most obvious changes has been a rearranging of the small lobby. A tempered glass partition separates customers from clerks and a pullout drawer makes it easier to mail a package.

Customers are required to wear masks and hours have been cut from a full day to 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

With just two customers allowed in the 500-square-foot building at a time and social distancing expected, the post office remains a safe convenience for residents and a safe place to work for Jacoby.

— Rich Pollack



Michael Varesio

Shipt shopper serving coastal communities

When Michael Varesio joined the ranks of Shipt shoppers in January, he never anticipated a pandemic that would turn him into an essential worker.

It was overwhelming: The 47-year-old Boynton Beach resident worked 61 days straight, took a day off, then toiled 21 more days, frantically buying groceries for people who feared leaving their homes.

"Nobody was ready for this. The orders were insane. I felt bad if I didn't take an order, I was worried someone wouldn't be able to get groceries. I tried to do too much and had to cut back," he admits.

"Low inventory made the job stressful. Toilet paper and paper towels were scarce. Then the bread aisle was empty for weeks. After that, flour was gone. I haven't seen anything with the word Lysol on it for months," says Varesio, a father of two. "I felt bad texting people every two seconds to update them. I didn't know what they were doing. They might have been working or feeding the baby. Most said not to worry (if I was late), that they weren't going anywhere, which made things easier."

Although the workload decreased and inventory increased, risks linger.

"I'm aware of the possibilities of getting COVID and I take all the precautions and follow the rules to stay healthy. And after I put the groceries in the car, I sanitize my hands and clean my phone," he explains.

The outpouring of appreciation is an enormous perk. From Ziploc bags filled with masks to generous tips to thoughtful handmade thank-you notes, customers' gratefulness is heartwarming, Varesio says.

"The most surprising thing is the gratitude. I keep the thank-you notes. They mean so much," he says.

"I'm putting myself at risk, but I know I am helping people. I am not a nurse or a doctor, but I know that I am helping others and it feels good. I'm making a difference during a tough time."

— Linda Haase



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Along the Coast

Overdose deaths double in Delray during pandemic

By Charles Elmore

Tony Allerton calls it a situation “we’ve never been through before.”

Amid a COVID-19 pandemic, overdose deaths have doubled in Delray Beach in 2020 and emergency response calls for opioids have climbed by a third in Palm Beach County, reports from police and rescue agencies show.

“It’s a time of survival, whether it’s from the drug of choice or the pandemic,” said Allerton, executive director of the Delray Beach-based Crossroads Club, formed in 1982 to help people cope with drug and alcohol addiction.

Support groups and agencies say they see inspiring efforts every day by people to help themselves and others, but these are conditions that virtually no one anticipated. The virus not only threatened lives and jobs, but in many cases it also closed meeting spaces for 12-step and other recovery groups.

Organizers scrambled to hold meetings by way of Zoom or other online services, racing to stay connected with people at risk. Some groups met outside.

Because of fears of COVID-19 exposure, virtual meetings remain common even as some in-person gatherings have resumed in recent months, typically with masks and distancing. But it has been a difficult battle to break through isolation and despair.

In the third week of March in Delray Beach, “when everything was shut down, there were 17 reported overdoses in one week,” said Ariana Ciancio, service population advocate for the Delray Beach Police Department.

That was roughly triple the weekly average for the first seven months of 2019, when the department responded to a total of 171 overdose calls.

In the first seven months of 2020, the city recorded 229 overdose calls, an increase of 34%.

Overdose deaths in 2020 tracked by Delray Beach police doubled to 42 through July 31, compared to 21 in the same period of 2019.

“No one was prepared for coping with this kind of situation,” Ciancio said. “I have spent years talking about learning proper coping skills, but a global pandemic isn’t something that is frequently discussed in relapse-prevention planning or discharge planning.



Chef and restaurant owner Louie Bossi, who speaks openly about his recovery, is joined by staff members at Louie Bossi's Ristorante in Boca Raton. Bossi often hires recovering addicts at his restaurants, and says at least three members of his staffs have relapsed since the arrival of the novel coronavirus. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**



Allerton

“It’s a time of survival, whether it’s from the drug of choice or the pandemic.”

Tony Allerton, executive director of the Delray Beach-based Crossroads Club

It is a difficult situation for everyone experiencing it and the only way to get through it is together.”

Her advice for people struggling with addiction: “Utilize support systems, either in person or by Zoom. Utilize family and friends, old connections and sponsors. Even though you are physically distant you have to remain socially connected.”

Nationwide, there are signs the problem may be getting worse as the pandemic drags on.

Preliminary data shows suspected overdoses nationally increased 18% in March, 29% in April and 42% in May, compared to year-earlier periods, according to a *Washington Post* report. It cited the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program, a federal initiative that collects information from ambulance teams, hospitals and police.

Other parts of Florida have seen similar spikes. By July, Jacksonville was reporting a 40% increase in overdose calls. Manatee County reported a 44% rise.

An annual fundraiser for Crossroads Club in Delray Beach organized by chef and restaurant owner Louie Bossi and colleagues had to be

canceled in June because of the coronavirus.

Bossi, who speaks frankly about his own recovery from addiction, said at least three employees at his restaurants relapsed during the pandemic. Bossi is a partner in restaurants including Louie Bossi's Ristorante in Boca Raton and Fort Lauderdale and Elisabetta's Ristorante in Delray Beach.

Workers came to him to express “fear and difficulty,” Bossi said. “I relate to everything they talk about. I’ve been there and done that.”

Born in New York and raised in New Jersey, Bossi has talked about his own previous years of addiction as daily “torture” before he began a different path at Crossroads. He sees the stress in the eyes of people he wants to help.

“It’s caused a lot of relapses and a lot of deaths,” he said.

A different story from 2019

A little more than one year ago, things looked different. Palm Beach County Fire Rescue reported a 21% decrease in opioid overdose patients in the first half of 2019, compared to the first six months of 2018. Since 2017, there had been a 61% decrease in county emergency responses to overdoses, State

Overdoses in Delray Beach

Jan. 1 to July 31, 2020	Jan. 1 to July 31, 2019
Overdose calls 229	171
Overdose deaths 42	21

Source: Delray Beach Police Department

Attorney Dave Aronberg, working with a Sober Homes Task Force, announced at the time.

By July 31, 2020, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue had logged 1,063 overdose calls for 1,086 patients during the calendar year, according to the department. That compared to 799 calls for 814 patients in the first seven months of 2019, a 33% increase in calls.

A spokesman said he did not have information on overdose deaths.

People who count on meetings for support said isolation was a big factor as the initial impact of COVID-19 began to hit.

“The most immediate concern was meetings — meetings generally held in public spaces,” said one participant, who asked not to be identified, in a recovery group that gathers regularly in southern Palm Beach County. “Once public spaces were shut down, it was challenging. Some people weren’t as open to trying Zoom.”

The pressure has not let up, with one participant in the group dying of an overdose in July, she said. “He had started to get to know people and was really excited about making a new life.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has

affected people in different ways, she said.

“Some people are like, ‘oh my God, I have to get out of my house,’” she said. “There are others saying, ‘oh my God, I have to go to work every day in public.’”

For some people in recovery, 2020 will go down as the year one epidemic met another.

“Individuals working for their recovery are now in a life-and-death struggle,” said Jeffrey Fiorentino, CEO of KipuHealth in Coral Gables, a software provider serving the substance abuse, mental health and eating disorder communities. Palm Beach County’s Sober Homes Task Force posted written remarks from him in meeting materials.

“The two great epidemics of our generation — opioid addiction and COVID-19 — are intersecting in ways that impact and worsen each other,” Fiorentino said. “For individuals in recovery, the social distancing, lack of work, homelessness, anxiety, shattered treatment models, fear of the future and the crushing loneliness of isolation has, in many cases, derailed sobriety. ...”

That requires a “reset,” he said, of efforts to help. ★

Jane Smith contributed to this story.

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Along the Coast

For hotels, pre-pandemic success may be 5-7 years away

By Mary Hladky

COVID-19 has slammed the Wyndham Boca Raton.

"It is grim," said general manager Phillip DiPonio. His average occupancy rate has plunged to 25%, "which clearly does not pay the bills."

About one quarter of his staff has been laid off or furloughed. The bellman is gone. The shuttle service is on ice.

Nearly all his corporate business has canceled to the end of the year. Weddings are way down, and the couples who are booking have dramatically downsized their guest lists. International travelers have disappeared.

One recent bright spot was the arrival of parents bringing their children to start classes at Florida Atlantic and Lynn universities, boosting his occupancy to nearly 40%.

DiPonio has an advantage, though. His Wyndham franchise hotel at 1950 Glades Road is locally owned by Mitchell Robbins, who also is co-owner of the Farmer's Table restaurant adjacent to the hotel. "I know our owner will sustain us," he said.

His plight is shared by hoteliers across the county and country.

"Things are probably the worst for the hotel business in its history," said Peter Ricci, director of FAU's hospitality and tourism management program.

He expects a very slow recovery, with a return to a "reasonable" amount of business in 12-24 months. But a return to pre-pandemic occupancy, room rates, profit margins and staffing levels will take five to seven years, he says.

A June forecast by hospitality industry data firm STR and Tourism Economics was only a bit more optimistic, saying that U.S. hotel demand will not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023, and average daily hotel rates will not fully recover in the next five years.

Roger Amidon, president of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association's Palm Beach County chapter and general manager of the oceanfront Palm Beach Marriott resort on Singer Island, also said the hotel industry is in dire straits.

"We have been annihilated," he said. "We have never seen anything like this. There is no light at the end of the tunnel as we see it now."

The American Hotel and Lodging Association is pressing Congress to provide hotels with economic relief.

"It's hard to overstate just how devastating the pandemic has been for the hotel industry," AHLA president and CEO Chip Rogers said on July 29. "We have never seen a crisis of this magnitude."

A July AHLA survey of hotel owners, operators and employees found that 87% of



The Wyndham Boca Raton and others 'have been annihilated' as never before, an industry executive says. Photo provided

hotels laid off or furloughed staff because of the coronavirus pandemic and only 37% of hotels have been able to bring back at least half of their full-time employees.

On Aug. 18, the AHLA cited a national report that the hotel industry is facing a wave of foreclosures and the loss of tens of thousands of jobs.

Many Palm Beach County hotels temporarily closed in March when occupancy rates plunged and began reopening in May. Business picked up a bit until July when COVID-19 cases spiked, driving guests to cancel reservations.

Hotels were showing a very modest recovery in August.

Ricci said occupancy rates range from 10% to 40%, far less than the 70%-75% that is considered healthy.

Hotels are showing their best results on weekends. "The weekdays are miserable," he said.

Oceanfront hotels were doing better than those inland, with a few hitting 70% occupancy on weekends, Amidon and other hoteliers said. Hotels that cater to leisure travelers had the edge over large conference hotels, Ricci said.

"The bottom line is there is slight improvement," Ricci said. "But if we were to stay at this level even for another two months, I definitely think there would be more layoffs and foreclosures."

As of late August, he and Amidon were unaware of any hotel foreclosures or bankruptcies in the county.

To keep their heads above water, hoteliers are reinventing the way they do business.

With business travel at a halt, international travelers scarce and many U.S. residents avoiding air travel, they are marketing to guests who live within driving distance to Palm Beach County.

They have slashed room rates and are emphasizing on their websites the steps they are taking to keep their hotels clean and sanitized so that guests will feel safe.

The lobby of DiPonio's Wyndham Boca Raton was cleaned three or four times a day before the pandemic. Now, the cleaning is constant.

Guests want that and are paying attention to sanitation procedures, he said.

"People absolutely want to see the elevator buttons wiped

down. They want to see we are all wearing masks," he said.

Over the long term, he thinks the new procedures will become permanent. For example, his hotel now uses electrostatic disinfectant sprayers to kill any viruses in guest rooms and common areas. That protects both guests and hotel housekeepers, he said.

"We will get through this COVID thing," he said. "Going forward, hotels will have things in place to keep guests safer" and even protect them from cold and flu viruses. "That is a wonderful thing for the future."

The Aloft Delray Beach at 202 SE Fifth Ave., a Marriott franchise hotel, has no plans to throw in the towel, but its occupancy rate and revenues are way down.

"It's an unbelievably incredible impact," owner Alan Mindel said of COVID-19. "It has wrecked our world."

He too has laid off or furloughed staff, although some are now back at work. But since the hotel is not hosting banquets, he can't bring back banquet staff, and he remains down four or five housekeepers, one front desk employee and some others. He is trying to give as many employees as possible enough work hours so they can make ends meet.

Before the pandemic, most of his guests were international or out-of-state; now they are mostly Floridians. Mindel is marketing to in-state residents and promoting his hotel's cleaning and safety protocols, including electrostatic sprayers.

Weekday business remains low, but occupancy is back up to 30% to 40% on weekends.

One of the challenges is providing excellent service despite the difficulties. "We must maintain customer service at a high level," he said. "The chef has a smaller captured audience and we want to make sure we impress each time."

Mindel said his company, Samar 202 Florida LLC, has a partner who is well financed.

"We can weather it," he said. Even so, "we could really use a vaccine by the end of the year. We could use a little more federal assistance."

In the spring, Cathy Balestriere, general manager of privately owned Crane's Beach House in Delray Beach, pivoted from the leisure market to extended-stay guests, which was possible because each of her 28

rooms has a kitchen. But she is constantly readjusting.

She too is now focusing on the drive market, and her occupancy rate was about 40% to 50% on weekends in late August. But when COVID-19 cases spiked in July, the cancellations rolled in.

Her hotel at 82 Gleason St. is a short distance from the beach, which is attractive to guests. She is offering a "7-night getaway" at reduced rates aimed at people desperate to get out of their houses.

"Stay at Crane's. Stock up the fridge. It is like having your own beach house at Crane's. You don't have to be concerned about exposing yourself by dining out every night," she said of her message to potential guests.

She has not laid off staff, but has trimmed costs and adjusted duties to keep them working. For example, she stopped using a landscaping company and instead is having some of her employees do that work.

Having a robust safety and sanitation program is essential because guests demand it. "People are being very careful and cautious," she said.

Nick Gold, public relations director for the Eau Palm Beach in Manalapan, did not provide an occupancy number except to say, "It certainly is not where it was last year at this time."

The oceanside resort temporarily closed in March but continued to pay salaries and

provide health insurance for three months. It has since cut almost 50% of its staff.

The resort reopened on July 1 in anticipation of strong demand for the July Fourth weekend. But the county closed beaches, dealing a blow to many hoteliers. Since the beaches opened, "we see guests returning," he said.

The resort's conference business is at a halt but couples are beginning to book weddings, albeit small ones. Guests are mainly South Floridians who drive to the resort for staycations.

"They feel it is time for a break and to have a change of scenery from being at home," Gold said.

The Eau Palm Beach has launched a "Stay Safe Program" that affects every part of the resort's operations. The detailed list, and videos, on its website explain contact-free check-in, social distancing measures, linen cleaning procedures, electrostatic sprayers and UV light technology to disinfect everything from luggage carts to the air, and new seating layouts at restaurants.

"It is all about making the guest feel safe and comfortable in the new world we are living in," Gold said.

Guest surveys show they appreciate the changes. "They say, we really appreciate you're taking this seriously and we feel good about being here," he said. ★



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Obituaries

Gerald Allen 'Jerry' Goray

By Sallie James

OCEAN RIDGE — Longtime Ocean Ridge resident Gerald Allen "Jerry" Goray, the dedicated chairman of the town's Planning and Zoning Commission and a devoted philanthropist, died on June 30 of heart disease. He was weeks shy of his 81st birthday.

"He will be sadly missed," said Mark Marsh, a colleague on the Planning and Zoning Commission who took over after Mr. Goray stepped down. "It was a pleasure to work with him. His heart and soul were in Ocean Ridge."

The real estate developer had lived in the quiet beachside town for 30 years with his wife, Donna, and kept close watch on what type of development was permitted there. His goal was to preserve the quality, character and uniqueness of Ocean Ridge, Marsh said. Mr. Goray was also chairman of the town's Infrastructure Surtax Citizens Oversight Committee.

"I worked with him at least seven years. Our Planning and Zoning Commission was quite parochial and we both worked to try to get it where it is today, where we have some say as to what is developed in the town," Marsh said.

Mr. Goray was a Michigan native, born Aug. 22, 1939, in Detroit. He grew up there, attending Detroit Catholic Central High School, the University of Detroit and the University of Michigan Law School. He married his high school sweetheart, Donna, in 1958 and spent the next 62 years with her.

His wife remembered her husband as a complicated, brilliant person who loved to talk, and always tried to do better than he had done before.

"He was constantly thinking more should be done, more can be done, let's do some more," Donna Goray said. "Quiet wasn't him. He loved to talk."

Mr. Goray practiced law in Detroit for several years, became area counsel for HUD, and then co-founded a law firm specializing in real estate law.

His career in real estate development began in the 1970s, when he began building houses and developing subdivisions in suburban Detroit.

The couple moved to Florida in 1981 and built their house in Ocean Ridge in 1989. In Florida, Mr. Goray developed self-storage units, apartments, senior housing and other properties.

In 1979, Mr. Goray founded In the Pines, Inc.,

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing affordable housing for low-income, immigrant farmworkers. The organization operates two low-income housing complexes in Delray Beach.

"He was always very prideful when he talked about it, but you never felt pressure to participate," Ocean Ridge Mayor Kristine de Haseth said.

Donna Goray said her husband completely rebuilt the two apartment buildings because he was always driven to do more.

"They are absolutely lovely. Very well maintained, and really beautiful," she said. He worked until he died, said his son Brian.

"No one ever knew he was sick until he had to quit coming to meetings. He was very humble in that way. He never wanted the limelight on himself," de Haseth said.

Mr. Goray loved cars, contemporary art and his work.

"He enjoyed what he did," his son Brian said. "He had a lot of friends and he enjoyed life. All of his adult life he owned one sports car or another, starting with a Corvette. His last car was a Porsche."

People who knew him described him as witty, thoughtful, dedicated and inclusive.

"He was dedicated to the town, he was dedicated to his family or any project he got involved with, whether it was assisted living, his nonprofit, or the McCormick Mile Beach Club. Anything that was community-minded he supported," de Haseth said.

"He always made everyone feel very warm and welcome. He was very active in the community not only in a leadership role but was also very supportive of the McCormick Mile Beach Club. Every year he would sponsor a Ben and Jerry's ice cream truck in front of his house so the community could watch Fourth of July fireworks in his front yard."

De Haseth also remembered Mr. Goray as forward-thinking and respectful of varying opinions.

"That made our job much easier to have that kind of leadership — well thought out, very even-handed and very well-researched. I really appreciated it. I had an even deeper respect for what Jerry did for the town after I became mayor," she said.

Mr. Goray is survived by his wife; sons Brian and Greg; a brother, David; a sister, Christina, and numerous nieces, nephews and grandchildren.

Johan Erik Hvide

GOLF — Johan Erik Hvide died at home July 15, surrounded by loved ones. He was 71.

Born Sept. 5, 1948, in Glen Cove, New York, son of Hans Johan and Elsa Mosse Hvide, Mr. Hvide spent his life defying odds. He possessed the stubborn determination of a true Viking. He was diagnosed at age 7 with polio and his doctors said that he would not survive — but he did. His doctors said that he would never get out of an iron lung — but he did. His doctors said that he would never get out of a wheelchair — but he did, going on to become a varsity golfer for Saint Andrew's School in Boca Raton, where he graduated in 1965.

He went on to the University of Miami, where he was president of Alpha Kappa Psi business fraternity and a member of ODK, the highest national leadership and scholastic fraternity. He graduated in 1970 with a BBA. He did continuing education through Harvard. But, as the Beach Boys sang, Mr. Hvide loved and was true to his (high) school for the rest of his life.

He married his sweetheart, Betsy Frances Schmidt, in the Chapel of Saint Andrew on May 29, 1971, and both of their sons, Leif-Erik and Johan Anders, were also graduates. He served on the board of trustees for 12 years, including as chairman. Under his leadership, the school began a new era, calling the Rev. George Andrews as the new headmaster, implementing a long-range master plan, and successfully launching its first capital campaign.

Mr. Hvide's donations were responsible for the construction of the Saint Andrew's Lower School, but true to his quiet modesty, he would not permit the facilities to be named in his honor.

Mr. Hvide was a consummate businessman who loved his work with absolute passion. He joined his father at Hvide Marine in 1970 and went on to become its president in 1981, CEO in 1991, and chairman in 1994. Under his leadership, the company grew from a small family tugboat operation into a global shipping company with offshore and harbor tugs, offshore supply vessels and chemical tankers. He led the company in an initial public offering in 1996, raising \$1.5 billion in capital and growing the company from 23 vessels to one of the world's leading providers of global marine support services with a fleet of 273 ships, 2,500 employees, operations in 20 countries and revenues of \$400 million.

Hailed by *Maritime Executive* as an "unquestionably innovative, undoubtedly brilliant" leader in the maritime industry, Mr. Hvide invented the revolutionary Catug tanker and the SDM tugboat for which he held two patents in vessel design.

His accolades include induction into the International Maritime Hall of Fame, Master Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst and Young, International Executive of the Year by the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, congressional appointee to the U.S. Coast Guard, council member of the American Bureau of Shipping, and member of various industry, corporate and bank boards.

Mr. Hvide also loved to serve his local and religious communities, having served for various parishes in South Florida as well as having lobbied the state of Florida to protect the natural tree corridor along A1A in Gulf Stream, and was made mayor for the day.

He was a member of the Gulf Stream Bath and Tennis, Lauderdale Yacht Club, Royal Palm Yacht & County Club, Country Club of Florida and Cat Cay Yacht Club, where he spent many years at his home, Manor House.

He is predeceased by his parents and sister Elsa. In addition to his wife and sons, he is survived by grandchildren Magnus Johan, Hans Kristoffer and Hákon.

Mr. Hvide will be remembered as a giant among men, but his greatest accomplishments were not the ones that made the papers but rather the quiet ones he shared with friends and family.

To him we say: "For us you were a truly special husband, father, and friend and a shining example of how we should all lead our lives. We want to say thank you. Thank you for the many sacrifices you made, teaching us to put others first and that family is more important than anything. Thank you for teaching us the art of storytelling; you always had us hanging at your every word and we can only hope to be as captivating as you.

"Thank you for all of the incredible adventures; together we learned to appreciate the journey and the world around us. Thank you for teaching us the value of dedication and hard work; the standard you set is golden. Thank you for your determination and perseverance; you had the heart of a lion and we can only strive to be as brave as you. Thank you for teaching us to truly listen. You were always 110% in the moment, and there is nothing more powerful than to hear what others have to say.

"Thank you for your unflappable calmness in the face of adversity; you are the original 'keep calm and carry on.' Thank you for showing us that anything is possible if you put your mind to it; there is nothing more satisfying than defying the odds and the critics. Thank you for your kindness — you always had time for anyone and everyone. Thank you for teaching us faith, forgiveness and unconditional love; you are the perfect example of Christ's teachings. You will be greatly missed and eternally loved."

— Obituary submitted by the family

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Obituaries

William Thomas 'Tom' Gerrard

By Dan Moffett

MANALAPAN — Tom Gerrard became Manalapan's mayor in 2008 and quickly earned a reputation as a progressive leader who was popular with town staff and residents.



People at Town Hall couldn't wait to see him show up in the morning — yes, partly because of his good nature, but also because of how he might arrive.

"You'd never know what kind of classic car he'd drive up in," said Linda Stumpf, the Manalapan town manager. "Every time it was something different. It was great fun."

Mr. Gerrard was fond of his 12.5-bathroom home on South Ocean Boulevard, but what he really wanted to talk about was the garage he built beside it that housed dozens of his prized vintage automobiles. He considered them works of art and scoffed at modern vehicles as "computer-produced and bean-counter engineered" abominations.

The classic American rides of the '50s and '60s, convertibles and pickups, were his consuming passion. "If it were treatable, it would be a disease," he confessed to *The Coastal Star* in 2011.

Mr. Gerrard died on July 23 in Big Sky, Montana, after a short illness. He was 74.

William Thomas Gerrard served as Manalapan's mayor for two years before moving to Montana to be closer to family. He also kept a home in Fort Lauderdale. During his time on the commission, he guided projects that have left a lasting mark on the town.

"He had a great impact on the community," said Keith Waters, the current mayor. "Many of the things we're working on now he brought to the table. He was a good man."

Mr. Gerrard pushed for improvements to the town's water delivery system and stormwater drains. He oversaw the renovation of the water plant, and helped negotiate a sand transfer plant agreement with Ocean Ridge.

It was his passion for vintage autos, however,

that gained him a national reputation among collectors and aficionados.

"Tom loaned the museum cars on multiple occasions," said Jeffrey Bliemeister, executive director of the Antique Automobile Club of America in Hershey, Pennsylvania. "I'm sorry to hear of Tom's passing."

Mr. Gerrard donated his collection of thousands of owner's manuals, brochures, engineering diagrams, fabric samples and catalogues to the AACAA's Library and Research Center in Hershey.

"Tom was an exceptionally generous man with an incredible eye for detail and a dedication to preserving automotive history," says Chris Ritter, the library's head librarian.

Ritter said Mr. Gerrard's love of classic autos was infectious: "It was always a joy to see Tom in person and see how much fun he had with his cars."

Mr. Gerrard was born in Queens, New York, but grew up in Indiana, where he worked as a gas station attendant and his love of cars began. He moved to South Florida in 1957 and graduated from Broward Junior College and Florida Atlantic University. He established his business career as president of CMH Corp., a supplier of high-rise cranes and elevators.

He transitioned from cranes into telecommunications, owning Air Space Radio services and Advanced Radio Communications Services, companies that grew to rank among the industry's largest. In 2003 he became chairman of Interlaken Inc., which specialized in Everglades restoration work for the South Florida Water Management District.

Mr. Gerrard is survived by his children, Lisa Marie Gerrard and Mark Thomas Gerrard; a sister, Darcy Jean Gerrard; and grandchildren Miles Barrett and Brenden Patrick Radick, and Grace Kendal and Jack Thomas Gerrard. His family asks that memorial charitable donations be made to Eagle Mount of Bozeman, the Yellowstone Park Foundation, Big Sky Community Organization or the AACAA Library.

Agnes Conroy

By Sallie James

LANTANA — Hypoluxo Island resident Agnes Conroy, a lifelong academic who was married to her beloved husband, Francis, for 62 years, died on July 31 at Hospice By the Sea in Boca Raton after a lengthy illness. She was 82.



Born April 29, 1938, in Lettermore, County Galway, Ireland, Mrs. Conroy grew up

on a farm when times were tough. But it didn't stop her from becoming a standout in school. She attended Ireland's prestigious Kylemore Abbey School on scholarship, embarking on a lifetime of academic achievement.

The school "was run by nuns and it was a secondary school and operated as a boarding school from 1922. She attended that boarding school," her son Martin Conroy recalled. "But the local Catholic priest thought she would be better served to come home and help her mother."

Nevertheless, Agnes Conroy went on to earn two bachelor's degrees.

Mrs. Conroy moved to London in the 1950s, where she met her future husband, Francis. The couple was married in 1958 at St. George's Cathedral. Mrs. Conroy later became deputy headmistress of St. Bernard's Prep School in Slough, and headmistress of the Brigidine School in Windsor.

She met Queen Elizabeth in 1975 when the queen toured the Brigidine School. A photographer captured an image of a young Agnes Conroy shaking the queen's gloved hand.

"She was proud she was asked to be deputy headmistress and headmistress at the other school

in Brigidine," her son said.

Mrs. Conroy also crossed paths with celebrities during her tenure at St. Bernard's Prep School. Her students included the children of British actor Roger Moore, known for his role as James Bond; and the children of the former CEO and chairman of the H.J. Heinz Co., Tony O'Reilly, a renowned international rugby player.

Martin Conroy said his mother was always trying to help others and when she learned that the Catholic Church was reluctant to baptize Moore's children because he was divorced, she stepped in.

"My mother took it upon herself to make sure they were baptized," Martin Conroy said.

Mrs. Conroy left the world of academia when Francis Conroy's construction business took off. Together, they worked at Fera Construction until moving to Palm Beach in 1988, where they rented a home on Orange Grove Road, Martin Conroy recalled. His parents lived in Palm Beach until 2004, before moving to Hypoluxo Island.

Agnes Conroy lived much of her life battling multiple sclerosis, but was not diagnosed until the late 1980s. Along the way, she tried many holistic treatments. One of the craziest involved bee venom therapy, which involved having a bee sting the base of her spine, her son recalled. The bee had other ideas.

"The bee ended up stinging my dad," he chuckled.

Mrs. Conroy is survived by her husband; three sons, Martin of Hypoluxo Island; Francis of Palm Beach; and Peter of Naphill, Buckinghamshire, England; three grandchildren; and two sisters, Sara Kelly and Kathleen Pelletier. She was preceded in death by her brother Padraigh and her sister Moira. Services were private.

Jay H. Van Vechten II

By Mary Thurwachter

BOCA RATON — Jay H. Van Vechten II, a Boca Raton public relations pro who honed his skills in New York City and later used that experience to found the Boating and Beach Bash for People with Disabilities, died on July 11 at Hospice By the Sea. He was 75.



The annual Boating and Beach Bash, launched in Boca Raton in 2009, became the largest free outdoor event in Palm Beach County for people with disabilities. Mr. Van Vechten himself was disabled since a fall in 2001.

"Jay was such a genuine friend and a real ambassador for people with special needs," said his close friend Mark Hansen. "That was his life, always on a mission to help others, always wanting to add a voice where others couldn't. He had a personal touch in all his ways that left lasting positive impressions to all whom he came in touch with."

Mr. Van Vechten was born Sept. 17, 1944, in New York City. He studied graphic design at Carnegie Mellon University and later founded his own company, Van Vechten & Co. in Manhattan, where he represented medical, pharmaceutical and health care clients. He was fond of travel and enjoyed organizing trips with groups of friends from around the world.

"As a devoted husband, father and friend, Jay's capacity for love — the genuine, true, unconditional love — was large," his wife, Lowell, wrote. "He loved people, and everyone who knew him understood that in him they had a friend for life. In his honor, we need to take the 'lessons' he gifted us with and pay them forward. Stay connected, celebrate life, practice forgiveness and be kind to one another and to strangers. Don't be afraid to reach out, make a difference and see the positive aspects of life and the lives of those you come in contact with."

Mr. Van Vechten was preceded in death by his parents, Isabel H. and Jay H. Van Vechten. In addition to his wife, Mr. Van Vechten is survived by their son Nicholas, grandson Alex and countless friends.

Ralph Goodrich Boalt II

DELRAY BEACH — Ralph Goodrich Boalt II of Delray Beach died on July 28. He was 83. He was born June 28, 1937, in Ramsey, Minnesota, the son of Eben L. & Virginia M. Boalt.



Mr. Boalt was a graduate of Marquette University in Milwaukee and played pro football in Canada. He was a CEO for Kentucky Fried Chicken. Mr. Boalt lived in Delray Beach most of his adult life and was instrumental along with Maury Power in starting the legendary St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Mr. Boalt was an amazing, kind, generous, handsome, 6-foot-6 man who possessed a positive attitude even with his 30-plus-year battle with MS. He found great enjoyment dining with all his dear friends. The funeral service was private.

— Obituary submitted by the family



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Boca Raton

Diverging diamond interchange safer, FDOT assures city

By Steve Plunkett

After some back-and-forth communications between city and state transportation officials, the plan for a “diverging diamond interchange” at Interstate 95 and Glades Road is back on track.

“Our engineering staff raised a number of questions, and [state workers] have gone back and made modifications and adjustments, and talked to the staff,” City Manager Leif Ahnell said. “And I believe everybody’s happy now, and we’re all fully supportive of the project.”

In March the City Council threatened to call on its state and federal lobbyists to fight the plan after the city’s municipal services director and traffic engineer raised concerns about safety and traffic operations.

A diverging diamond interchange makes vehicles switch sides of the road at multilane X crossings guarded by traffic signals at either end of the diamond.

Paul Lampley of the Florida Department of Transportation told council members Aug. 24 that the goal of a DDI is “to improve traffic operations and system performance, reduce congestion and increase safety.”

Another benefit: The design will replace 4-foot-wide bike lanes on Glades Road to 7-foot-wide, buffered bike lanes with a 10-foot-wide “shared-use” lane for bicyclists and pedestrians in the middle, he said.

Backup generators on automatic transfer switches will be installed to power the traffic signals in case of an outage, he said, answering one of the city’s primary questions.

Other FDOT representatives said plans are also being made to convert the I-95 interchanges at Lantana Road and 45th Street in West Palm Beach to DDIs.

Design engineer Jose Otero said the Glades project will reduce crashes by 9% and reduce the severity of crashes. It will increase throughput of traffic along Glades and decrease delays, he said. And it eliminates 8,000 linear feet of retaining wall that would have been needed for a no-longer-planned “flyover” ramp.

The state agency expects work on the DDI will begin in the first three months of 2021. The schedule calls for 700 days of construction.

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

In other transportation news, council members endorsed a plan to slim Federal Highway south of Southeast Mizner Boulevard from six lanes to four while adding bike lanes and widening sidewalks. Money to design that project will not be available until 2024. ★

Delray Beach

Utility director: ‘Safest reclaimed water system in country’ once all service is restored

By Jane Smith

Delray Beach barrier island residents have endured three reclaimed water shutoffs in less than two years.

The first two were short, under 10 days. This year, the entire reclaimed water system was shut down for months, starting in early February.

By late August, slightly more than 7%, or 55 parcels, of the barrier island homes were still waiting to have the reclaimed water service restored.

“It’s the safest reclaimed water system in the country,” said Hassan Hadjimiry, new utilities director for Delray Beach. “It was disconnected, and every installation was inspected and surveyed for crossed connections before the parcel was placed back into service.”

Delray Beach has spent at least \$1.05 million to bring its reclaimed water system into compliance with state standards by inspecting every reclaimed water connection in the city.

At the Aug. 11 City Commission meeting, Hadjimiry broke down the expense into three categories: \$254,876.13 for materials, including backflow preventers; \$558,647.14 for contractors; and \$228,845.83 for staff overtime.

He also said 55 of the 68 offline accounts had switched to drinking water for irrigation. Most of the switched accounts sit along South Ocean Boulevard.

“The properties there are complex. They are large, 2 to 3 acres, with lots of concrete,” Hadjimiry said. “It’s too hard to bring them into compliance.”

The estates also sit below 801 S. Ocean Blvd., where a resident called the Florida Department of Health on Jan. 2 to say she was not adequately informed of a crossed connection issue in December 2018.

Some of the South Ocean residents reported they were getting sick from drinking the contaminated water between October and December 2018. Their complaints were not reported to the Florida Department of Health, as required.

That investigation led to notes compiled by a Utilities Department inspector who was hired in June 2017. Christine Ferrigan claimed whistleblower status in early January.

On Feb. 3, three Utilities Department managers and an assistant city attorney met with six representatives of the Florida DOH. The six included two department attorneys.

City staff “felt intimidated by the unexpected firepower they were confronted by,” according to a staff Feb. 20 draft letter to Rafael Reyes, environmental director at the Florida DOH.

The health agency wanted

Delray Beach to issue a citywide boil water order.

Instead, the city offered to shut down its entire reclaimed water program, which was accomplished on the evening of Feb. 4.

With approval of the Florida DOH, the city is restoring the reclaimed water service in phases.

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

The city must reuse 4.6 million gallons a day by 2025, according to the settlement. Its current level is 2.6 million gallons a day, which can fluctuate depending on the rainwater received, Hadjimiry said.

Most of the city’s water customers on the barrier island have reclaimed water service for lawn irrigation. The golf courses, city parks and master-metered communities west of the interstate also use reclaimed water for irrigation.

A crossed connection happens when reclaimed water pipes are mistakenly connected to the drinking water supply. The reclaimed water can be used only on landscaping, not for watering vegetable plants, filling pools or connecting with outside showers.

Backflow preventers are needed to stop the reclaimed water from mixing with the city’s drinking water supply. When Delray Beach contractors inspected every reclaimed water location earlier this year, they reported 194 backflow preventers were missing on the barrier island — a little over 25% of the required installations.

It was also discovered that 130 city water customers were never connected to the Delray Beach reclaimed water program, despite the city rule that mandates connection to the reclaimed system if lines exist in front of the homes.

Most sit on the barrier island, Hadjimiry said. No records exist to explain why they were not connected.

Investigation underway

Delray Beach hired a forensics firm in late April to investigate the reclaimed water system since its start, Hadjimiry said. That report will determine responsibility of the system — including construction and inspections. It will be ready in late September, he said.

The city also is trying to avoid civil fines from the Florida DOH, which sent a warning letter to Delray Beach on July 1. That letter listed 13 possible violations of the reclaimed water

program in Delray Beach.

In response, the city has created a Regulatory Compliance Section with four employees who report directly to the utilities director. They will carry out the city’s cross-connection control program and audit all accounts requiring backflow preventers.

The city expects full implementation in about 12 months, Interim City Manager Jennifer Alvarez wrote in her July 16 reply to the Florida DOH.

Alvarez also said the city will supply reclaimed water customers with annual notices about the origin, nature and characteristics of reclaimed water; how it can be safely used; and limits of its use.

In addition, Delray Beach will provide instructions for complying with the reclaimed water design standards for homebuilders, according to the July 16 letter. The city standard calls for reclaimed pipes and fixtures to be purple in color and drinking water pipes and fixtures to be dark blue.

City leaders, including Hadjimiry and Alvarez, met on July 22 with Florida DOH staff to review the possible violations and Delray Beach’s response.

“The Florida DOH is currently reviewing the city’s responses,” Gina Carter, city spokeswoman, wrote in an Aug. 18 email. The Florida DOH declined to say when it will issue a final report.

Meanwhile, the city has found two other crossed connections this year at two barrier island condominium buildings.

In April, inspectors discovered the reclaimed water pipes were wrongly connected to the drinking water pipes at 120 S. Ocean Blvd. The city issued a boil water order for that 30-unit building on April 22.

The Ocean Place property manager can use the drinking water system for irrigation while it investigates the crossed connection, Carter wrote.

The other condo building, known as Commodore Apartments, has eight units and sits at the northeast corner of Gleason Street and Langer Way. The cross connection was discovered July 7 by city inspectors.

The city notified the Florida DOH, as required.

As long as the backflow device was installed, inspected and certified, the city did not have to notify the Commodore Apartments residents within 24 hours, according to a July 8 email from the Florida DOH.

Hadjimiry sent a July 10 email asking the city water resources administrator to “please notify the eight residents at 1029 Langer Way and advise them that we discovered an onsite cross connection.” ★

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WATER

Continued from page 1

“It’s not unhealthy, it’s just visually unacceptable,” says Chris Helfrich, Boca Raton’s director of utilities. “It’s not common, but it’s something that happens more than it’s advertised.”

Still, the slug that made it into Delray Beach’s drinking water on March 27 may have helped to bring attention to maintenance and operational issues plaguing Delray Beach’s aging water plant — which has not seen a major upgrade since the early 1990s.

Correspondence between members of the city’s Utilities Department and county health officials responsible for ensuring state regulations for safe drinking water are followed, as well as internal city documents, detail how a series of malfunctions and missteps led to the unwanted release of sediment in March.

These documents, along with reports filed by health inspectors, highlight maintenance issues that likely contributed to the release of the discolored water. These issues were a concern to regulators.

Since the appearance of the slug, the city has taken a series of steps to address a variety of issues, including long overdue cleaning or the scheduling of cleaning of groundwater storage tanks and repairing malfunctioning equipment.

In June, Hassan Hadjimiry came on board as Delray Beach’s utilities director, filling a spot that had been vacant for 14 months since the departure of Marjorie Craig in April 2019.

Hadjimiry, who had been deputy director for the Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department, is well respected by utility directors in Delray Beach’s neighboring communities.

With the departure earlier this year of the water plant manager and a supervisor, one of the city’s deputy directors of utilities has been given expanded oversight of the plant’s day-to-day operations.

“We’re watching the plant much, much more than ever before,” says Hadjimiry.

The city also has sent out notices and used social media to assure residents that the drinking water is safe. On its website, the city points out that the water is tested daily and assures compliance with all state safe drinking water regulations.

“The water we send out meets all state standards,” Hadjimiry said.



The Delray Beach water treatment plant, a few blocks south of downtown, has not received a major upgrade since the early 1990s. The city says it plans to improve cleaning and other maintenance at the aging plant, watching for trouble more closely than ever before. **Google map image**

Sediment in the water

It was about 10:30 p.m. March 26 when a telemetry system, which uses an automated communication process to collect and send remote data, failed to forward real-time information about a storage tank abnormality to plant operators, according to information provided by the city.

A low-level shut-off system at the groundwater storage tank serving the city’s north side also failed to work properly, allowing water levels in the tank to drop to about 3 feet, far below the normal 7- to 12-foot level, according to the city.

When that occurred, sediment that accumulated at the bottom of the tank seeped into the drinking water.

The plant operator at the time noticed that the telemetry system was not working but didn’t visibly inspect the tank, according to Deputy Utilities Director Bryan Heller.

The problem was not noticed until 7 a.m. the next day when the day shift came in, and city utility leaders didn’t become aware of the issue until after residents began calling to complain about cloudy or discolored water, according to information obtained from the city.

The Utilities Department was able to move the water from the north storage tank to another tank and discharge it into a pond from there.

Heller said that senior utilities department managers were not notified of the incident shortly after it was discovered. He said that had the information been forwarded sooner, hydrants could have been flushed before the slug reached customers.

A notice was sent to residents of the north end of the city, who were told that the water was safe but not treated to the city’s color and taste standards. The city

advised residents who continued to have problems to run their water for about 10 minutes and flush the system.

The sediment that entered into water lines was likely from an accumulation at the bottom of the storage tank of tiny particles of minerals found in water, particularly lime, which is used in the city’s lime softening treatment operation.

“There’s nothing in that tank that isn’t already in the water,” said Colin Groff, Boynton Beach’s assistant city manager for public services, who oversees water treatment operations.

Maintenance issues

What may have been an issue in Delray Beach, however, is the quantity of the sediment in the tank — which has a capacity of about 2 million gallons — and how long it had been there.

Under state Department of Environmental Protection regulations, groundwater storage tanks must be inspected and cleaned every five years. Yet in an April 20 memo to then-City Manager George Gretsas through an assistant city manager, Heller wrote that the slug may have been caused by noncompliance.

“The sediment was the result of the north storage tank having not been cleaned every five years as required by regulation,” Heller wrote in the memo, in which he recommended disciplinary action against then-water plant manager John Bullard.

In the memo, Heller also noted that two other water storage tanks at the main water plant did not appear to have been cleaned every five years.

The memo also makes reference to a failure of the water plant operations team to clean the clear well — a large tank below a series of filters that contains water as it flows through the treatment process. The clear well, however, is not

subject to the same five-year inspection requirements as are water storage tanks.

“The tank inspection report for the clear well, dated May 12, 2016, specifically indicates the presence of ‘large accumulations of silt, sediment, and other debris. This accumulation of debris should be removed immediately to help prevent future water quality testing issues,’” Heller wrote. “When Bullard was questioned about the clear well sludge, he indicated it had not been cleaned since 1972.”

The city since has cleaned the north tank and has scheduled cleanings of the two south tanks at the end of this year or early next year. It also has scheduled the cleaning of the clear well, which is expected to take a week and should not interfere with service to residents.

Bullard, who started with the city in 1982 and became water treatment plant manager in 2000, resigned at the request of the city manager on May 6, according to Heller. A supervisor and operator involved in the incident both resigned on their own, Heller said.

Delray Beach utilities also made several corrections after a December 2019 state-mandated “sanitary survey” by the health department found 27 deficiencies in five areas. That number is considered high, according to utilities directors from other communities, but they say most of the deficiencies didn’t affect water quality issues.

Three of the deficiencies were considered significant. They included several wells not properly sealed, filter walls leaking and vents missing proper screens, city records show.

In a Feb. 13, 2020, memo, Heller addressed each of the issues and documented improvements to the three significant issues as well as

all others, which ranged from labeling unmarked chemical storage areas to removing algae and bio-growth from exterior portions of the plant.

In neighboring communities, utilities keep regular maintenance schedules to ensure tanks are clean and sediment is removed. Boynton, for example, does not wait for the five-year intervals as required by state regulations to do maintenance on tanks.

“We clean our tanks when they need to be cleaned,” Groff said.

Both Boynton Beach and Boca Raton have been through major upgrades to their water treatment and distribution systems, with Boynton Beach spending about \$55 million for a renovation and increased capacity in 2017 and Boca Raton spending about \$20 million on a water system upgrade within the past five years.

Delray Beach has not done a major upgrade at its plant for more than two decades, but Hadjimiry says the department is planning significant improvements in the next year, including replacing major filters used in the lime softening process that are critical in assuring high water quality.

He said the department is also focused on preventive maintenance and building an inventory of spare parts.

Although an engineering study authorized by the City Commission in 2019 found that a new plant using reverse osmosis and nano-filter technology could be built for as much as \$132 million, Hadjimiry says he is leaving the door open as to what should be done with the plant and is exploring all options.

“Right now we’re looking at determining what is the most we can do with what we have in order to get the best quality of water,” he said. ★



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Lantana/Hypoluxo Island

Council hears complaints about illegal short-term rentals

By Mary Thurwachter

After hearing residents' concerns about house parties at suspected short-term rental properties, the Lantana Town Council, at its July 13 meeting, said it was addressing the problem, but warned that a resolution won't be easy.

In a letter to the Town Council, Hypoluxo Island resident Lyn Tate said that on the weekend of July 11 a house on South Atlantic Drive appeared to be rented out for Saturday night only.

"When it got dark, seven cars arrived and parked all over the front lawn," Tate wrote. "Various young people poured out of the cars and the occupants partied with music until midnight and then left the next morning. A single guest met with the owner's housecleaner and drove off. This

makes the third weekend in a row that it appears the property has been rented out as a short-term vacation getaway."

Lantana does not permit rentals for less than 30 days in the residential zoning districts (R-1 and R-1A).

Additionally, Palm Beach County restricted short-term rentals at the start of the pandemic. Those restrictions continued as COVID-19 cases began to surge.

But Hypoluxo residents suspect some houses are being used for short-term rentals.

Realtor Patricia Towle, who lives next to the party house Tate mentioned in her letter, said she had observed several houses on the island being advertised as rentals.

"I found one property that was posted for \$2,000 a night. There are various prices and locations, but I really see it

as a health and safety issue with COVID-19. I don't know whether property owners are required to clean, what their standards are. Just before I came here tonight, I saw something in the news about house parties in various states where young people gather to tempt fate."

She said she hoped that wasn't happening here.

Towle said enforcement seems to be a problem.

"Since most of these rentals take place on the weekends when code enforcement isn't around, and they seem to happen at night, is there a way that you envision we can enforce this?" she asked.

Town Manager Deborah Manzo said it didn't matter that the parties took place on the weekend and explained how the town handles illegal short-term rentals. She said once code

enforcement officers are made aware of a suspicious house, they check to see if the property is being advertised on online sites such as Airbnb and Vrbo.

"Then code enforcement will send a letter," Manzo said. Seven letters have already been sent to property owners. The letters are friendly reminders advising that this is not permitted, she said. "If the rentals continue, a notice of violation is issued."

If sufficient evidence is found, the case goes to the special magistrate, who could fine the property owner up to \$5,000.

Nicole Dritz, the town's director of development, said code enforcement is proactive. "We check the regular sites and we do that more for reaching out to the property owners to try to gain compliance from them. A lot of times, educating

them is our best first step."

Proving the violations is difficult, Dritz said. "Just seeing cars outside with out-of-state license plates is not evidence enough for the magistrate to rule against them. Firsthand knowledge is what our magistrate is looking for."

That knowledge may be gained when an officer asks someone at the house pertinent questions, such as how long the renter is staying on the property. "If the renter says, 'I'm just here for a night or two,' that is firsthand evidence that we can take to the magistrate," Dritz said.

Dritz has issued a department rule that each of the town's three code enforcement officers spends one hour per week visiting the properties in question.

There are seven or eight properties now on the list. ★

Boynton Beach

Developers pitch mixed-use downtown project

By Larry Barszewski

A \$65 million complex of apartments and stores with a free, public-access parking garage could become a pivotal part of Boynton Beach's downtown revival efforts.

The proposed eight-story project on 2.6 acres owned by the city's Community Redevelopment Agency includes 229 apartments, with 20% dedicated to workforce housing, ground-level and upper-deck pools, a clubhouse, gym, 18,000 square feet of commercial space and a 544-space public-private garage.

Developers said they would enhance the city's Dewey Park, incorporate it into the overall project and make the alley used by Ocean Avenue businesses on the project's south side more pedestrian friendly.

Two years ago, the CRA paid \$3 million for the land on the west side of Federal Highway that is to the north and south of Northeast First Avenue. It is being used as surface-level parking and includes the Congregational United Church of Christ building, which most recently served as the city's temporary library.

City commissioners, meeting Aug. 11 as the CRA board, unanimously approved giving Ocean Avenue Residences and Shoppes, LLC, 90 days to work with the city, CRA staff, adjacent property owners and the public to refine its unsolicited proposal.

During that time, others can submit their own project proposals. Commissioners could then move forward with the proposal or any other one received, open the process to more proposals, or leave the property as it is.

"We do think this is the center of the doughnut,



something that will activate this whole area," said William Morris of Southcoast Partners, who proposes developing the project with Harold and Max Van Arnhem of Van Arnhem Properties. "It's going to be a real people place."

Morris compared the project to Worthing Place, which "has

become an incredible catalyst for the whole downtown area of Delray Beach." The mixed-use residential and commercial project he helped develop includes public parking and is connected to Worthing Park on East Atlantic Avenue.

The fear of some businesses and property owners near the

Avenue and goes down there, because of the hot mess it has turned into," Oyer said. "The people who live there are miserable because now you've got clubs all night long making all kinds of noise."

Kim Kelly, owner of Hurricane Alley Raw Bar & Restaurant on Ocean Avenue, started a change.org petition against the proposal and opposing more downtown residential development. It collected more than 2,000 signatures in less than a week.

"Look around you and realize the buildings and storefronts they have already built are vacant and gives a bad look," Kelly's petition said.

She plans to lead a march from her restaurant to City Hall on Sept. 8.

Commissioners saw plenty to like in the 115 N. Federal Highway project that wouldn't be completed until 2024 at the earliest.

"Overall, I think this project is fantastic. I think this may be what we need to really light that fire in this corridor," Vice Mayor Ty Penserga said.

Developers hope for a future Brightline railroad station to the west of the property. They also would try to lease Florida East Coast Railway land on the west side of Northeast Fourth Street to add landscaping and more parking for downtown visitors.

Instead of paying cash for the CRA property, developers would build free public parking in the garage. They estimate the garage would have 120 public spaces, costing about \$25,000 each, to cover the property's \$3 million value.

The site currently has 114 spaces in its surface lots and adjacent on-street parking, city officials said. ★

A proposal for redevelopment along Federal Highway between Ocean Avenue and Boynton Beach Boulevard includes an eight-story apartment complex, shown at left. **Renderings provided**

proposed Boynton Beach project is it will end up a Delray Beach clone.

Susan Oyer's family owns Ocean Avenue buildings immediately south of the project. She would be fine with the proposal if its height was reduced, but "parts make my head want to explode," she said.

"You're trying to make this into a Delray Beach/Atlantic Avenue scenario and I can honestly say I don't know anyone who likes Atlantic

Boynton Beach

RIGHT: June 30 was the first day for many shipments of books and DVDs to the new library location.



New library opens

City Hall complex, Boynton Beach — July 27

ABOVE: Librarian David Lucas selects titles to highlight on the end caps of the bookshelves. **RIGHT:** Patrons can use their library cards to check out laptops for use in the library. The new City Library is part of the massive Town Square project aimed at creating a defined downtown. **Photos by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**



Commissioners by 3-2 vote threaten to end deal with partner in Town Square

By Jane Smith

Boynton Beach City Commissioners narrowly voted on Sept. 1 to direct city staff to see whether JKM Developers can fulfill its contract on Town Square construction or else end it.

John Markey, principal of JKM Developers, wanted until Sept. 15 to present an additional option — using the city's Community Redevelopment Agency tax dollars to help underwrite the private portion of the project.

That pledged money would be used to finance two parking garages and three residential buildings with retail and restaurant space on the ground floor. In return, JKM promised a community benefits package of workforce housing, a rent-to-own program and a scholarship fund.

"It pains me to be in this position," Commissioner Justin Katz said about taking a hard line with the city's development partner. "I implore my colleagues to make a decision tonight and stop us from listing in the sea."

Commissioner Christina Romelus was equally frustrated: "I'm at my wit's end. I want to throw in the towel. This makes no sense to me."

Katz, Romelus and Vice Mayor Ty Penserga felt the city already has given JKM too much.

Commissioner Woodrow Hay and Mayor Steven Grant voted to hear another presentation in two weeks, with Grant saying: "It's not our money. It belongs to the taxpayers in the CRA and the city. We haven't had an opportunity to see the final solution."

For its role in the partnership agreement, the city gave JKM 8.6 acres in the project area, \$1.9 million in cash and new water and sewer lines and underground utilities at no cost.

"I walked into the meeting with my position firm," Penserga said. "The idea of doubling down is not working for me. ... The current contract should be fulfilled or ended."

Markey said the south garage, closest to the new City Hall/Library building, was not supposed to be finished until 18 months after the City Hall building received its certificate of

occupancy. That just happened in July.

Commissioners first learned about the delay in the garages' construction from Markey at their July 21 meeting.

The six-story south garage received a building permit on Sept. 5, 2019, and was supposed to be finished by June 5, 2021, Colin Groff, assistant city manager, said at the July 21 Town Square update. The south garage will not be finished in June as promised. In fact, the city would be lucky to get it financed early next year, Markey said July 21.

The north garage is estimated to be finished by Dec. 5, 2021.

Town Square is a private-public partnership between the city and its CRA and private developers. The 16.5-acre area, sitting between Boynton Beach Boulevard and Southeast Second Avenue, is supposed to give the city a downtown.

When complete, the \$250 million Town Square will have a mix of municipal buildings and privately developed apartment buildings, a hotel, restaurants and shops. The city's share is slightly more than \$118 million.

Markey blamed the souring of the deal on how the bonds were financed.

"Your staff proposed that the bonds be issued by a Community Development District that they would create," Markey said Sept. 1.

In 2018, city staff decided a nonprofit, based in Wisconsin, could issue the bonds faster than a Community Development District, Markey said Sept. 1.

Then, he said, Mark Hefferin of E2L Real Estate Solutions, Town Square's lead developer, "comes to me and says we cannot underwrite the garages because a nonprofit issued the bonds."

Markey's recently hired attorney, Bonnie Miskel, asked for more time to allow Markey's staff to prepare a third option. "It's better for the partners and the city," she said.

Hay was willing to give that time.

"We are looking at something that will last a long time, decades even," he said. "I would like to see his plan. Then, if it does not pan out, we can do what Katz suggested." ★

City goes to hourly rates for waterside parking

By Jane Smith

Parking at Oceanfront Park and Harvey Oyer Jr. Park will become more expensive in some cases starting Oct. 1.

At Oceanfront Park, four meter kiosks will be added and in operation from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m., Boynton Beach city commissioners decided Aug. 4. The kiosks will replace the beach tollbooth, which had been staffed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

The new fee will be \$1.50 per hour, or about \$10 for an average beach stay of 6.67 hours, Andrew Mack, Public Works director, said at the Aug. 4 meeting. The kiosks accept cash or credit cards.

The in-season fee and year-round weekend and holiday fee were a flat \$10. The \$5 fee for summer weekdays will no longer be offered.

Boynton Beach's new beach parking rate is comparable to the hourly rate in Delray Beach. Lake Worth Beach, though, charges \$3 per hour and Boca Raton charges \$2 an hour on weekdays and \$3 an hour on weekends, Mack said.

He said the kiosks will be installed in September and then go live on Oct. 1. Park rangers will enforce the parking times with a laptop that will check each vehicle, Mack said.

"The proposed revenues from daily parking fees will be \$680,000 in the next financial year," Mack told commissioners. "The current revenue is \$320,000."

"The city will see an additional \$50,000 from parking citations," he said. Parking pass income will remain at \$170,000.

Boynton Beach residents will still be able to buy a beach parking pass for \$50. Ocean Ridge residents can buy a beach parking pass at the same rate.

The cost for annual passes stayed the same after the mayor and vice mayor, at the July 21 commission meeting, objected to the residents' paying more.

The city will no longer sell decals, starting Oct. 1. Instead, the system will be based on the vehicle license plate, Mack said.

During a July 29 Facebook live video, Mack said there should not be backups on State Road A1A to get into the park. Searching for a place is similar to searching for a space in a packed shopping center, he said.

"You ride around until you

see someone leaving, then follow the person to the vehicle. Put on your blinker and allow that car to back out until you can pull in safely," Mack said on the video.

The toll booth workers' last day will be Sept. 30. They can apply to be park rangers. The two full-time and two part-time positions were advertised in late August, Mack said.

Hal Hutchins, Ocean Ridge police chief, said he had talked with the former Boynton Beach Recreation and Parks director about installing the kiosks about one year ago. Ocean Ridge patrols Oceanfront Park.

"The ParkMobile program is a common method of parking," Hutchins said. "We don't have too many times when Oceanfront Park needs to be closed because there are no more parking spaces. When that happens, we will work with Boynton Beach to close it down."

At Harvey Oyer Jr. Park, on the Intracoastal Waterway, Boynton Beach will charge up to \$10 on weekdays and \$25 on weekends to park boat trailers in the long spaces.

Ten shorter spaces will be free to park users, commissioners decided Aug. 4 after Susan Oyer, daughter of the late Harvey Oyer Jr., who served as mayor, told commissioners that residents' taxes already paid for the park.

"Boaters take up extra space," she said. "It's wrong that families will pay a fee for parking there when they come to play or have picnics."

Currently, boaters pay \$50 for an annual boating decal that allows free parking on weekends and holidays. Without a decal, the fee is \$10 on weekends and holidays. Boynton Beach does not charge for weekday parking at Oyer Park.

That will change in October, Mack said.

The city will charge any vehicle that uses the long spaces \$1.50 per hour, payable at the two parking kiosks. The maximum daily charge is \$10 and \$25 on weekends. The rates are in effect 24 hours.

Boynton Beach will offer boat owners an annual parking pass at \$350.

The city also will find free spaces for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers to use at Oyer Park. The volunteers offer free boat inspections and teach boating safety classes. ★

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Business Spotlight

Boca's IMI moving into part of iPic space in Delray Beach

International Materials Inc., an international trading and logistics provider, signed a lease on a 20,052-square-foot space in early July to relocate and expand its corporate headquarters. Moving from Boca Raton to **The Offices at 4th & 5th Delray Beach**, the company will occupy nearly two-thirds of the mixed-use building's third floor to accommodate its roster of 45 full-time professionals and have room to grow.

The Offices, located a half-block south of Atlantic Avenue, is a 144,733-square-foot, four-story mixed-use project, developed in a joint venture between the Boston-based Samuels & Associates development firm and American Realty Advisors, a Los Angeles-based private equity real estate investment manager.

The development consists of iPic Theater, retail space, office space and a parking garage. In December 2019, after **iPic Entertainment** changed hands in bankruptcy court, the lender — Retirement Systems of Alabama — canceled iPic Entertainment's lease for headquarters office space in the new theater building, known as 4th & 5th Delray.

Founded in 1987, IMI is an independent trading company of bulk, raw materials that serves customers in cement, construction and steel markets in more than 60 countries. In addition to its South Florida headquarters, it has offices in Madrid, Singapore, Dubai, Shanghai, Bogota, Melbourne and Hanoi.

"This IMI corporate headquarters relocation to the Delray Beach central business district is a testament to the strength of our city and evidence that the investments in our public-private partnerships strategically located for economic development are beginning to pay off," said Stephanie Immelman, president and CEO of the Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce.

In the transaction, Samuels & Associates was represented by Keith O'Donnell and Gary Gottlieb of Avison Young, a Toronto-based commercial real estate firm, and IMI was represented by Ingrid Kennemer of Coastal Commercial Group, a Delray Beach commercial real estate firm.

JLL Capital Markets announced in August that it arranged a \$9.26 million refinancing for **The Forum**, a 73-unit apartment complex at 1361 S. Federal Highway, Boca Raton. JLL worked on behalf of the borrower, Boca Raton-based Rosemurgy Properties, to secure the 120-month, fixed-rate loan through Freddie Mac. The loan will be serviced by Jones Lang



Economic woes led to the collapse of the iPic Theater, but International Materials Inc. signed a lease to move its corporate headquarters into the third floor of the building in downtown Delray Beach. **Photo provided**

LaSalle Multifamily LLC, a Freddie Mac Optigo lender. The property is undergoing \$1.3 million in renovations, and to date, Rosemurgy Properties has contributed \$2 million in upgrades.

A recently completed ocean-to-lake estate at **640 S. Ocean Blvd., Manalapan**, sold for \$36.05 million in July. A revocable trust named after the property's address was on the seller's end of the transaction, with West Palm Beach real estate attorney **Maura Ziska** as the trustee.

On the buyer's side, City National Bank of Florida acted as trustee of the 2401-3315-00 Trust. The listing broker was **Lawrence Moens** of Lawrence A. Moens Associates.

The nine-bedroom estate and guest house, with 23,187 total square feet, features 150 feet of waterfront on its east and west sides. The 1.9-acre property was listed for \$41.75 million in January and last sold in March 2017 for \$11 million.

Delray Beach's **Frank McKinney** sold his latest spec home for \$10.1 million on July 2. This project, a contemporary residence at **3492 S. Ocean Blvd., South Palm Beach**, with 90 feet of oceanfront, was bought by Republic First Bancorp Chairman Vernon W. Hill II and his wife, Shirley, with Corcoran Group agent **Steven Presson** handling both sides of the deal.

Last year, McKinney told *The Coastal Star* that this was to be his "final masterpiece," and he shared changes he's seen in Florida real estate over his 30-plus years in the business.

"A lot of trends that start at the top trickle down and make their way into the everyday home," he said. "Examples include granite countertops, stainless steel and the under-the-counter coffee makers. Three decades ago, these

features could only be found in luxury homes; today, they are a must in nearly every home, thanks to demand and cost reduction."

In this five-bedroom, 7,850-square-foot residence, sold furnished with interior design by McKinney's wife, Nilsa, he went above and beyond. Highlights include a kitchen countertop made of 11,000-year-old azure-blue lava; a sphere-shaped aquarium filled with jellyfish in the living room, rooftop terrace, and a beachfront pool.

The Thousand for 2020, an annual national award ranking the top 1% of the nation's real estate professionals, published its results in July, with a number of agents who are with firms serving the coastal area in south Palm Beach County included.

Here are the results: Individuals by volume: No. 15, Suzanne Frisbie, Premier Estate Properties Inc., Boca Raton, \$196,230,116; No. 74, James McCann, Premier Estate Properties Inc., Boca Raton, \$112,360,000; No. 159, Marcy Javor, Signature One Luxury Estates LLC, Boca Raton, \$79,545,500.

Individuals by transaction sides: No. 68, Paul Saperstein, eXp Realty, Boca Raton, 164 transaction sides.

Small teams by volume: No. 34, Pascal Liguori, Premier Estate Properties Inc., Delray Beach, \$164,316,000; No. 51, Candace Friis, The Corcoran Group, Delray Beach, \$133,158,500; No. 54, The Cotilla Luxury Team, Douglas Elliman, Boca Raton, \$131,867,734.

Agent-owned brokerage by transaction sides: No. 2, Ralph Harvey, ListWithFreedom.com, Boynton Beach, 1,636 transaction sides.

Agent-owned brokerage by volume: No. 3, Ralph Harvey, ListWithFreedom.com,

Boynton Beach, \$444,911,020; No. 6, David W. Roberts, Royal Palm Properties, Boca Raton, \$335,116,000.

The Thousand is sponsored by Real Trends and Tom Ferry International coaching.

Two South County government leaders were recognized recently for their roles.

Lori LaVerriere, Boynton Beach city manager, is serving as the secretary/treasurer on



LaVerriere

the **Florida City and County Management Association** board for the financial year of 2020-2021. She was elected in May. An association member for more than 20 years, she has served as a District IV director for the past three years. After serving as secretary/treasurer, LaVerriere is slated to serve as president-elect and ultimately as president of the association in the next three years.

With more than 30 years of public service, LaVerriere has worked for three Palm Beach County towns. Since 2008, she has served the city of Boynton Beach, where she became city manager seven years ago. With 16 departments, she leads a team of more than 800 employees who serve nearly 80,000 residents.

She has a bachelor of arts degree from Florida International University in business administration and a master's in business administration from Palm Beach Atlantic University.



Hadjimiry

Hassan Hadjimiry, the new utilities director for Delray Beach, is the other honoree. In early August, he received the

2020 Government Engineer of the Year award, presented by the Florida section of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Hadjimiry has more than 38 years of management and engineering experience in the water utilities industry.

He started as a staff engineer at the Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department in early 1982. Over the years, he progressed to become deputy director for the third-largest water utility in Florida.

At the county department he developed and implemented a reclaimed water program that provides more than 30 million gallons per day to local golf courses, residential areas and constructed wetlands. Reclaimed water is treated wastewater suitable for irrigation but not for human consumption.

Hadjimiry holds a master of science degree in water resources engineering from Florida Atlantic University, was named the 2009 Water Reuse Person of the Year in Florida, and is a five-time winner of the County Administrator's annual Golden Palm Award, the highest level of recognition for county government employees.

Rocco Mangel, founder of Rocco's Tacos and Tequila Bar,



Mangel

was appointed by the Delray Beach City Commission on Aug. 11 to serve on the board of the **Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority**.

Mangel operates nine restaurants throughout Florida and New York. He has been an active member of the downtown Delray Beach community as a business owner since 2010.

Max Weinberg, the longtime drummer for Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band and a four-year resident of Delray Beach, was appointed to the **Delray Beach Planning & Zoning**

Board by the City Commission on Aug. 18. Weinberg has purchased and restored old homes on the East Coast and in Delray Beach. Weinberg also serves on the board of the nonprofit Delray Beach Preservation Trust.

The commission also appointed **Allen Zeller**, a land-use attorney and Delray Beach resident since 2003, to the P&Z Board. He has also served as a board member of the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, president of the Marina Historic District and serves on the Preservation Trust.

Incumbent P&Z Board members **Julen Blankenship** and **Robert Long** were reappointed. A fifth board member will be appointed at the commission's Sept. 10 meeting.

The Seagate Hotel & Spa in Delray Beach announced the addition of two new members to its leadership team: **Jamie Erler**, director of membership, marketing and communications for The Seagate Clubs, and **Sonny Grosso**, director of golf for The Seagate Country Club.

In August, **John M. Campanola** was named a member of the 2020 executive council of **New York Life**. The council recognizes the top 21% of New York Life's field force of more than 12,000 licensed agents in sales achievement. Campanola, a Boynton Beach resident, has been a New York Life agent since 2012.

He is associated with New York Life's South Florida General Office in Sunrise, and he works out of its offices at 401 W. Atlantic Ave., Suite 09, Delray Beach.

Debbie Abrams, president of the **Gold Coast PR Council**, announced in July this year's **Bernays Awards** winners, honoring excellence in local public relations campaigns, marketing programs and media coverage.

The council's Presidents Award, which goes to a person or organization for outstanding performance, was given to Sandy Collier of Hey Sandy PR & Communications in Wellington for her work on behalf of evacuees from the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian.

Other awards include: PR Campaign/Large Company or Firm award went to The Moore Agency; PR Campaign/Small Company or Firm award went

to Katnip Marketing; Crisis Communications award went to Loggerhead Marinelife Center; Nonprofit Project or Campaign award went to The Buzz Agency; Social Media Campaign/Nonprofit award went to Florida Atlantic University; Social Media Campaign/Corporate award went to Mugsy PR; Special Event award went to Food For The Poor; Marketing Material/Print award went to Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County; Marketing Material/Digital award went to Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County.

The organization's PR Star Award went to Scott Benarde, for the reopening of the Norton Museum of Art, the Founders Award went to Abrams, who is also senior vice president of The Buzz Agency, and Judges Awards went to BlueIvy Communications and Labor Finders International.

The council paid special tribute to two previous award winners who recently died: John Shuff of JES Media, publisher of *Boca Raton* magazine, who was remembered by Group Editor-in-Chief Marie Speed; and Jay Van Vechten, founder of the Boating and Beach Bash for People with Disabilities in Boca Raton, a four-time Bernays Award recipient, who was eulogized by his widow, Lowell Van Vechten.

In response to increasing dependence on reliable internet connectivity due to COVID-19 stay-at-home precautions, **QXC Communications'** fiberoptic network technology is offering a solution for South Florida customers. QXC designs and installs fiber-optics using Active Optical Network direct fiber-to-the-home architecture to deliver internet, WiFi, HD TV, and VoIP phone services to condominium communities, businesses, outdoor events, and U.S. military bases. Unlike coaxial cable, QXC's AON fiber installments run a dedicated fiber strand to every home or condo directly. With this technology, in the event of a power outage, customers connected to the wireless backup won't lose service.

QXC's service contracts include Villa Magna Condominiums in Highland Beach, Seagate of Highland Beach, and East Wind Beach Club in Delray Beach.

Founded in 2011, Boca Raton-based QXC Communications serves customers throughout the United States. For more information, visit www.qxc.us.

— Jane Smith contributed to this column.

Send business news to Christine

Davis at cdavis9797@gmail.com.



Mizner Park loses Lord & Taylor

By Mary Hladky

Lord & Taylor is closing its Boca Raton store in Mizner Park and has filed for bankruptcy court protection along with its new owner, clothing rental company Le Tote.

The venerable retailer, which traces its roots to 1826 in New York, joins a long list of companies that have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy since May as the coronavirus pandemic takes its toll on those that were already teetering. Others include Neiman Marcus, J. Crew, J.C. Penney and Brooks Brothers.

Le Tote and Lord & Taylor are seeking a new owner, the companies said in an Aug. 3 release.

Lord & Taylor initially announced that it was closing 19 of its 38 stores, including its Mizner Park location. On Aug. 27, the company said it is closing all of its stores. All are holding closing sales.

"Today, we announced our search for a new owner who believes in our legacy and values," the company said in a full-page ad appearing in the Aug. 4 *New York Times*. "Part of our announcement also includes filing for Chapter 11 protection to overcome the unprecedented strain the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on our business."

At an Aug. 3 bankruptcy court hearing, Lord & Taylor received a judge's permission to close all of its 38 stores if that became necessary, *Forbes* reported. Its existing stores are down from 45 in 2019.

It is not clear how long the Mizner Park store

will remain open. The Aug. 3 release did not specify, and the company did not respond to an inquiry by *The Coastal Star*.

Dana Romanelli Schearer, general manager for retail for Mizner Park owner Brookfield Property Partners, did not respond to a voicemail seeking information on what Brookfield will do with the Lord & Taylor building.

Lord & Taylor's website stated in early August that returns would no longer be accepted at the Mizner Park store and that all closing sale purchases were final. As of Aug. 14, the Mizner Park store would not accept online returns.

The store also would not honor coupons, mall certificates, Lord & Taylor Reward/Award Cards or prices offered at other Lord & Taylor locations.

Customers could continue to shop on the Lord & Taylor website.

Lord & Taylor stores dotted South Florida in the early 2000s. But the company exited the state in 2004, closing stores in Boca's Town Center mall, the Mall at Wellington Green and the Palm Beach Mall, among others, in the wake of an ill-fated expansion strategy.

As the chain regrouped, Lord & Taylor opened in Mizner Park in 2013. It is the chain's only brick-and-mortar store in Florida.

But Le Tote, which purchased Lord & Taylor last November from Hudson's Bay Company, struggled to breathe new life into the chain before COVID-19 forced the temporary closure of many stores in March. The Mizner Park store reopened in May. ★

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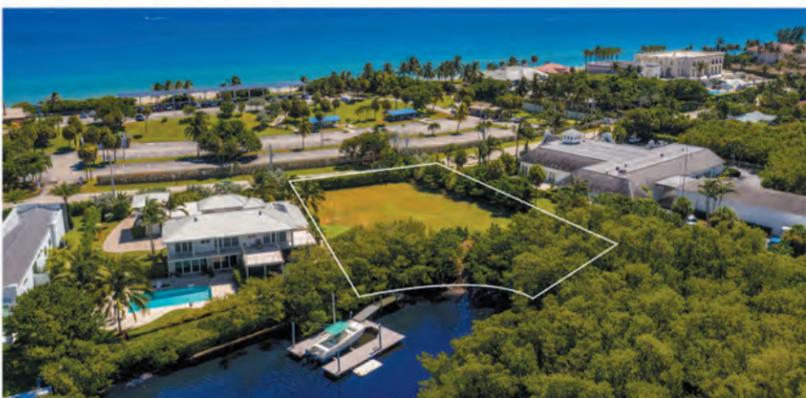
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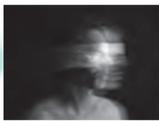


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Around Town

September/October 2020

The Coastal  Star

Inside



Hypoluxo Island looking southeast, circa 1914

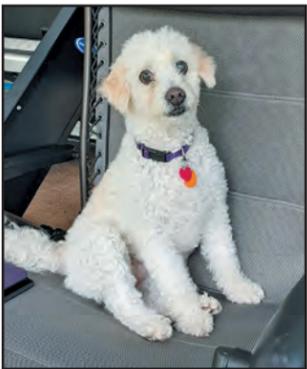
History

A self-guided tour of Hypoluxo Island. Page AT3



Dining

Made-from-scratch sausage in Boynton Beach. Page AT6



Paws Up for Pets

Ease stress with a getaway for your pooch. Page AT16



Tots & Teens

Girl, 9, creates book with grandmother. Page AT17



A car drives along Ocean Avenue in downtown Boynton Beach in 1915. Photos from Boynton Beach City Library collection

100 years of Boynton

By Ron Hayes

The city's evolution from incorporation in 1920 to a dazzling new \$118 million Town Square in 2020

On July 14, 1920, a Wednesday that year, 50 qualified voters gathered to decide whether their little Florida community should incorporate.

Forty-eight of them said yes, one said no, and one apparently said nothing.

They adopted a town seal, elected a mayor, five aldermen, a marshal and a clerk, and a week later, on July 21, the town of Boynton (pop. 602) made it official.

See **BOYNTON** on page AT4



Sun worshippers relax near the Boynton hotel, which opened in 1897 and was torn down in 1925.

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Philanthropy Notes

Sun Capital gives \$1 million to Boca Regional Hospital campaign

A \$1 million donation has been made to the Boca Raton Regional Hospital Foundation's Keeping the Promise Campaign to support the current and future needs of the medical facility.

The monetary source: Sun Capital Partners Foundation founders Rodger Krouse and Marc Leder.

"This generous gift from the Sun Capital Partners Foundation, Rodger and Hillary Krouse, and Marc and Lisa Leder, will enable our hospital to better serve the evolving health care needs of our community for years to come," Boca Raton Regional Hospital CEO Lincoln Mendez said. "We are deeply appreciative of their past support and this new commitment to our efforts to modernize and renovate our

campus, add key services and new technology capabilities and continuously improve the experience for patients and their families, physicians, staff and visitors."

For more information, call 561-955-4142 or visit <https://donate.brrh.com>.

\$85,000 in grants go to South County initiatives

The Jewish Women's Foundation of South Palm Beach County graced nine organizations with donations that will aid and empower women and children in the community.

The money — \$85,000 total — comes from the pooled resources of trustees who contribute a minimum of \$2,000 annually. Through an intensive, hands-on process,

the philanthropists decide which organizations will most effectively achieve the agency's goals.



Rosenberg

"I am very proud to be part of JWF," said Amy Rosenberg, grants chairwoman. "Reviewing

grants, researching organizations and having in-depth discussions about key issues are an empowering experience for our trustees. We come from varied backgrounds and experiences, yet we all bring a strong desire to collaborate together to help improve the lives of Jewish women and children and strengthen Jewish families."

For more information, call 561-852-6027 or visit <https://jewishboca.org/jwf>.

Community Foundation awards 88 scholarships

The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties has granted 88 local students more than \$1 million in scholarships, averaging \$11,000 per recipient.

The recipients were evaluated by an advisory committee based on applications, essays, interviews and résumés.

"The process of choosing who will be awarded each of these scholarships is undertaken with dedication and discipline," said January Reissman, the foundation's vice president for community impact. "The process is never easy because our student applicants are outstanding."

Since 1983, the organization has awarded \$15 million-plus in scholarships and helped nearly 2,500 youths.

For more information, call 561-659-6800 or visit www.yourcommunityfoundation.org.

Amid pandemic, nonprofits share \$250,000 allocation

The Quantum Foundation has distributed \$250,000 to select area charities to help their clients pay the bills and put food on the table.

A total of 20 nonprofits assisting the community's most vulnerable residents were allocated funds in the wake of the coronavirus.

"The COVID-19 pandemic brought forward longstanding health inequities in disinvested communities, exposing the impacts of the social determinants of health such as

economic and social conditions that influence a group's health status," Quantum Foundation President Eric Kelly said.

"Health is not the absence of illness but rather a positive state of physical and mental well-being, and these grants are a step in the right direction."

For more information, call 561-832-7497 or visit www.quantumfnd.org.

Delray Beach museum selected for \$50K grant

To maintain operations and staffing during the pandemic, the Spady Cultural Heritage Museum landed \$50,000 in grant funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The nonprofit was one of three arts organizations in Palm Beach County — and one of 855 nationwide — to receive funding from the NEA through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act.

The Delray Beach museum received additional funding stemming from the CARES Act: \$7,500 from Florida Humanities Council and \$1,929 from the Florida Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs.

"All of us at the National Endowment for the Arts are keenly aware that arts organizations across the country are hurting, struggling and trying to survive, and that our supply of funding does not come close to meeting the demand for assistance," Chairwoman Mary Anne Carter said.

"That said, I am enormously proud of the over-and-above efforts of the arts endowment staff to swiftly and professionally manage such a large amount of additional work in a relatively short period of time on behalf of the American public."

For more information, call 561-279-8883 or visit www.spadmuseum.com.

Underserved kids get much-needed computers

With the shift to distance learning amid the pandemic, a longtime Achievement Centers for Children & Families supporter saw the need for access to laptops for underserved children.

The anonymous donor partnered with the Education Foundation of Palm Beach County to donate 55 Chromebooks to ACCF, which in turn were distributed to

students enrolled in the Delray Beach-based organization's programs. Families of the students will receive training on how to use the devices.

"We were thrilled to receive this generous donation of 55 Chromebooks to distribute to our students for the upcoming school year," Achievement Centers CEO Stephanie Seibel said. "These devices are a basic component to a student's ability to work virtually and be successful."

For more information, call 561-266-0003 or visit www.achievementcentersfl.org.

South County residents join Impact 100 board

Impact 100 Palm Beach County has named Emily McMullin and Nicole Mugavero of Boca Raton and Lisa Warren of Boynton Beach to the board for the 2020-21 season.

The women will help advance the nonprofit's mission of elevating philanthropy by combining members' donations to create high-impact grants.

"Impact 100 Palm Beach County welcomes Emily, Nicole and Lisa to the board of directors," President Kathy Adkins said. "With all of their combined nonprofit leadership experience as well as their passion for giving back and many years of involvement with Impact 100 PBC, they will be exceptional assets to the board."

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

Diabetes foundation names execs, board members



Lubetkin

Dr. David Lubetkin, former chief of staff at West Boca Medical Center, has been named president of the Juvenile Diabetes

Research Foundation's Greater Palm Beach chapter.

In addition, Donna DeSanctis, a financial adviser who has served in several roles at the chapter, has been named vice president.

Joining Dr. Lubetkin and DeSanctis on the board are members RoseMarie Antonacci-Pollock, Summer Dennis, Neil Efron, Steven Fried, Scott Meece, Deborah Morawski, Nicole Oden, Dr. Miladys Palau, Dr. Michael Patipa, Mark Patten, Debbie Roosth, Ryan Rothstein, Dane Sheldon, Marc Tanner, Daniel Tumba and Bryan Weinstein.

For more information, call 561-686-7701 or visit www.jdrf.org/southernflorida.



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Lantana

History buff debuts self-guided tour of Hypoluxo Island

By Mary Thurwachter

Not long after the coronavirus prompted stay-at-home orders last spring, Michelle Donahue noticed how many people from both the Manalapan and Lantana sides of Hypoluxo Island took advantage of the time to walk, jog or bike around the neighborhood. Beaches and parks were closed, and residents were eager to get outside.

Donahue, a history buff who is president of the Hypoluxo Island Property Owners Association and author of the *Brown Wrapper* newsletter, used the quarantine to fast-track a project that she had been considering for a while — creating a self-guided tour of Hypoluxo Island.

The island, just 3 miles long and a half-mile wide, boasts fascinating history that few seem to know, she says.

Her online guide came out just before the Fourth of July — an appropriate time, Donahue determined, since people would be looking for fun things to do and the beaches were closed for the

holiday weekend.

She thought it would be nice for residents and others to “get out their phones and flip through the pages of the brochure and at least walk through the neighborhood and get exercise and learn a little something about where they lived.”

She explains: “You ask people about Hypoluxo Island and they say, ‘Oh, it’s a hidden gem,’ but no one ever really knows what the history is here.”

Donahue thought about doing the guide, but given her job as a Realtor with Douglas Elliman and other commitments, “it took me a few months just to kind of get it together.”

Since the online version of the tour came out, Donahue, 51, published a printed version as well, and on the first Friday of each month, she began a Happy Hour History Tour of the island. Donahue, a Miami native who grew up in Delray Beach, paid for the printing and did all the writing and research.

Hannibal Pierce, an assistant keeper at the Jupiter Lighthouse, settled on the island in 1873. He built a thatched-roof cabin and other pioneers followed suit, carving a community out of the wilderness. Until

the 1950s and 1960s, when snowbirds started putting up cottages, the island was sparsely settled.

Donahue’s guide points out many historical sights, from McKinley Park, originally known as Beach Curve Park but renamed in the mid-1970s for Floyd Charles McKinley to honor his many years of community service to Lantana; to Casa Alva, the 26,000-square-foot, Maurice Fatio-designed home built for Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan.

Producing both the *Brown Wrapper* — a local history publication that debuted in 2017 — and the self-guided tour are labors of love, she says. The Property Owners Association pays printing costs of the newsletter, an annual publication.

“When you’re passionate about something, it’s more enjoyable than anything else,” Donahue says. “I really have gotten such great pleasure out of doing this and learning from it.”

She particularly enjoys connecting history with people who still live on the island, such as Narine Ebersold, who has lived on Hypoluxo since 1946; and Don Edge, an architect who helped create Manalapan’s La Coquille Club, where the Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa

stands today.

Both have become great sources of information for Donahue, who delights in visiting with them, even now when it’s socially distanced through screen doors and wearing masks.

“It’s so important because if we don’t capture it now, we’re going to lose it forever,” she says. “It’s too important not to tell the story of the island. I just feel like it’s never really had that opportunity.”

Donahue and her husband, Sean, live in an Addison Mizner home built in 1927. The historic house is called Casa Lillias, after Lillias Piper, a nationally known interior decorator who first owned the home. Since 1999, it has been declared the oldest house on the island.

Donahue’s day job keeps her very busy, and to keep in shape she runs in the morning.

“As much as I love to run, that’s my passion every day, this is just as much my passion,” Donahue says of her historical research and writing. “After dinner, when things settle down here at the house, I’ll just jump on the computer and do some more research. It’s always so fun. Especially when I find articles that are so relative to what I find to write in the papers.

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Hypoluxo Island looking southeast, circa 1947

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The online brochure and the Happy Hour History Tour can be found on the Historic Hypoluxo Island Facebook page, www.facebook.com/groups/1819427474979121. Printed versions of the tour are available at the Lantana and Manalapan libraries.

“Of course, I don’t want to put anything out there that I haven’t totally documented or researched and ... sometimes it can take days to get the answers. But it’s a good journey to be on.” ★

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BOYNTON

Continued from page AT1

History doesn't record if the occasion was toasted with food and drink, but a century later, on July 21, 2020, in the towering lobby of a gleaming new City Hall, 100 vanilla bean cupcakes topped with buttercream frosting offered themselves to anyone in the city (pop. 79,000) who wanted to celebrate its centennial.

"Boynton Beach," a sign behind the cupcakes boasted, "100 Years In The Making."

Of course, some might argue that there should have been 125 cupcakes that morning.

Or at least 122?

Actually, the making of Boynton Beach began long before July 21, 1920.

Sometime in 1895, a charter boat called the Victor carried a former Union Army officer named Nathan Smith Boynton of Port Huron, Michigan, down what would become the Intracoastal



Boynton

Waterway in search of real estate. Major Boynton liked what he saw, bought some land on an ocean ridge, and started building a beachfront hotel.

"The Boynton" opened two years later — 45 rooms, six cottages, a showplace.

A year after that, on Sept. 26, 1898, Birdie and Fred Dewey recorded a plat to be known as "the Town of Boynton."

By 1920, when the town finally incorporated, Nathan Boynton had already been dead nine years.

The town of Boynton had incorporated just in time to enjoy the Florida land boom of the 1920s.

That first year, a Police Department was organized and a bridge built across the Intracoastal Waterway. The town got electric streetlights, a sewer system and a Chamber of Commerce.

By 1925, Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems Sr. had opened the town's first doctor's office. A Woman's Club building designed by Addison Mizner was being built, Nathan Boynton's hotel was being torn down, and an inlet was being cut between the waterway and the ocean to flush out the brackish water flowing in from the Lake Worth Inlet to the north.

Completed in 1927, the inlet was 130 feet wide, 8 feet deep, and cost \$225,000.

That would be about \$3,331,000 today.

The town of Boynton was thriving, unless you weren't white.

Of the 602 total residents counted in the 1920 census, 157 were Black.

The oldest church in town was the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded on Feb. 5, 1892. The original building, built in 1900, stood at the northeast corner of what is now U.S. 1 and Boynton Beach Boulevard, along a stretch



The Weaver dairy farm stood west of town in an area now filled with shopping centers. Marcus A. Weaver (1887-1960) and his son Marcus (1924-1997) pose with a heifer. M.A. and his son C. Stanley Weaver each served as Boynton's mayor. Photos from Boynton Beach City Library collection



As in many Southern communities, Boynton Beach schools were segregated in the early years. LEFT: In 1924 teacher Ella Lakin posed with her class of sixth-graders at the Boynton Beach Elementary School. RIGHT: Still segregated in 1950, teacher Blanche Girtman with her class at Poinciana Elementary.



of Black-owned homes and businesses. But it didn't stay there.

On Feb. 19, 1924, the town passed Ordinance 37, which created a "Negro section" west of town.

The Black citizens living along U.S. 1 packed their belongings, put their small church building on a wagon and hauled it over to the new "Boynton Colored Town" along Wells Avenue, on land platted by Robert Wells.

"My great-grandfather helped build the church," says Victor Norfus. "It was the family church on my mother's side."

Norfus, 57, is the great-grandson of Allen Meeks, who came to the area from Tallahassee in 1896 to work for the Florida East Coast Railway when it ended in West Palm Beach. He is the author, with Odessa Holt, of *Foundations of Faith*, a privately published history of Boynton's Black community.

"The value of land went up in the early 1920s," Norfus says, "so all the Blacks living on Boynton Beach Boulevard were forced to live in that area. It was like a reservation."

But even then, some thought Black property rights mattered.

On July 18, 1924, the town sued James Butler, Nebraska B. Lee and Rhodia Lee for refusing to sell their property in the new "whites only" part of town. The property had been condemned so a new city hall could be built. The town won and was ordered to pay the Black landowners \$2,500 for the two lots.

On Oct. 5, the town sued again to have the payment reduced to \$2,000, which Butler and the Lees accepted.

Boynton hadn't been incorporated two years when Charles Stanley Weaver was born on Jan. 19, 1922, in a wood frame house on South Federal Highway, just north of Southeast Fifth Avenue.

The young Weaver, the son of Marcus A. Weaver, who owned a small dairy farm west of town, was only 6 when the great "Okeechobee hurricane" of 1928 struck.

"The wind was so strong that even with the windows closed, water was coming in," Weaver recalled in an oral history recorded for the Boynton Beach City Library in 1992. "In our dining room, which was on the east side of the house, Dad finally got a carpenter's drill and drilled a couple holes in the floor. We had about 2 inches of water in the dining room."

On May 15, 1931, the small community on the ocean ridge that had dubbed itself Boynton Beach split from the town of Boynton. Each municipality agreed to take on half the debt.

Boynton and Boynton Beach remained separate municipalities until 1938, when Boynton Beach, on the ocean ridge, changed its name to Ocean Ridge.

Three years later, by a vote of 155 to 3, the town of Boynton became the city of Boynton Beach.

Boynton's Black citizens had been forcibly moved to a segregated district along Wells Avenue, but they didn't stay in their place.

On Nov. 7, 1933, the town fathers passed Ordinance 136, a "sunset law" making it unlawful for any "person of the Negro race over the age of 18 years to loiter, wander, stroll or be about" in the "White District" after 9 p.m. in the winter months or 10 p.m. in the summer. To be fair, the law also prohibited "any person of the Caucasian race" from loitering in the Black District after dark.

The first of Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems' seven children arrived in 1927 and grew up to become Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems Jr.

When he was a teenager in the 1940s, his hometown still had only 1,357 residents.

"It was a lot slower pace," he would recall for the library's oral histories. "Boynton was sort of a small town between Delray and Lake Worth. There was a movie usually at both of those places and not one in Boynton. A municipal swimming pool over on the beach in both Delray and Lake Worth, but not in Boynton."

"I'm not sure when the first red light went in between here and Fort Lauderdale," Dr. Weems said. "I think it was probably in the '50s."

"There was a caution light in Boca."

In 1956, C. Stanley Weaver's younger brother,

Curtis, married Nathaniel Weems Jr.'s younger sister, Alice.

A year later, they had Curtis Weaver Jr.

Between 1950 and 1960, the city burgeoned from 2,542 residents to 10,467, and the Weaver Dairies had grown to 3,000 acres and 1,500 cows.

Bethesda Memorial Hospital opened in 1959.

Boynton Beach may have called itself a city, but even in the 1960s it was still a small town to Curtis Jr.

"We used to take our horses into town once or twice a month in the summer and ride them on the beach," he recalled recently. "Right down Boynton Beach Boulevard all the way into town, up and over the bridge where the Two Georges restaurant is and go right up to the beach. All that wasn't developed in the 1960s."

"We sold the horses and got motorcycles when I was 13 or 14."

The 1960s were a decade of change, and Boynton Beach changed a lot in the coming decades.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensured African-Americans' right to stroll, eat and swim where they wished.

In the 1950s, the Negro Civic League served as an unofficial Black city commission because Black residents had no formal representation in government.

Today, the five-member City Commission has two Black members.

Interstate 95 was completed through the city in 1977, and in 1985 the Boynton Beach Mall opened.

C. Stanley Weaver, who served on the Boynton Beach Commission from 1951-1956 and was elected mayor in 1955, died Sept. 1, 2010.

Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems Jr. practiced medicine in the city from 1957 until 1990. He died Aug. 14, 2015.

Victor Norfus continues to work for historic preservation and redevelopment in the city's Black community.

Three years after being moved to Wells Avenue, the St. Paul AME Church was destroyed in the 1928 hurricane. A new church was built on the site a year later, and in 1954 the present church building rose directly across the street.

Wells Avenue is now called Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Along with those 100 cupcakes, the centennial brought a proclamation from Mayor Steven B. Grant.

"As significantly important it is for the city of Boynton Beach to honor and celebrate its beginning," the proclamation read in part, "it is equally important to look to our future and create future legacies."

And then, 100 years to the day after the city was incorporated, he cut the ribbon on a beautiful new City Hall/Library complex called Town Square, which cost \$118 million to build.

On July 21, 2020, it would have cost about \$8.6 million.★

Obituaries

Curtis Weaver Sr. and Alice Weems Weaver

By Ron Hayes

BOYNTON BEACH — When Alice Weems Weaver and Curtis Weaver Sr. died five days apart in late June, the city of Boynton Beach lost a treasury of local memories, and their love story found a bittersweet ending.

Alice, known to all since childhood as Nainie, died at home on June 25. She was 89.

Curtis, 92, died at home on June 30 — their 64th wedding anniversary.

Trying to separate their lives from the city where they were born, lived and died would be as fruitless as trying to separate their love for each other.

Nainie Weems was born March 24, 1931, the daughter of Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems Sr., the town's first physician, who opened his practice in 1925. Among the 7,500 babies Dr. Nat delivered during his 40-year career was the boy who would grow up to become her husband.

Curtis A. Weaver was born on March 18, 1928, the son of Marcus A. Weaver and Marion Grace Knuth. The Weavers owned a 90-acre dairy farm at what is now Old Boynton Road and Military Trail.

Both families were founding members of the First Methodist Church, where Curtis and Nainie were baptized, met and married.

As children, they attended the town's one-room schoolhouse for the entire 12 years. As adults, they worked with others to resurrect the aging building as the Schoolhouse Children's Museum.

After graduating from the University of Miami, Mrs. Weaver taught history and home economics at Seacrest High School in Delray Beach.

Mr. Weaver graduated from the University of Florida with degrees in milk chemistry and animal husbandry and, after service in the U.S. Air Force in the early 1950s, returned to work at the Weaver Dairies.

The couple were married in 1956, saw 350 friends and relatives attend the reception at the Boynton Woman's Club, and honeymooned in Cashiers, North Carolina.

Their first child, Curtis Weaver Jr., was born in 1957, and a second, David, two years later.

Weaver Dairies grew into a 3,000-acre farm with 1,500 cows and nearly 100 employees.

"We moved to town when I was 4 years old, when David was born," Curtis Weaver



Jr. recalled recently. "Before that we lived on the farm in a small house — very, very small, wood-frame on cinder blocks with a wood joist floor with a porch patio. I would call it a shanty house or a row house.

"There were two roads built with housing, just for employees, where they lived with their families. I remember going to the barn and riding in the truck to pick up the employees."

In the mid-'60s, the Weavers sold much of the dairy land to developers from Miami.

"And the western corridor of Boynton went from cows to townhouses," their son said.

Later, Mr. Weaver and his siblings bought land on the south end of Nassau, Bahamas, and started another dairy farm, Golden Isles, which they later sold to Canadian developers.

In 1970, the couple renovated a small hotel in Cashiers, where they had spent their honeymoon 14 years before. For the next 20 years, they rented rooms and cabins at the Silver Slip Lodge to fellow vacationers from Boynton Beach.

In retirement, they traveled to Europe and Alaska, New England and the Canadian Rockies. But Boynton Beach was always their home, and their history.

Mr. Weaver was a president of the Boynton Beach Historical Society and a 35-year member of the local Rotary Club.

In addition to their sons Curtis Jr. and David Weaver, they are survived by their daughters-in-law, Diane and Eileen; grandchildren Josh and Brittany Weaver; Chelsea Weaver and her fiancé, Thomas McKeen; Leslie and Nate Beals; Lauren Weaver and her fiancé, Cage Regneris; and four great-grandchildren.

"My parents took a great deal of pride in being from Boynton and having been a part of the history of Boynton," Curtis Weaver Jr. said. "They were tremendously loyal people to the town, and to their church."

A memorial service will be held at a later date at the First Methodist Church of Boynton Beach.



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Dining

New Boynton eatery looking forward to offering bar service

Partners in **The Butcher and The Bar** worked through the COVID-19 shutdown and have managed to open — at least partially — their new eat-in butcher shop in Boynton Beach.

Eric Anderson, business partner, says the old-school, retail butcher shop and sandwich counter are open for takeout, and diners can sit inside or out and eat, but as of late August there was no table service.

“We were kind of supposed to open in April, but then contractors couldn’t send as many people at once to a job so there was a delay. We opened early August,” he said.

“Once Phase 2 is in place... we’ll be able to open the bar. We’ll start serving small plates there.”

In late August, the partners were still waiting for their liquor license to be approved.

From the counter, they serve breakfast biscuits from 9 a.m. until they’re sold out, and offer a variety of sandwiches and other prepared foods at lunch. The retail butcher case is open all day.

First and foremost, TBTB is a whole-animal butcher shop, Anderson said. “We bring in whole cows, pigs, chickens, and butcher them on site.” Fresh meats and poultry, most sourced in Florida, are cut to order in the retail side.

Jason Brown, a junior partner, is the butcher. He is largely self-taught but has taken classes in butchering from noted chefs. He and others from the shop visited several farms in Florida to see animal operations before choosing their meats.

“We get our hogs from HertaBerkSchwein Farms in Groveland, and cows from Watkins High Pasture Ranch, and Fort McCoy near Zolfo



Springs,” Anderson said. For now, Bell and Evans chickens from Pennsylvania are on the menu until they find a quality poultry producer in Florida, he said.

All ground and smoked meats from the kitchen are house-made, including pork and chicken sausages, smoked bacon, tasso ham, porchetta, chicken meatballs and kielbasa.

“Everything is from scratch,” Anderson said. “All our condiments — our mayonnaise, ketchup, bone broth — we make everything here.” They have a “pickle program” as well.

Daniel Ramos, of the critically acclaimed **Red Splendor Bone Broth**, is a chef/partner, overseeing the menu, which changes daily.

Anderson said despite the

ABOVE: The Butcher and The Bar opened in August and offers takeout and dining inside and out. Table service wasn’t available at first, but customers could place orders at the sandwich bar. The establishment includes a retail butcher shop.

LEFT: Pork and chicken sausages and slaw are among the menu items. Everything is made from scratch. **Photos provided by Jupiter Compass Digital Marketing Agency**

name and concept, the shop has vegetarian and even vegan offerings.

“We had a party of three vegans who came in, and Chef Dan made them a whole vegan meal. There’s a joke there,” he laughed. “Three vegans walk into a butcher shop. ...”

Hours for the shop are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, but once Phase 2 is initiated and the bar is open, hours will change.

The Butcher and The Bar, 510 E. Ocean Ave., Boynton Beach. Phone 561-903-7630; www.butcherandbar.com.

Feeding South Florida, the food bank that partners with other nonprofits throughout the county, has expanded with a 5,000-square-foot kitchen and

food prep area that can now handle the production of 10,000 hot meals weekly. The Boynton Beach facility on Park Ridge Boulevard opened in July.

It’s just in time to meet much greater needs, said Sari Vatske, executive vice president.

“The need has doubled because of COVID,” Vatske said. She listed as recipients homebound older adults, school kids out on summer break, and numerous nonprofits that help food-insecure populations across the county.

Add to that people who are newly unemployed in the food and hospitality business, who find themselves needing basic help, and a potentially threatening hurricane season.

The organization also took over serving Boynton Beach’s homebound seniors for the Community Caring Center of Boynton Beach. “We’re doing 1,000 meals weekly for CCC,” Vatske said.

The new facility has a pantry up front. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients can come in and get cleaning supplies, canned goods and dairy perishables as part of the program. The facility acts as a drive-through distribution center as well, providing boxes of SNAP benefit food weekly.

In the main production area, a gleaming new commercial kitchen line is in place.

“This is the culinary training kitchen,” Vatske said. “We’re going to have 10 to 12 people at a time, for 16 weeks, training here.”

Feeding South Florida chefs, led by Chrissy Benoit, will team with volunteer guest chefs from the



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community to train people to work in the culinary field, both kitchen and front-of-house positions.

The goal is for graduates to find work in commercial restaurants. The program is open to anyone with at least a GED who wants to get into the culinary field or improve his or her career, she said.

The plan is for classes to be sponsored, Vatske said, with the goal that they are free for the trainees.

For now, the teaching kitchen is idle because of COVID-19. "We are hopeful by October we'll have teaching and training," Vatske said.

The organization also will add commercial events, such as catering large affairs.

"We will have a revenue-generating component. The money earned will be reinvested into our program," she said.

In the past, Feeding South Florida relied on vendors to help produce its meals; FSF now will become a vendor to others, supplying hot meals for recipients of other programs.

For special events and catering work, the agency will hire from its grad pool.

"We'll also have an incubator program for food products," Vatske said. Entrepreneurs can learn to make and market their own products in a commercial

environment.

"Right now, we're focusing on scaling our production. We're still hiring and training for current production."

Workers on the production side are cooking and packing meals for distribution. Soups are prepared in one of the giant tilt skillets — cream of celery was the choice on a recent day. The menu rotates through a four-week plan.

Meals are cooked rapid-fire in the new combi ovens. These are high-volume ovens that perform multiple functions such as baking, steaming, poaching and roasting.

"These are amazing," Vatske said. "They are state-of-the-art," allowing them to turn out hundreds of complete meals much faster.

Volunteers are used to pack and seal the food trays.

A cold storage area is being added; for now, it shares space with the major distribution area. There's also a small laundry room where kitchen linens and uniforms are laundered, keeping everything in house.

The agency also works with FEMA and Florida's CERT (the emergency response team coordinators), as well as community groups to provide meals for emergency workers and people in shelters during disaster relief efforts.

Hurricane Harvey, a Category 4 storm that devastated parts of Texas and Louisiana in 2017, wiping out resources for food, spurred a new program for Florida, Vatske said.

The state funds FSF and other organizations, which have high-production meal-distribution plans ready whenever a storm approaches.

Other funding comes from federal agencies, as well as a number of local partners such as Publix, the Quantum Foundation and other private groups.

Volunteers and donations are still needed from the community, she said, more than ever to help people outside the government programs.

Vatske said FSF is grateful for all donations. "Absolutely. We have general programs and supplies to fund."

For information about the programs or volunteer opportunities, go to feedingsouthflorida.org.



Strine

It is billed as "New Florida

Chef James Strine has taken the helm at **Taru**, the new moniker for the restaurant at the Sundry House.

Cuisine," and puts a twist on Florida influences from the Caribbean (jerk ribs with tamarind barbecue sauce); Cuba's croquettes (turkey and stuffing croquettes with cranberry mayo), or a Florida bouillabaisse (local fish, clams, shrimp, grits). He also dips into Asian influences, with Dynamite rice (furikake, crab, pork belly) and rice noodles and clams, with wine, garlic, bone marrow and Thai basil. Taru also gives a nod to a hot trend by offering poutine (fries covered with burrata and foie gravy).

Though Strine is a master at meats — he's noted for charcuterie and his butchering skills — he knows vegetarian plates as well (cauliflower steak and waffles).

Strine comes from a string of noteworthy kitchens, including Cafe Boulud, Buccan and Grato, as well as his most recent gig at The Trophy Room in Wellington.

The restaurant is still open for its acclaimed Sunday brunch in the garden — a romantic setting on any occasion.

Taru at the Sundry House, 106 S. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach. Phone 561-272-5678; www.sundryhouse.com. Open for dinner Monday-Saturday; brunch Saturday (a la carte) and Sunday (prix fixe buffet).

In brief ... Viva La Playa, a new Latin restaurant, takes over



Hanlon

the former Mulligan's space at the Lake Worth Casino beachfront plaza. Chef Jeremy Hanlon of

Benny's on the Beach, the sister restaurant, brings flavors from South America through Latin America to the menu. The eatery planned a September opening. ...

Plans are still on hold for the season's green markets, but Delray's GreenMarket is celebrating its 25th year anyway — with a new cookbook.

Residents are asked to send in their favorite recipes to be included in the *Community Cookbook Tastes of the Season*. To participate or for more information, email Lori Nolan at nolan@mydelraybeach.com. The Vol. 2 cookbook is still available for \$12 by calling the Community Redevelopment Agency at 561-276-8640.

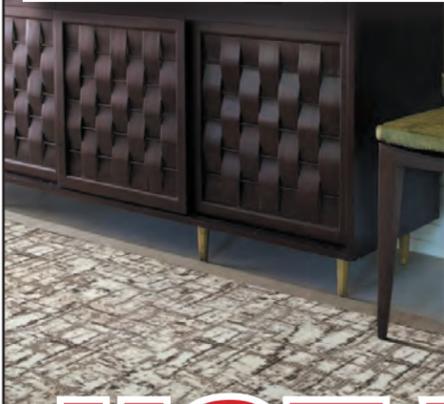
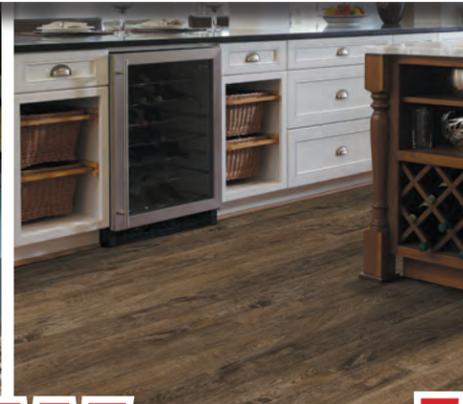


Jan Norris is a food writer who can be reached at nativefla@gmail.com

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Local artist donates 50% of his proceeds to needy in pandemic

By Jan Engoren
Contributing Writer

In a time when artists' voices have been silenced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one artist has found a way to not only make his voice heard, but also make an impact on those around him.

Lifelong black-and-white photographer Brian Cattelle, 38, a Maine native now based in Lake Worth, has created the 50/50 COVID artwork project, which is designed to donate 50% of the proceeds from his art to local individuals and charities.

Each night from his home studio, he creates a video showcasing his latest works and talks about the different projects he's involved with. If somebody buys the art, he donates half of the sale price to a charity of their choosing.

Cattelle said he donated \$150 to St. Jude's Hospital and \$150 to Healing Hearts on one day alone and has met his short-term goal of donating \$1,200.

"During these COVID times, my ability to show my art in public was virtually eliminated and my ability to explore new projects that involve other people has been hindered, so I have to turn to the resources at hand," Cattelle said. "I'm forced to have

Two in a series of self-portrait photographs created by Brian Cattelle. Photos provided by the artist

my art show in my apartment and invite collectors in for virtual private tours. ... With only myself to work with, my current work has me looking inward."

Other beneficiaries include local organizations such as Boca Helping Hands, Liberia Economic and Social Development in Hollywood, Jewish Family Services, Black Lives Matter and No More Starving Artists Foundation (NMSAF).

"Brian Cattelle is an extremely talented artist," said Trina Slade-Burks, president and founder of NMSAF. "During his participation in the Continuum Palm Beach Art Fair last year, he demonstrated an amazing gift for community engagement.

"Brian knows how to intrigue and captivate his audience with his art and insight," Slade-Burks says. "He was generous enough to donate funds to our foundation."

Cattelle's donations from the sale of his artwork went to support NMSAF's Pay It Forward project for artists to create masks for the nonprofit, Clinics Can Help, which provides medical equipment to those in need.

"I aim to be a better person and believe in treating each other well," says Cattelle, who adds that he is 10 years in recovery from substance abuse. "To live the happiest life, do

See CATTELLE on AT11

Theater

Area directors vow commitment to adding diversity to offerings

By Hap Erstein
ArtsPaper Theater Writer

With the coronavirus so pervasive in Palm Beach County, surviving the shutdown dictated by the pandemic is foremost on the minds of area theaters. But the next priority, artistic directors say, is putting an added emphasis on diversity — in their programming and casting.

Most theaters think they have done a pretty good job at diversity, but agree there is still room for improvement. As Florida Atlantic University's Matt Stabile puts it, "I'm proud of our work, but there's a lot more for us to be doing. We've made mistakes in the past, I think, in terms of what we chose to program and what we didn't." Still, he can point to

Motherland, When She Had Wings and *The Glass Piano* as examples of productions that featured performers of color, even though the playwrights did not specify racial characters.

The same goes for Palm Beach Dramaworks, which recently gave Ernest Thompson's *On Golden Pond* a new look by making the central aged married couple bi-racial.

"I'm not trying to be color-blind here," notes PBD's producing artistic director Bill Hayes. "There's nothing in the play that making it a mixed marriage won't work. I wanted to say, 'This is a play about family and love and the complications that go along with them,'" a theme that he felt was relevant regardless of race. "And it will demonstrate that we have more in common than



Lester Purry and Karen Stephens starred in *Fences* last season at Palm Beach Dramaworks. Photo by Alicia Donelan

differences. Still, I called the playwright, because I wanted his blessing."

Diversity casting may be easier in new works or in the classics, but The Wick Theatre is proud of its efforts in mainstream musicals. "We are so color-blind here," says

executive managing producer Marilyn Wick. "We meet great people and if they're talented, they get cast. If you're talented, no matter what color you are — you can be purple — you'll be on my stage. When we did *Evita*, we had like six cast members that were African-American in

that show alone."

Although the production had its difficulties, Wick is also proud of having cast Leslie Uggams in *Mame*, which she believes is the first time a black performer ever played that title role. And when you factor in gender among the ways a production can be diverse, she also makes a point of mentioning another first her theater had with a Jerry Herman show — Lee Roy Reams as the meddlesome matchmaker in *Hello, Dolly!*

Across town in Boca Raton, intimate Primal Forces feels that it is naturally drawn to plays with built-in diversity. "I like to do plays about how baby boomers have lost their ideals," says artistic director Keith

See DIVERSITY on AT11



A rendering shows the Maltz Jupiter Theatre as it will look at night after the \$32 million renovation project. Photo provided

Theater

Maltz cancels 2020-21 season, will complete \$32M expansion

By Hap Erstein
Theater Writer

While most area theater companies are still mulling the possibility of producing live theater in some form in the upcoming season, the Maltz Jupiter Theatre has announced a firm postponement of its 2020/2021 shows. Instead, it will start construction this month to complete the expansion of its playhouse complex, previously reported to have a \$32 million price tag.

The goal is to expand the current stage to Broadway scale to accommodate future pre-Broadway tryouts of plays or musicals as well as full-sized national tours. In addition, plans call for three floors of state-of-the-art production facilities, an innovative dining experience dubbed Scene Café, expanded lobby and conservatory spaces, a redesigned entrance area and a 199-seat second auditorium.

The \$4.2 million first phase of the expansion began in spring 2019 and was completed that fall. Although the next phase was not scheduled to begin until April 2021, the Maltz Jupiter's board of directors decided to jump-start construction now. The aim is to compress the final two phases into 13 months, working through what would normally be the 2020-2021 season and finishing the work before the 2021-2022 season begins.

"Completing the work now will ensure that we can come back stronger than ever when we reopen," said producing artistic director and chief executive Andrew Kato in a written statement. "This expansion is bringing us even closer to reaching our goals of producing the next Broadway-bound play or musical right here in South Florida."

The projected lost revenue from ticket sales has forced the

theater to furlough 80% of its staff, to slash its annual budget for the upcoming season by 80% and to cease operation of its conservatory training program, which historically served 600 students annually.

All of these factors made the decision to forge ahead with the expansion particularly gutsy.

"We are determined to keep looking toward the future and focusing on transforming our theater into the best regional theater in the nation that will be ready for guests as soon as it's safe to reopen again," said Maltz Jupiter board chairman W. Scott Seeley.

The fast-tracked construction plan has been made possible by a \$5 million top-off grant from founding board members Milton and Tamar Maltz, in addition to a \$5 million matching challenge grant through The Milton and Tamar Maltz Family Foundation previously pledged to the project. Kato concedes that the theater's fundraising efforts have not yet brought in the entire amount needed for all elements of the expansion. If necessary, such finishing touches as the plumbing and electrical work for the conservatory, Scene Café and 199-seat second space might occur in subsequent years.

The previous season ended abruptly when a statewide shutdown order caused the postponement of the final show, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. The Maltz is considering mounting it in the spring at an offsite venue if the local COVID-19 situation measurably improves.

Those who purchased tickets for the season have been contacted about their options. For further box office inquiries, email questions@jupitertheatre.org. For questions on the construction, email staffer Laurie Stanton at lstanton@jupitertheatre.org.

Music

Teacher has second career as songbird

By Janis Fontaine
Contributing Writer

Rhea Francani isn't a tough-talking Texan or a boot-scooting Okie but she loves country music like one.

Born in Buffalo, N.Y., the youngest of three sisters in a close-knit Italian family that put on "full-blown concerts" in their living room, Francani, 28, of Boca Raton, just released the first single from her soon-to-be released second country album.

"We're a very musical and creative family," Francani said. "We listened to Motown and R&B, we loved Earth, Wind and Fire, Stevie Wonder, Whitney, Mariah. We dabbled in a lot of genres."

That dabbling included a love of musical theater, and Francani breathed life into Belle in her high school production of *Beauty and the Beast*. Active in choir and jazz band, after high school, Francani followed her sisters, Elisia, eight years older, and Adria, four years older, to New York City to pursue music. "We've always been very close," Francani said. "Family is important."

The high-achieving songbird graduated with honors from Wagner College on Staten Island with a degree in musical theater and fell in love with teaching when she helped her sisters in their work. Francani decided to pursue a master's degree at Columbia University's Teachers College specializing in music education, which surprised no one.

But as much as Francani



loves the theater and teaching, when she sits down to create her own music, Francani feels at home in country music. She says she became a fan of country/pop group Lady Antebellum when the trio released its blockbuster crossover hit "Need You Now" in 2009, and she has followed Taylor Swift's trajectory from country to pop to *Folklore*.

After Columbia, Francani went to Nashville, where she co-produced a self-penned 12-track debut album called, appropriately, *Now or Never*. Two singles from the album, "Dizzy" and "Shotgun Baby," showed fans her grasp of two of country music's staples: catchy hooks and upbeat, toe-tapping rhythms.

But the reality of working hand-to-mouth as a singer/songwriter in dog-eat-dog Music City when you have a passion for teaching — and a master's degree from a prestigious university — doesn't make financial sense.

So, Francani accepted a challenge from the Alexander D. Henderson University School, a public elementary and middle school on the FAU campus, to rejuvenate its music performance program.

Francani joined the middle school in 2016, starting with 65 students in her elective classes; she now has more than 200 in chorus, dance and musical theater.

Henderson has chosen to begin instruction this year virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. One advantage Henderson has, Francani says, is "we're great with technology."

When she's not teaching, Francani is working on her craft. Among artists she admires, Francani calls out some of country's strongest contributors: Carrie Underwood for "class and intelligence"; Maren Morris, "who had time for me and was very kind"; and Kelsea Ballerini "for her 'it' factor."

Francani says that her second album will be quite different from her first. "The first one was super-raw. I was young and those were the first songs I'd written. I've grown up a lot since then."

Francani says "a lot happened to me in my life" since the first album. For one thing, Francani fell in love for the first time, and that love inspired the first single from her upcoming album. "I'll Go," a romantic pop-country road song, showcases her strong vocals, with a simple but catchy hook. It's the kind of tune that makes you roll the windows down, turn up the volume and sing along.

Francani says she plans to release a ballad next. And that's one key to her success: Always keep 'em guessing.

Books

A call to action to defeat Parkinson's

Ending Parkinson's Disease: A Prescription for Action, by Ray Dorsey, Todd Sherer, Michael S. Okun and Bastiaan R. Bloem; PublicAffairs, \$16.99

By Bill Williams
ArtsPaper Books Writer

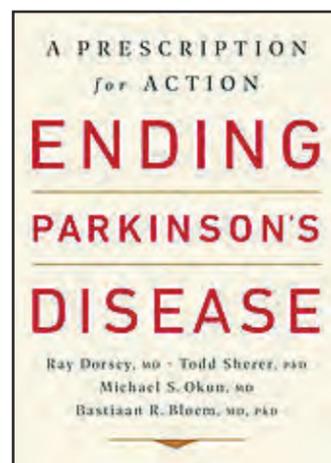
By 2040, the number of people battling Parkinson's disease will have doubled to more than 13 million worldwide.

That grim prediction is contained in an absorbing new book, *Ending Parkinson's Disease: A Prescription for Action*.

The book was written by four Parkinson's experts, including Dr. Michael Okun, a neurological diseases expert at the University of Florida.

I have a personal interest in the book because I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease two years ago.

Currently, there is no cure for Parkinson's, which can last for decades and is not fully understood. The book offers poignant stories about people



who are coping with the illness, sometimes for decades.

Among the symptoms are slowness in walking, difficulty balancing, loss of smell and depression. There are recommended steps to slow its progress, such as exercise.

"We are sounding the alarm that this pandemic is upon us. But we also know if we respond now to the challenge it presents, we can save many people from suffering," the authors say. Millions of dollars for research have been raised by various celebrities, including

the actor Michael J. Fox.

The book is more than a history of a serious disease. The authors list steps, including reducing the use of pesticides, that can slow the increase in Parkinson's. The book cites examples of illnesses that have been reduced by habit change. Lung cancer cases, for example, declined when people gave up cigarette smoking.

"Not only is Parkinson's the fastest growing neurological condition on the planet, but it is also among the most disabling. Individuals with Parkinson's suffer. And so do their caregivers," the authors say.

The book is a wakeup call for families and colleagues to assist those battling this persistent illness, knowing there is no cure but offering help with rides, meals, and other tasks.

This book is a valuable addition to the growing body of literature about a mysterious illness.

Bill Williams is a freelance writer in West Hartford, Conn.



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CATTELLE

Continued from page 9

what you want and don't let fear hold you back."

Captivated by photography as a teenager, in 2012 he won \$30,000 as a grand prize in a nationwide photography contest sponsored by Marlboro cigarettes in a challenge to "Capture the Unknown."

He recalls when the fascination with photography took hold.

"I remember developing my first black-and-white photo in my high school darkroom — the ominous red glow of the light, the stink of chemicals, the trickling water in the background, and the anticipation as, moment by moment, my picture materialized.

"From then on I was hooked," he writes on his website.

"Exploring my art helps me develop as a person," says Cattelle, whose works have been shown at Art Palm Beach, Art Synergy, the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County, the Cornell Museum and The Heart of Delray Gallery.

Daniel Cianciotto, owner of The Heart of Delray Gallery, where Cattelle exhibited his photos between 2017-19, calls Cattelle "an amazing photographer."

"The way he captures photo-realism along with graffiti art is impeccable," said Cianciotto. "It seems like he travels through the most dangerous terrain to get the most prestigious shot."



Another image from Brian Cattelle's series of self-studies. Photo provided by the artist

To get those prestigious shots for the Marlboro project, Cattelle traveled through Arizona, Utah and Nevada, capturing thought-provoking images.

Two years later, he traveled across the country again in his exhibit-ready customized 1994 Chevy Astro van, for a photography project he titled *Bare USA*, which juxtaposed nude women models alongside areas of urban decay.

"For me, photography is an escape," Cattelle says. "It's a way to explore the world and gives me an opportunity to find beauty in unexpected places and in all walks of life."

In a nod toward his own personal challenges with substance abuse, Cattelle spent time at the Caron Renaissance treatment center in Boca Raton, which in 2017 commissioned him to create a series of photographs, the *Gratitude Portrait Series Part I*.

If You Go

To see more works by Brian Cattelle, go to his website, briancattelle.com.

He interviewed alumni about their feelings of gratitude and conceptualized their ideas into a series of photographs, which has since been featured in the treatment center's facility.

The following year he created his *Gratitude Portrait Series Part II* for Caron Renaissance in Wernersville, Pa.

Cattelle also finds creative ways to communicate with his photography, stretching the boundaries of the photo itself. In his project *90's 3D Mashup*, he utilized techniques from the 1990s. He screened VHS tapes of popular films (such as the 1996 film about heroin addicts, *Trainspotting*) on a CRT TV, photographing the most notable scenes with a 35 mm film camera.

He then captured everyday scenes from his neighborhood — such as the fireworks on July 4 — and with an X-Acto knife and tape, "mashed" the two scenes together, creating a classic 1990s 3-D image.

"This photograph speaks to the false euphoria you get from doing drugs," he says on one of his Facebook Live videos.

"I'm always trying to innovate and find new ways to present photography and to do photography," says Cattelle.

More recently, he experimented again,

coming up with creative ways to view his works.

Cattelle put his *Bare USA* photographs into vintage Viewmasters, created specifically for last year's Aqua Art Miami. Each Viewmaster contains seven images and is encased in a custom-painted box.

"Looking at my photos through the lens of the Viewmaster eliminates all distractions," Cattelle says. "You actually become transported into the photo."

Another project, *Born from the Streets*, is a series of photographs of underserved people, many taken in San Francisco, where Cattelle derived inspiration from painters, graffiti artists, sculptors, musicians, architects and product designers and integrated these elements into his photographs using a variety of mixed media techniques.

He collected and assembled found objects — flyers, stickers, street debris — to create an urban wall backdrop for what he calls a "street art style photo."

All these photographs are part of his *50/50* series.

"I'm taking black-and-white photography to a new level and exploring new ways to present and capture an image," he says. "My photographs are not just an image on a wall, but have so many more facets to them. I hope always to take my photos to the next phase."

"There's a lot of good that can be achieved through art — including philanthropy," he says.

DIVERSITY

Continued from page 9

Garsson. "Y'know, the folks from the '60s and '70s, where are they now? Well, if that's what I like to do, a huge percentage of those plays are racially themed. Jeannie (Croft, Primal's resident director) and I realized that we don't think about it, because we just naturally gravitate to these themes anyway."

And even if such a play did not originally have a diverse cast, it probably will at Primal Forces. Consider Lanford Wilson's post-Vietnam drama, *Redwood Curtain*. "The part of the disillusioned war vet was originally played by Jeff Daniels and we cast (African-American) Ethan Henry," says Garsson. "That gave it a whole different spin."

Still, while these artistic directors agree that diversity productions are relatively rare in the area, they say the problem is not a lack of worthy material.

"It's not the lack of plays. We don't have much of a diversified community of artists, particularly in Palm Beach," answers Hayes. "Even when I made the decision to do (August Wilson's) *Fences* because I thought it was an important play to do right now, I had to do a national search to be able to cast the show. And that's the kind of effort you need to put into it. And not make excuses. You have to commit to the work and do what it takes to cast it."

Dramaworks has been producing race-themed plays like *Master Harold... and the Boys* and *A Raisin in the Sun* since 2012, which Hayes concedes is coming late to the party.

"A number of years ago, I realized that everything I was

putting onstage was by an old white male. That was not intentional," Hayes insists. "It's not that there aren't great plays written by women, but I was more focused on the play and the theme rather than all the other things that as an artistic director I should have been focused on. I should have been focused on diversity long ago."

Stabile, whose Theatre Lab produces new and nearly new plays, says there are plenty of scripts dealing in racial themes. The challenge comes for theaters that stick to "the classical American canon."

"But the majority of productions that we see around town are based on titles that we think are going to draw an audience. It probably gets assumed that an audience will be resistant to this kind of (race-based) material. I think that sometimes is a discredit to our audience, not having enough faith in them."

"I think there's a problematic equation that people tend to do, that a play about this kind of stuff is a heavy play, something that's going to be uncomfortable. I don't always think that's true," says Stabile. "We did a play at our last play festival of Jonathan Smith's brilliant *Woods*, a hilarious comedy about African-Americans' access to national parks. It works incredibly well, because you spend 95 minutes laughing or being uncomfortable, but it's a humorous uncomfortable."

When Primal Forces was producing at Delray Beach's Arts Garage, diversity programming was a requirement of several grants that the umbrella organization received. Nevertheless, having that mandate was hardly a



Avery Sommers starred as Bessie Smith in a well-received production at the Arts Garage. Photo by Alex Shapiro

hardship. "The Bessie Smith show (which starred area favorite Avery Sommers) could probably still be running," Garsson says of the show's ticket demand. "So I'm kind of confused as to why more theaters don't embrace black history, because it's a sure-fire seller. Why? Because we often can't cast it."

Stabile believes he has an obligation to find the actors he needs for a production. "As to your question of whether the actors are out there, sometimes you have to go on a little bit more intense of a search than just putting out a casting call," he says. "What I've seen happen with actors of color, they tend to work at one or two theaters and that's where they feel safe and respected and valued and those are the only places they go. They don't audition at other theaters

because they figure, 'Oh, I'm not going to get cast anyway.' So we have to encourage them to come out to theaters they are not familiar with, but the talent exists here."

Most artistic directors agree that their traditional — as in "white" — theatergoers will attend plays with African-American themes. "Absolutely, positively," says Hayes. "We have the best audience. They're mostly liberals. They're very passionate about the things we stand for as an organization, for the things that we are clearly messaging. They care about society and doing the right thing and standing up for the right causes."

Theatre Lab's Stabile points to the company's production of *Motherland* — a multi-cultural version of *Mother Courage* — as one of the best-selling shows of his first season as artistic director. Still, he emphasizes the importance of "getting our existing audience to understand that this was a show for them too. You never want to have a show where it's like, 'Oh, that's the show they're doing to reach out to an audience of color. That means we don't have to go to this one.'"

More of a challenge can be attracting theatergoers of color to plays that are not specifically about racial themes. Once they feel comfortable attending a play with African-American characters, Hayes believes that will show up for the rest of the programming. "I think so, once they realize we're not just doing it as a one-time deal," he says.

The Wick, however, says it has been unsuccessful at drawing a black audience. "I've had a lot of black entertainers in one-off evenings and it always is amazing to me that I never

get any black audience," says executive managing producer Wick. "I advertise in all the right places. I don't understand it."

The future remains cloudy as to when area theaters will be able to reopen, but when they do, most expect to double down on productions of diversity. Primal Forces has on its season schedule a Civil War play, *Ben Butler*, about "an escaped slave who lands at a Northern fort, seeking asylum."

Palm Beach Dramaworks plans to produce two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage's *Intimate Apparel*, a play of undergarments and emotions in turn-of-the-20th-century New York. As Hayes says of Nottage, "I think she's one of the great contemporary playwrights."

Fresh off a reading at its New Play Festival, Theatre Lab's Stabile is eager to produce Andrew Rosendorf and Satya Chavez's *Refuge*, a bilingual, multi-cultural drama of life at the U.S.-Mexico border. To attract a diverse audience, he plans on "connecting with outside organizations, so that we can bring in audiences who haven't, until now, known about us or felt welcome here."

And The Wick expects to produce *Smokey Joe's Café*, a review of pop songs from the '50s and '60s by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, tailored to a diverse cast.

Dramaworks' Hayes sums up the generally held attitude toward diversity when he says, "I think it's my job as artistic director to find more opportunities for different ethnic groups, different age groups, and that's something I've vowed to work harder on once we reopen."

Health Notes

COVID-19 vaccine trial enrolling more volunteers

COVID-19 vaccine development is in the works across the globe with one Phase 3 trial — the final step before U.S. government approval — in progress locally.

Massachusetts-based **Moderna Inc.** — in collaboration with the **National Institutes of Health** — aims to enroll 30,000 adults in Phase 3 of its testing with volunteers from all over the country.

In West Palm Beach, at the **Palm Beach Research Center**, a clinical trial began July 31 and has already enrolled and vaccinated hundreds of volunteers. It is still enrolling, said **David Scott**, president and CEO of the research center.

The study will continue for two years. The first visit takes 3-4 hours, with other quicker visits at days 28, 57, 209, 395 and 759, plus or minus a couple of days, he said. Participants will be paid up to \$1,190.

Scott describes the vaccine: “Moderna uses a biodegradable lipid nanoparticle, which allows it to more effectively be absorbed by the body than any current vaccine technology. It carries a messenger RNA, which creates a protein that looks like COVID-19’s outer shell.

“It causes the body’s immune system to create proteins that look like COVID-19 (with spikes), but they are empty — they don’t have COVID-19. Since it looks like COVID-19, the body will be prepared; in the future it can recognize COVID-19 and eliminate it.

“While the trial is ongoing, if the data shows it’s effective, Dr. Fauci is confident the FDA may do an interim analysis and begin to manufacture it this winter and distribute soon after,” Scott says.

Dr. Anthony Fauci is one of the government’s top advisers on the coronavirus pandemic.

This is a randomized, double-blind trial, which means that volunteers are randomly assigned to either receive the vaccine or a placebo, and neither the vaccinated person nor the researcher knows which was given to each person until the end of the trial.

To volunteer, go to <https://palmbeachresearch.com/2020/03/02/covid-19-vaccine-study/> or call 561-689-0606.

Researchers at **Brain Matters Research** are looking for participants age 50 and older with no memory loss to take part in the **Alzheimer Prevention Trials** web study, an online study that detects if people experience memory loss over time and need early intervention.

Volunteers take no-cost tests online every three months to monitor memory changes. If changes are observed, volunteers may be invited to in-person evaluations to determine eligibility for additional Alzheimer’s studies. To learn more and enroll, visit www.APTWebstudy.org.

Four researchers from **Florida Atlantic University** received the **National Science Foundation Early Career Awards** in August. The awards support early-career faculty members who have the potential to lead advances and serve as academic role models.

The award winners are **Waseem Asghar, Ph.D.**, associate professor; **Behnaz Ghoraani, Ph.D.**,

associate professor; **Feng-Hao Liu, Ph.D.**, assistant professor, all within the Department of Computer and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in FAU’s College of Engineering and Computer Science; and **Marianne E. Porter, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of biological sciences in FAU’s Charles E. Schmidt College of Science.

Asghar received \$500,000 over five years to develop a low-cost disposable point-of-care platform to detect current and emerging infectious diseases.

Ghoraani, who is also a fellow in FAU’s Institute for Sensing and Embedded Network Systems Engineering, was given \$524,191 over five years to develop a cognitive screening tool for the early detection of Alzheimer’s disease using wearables and a smartphone.

Liu got \$500,000 over five years to develop new ways of coding to enhance cybersecurity.

Porter’s \$625,943 over five years is for research to better understand how marine animals tune, or dynamically adjust their movements using their skin and skeletons.

In July, **Boca Raton Regional Hospital** received certification from DNV GL Healthcare as a comprehensive stroke center.

This signifies that the hospital’s Marcus Neuroscience Institute meets standards for providing care to all stroke patients, including endovascular embolization and surgical clipping of brain aneurysms, tPA administration and mechanical endovascular thrombectomy, a procedure used to remove a blood clot from the brain during an ischemic stroke.

JFK Medical Center received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award in July, recognizing the hospital’s commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment.

Additionally, JFK Medical Center received the association’s Stroke Honor Roll Elite award, recognizing that the hospital meets quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient’s arrival at the hospital and treatment.

JFK was also recognized by Healthgrades with a Five-Star Recipient Award for Treatment in Stroke for three consecutive years, 2018-2020.

The Palm Beach Health Network’s **Delray Medical Center** also earned the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Stroke and Heart Quality Achievement Award.

The hospital achieved high performance marks in the category of heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease for the state of Florida in the *U.S. News & World Report’s* 2020-2021 Best Hospitals rankings for adult clinical specialties.

Dr. Lloyd Zucker, who has more than two decades of practice in South County, was named medical director of neurosurgery for **Delray Medical Center** and Good Samaritan Medical Center.



Zucker

An honor graduate of Johns Hopkins University, Zucker was invited as an undergraduate to do research at the National Institutes of Health.

A neurosurgical residency at the University of Connecticut-Hartford Hospital followed his medical training at Rutgers University/University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. His extended training was completed by a fellowship in complex spinal surgery at the University of South Florida/Tampa General Hospital.

FoundCare, a nonprofit health center, has expanded its women’s health services to include OB/GYN care, well-woman exams, preventive care and screenings, bone density testing, breast and cervical cancer screening, sexual health services, birth control, Pap smear and HPV testing, pregnancy services, and prenatal and postpartum care.

With 35 years in the community, FoundCare Inc. has several locations throughout Palm Beach County, offering services that include pediatric and adult primary care, new women’s health services, chronic disease management, behavioral health services, dentistry, pharmacy, laboratory services and X-rays.

FoundCare’s mission is to fulfill unmet health care and social service needs of individuals and families in Palm Beach County. For more information, call 561-432-5849 or visit www.foundcare.org.

A new exhibit at the **South Florida Science Center and Aquarium**, “Real Bodies,” will run from Sept. 28 through April 11.

It will give visitors a tour of human bodies that have been preserved using a process known as polymer impregnation, where bodily fluids are replaced by liquid plastic, which is then hardened to create a solid, durable anatomic specimen that will last indefinitely. The process leaves fine delicate tissue structures intact, down to the microscopic sphere, making the process invaluable for medical study.

The exhibit will feature a COVID-19 component, where visitors can learn more about the pandemic’s impact on the human body.

The South Florida Science Center and Aquarium is at 4801 Dreher Trail N., West Palm Beach. For more information, call 561-832-1988 or visit www.sfsiencecenter.org.

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

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Health & Harmony

Lantana woman finds gratitude sustains her during pandemic

Gratitude swept into Carol Ann Keller's life in "full force" in 1993, when she felt she had absolutely nothing to be grateful for.

"Everything was a giant mess, mostly of my own making," says Keller, a Lantana resident who works in the interior design field. "I had to make extreme life changes in order to change my own life. It was introduced to me that maybe a power greater than myself existed — whatever that looked like, whatever that would be called — and that was very humbling. And once humility started entering into my existence, the gratitude just came up, and I really learned ... what gratitude looks like."

She started with baby steps, acknowledging her good fortune at having a roof over her head and food in the refrigerator — basic but life-sustaining needs. Keller says as her gratitude practice grew, so did her sense of peace and well-being.

While skeptics may regard practicing gratitude as woo-woo, a phalanx of researchers says otherwise. Keller's experiences mirror findings reported in "The Science of Gratitude," a 2018 report from the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California in Berkeley, a locus for research into the psychology, sociology and neuroscience of well-being.

"In general, more-grateful people are happier, more satisfied with their lives, less materialistic, and less likely to suffer from burnout. Additionally, some studies have found that gratitude practices, like keeping a gratitude journal or writing a letter of gratitude, can increase people's happiness and overall positive mood," writes author Summer Allen in the report, which documents



Carol Ann Keller for years has incorporated gratitude into her meditation sessions, but the practice can be as simple as jotting down thoughts on paper. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

more than two decades of research. (To read more, visit ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf)

In one cited study, Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough define gratitude as having two components: "Recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome and recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome." That external source can be a higher power, as it is for Keller, or someone whose actions have bestowed a kindness, or gift.

The important part, experts say, is to get outside of ourselves, acknowledging that navigating life does, indeed, take a village.

Expressing thanks to others directly is another way to practice gratitude. It can come

in many forms, such as a letter of thanks. (And you can say thanks to the U.S. Postal Service at the same time by ordering its "Thank You" stamps, just issued in August.)

You might share appreciation in a conversation or as a random act of kindness. The nightly cheering, clapping and pots-and-pans clanging to honor front-line workers during the coronavirus pandemic upped the feel-good ante by giving thanks and building community.

As the pandemic upended life as it was, it prompted many of us to reflect on what we previously may have taken for granted — from lingering with a friend over lattes to visiting far-distant family members or hugging loved ones just across town. With gratitude, surely

hindsight counts, too.

Keller says gratitude is helping to sustain her through the fear and uncertainty of the pandemic.

"When everything just kind of blew up, and nothing looked like it ever did before, I had to take myself down a notch to relieve that inner angst, because when I get anxious, it's usually because I'm trying to control things that are out of my control," she says. "And so, I go back to gratitude. Gratitude brings me back and I have so much to be grateful for in my life, I really do."

Michelle Maros, co-founder of Peaceful Mind Peaceful Life in Boca Raton, a nonprofit organization offering mindfulness classes and workshops and other inspiration activities, believes

gratitude is especially beneficial during times of crisis.

"Finding things to be grateful for, no matter how small, can allow us to feel a sense of optimism, hope and peace," she says. "During difficult times, our minds may convince us that everything is going wrong. Gratitude can help shift that mind-set and allow us to remember that there is still so much light in the world, even when it feels dark."

If you have room in your life to grow your gratitude, the good news is that you already have everything you need. Think about the people, pets, places and things for which you're grateful. You decide on the where, when and how.

Some jot down their thanks on paper, a couple of nuggets at a time. Keeping a running list builds a storehouse of goodwill that may boost your mood when you review it.

Others, like Keller, make it part of a meditation practice, "an inner journey" that starts and ends her day. "Gratitude keeps me out of the headspace of, oh, why does that person have that, and I don't?" she says. "It really alleviates any of that because when I've been grateful for really small things, bigger things have come along. And I don't know how that works, I don't know why that works, but it's worked."

"My gratitude is increasing by leaps and bounds the older I get. I don't know. Maybe I'm growing up at 66. Hopefully not," she says, laughing. "But I'll still be grateful."

Joyce Reingold writes about health and healthy living. Send column ideas to [joyce.reingold@yahoo.com](mailto:reingold@yahoo.com).



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Religion News

Amid churches' challenges comes a story of divine intervention

Just as the response to the coronavirus varies in different cultural, social and political arenas, the same is true in local churches. The one thing they share is a desire to serve and help, and they are on the front lines when families are in crisis.

Here's what's happening at some churches.

At **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** in Delray Beach, **Father Paul Kane** reports that "our Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida has mandated closure of all churches at least until there is a 14-day, gradual decrease in COVID-19 cases in Palm Beach County. So far, our numbers are not heading in the right direction."

Kane says the church has a reentry plan that gives details on the protocols it will follow when it is deemed safe to reopen for in-person worship.

In the meantime, Kane says that online giving, the backbone of the church's community support, has increased. People who used to put cash in the collection plate have signed up to give online.

The congregation's needs have increased as well, but its members have stepped up to help.

Kane says the complexity of the pandemic, and the myriad issues driving the demand for church support, make everything harder to manage.

"Consider," he says, "we're dealing with the health and well-being of our congregants, especially those living in nursing homes and crowded public housing facilities; the mental health of our entire community, especially those who live alone and those who suffer from addictions; the strain on our health care system; the economic impact, especially on small businesses and newly unemployed people; and the spiritual impact of not being able to gather in-person for worship."

To help, Kane says, "Our clergy provide ongoing pastoral care by phone, and we have six ministries who have dedicated themselves to praying for those people on our parish prayer list. We have also initiated a Prayer by Phone ministry, with prayer partners available five days per week."

Kane said the church hadn't lost any members to COVID as of mid-August, but members have lost family, friends and co-workers to the virus. The

prayer partners have been especially helpful to people who are grieving, he said.

Advent Lutheran Church reports in-person worship resumed at both its locations — Boca Raton and Lantana — under CDC and local guidelines. In Boca, attendance was increasing in August.

One happy first: **Andrew Hagen**, lead pastor for Advent Life Ministries, says the church performed its first socially distanced baptism in the church since the crisis began.

Hagen says donations are up slightly over previous years.

At **Unity of Delray Beach**, the **Rev. Laurie Durgan** reports, "We're keeping members and guests close via digital virtual means."

Programs to help keep people connected include:

- Sunday: Guest speakers and meditations, minister talks and children's videos and music by musical director D. Shawn Berry and soloist Daniel Cochran.

- Tuesday: Prayer services
- Wednesday: Meditation services

- Thursday: The Morning Prosperity Class with Charlene Wilkinson (phone) and the Lunch Prosperity Class with Dymon Dyer (Zoom).

If you need prayer, listen to new prayers on the Dial-a-Prayer line at 561-900-2559, email a prayer request to unitychurch@unityschool.com or speak to a prayer chaplain at 561-276-5796. Info at www.unityofdelraybeach.org.

Hot news!

In early August, **Pastor D. Brian Horgan** of **St. Lucy Catholic Church** in Highland Beach says divine intervention woke him in the middle of the night to alert him to an electrical fire in the rectory, "right outside my bedroom door."

The parish priest likes to play the radio to fall asleep at night, and the radio, plus the breathing device he uses for his sleep apnea, prevented him from hearing the smoke alarm. Instead, he says, God woke him.

Horgan tried to use a fire extinguisher he keeps on hand to fight the flames, but the fire was too big. He called the Fire Department, which quickly traveled the quarter-mile to the church to take care of the blaze.

"The place is mess," Horgan said, and his clothes all smell like smoke, but he's grateful.

"I was very lucky," Horgan said. "I used to joke about divine intervention. I don't anymore."

— Janis Fontaine



Kane

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Finding Faith

Coronavirus alters services for High Holy Days

The Jewish High Holy Days — Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement — both take place in late September.

In Judaism, these are two of the most important holy days, and services featuring special prayers, feasts with significant foods, and 25 hours of fasting are planned. Congregations gather together with great joy to celebrate the anniversary of the creation of the universe during Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 18-20).

Then the devout come together again a week later for Yom Kippur (Sept. 27-28), the holiest day of the year. Having spent time evaluating their lives, repenting their wrongs, praying and fasting, the worshipers are granted acquittal and the cleansing of their sins. The congregation dresses in white for solemn — but not sad — services at the synagogue.

This year, because of COVID-19, communal worship is limited, and some synagogues won't have in-person services.

Rabbi Shmuel Biston of Chabad of East Delray expects 30 or 40 people to attend his socially distanced, carefully abbreviated services.

"The service will last about 30 minutes," he said, "and if we get more people wanting to come, we'll add a second staggered service and clean in between."

For those who still don't feel comfortable in a group setting, Chabad of East Delray offers "Stay at Home" kits, so people can mark the holidays at home. The Chabad resumed weekly services in August and Biston meets in private (socially distanced, masks required) with people who are struggling.

"We want to offer any type of safe interaction we can, any way we can connect," Biston said.

Most of what he does is listen and talk things through, so the phone is good, but in-person is better for some people. "A lot of people are lonely and they really need that personal connection. It's been tough for some people to adapt."

Rabbi Joe Fishof of Temple Beth Ami in Boca Raton agrees. "Many are afraid, and we don't want to subject them

to a situation that makes them uncomfortable."

So, this year, a limited number of members will come to services, but most will watch them on Zoom, Fishof says.

Many synagogues depend on the sale of tickets for these two important holidays for financial support throughout the year, but most have received special donations from members.

"We reminded them, 'Don't let the shul suffer,'" Fishof says, "and people were generous."

Tickets for services are lower in cost this year, from \$50 to \$120, but these are suggested donations and no one is ever turned away because he can't pay.

Leaders of Temple Beth El in Boca Raton suggest that with so many in the congregation suffering as a result of COVID, members who have purchased High Holy Day tickets in the past should consider making a donation in the amount they would have spent.

At Beth Ami, two 90-minute services are planned. Guests will be limited to 50. Cleaning is planned in between services. Fishof is keeping most of his sermon under wraps, but he plans to comfort and encourage people whose routines have been disrupted.

"With so many people suffering, we should make an effort to be more compassionate," he said.

"I also want to remind them to be grateful for what they have. I want to tell them to have hope, to pray and stay in faith."

To Fishof, Yom Kippur is about "cheshbon hanefesh," a spiritual accounting of the soul. Self-improvement, perfecting one's character and forging closer relationships with God and our fellow men are the essence of Yom Kippur.

"It's about introspection," Fishof said. "Look inside yourself and ask, 'How can I be a better person, more compassionate, more understanding this year?'"

Local services

• **Temple Beth Ami** — 1401 NW Fourth Ave., Boca Raton. www.bacboca.org.

Temple Beth Ami will hold both Rosh Hashanah and Yom

Kippur services by reservation only and by following CDC guidelines. Masks will be required. Bring your own hand sanitizer. Temperatures will be taken at the door. Two 90-minute services are planned: 9 to 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., with cleaning planned in between. Call for tickets: 561-347-0031.

• **Temple Beth El** — Schaefer Family Campus, 333 SW Fourth Ave., Boca Raton. www.tbefoca.org.

Temple Beth El's services will be celebrated online. The synagogue invites everyone to watch services livestreaming on the website, Facebook page or YouTube channel. For members, there are additional benefits, like a special High Holy Day gift bag for pickup and the ability to borrow a High Holy Day machzor (prayer book). For more info, call 561-391-8900.

• **Boca Beach Chabad** — 120 NE First Ave., Boca Raton. 561-394-9770 or www.ChabadBocaBeaches.com

Rabbi Ruvi New said the synagogue plans to host its services at Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center, 201 Plaza Real, Boca Raton, instead of its facility. He said Mizner Park has enough room to accommodate everyone even with social distancing. Ages 12 and older. Some programs require tickets.

Services are as follows:

Rosh Hashanah evening: 7:05 p.m. Sept. 18

First-day Rosh Hashanah: 9 a.m. Sept. 19

Mincha: First-day Rosh Hashanah: 7:05 p.m. Sept. 19

Second-day Rosh Hashanah: 9 a.m. Sept. 20

Shofar sounding: 11:30 a.m. Sept. 20

Mincha: 6 p.m. Sept. 20, followed by tashlich and second shofar blowing at the Intracoastal at the northwest corner (Wildflower) of east Palmetto Park Road and Fifth Avenue, Boca Raton, at 6:45 p.m.

Kol Nidrei: 7 p.m. Sept. 27. Reservations required. Seats are \$120.

Yom Kippur morning: 9 a.m. Sept. 28

Yizkor memorial: Noon Sept. 28. Reservations required. Seats are \$72.

Mincha: 5:15 p.m. Sept. 28

Neilah closing service: 6:15 p.m. Sept. 28

Additional events: The synagogue will host Mincha at 3:15 p.m. Sept. 27 at the synagogue.

Three special children's programs are planned at the synagogue: first-day Rosh Hashanah at 10:30 a.m. Sept. 19; second-day: 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sept. 20; and Yom Kippur: 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 28

• **Chabad of East Delray** — 10 SE First Ave., Delray Beach. www.jewisheastdelray.com.

An outdoor shofar-blowing and shortened services in both Hebrew and English are planned complying with social distancing guidelines. All seats are reserved. Adults only. Masks required. Between services, the shul will be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly. A donation of \$50 is suggested.

For congregation members who feel more comfortable staying at home, kits are available for pickup with a selection of the key prayers and insights, apple and honey, challah and candles. To reserve a kit, email rabbi@jewisheastdelray.com.

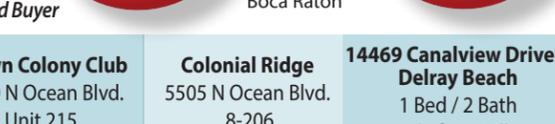
Services are:
 First-day Rosh Hashanah: 10-10:45 a.m. Sept. 19.
 Second-day Rosh Hashanah: 10-10:45 a.m. Sept. 20.
 Outdoor shofar blowing: 5 p.m. Sept. 20 (location TBA)
 Kol Nidrei: 7:15-7:45 p.m. Sept. 27
 Yom Kippur day: 10-10:45 a.m. Sept. 28
 Neilah: 7:15-7:45 p.m. Sept. 28

Janis Fontaine writes about people of faith, their congregations, causes and events. Contact her at janisfontaine@outlook.com.





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Religion Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 8/26. Please check with organizers for any changes.

SEPTEMBER 6-12

Sunday - 9/6 - Unity of Delray Beach Church Virtual Sunday Service, 101 NW 22nd St. Free. 276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org/podcast

9/6 - St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church Live-Stream Mass, 840 George Bush Blvd, Delray Beach. 9 am. Free. 276-6892; stvincentferrer.com

9/6 - St. Joseph's Episcopal Church Live-Stream Service, 3300A South Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. 9:30 am. Free. 732-3060; stjoesweb.org

9/6 - First United Methodist Church Boca Raton Facebook Live, 625 NE Mizner Blvd.

Every Sunday. Available via the church's Facebook page. 10 am. Free. 395-1244; fumcocaraton.org

9/6 - First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach Live-Stream Service, 33 Gleason St. 10 am. Free. 276-6338; firstdelray.com

9/6 - Cason United Methodist Church Online Worship Service, 342 N Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. 9:15 & 11 am. Free. 276-5302; casonumc.org

Friday - 9/11 - Temple Sinai Virtual Shabbat Service, 2475 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. 6:30 pm. Free. 276-6161; templesinaipbc.org

SEPTEMBER 13-19

Friday - 9/18-20 - Rosh Hashanah

SEPTEMBER 27-OCT. 3

Sunday - 9/27-28 - Yom Kippur

Paws Up for Pets

Stuck inside? Perhaps it's time for playful getaway with your pet

Raise your paw, er hand, if you are feeling a little stir-crazy. Got a dose of cabin fever due to the worldwide pandemic that seems to hover over Florida?

The silver lining for many stuck at home since mid-March is having a safe companion who never disagrees on which Netflix show to binge watch next. Yep, I'm referring to our dogs and cats, who have sacrificed oodles of me-alone-at-home nap time to cuddle and console us during our many moods.

Paws up for pets, for sure. At this stage of the coronavirus, opportunities are growing for us with pets to engage in safe activities and to take short getaways to pet-welcoming places. If you are ready to sport your mask, bring plenty of gloves and hand sanitizer, the Visit Florida team may have a fit for you.

Visit Florida represents more than 13,000 tourism industry businesses throughout the Sunshine State. Recognizing that pet adoptions have surged by more than 300% since April, this group is promoting "fur-babymoon" adventures for people and their well-mannered pets.

From the Panhandle down to the Florida Keys, opportunities exist for you and your pet to safely paddleboard, take beach strolls, hike, sail,



Costa d'Este Beach Resort in Vero Beach offers humans a free stay if an accompanying pet pays a rate starting at \$184 a night. Photo provided by Costa d'Este Beach Resort & Spa

rent pet-friendly Airbnbs and dine outdoors.

One of the most fetching options includes free stays for people at the Costa d'Este Beach Resort & Spa in Vero Beach. The catch? Their accompanied dogs must pay daily rates from \$184 a night.

"We put a playful spin on a traditional hotel package from the dog's perspective," explains Jessica Milton, regional

director of public relations for Benchmark Global Hospitality.

"This is a small hotel with 94 rooms, so you won't be walking into a massive resort. The hotel has plenty of safe things to do outside and definitely will pamper your dog with a beachside dog massage, water bowls and toys your dog can take home, use of a plush doggie bed in the room and even a doggie menu that includes Muttballs."

Lisa Radosta, DVM, a veterinarian who operates the Florida Veterinary Behavior Service in West Palm Beach, recently spent a month living in a pet-friendly hotel while her family's new house was being completed. Their old home sold quickly, so the entire family, including Maverick, a Labrador retriever, and a cat named Chewie were hotel dwellers.

"We chose the hotel based on the fact that they took pets and that we would have enough room (a suite) for us and both pets," she says. "Factors to consider when traveling with your pets these days definitely include the ability to have space for the pets, a place to safely walk pets

and pet-friendly restaurants and attractions nearby."

Equally important is knowing your pet's temperament and adaptability to being in new places with new sights, sounds and smells.

When they arrived, their normally easygoing Maverick had issues with the hotel elevator. But having a veterinary behaviorist for a pet parent helped as Radosta steadily built up Maverick's exposure to elevator rides.

"My husband and I are pretty fit, so we took the four flights of stairs up and down as much as possible to give Maverick a break from the elevator," she says. "We learned that he needed treats before he got on the elevator and tolerated the ride much better if I asked him to lie down. He rides the elevator just fine now."

If you want to bring your pet on a day trip or overnight at a hotel, vacation rental, RV campground or cabin in a park, Radosta advises making a pros/cons list with your pet's needs and personality in mind.

Some pets are genuine homebodies, who prefer staying at home under the

If You Go

Taking COVID-19 precautions into account, numerous pet-welcoming places and activities are available in the Sunshine State. To learn more, go to www.VisitFlorida.com.

To learn more about Dr. Lisa Radosta's practice, visit www.flvetbehavior.com. Radosta is the co-author of *From Fearful to Fear Free*. The book spotlights the national Fear Free program created by veterinarians to reduce fear, anxiety and stress in pets at home, in the car, at veterinary clinics and during outdoor activities.

care of a professional pet sitter who is practicing CDC health and safety guidelines. Dogs feeling stressed may chew or damage hotel furniture or bark excessively.

"You can't come and go as you please on vacation, because you have to go back to the RV or hotel to take care of your pets," Radosta adds.

Know your pet's likes and dislikes.

"Going out with your dog is really fun — for you! Is it fun for your dog?" she says. "If not, take some time to get your dog used to going to the beach or getting on the kayak before you expect him to spend significant amounts of time in that activity."

For well-socialized pets, however, such trips are viewed as added adventures spent with their favorite humans. Never before has the unconditional love unleashed on us by our pets felt so good.

Arden Moore, founder of fourleggedlife.com, is an animal behavior expert and host of the

Oh Behave! show on petliferadio.com. Learn more at www.ardenmoore.com.



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Tots & Teens

Boca girl, grandmother create book to stay close during pandemic

By Janis Fontaine

Patricia Maguire of Ocean Ridge and her granddaughter Daniella Maguire of Boca Raton have always been exceptionally close, so the social distancing protocols of the coronavirus had them both craving more of a connection than FaceTime and phone calls could offer.

At the same time, Dani, 9, was empathizing with her mother, Viviana, who is Pati's oldest daughter. She was struggling to virtual-school Dani while caring for Dani's brothers, Mikey, 1, and Noah, 3. When Viviana's birthday came around, Dani wanted to make her a special gift and enlisted Pati, whom she calls "Noni," to help.

Dani wanted to write a story that portrayed her mom as the heroine and she wanted Pati, an accomplished artist, to illustrate it. "I wanted my mom to know how much I appreciate her," Dani said.

"Dani is very creative, and I'd been wanting to get her involved in a game or a project to stay in touch," Pati recalled, and so she jumped on board.

Dani had learned to write essays in the fourth grade at Addison Mizner Elementary. "I wanted to be the author," Dani said, but neither realized how big the project would become or how much work it would take.

In the end, the duo created *Fiona the Fox and the Magic Crystal*, an 18-page book with 14 color illustrations. Pati learned to use a medium called gouache, an opaque



Patricia Maguire and her granddaughter Daniella. Photo provided



watercolor-like paint thickened with a binding agent.

Many discussions took place over the phone. Dani would write a few pages, and send the story to Noni, who would type it up. They would discuss how to best illustrate each of the scenes. Later they met a few times outdoors — at the beach or the pool, practicing social distancing — to work on the project.

"I kept it a surprise from my mom," Dani said, so they had to be secretive. Afterward Dani apologized to her mom for "being mean and shutting her out." But such is art!

Dani loves most animals ("I don't like reptiles") and knew they would be central to

the story.

Her story was inspired by the pandemic and something she saw happening around her. Dani noticed there were more birds singing and squirrels playing. The news reports said air pollution was clearing up in the biggest cities because people were traveling and driving less.

"We noticed how nature responded," Pati explained.

Their central theme — if nature could cause the pandemic, nature could fix it — depended on Fiona the Fox and the brave and brilliant mom solving a mystery together, with the help of all the forest animals and a bit of magic, of course.

In all, it took Dani and Pati almost three months to complete their book, which Pati had self-published at www.blurb.com.

"I was so excited to see it and I was so proud of her," Pati said. Dani had stuck with the project long-term, which can be tough when you're not even in fifth grade yet.

"Dani got to experience the creative ebb and flow," Pati said. "We motivated each other."

"I was really proud of myself," Dani said, "and my mom was really happy."

Now if we could just find that magic crystal.

Pati and Dani's book, Fiona the Fox and the Magic Crystal, is available for purchase at www.amazon.com. See Pati Maguire's paintings, including several inspired by COVID-19, at www.patimaguire.com or at her Facebook page at [patimaguirepaintings](https://www.facebook.com/patimaguirepaintings).

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Tots & Teens Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 8/26. Please check with organizers for any changes.

SEPTEMBER 5

Saturday - 9/5 - 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. Held again 10/3. 1st Sat 9-10 am. \$7.50/adult; \$6.50/senior; \$5.50/child 3-12; free/member & child under 3. 832-1988; sfsccenter.org

SEPTEMBER 6-12

Monday - 9/7 - STEM Learning Lab at South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, 4801 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. Each student provided w/sanitized learning space, WI-FI connection, technical support; program uses same health/safety protocols developed for summer camp. Temperature checks upon arrival. Ages 7-12. Program runs until schools welcome children back in-person. M-F. Primary session 8 am-2:30 pm, \$200/child per week; aftercare session 2:30-5 pm, \$75/week. Register: 832-2026; sfsccenter.org/STEM-Lab

9/7 - Distance Learning Camps at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 8-14. Runs weekly 9/7-11, 9/14-18, 9/21-25 & 9/28-10/2. 8 am-noon; noon-4:30 pm or 8 am-4:30 pm. M-F \$160-\$200/week, M/W/F \$145-\$175/week; T/Th \$130-\$150/week; before/after care available for a fee. 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

Tuesday - 9/8 - Oh, Baby! Zoom Story Time presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 3 months to 2 years. Every W 10 am. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

9/8 - Virtual Family Storytime presented by Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Age infant to 5. Every W 10 am. Free. 742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

Thursday - 9/10 - 2020 Discovery Series: Reptiles at Sandoway Discovery Center, 142 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. Program takes

place outdoors; limited to 5 families per class. Geared for families w/children age 3-6. Every Th through 9/24. Held again 10/29. 9:30-10:15 am. \$8/class child; \$6/accompanying adult. RSVP: 274-7263; sandowayhouse.org

9/10 - Zoom Tween Time presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 7-12. 2nd Th 3:30 pm. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

Friday - 9/11 - Kindergarten Readiness Zoom Story Time with Ms. Tea presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 3-5. Every F 10 am. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

Saturday - 9/12 - Virtual Code Palm Beach Beginner Workshop at South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, 4801 Dreher Tr N, West Palm Beach. Learn how to code in the world of technology. Age 7-17. Held again: 10/10. 2-3 pm. \$2/class. Registration: 425-8918; sfsccenter.org/code-palm-beach

SEPTEMBER 13-19

Tuesday - 9/15 - BeTeen the Lines Zoom Readers Club presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13+. 1st & 3rd T 3 pm. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

SEPTEMBER 20-26

Monday - 9/21 - Story Chasers Zoom Book Club presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Grade 1-3. 3rd M 3:30-4:15 pm. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

SEPTEMBER 27-OCT. 3

Monday - 9/28 - Tween Zoom Book Club presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Grade 4-8. Held again: 10/26. 4th M 3:30-4:15 pm. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

Tuesday - 9/29 - Virtual GEMS Club: Sea the Change presented by 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. 5:30-6:30 pm. \$5/virtual class. Register: 370-7710; sfsccenter.org/gem

Thursday - 10/1 - 2020 Discovery Series: Ocean at Sandoway Discovery Center, 142 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. Program takes place outdoors; limited to 5 families per class. Geared for families w/children age 3-6. Every Th through 10/22 9:30-10:15 am. \$8/class child; \$6/accompanying adult. RSVP: 274-7263; sandowayhouse.org

10/1 - Mori Stories: Kamishibai Folktales: The Magic Tea Kettle at Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. 1 pm. Free w/museum admission. 495-0233; morikami.org

OCTOBER 18-24

Monday - 10/19 - Story Chasers Zoom Book Club presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Grade 1-3. 3rd M 3:30-4:15 pm. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

Friday - 10/23 - Teen Zoom Read Day 2020 presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 5 rockstar Young Adult authors speak about equity, inclusion, their books. Age 12+. 8:30 am-2 pm. Free. 266-0194; delraylibrary.org

10/23 - Halloween at the YMCA at DeVos-Blum Family YMCA, 9600 S Military Tr, Boynton Beach. 6:30-9 pm. \$5/adult; \$15/child member; \$20/child non-member. 395-9622; ymcaspbc.org/programs/events/halloween-y

Saturday - 10/24 - Halloween at the YMCA at Peter Blum Family YMCA, 6631 Palmetto Circle S, Boca Raton. 6:30-9 pm. \$5/child member; \$20/child non-member. 395-9622; YMCA ymcaspbc.org/programs/events/halloween-y

OCTOBER 25-31

Tuesday - 10/27 - Florida Treasures at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Grades K-8. 11 am. Tickets: 586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

10/27 - Virtual GEMS Club: Haunted Chemists presented by 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. 5:30-6:30 pm. \$5/virtual class. Register: 370-7710; sfsccenter.org/gem

Lifeguard honored

Lantana — July 27



Lifeguard Tanner Thielemann received the Lantana Police Department's Life-saving Award from Chief Sean Scheller at Town Hall. Thielemann, a 34-year-old South Palm Beach resident, rescued an 18-year-old man from a rip tide about 60 yards offshore on May 23. **Mary Thurwachter/The Coastal Star**

Outdoors

In wake of Hurricane Isaias

Ocean Ridge/Briny Breezes — Aug. 2



Hurricane Isaias passed Florida as a tropical storm. It provided a morning of rough seas, then an afternoon of beautiful surf and spectacular dismounts. Thousands of surfers hit the beaches along Florida coasts, including these off Ocean Ridge and Briny Breezes. By the following day, the surf was back to its normal summertime flatness. **Photos by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

Winning Wahoo

Juno Beach — July 11



The crew of the Hypoluxo-based Southern Comfort IV holds the 51.3-pound wahoo caught July 11 to win the Big Dog/Fat Cat KDW Shootout. From left are mate Josh Joyner, Capt. Bill Cox and mate Ashley Mann. Winning angler Mark Boydston reeled in the wahoo, which hit a trolled bonito strip/sea witch combination in 250 feet off Sloan's Curve. It was the heaviest fish of the 233-boat tournament. **Photo provided by Southern Comfort Charters**

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On the Water returns next edition



Willie Howard is on vacation. Reach him at tiowillie@bellsouth.net.

Community Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 8/26. Please check with organizers for any changes.

SEPTEMBER 5

Saturday - 9/5 - New Visitor Experience at Flagler Museum, One Whitehall Way, Palm Beach. General admission tickets now available. Visitors must pre-purchase general admission tickets using credit card or PayPal, limited to 4 tickets per purchase. Museum has adopted timed entry; visitors are required to choose entry date/time. Present ticket confirmation w/photo ID at entry kiosk. Runs through 9/30 T-Sat 10 am-5 pm. \$18/adult; \$10/age 13-17; \$3/age 6-12; free/child under age 6. 655-2833 x10; flaglermuseum.us

9/5 - Free Museum Admission at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real. W-Sun 11 am-7 pm. Free through 9/30. 392-2500; bocamuseum.org

SEPTEMBER 6-12

Monday - 9/7 - Labor Day

Tuesday - 9/8 - Great Directors

Documentary Series: *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness* (NR) presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Stream/watch Neil Schulhoff for virtual discussion. Adults. 4-5 pm. Free access to Kanopy stream with BRPL card number. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

Wednesday - 9/9 - League of Women

Voters: Conversations with the League.

Interactive Zoom video session; guest speaker First Responder Jaime Walker. Every W 6-7 pm. Free. Join Zoom meeting after 5:50 pm: 276-4898; lwvpc.org

Thursday - 9/10 - Virtual Lecture Series -

Citizen Science: Empowering the Public to Help Solve Biomedical Challenges

presented by Andrew Su, Ph.D., professor in Scripps Research's Department of Integrative Structural & Computational Biology: recent discoveries that were only possible by leveraging the Citizen Scientist community and many ways in which people can contribute to cutting-edge scientific research at Scripps Research and elsewhere. 4-5 pm. Free. Reservations: frontrow.scripps.edu

Friday - 9/11 - Virtual Free Friday Concert:

The Resolvers presented by Old School Square, 51 N Swinton Ave. All concerts filmed at Old School Square's Crest Theatre. Performances filmed cinematically for "front row" feel. Streamed Fridays on Facebook 7 pm. Free. 243-9722; oldschoolsquare.org

9/11-12 - Actors' Rep of West Palm Beach

Virtual Theatrical Performance *Beyond Therapy* by Christopher Durang. Bob Carter's Actor's Workshop & Repertory Company, 1000 N Dixie Hwy. 8 pm. Held again 9/25 & 26. \$10. 833-7529; actorsrep.org

Saturday - 9/12 - Writers Workshop:

P.O.V.: What It Is And How To Use It part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Charles Todd. 10 am-noon. \$25. Registration: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

9/12-14 - 3rd Annual USTA Sunshine State

Open at Delray Beach Swim & Tennis Club, 2350 Jaeger Dr; Delray Beach Tennis Center, 201 W Atlantic Ave; Boca Lago Country Club, 9045 Vista del Lago. The best juniors in the country compete in Boys' & Girls' 12s-18s age division. Start times posted online. Doubles and singles format. 8 am matches begin. Limit one guest per player. Schedules/draw information: 330-6003; yellowtennisball.com/sunshine-state-open

SEPTEMBER 13-19

Sunday - 9/13 - The Sunday Sleuths Book

Group Meeting: *August Snow* by Stephen Mack Jones at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. 4 pm. Free. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

Tuesday - 9/15 - *The Spy and the Traitor* by Ben Macintyre part of The Talk of Kings Book Discussion Group at The Society of the Four Arts King Library, 101 Four Arts Plaza, Palm Beach. Attend at the library or remotely via Zoom. 5:30 pm. Free. Registration: 655-2766; fourarts.org

Wednesday - 9/16 - The Classic Sci-Fi

Virtual Book Club: *Neuromancer* by William Gibson presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Virtual discussion w/ Neil Schulhoff. Adults. 10:30-11:30 am. Link to GoToMeeting emailed prior to the discussion. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

9/16 - League of Women Voters Hot Topic

Luncheon: 2020 Ballot Issues. Zoom video session; guest speaker Cynthia Archbold, Chair of LWVPC's National Popular Vote Committee & founding member of Floridians for the National Popular Vote. Noon-1 pm. Zoom registration information: 276-4898; lwvpc.org

9/16 - Music at Home: Live from Arts

Garage with Ariella at Arts Garage, 94 NE

2nd Ave, Delray Beach. 7 pm live stream. \$25/ household. 450-6357; artsgarage.org

9/16 - Friends Virtual Book Club: *Glass*

***Hotel* by Emily St. John Mandel** presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW

2nd Ave. Adults. 7-8:30 pm. Free. Email spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link information. 393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Thursday - 9/17 - Project C4OPE: Zoom

meeting Forum Series for Families in the Opioid Crisis presented by Hanley Foundation, designed to connect people who share the experience of a loved one who has died of opioid overdose, survived an overdose, or are at high risk for overdose. 1st & 3rd Th

6-7:30 pm. Held again 10/15. Free. 268-2357; hanleyfoundation.org/project-c4ope

Friday - 9/18-19 - Rosh Hashana

9/18 - Virtual Free Friday Concert:

Xperimento presented by Old School Square, 51 N Swinton Ave. All concerts filmed at Old School Square's Crest Theatre. Performances filmed cinematically for "front row" feel. Streamed Fridays on Facebook 7 pm. Free. 243-9722; oldschoolsquare.org

Saturday - 9/19 - Writers Workshop:

Crafting Your Short Story part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Elaine Viets. 10 am-noon. \$25. Registration: 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

9/19 - L.C. Shaw interviewed by K.J. Howe at Murder on the Beach Mystery Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. 2 pm. Admission included w/purchase of the book *The Silent Conspiracy* \$16.99. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

9/19 - Online Lamaze Birth Education

presented by Bethesda Heart Hospital, 2815 S Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. 2-week series, taught online by Lamaze certified instructor, supports/educates parents about birth, comfort techniques, pain control options, medical interventions. Held again 9/26. 3-5:30 pm. Free. Meeting ID/password provided on registration: 369-2229; publicrelations@bhinc.org

SEPTEMBER 20-26

Sunday - 9/20 - Friends Speaker Series:

Dan Schutzer, PhD: From Cold War to Cyber War - Then and Now presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Adults. 3-4 pm. Free. Register for Zoom discussion at <https://tinyurl.com/y36atlbx>. 393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Monday - 9/21-30 - 7th Annual 6X6

Exhibition & Sale virtual exhibition presented by Cornell Art Museum at Old School Square, 51 N Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. Sale 9/30 for 24 hours. 243-7922; oldschoolsquare.org

Tuesday - 9/22 - Hatching Writers Virtual

Zoom Class at Kravis Center, 701 Okeechobee Blvd, West Palm Beach. With Pulitzer Prize-nominated biographer, novelist, playwright Julie Gilbert. Small written assignment each week. Every T 2 pm through 10/27. \$200. Register: kravis.org

9/22 - Great Directors Documentary

Series: *De Palma* (R) presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Stream/watch Neil Schulhoff for virtual discussion. Adults. 4-5 pm. Free access to Kanopy stream with BRPL card number. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

Wednesday - 9/23 - Timothy Jay Smith

speaks and signs his book *Fire on the Island* at Murder on the Beach Mystery Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Noon. Admission included w/purchase of the book \$24.99. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

Friday - 9/25 - An Hour to Kill Virtual

Mystery Book Club: *Recursion* by Blake Crouch presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Join Neil Schulhoff for virtual discussion. Adults. 10:30-11:30 am. Link to GoToMeeting emailed prior to the discussion. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

9/25 - Virtual Free Friday Concert:

Artikal Sound System presented by Old School Square, 51 N Swinton Ave. All concerts filmed at Old School Square's Crest Theatre. Performances filmed cinematically, for "front row" feel. Streamed Fridays on Facebook 7 pm. Free. 243-9722; oldschoolsquare.org

Saturday - 9/26 - Writers Workshop:

Dialogue: The Voices in Your Head part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Michael Wiley. 10 am-noon. Registration: \$25. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

SEPTEMBER 27-OCT. 3

Sunday - 9/27-28 - Yom Kippur

Monday - 9/28 - *One in a Million Boy* by

Monica Wood part of Virtual Afternoon Book Group at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 1 pm. Free. Zoom link on website: 266-0196; delraylibrary.org

Municipal Meetings

NOTE: Please check with municipality for information regarding streaming/archiving of meetings.

9/8 & 10/5 - Ocean Ridge - First Monday at Ocean Ridge Town Hall, 6450 N Ocean Blvd. 6 pm. Agenda: oceanridgeflorida.com

9/8 & 10/13 - South Palm Beach - Second Tuesday at South Palm Beach Town Hall, 3577 S Ocean Blvd. 4 pm. Agenda: southpalmbeach.com

9/9 & 22, 10/14 & 27 - Boca Raton - Second & fourth Wednesday at Boca Raton City Hall, 201 W Palmetto Park Rd. 6 pm. Agenda: myboca.us

9/10 & 22 & 10/6 & 20 - Delray Beach - First & third Tuesdays at Delray Beach City Hall, 100 NW 1st Ave. 4 pm. Agenda: delraybeachfl.gov

9/11 & 10/9 - Gulf Stream - Second Friday at Gulf Stream Town Hall, 100 Sea Rd. 4-5 pm. 9 am. Agenda: gulf-stream.org

9/14 & 10/12 & 26 - Lantana - Second & fourth Mondays at Lantana Town Hall, 500 Greynolds Cir. 7 pm. Agenda: lantana.org

9/15 & 10/6 - Highland Beach - First Tuesday at Highland Beach Town Hall, 3614 S Ocean Blvd. 1:30 pm. Agenda: highlandbeach.us

9/15, 10/6 & 20 - Boynton Beach - First and third Tuesday at Boynton Beach City Hall, 100 E Ocean Ave. 5:30 pm. Agenda: boynton-beach.org

9/18 & 10/27 - Manalapan - Fourth Tuesday at Manalapan Town Hall, 600 S Ocean Blvd. 3 pm. 10 am. Agenda: manalapan.org

9/24 & 10/22 - Briny Breezes - Fourth Thursday at Briny Breezes Town Hall, 4802 N Ocean Blvd. 4 pm. Agenda: townofbrinybreezes-fl.com

Thursday - 10/1 - Sumi-e Ink Painting

Class: Beginners Floral Session 1 at Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. Every Th through 10/22 10:30 am-12:30 pm. \$55/member; \$60/non-member. Registration: 495-0233; morikami.org

Friday - 10/2 - Sumi-e Ink Painting Class:

Landscape Session 1 at Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. Every F through 10/23 1:30-3:30 pm. \$55/member; \$60/non-member. Registration: 495-0233; morikami.org

10/2 - Color Create Craft Program at The Society of the Four Arts King Library, 101 Four Arts Plaza, Palm Beach. Every F through 10/30 2-4 pm. Free. 655-7226; fourarts.org

Saturday - 10/3 - Writers Workshop:

Propelling Suspense with Driving

Questions part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Alison McMahan. 10 am-noon. Registration: \$25. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

10/3 - Shibori Indigo Workshop: Shibori

Aprons at Morikami Japanese Museum and Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. 10 am-3 pm. \$65 + \$25/material fee. Registration: 495-0233 x210; morikami.org

10/3 - League of Women Voters: A Taste of

the League Orientation Meeting for New Members. Interactive Zoom video session. 10:30-11:30 am. Registration: 276-4898; lwvpc.org

10/3-4 - Tovah is Leona at Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center, 201 Plaza Real, Boca Raton. Sat 3 & 8 pm; Sun 2 pm. \$39-\$59. 844-672-2849; miznerparkculturalcenter.com

OCTOBER 4-10

Sunday - 10/4 - The Art of Bonsai at Morikami Japanese Museum and Gardens Oki Education Center, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. Explore new techniques to artfully train/trim trees. Bring your own tree, pruning tools, bonsai pots, soil, wire as needed. Every Sun through 11/1. Intermediate 9 am-noon; Beginner 1-4 pm. \$45 materials fee (beginners) + \$81/member; \$91/non-member. Reservations: 495-0233; morikami.org

10/4 - Nihongo: Introduction to Japanese

Part 1 at Morikami Japanese Museum and Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. 3 parts per level should be taken sequentially before moving to the next level. Introduction of the Japanese language and culture. Every Sun through 11/22. Level I 1-2 pm; Level II 2:10-3:10 pm; Level III 3:20-4:20 pm; Level IV 4:30-5:30 pm. \$100/member; \$110/non-member. Registration: 495-0233; morikami.org

Tuesday - 10/6 - M.E. Browning

interviewed by Hank Phillippi Ryan at Murder on the Beach Mystery Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. 2 pm. Admission included w/purchase of Micki's or Hank's book *The First to Lie* \$27.99 or \$5 creditable toward Micki's book. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

10/6 - Great Directors Documentary Series:

***Hitchcock/Truffaut* (PG-13)** presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Stream/watch Neil Schulhoff for virtual discussion. Adults. 4-5 pm. Free access to Kanopy stream with BRPL card number. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

10/6 - *The Splendid and the Vile* by Erik

Larson part of The Talk of Kings Book Discussion Group at The Society of the Four Arts King Library, 101 Four Arts Plaza, Palm Beach. Attend at the library or remotely via Zoom. 5:30 pm. Free. Registration: 655-2766; fourarts.org

Wednesday - 10/7 - Ikebana: Flower

Arrangement/Sogetsu Class at Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens Oki Education Center, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. Contemporary flower arranging using fresh

flowers. Every W through 10/28. Beginner 10:30 am-12:30 pm; Intermediate 1:30-3:30 pm. \$70/member; \$80/non-member; +\$60-\$80/flower fee. Registration: 495-0233 x237; morikami.org

10/7 - Exhibit Opening - Jeff Whyman:

Out of Nature at Boca Raton Museum Art School, 801 W Palmetto Park Rd. Runs through 1/3/2021 W-Sun 11 am-7 pm. Free. 392-2500; bocamuseum.org

10/7 - Exhibit Opening - Trine Lise

Nedreaas: The Entertainers at Boca Raton Museum Art School, 801 W Palmetto Park Rd. Runs through 1/3/2021 W-Sun 11 am-7 pm. Free. 392-2500; bocamuseum.org

10/7 - Anna Lee Huber interviewed by

Alyssa Maxwell at Murder on the Beach Mystery Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. 2 pm. Admission included w/purchase of Anna's or Alyssa's book *Murder at Kingscote* \$26.00 or \$5 creditable towards Anna's book or Alyssa's. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

Thursday - 10/8 - Sado: Tea Ceremony

Beginners Class at Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens Seishin-an Teahouse, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray Beach. Unique opportunity to study traditional art of Sado, The Way of Tea. Tea Ceremony Workshop required for those who have never taken a Tea Ceremony Class but wish to start studying Sado. 2 lessons/month 10/8 & 22 10:15 am-12:15 pm. \$50/member; \$55/non-member. Registration: 495-0233 x210; morikami.org

Saturday - 10/10 - Writers Workshop: How

to Find an Agent part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor DJ Niko. 10 am-noon. Registration: \$25. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

10/10 - 7th Annual Mayor's Ball at Palm Beach County Convention Center, 650 Okeechobee Blvd, West Palm Beach. Benefits Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County. 6-11 pm. Tickets start at \$300. 308-6880; homelesscoalitionpbc.org

10/10 - Music at Home: Live from Arts

Garage with Ann Hampton Callaway at Arts Garage, 94 NE 2nd Ave, Delray Beach. 7 pm live stream. \$40/household. 450-6357; artsgarage.org

10/10-12 - 7th Annual USTA Columbus

Day Open at Delray Beach Tennis Center, 201 W Atlantic Ave; Delray Beach Swim & Tennis Club, 2350 Jaeger Dr; Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Dr; The Club at Boca Pointe, 7144 Boca Pointe Dr; Wycliffe Country Club, 4650 Wycliffe Country Club Blvd, Lake Worth. Over 250 best juniors in the country compete in Boys' & Girls' 12s, 14s, 16s & 18s age divisions; one of USTA's largest Level 2 nationally sanctioned events. Start times posted online. Singles format. 8 am matches begin. Limit one guest per player. Schedules/draw information: 330-6003; yellowtennisball.com/columbus-day-open

OCTOBER 11-17

Wednesday - 10/14 - Virtual Lecture

Series: Harnessing Chemical Biology for

Cancer Drug Discovery presented by Scripps Research. Associate Professor Michael Erb shares his research applying chemical tools to study how chromatin, a molecular machine that plays a key role in transcription, becomes disrupted in cancer, discusses his research developing small molecule drugs targeting these genetic malfunctions. 4-5 pm. Free. Reservations: frontrow.scripps.edu

Thursday - 10/15 - Virtual Conversations

with *New York Times* Bestselling Authors

Interviewed by FAU Faculty part of Palm Beach Book Festival, at Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. Tim Weiner, author of *The Folly and the Glory*. 5:30-6:30 pm. \$10/general admission; \$8/FAU Olsher Lifelong Learning Student; Free/FAU student. 297-2891; fauf.fau.edu/PBBF-Weiner

Friday - 10/16-17 - Fall Craft Sale at Boca Raton Garden Club's Garden and Clubhouse, 4281 NE 3rd Ave. Masks and social distancing required. 9 am-2 pm. Free. 994-5642; bocaratongardenclub.org

Saturday - 10/17 - Writers Workshop:

Dexter For Real part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Sharon Plotkin. 10 am-noon. Registration: \$25. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

OCTOBER 18-24

Sunday - 10/18 - The Sunday Sleuths

Book Group Meeting: *This Tender Land* by William Kent Kreuger at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. 4 pm. Free. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

Tuesday - 10/20 - Great Directors

Documentary Series: *Friedkin Uncut* (2018) presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Stream/watch Neil Schulhoff for virtual discussion. Adults. 4-5 pm. Free access to Kanopy stream with BRPL card number. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

Wednesday - 10/21 - The Classic Sci-Fi

Virtual Book Club: *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Join Neil Schulhoff for virtual discussion. Adults. 10:30-11:30 am. Link to GoToMeeting emailed prior to the discussion. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

10/21 - League of Women Voters Hot Topic:

Voter Resources. Interactive Zoom video session. Noon-1 pm. Registration: 276-4898; lwvpc.org

10/21 - Friends Virtual Book Club: *Just*

Mercy by Bryan Stevenson presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Adults. 7-8:30 pm. Free. Email book spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link information. 393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Thursday - 10/22 - An Hour to Kill Virtual

Mystery Book Club: TBA presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Join Neil Schulhoff for virtual discussion. Adults. 10:30-11:30 am. Link to GoToMeeting emailed prior to the discussion. Registration: 393-7906; bocalibrary.org

Saturday - 10/24 - Writers Workshop:

Groaners: How To Keep Laughably Bad Writing Mistakes From Torpedoing

Your Work part of Florida Authors Academy Workshop at Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Instructor Eliot Kleinberg. 10 am-noon. Registration: \$25. 279-7790; murderonthebeach.com

10/24 - Nihongo: Japanese Language

Intensive Virtual Workshops 1-A presented by Morikami Japanese Museum and Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Rd, Delray

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