



Along the Coast

Why county views small Milani site as big for beach plans

By Joel Engelhardt

As Palm Beach County's population grows, the share of public beaches for every resident drops.

And that makes it hard for the county to meet its target to have 0.18 acres of developed beach access for every 1,000 residents.

In fact, the county is hovering at 0.19 per 1,000 residents. Just over its goal.

And even though the county has three potential beach properties to add to its holdings — including the 5.6 acres at Milani Park in Highland Beach — the objective written into the county's comprehensive growth plan is under review.

"We are on the cusp of being deficient on developed park acreage," said Jennifer Cirillo, the county's director of parks and recreation.

Referring specifically to Milani, which Highland Beach has asked to be sold off for private development, Cirillo added: "At this point everything we have will be needed."

But applying an arbitrary standard to justify a public beach, whether merited or not, does not make sense,

See **PARKS** on page 23



Happy Holidays

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas (and Hanukkah)! From tree lightings to holiday bazaars, boat parades and more, the month will be filled with festive events; see our listings in the Around Town section.

ABOVE: Children are dazzled during Boca Raton's tree lighting Nov. 18 at Mizner Park, which has been transformed into a holiday wonderland, with 50,000 LED lights and festive 2D light displays. **LEFT:** Alida Bowden arranges her display at the Southern Handcraft Society show Nov. 17 at Old School Square.

Photos by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Along the Coast

'But never on A1A': Cyclist works to ride again despite shattering collision with pickup

By Joe Capozzi

Diane Pohanka, 63, is learning to walk again, one painful step at a time.

She uses a cane and the going is slow, which is to be expected. Her broken leg bones were surgically fused together with metal rods just a few months ago.

But despite the grueling physical therapy sessions, 90 minutes three times a week, the Gulf Stream woman has aspirations beyond walking.

She wants to get on her bicycle again.

That day will come, she said. And when it does, she knows where she won't be riding — State Road A1A. The scenic oceanfront route for years had been her favorite until the August afternoon she was hit by a pickup truck in Boca Raton.

"My active life came to a screeching halt," said

Pohanka, who suffered breaks to the fibula and tibia in both legs and a broken right femur.

"I will get on a bike again," she said, "but never on A1A."

Before her unsolicited encounter with the truck four months ago, Pohanka rode the same A1A route three times a week, from the driveway of her Gulf Stream home south to Palmetto Park Road in Boca Raton and back — 20 miles round-trip.

"I've done that ride 200 to 300 times," she said, describing a routine that started in 2020 when the pandemic reignited her lifelong passion for biking.

She usually went riding with her husband, Chris. And unlike those pack cyclists who often whizzed past them, they were not road warriors. They were leisure riders out for exercise and

See **CYCLIST** on page 26



Diane Pohanka of Gulf Stream reacts to stretching exercises during therapy at Miller Physical Therapy in downtown Delray Beach, where she has become a regular since her August accident. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

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Meet the service K-9 assisting Ocean Ridge police.
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New Gulf Stream development. Page AT31

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Coastal Star

Boca woman founded Autism After 21 to enrich lives of son and many others

By Sallie James

When Michelle Rubin's son Scott was diagnosed with autism three decades ago, doctors told her the condition was extremely rare and to expect few options for him in school and work.

Rubin refused to embrace that grim outlook. Instead, the Boca Raton resident dedicated her energy to helping Scott and others like him live productive lives filled with independence.

Rubin founded the nonprofit Autism After 21 in 2011 out of frustration stemming from a lack of services for her own son, who is now 31. She has since provided life skills training to hundreds of young adults with spectrum disorders, giving them hope for brighter futures.

"I always tell families, it's not as bad as you think," said Rubin, who has two other sons. "At 21 years old I realized rather quickly that any kind of support or structured work opportunities for Scott were gone. There was just nothing available. My friends suggested I do something."

So, she did. Now Rubin is in the business of changing lives.

Last month, the University of Florida honored Rubin with an Outstanding Alumni Award for Community Impact from the school's College of Public Health and Health Professions. She was selected from a field of more than 100 candidates.

Her friends weren't surprised at all.

"Michelle is one of the most impressive people I know. She made sure that her son Scott ... had every intervention possible. Now, he holds down two part-time jobs and is so proud of himself, as we all are," said Debbie Abrams, a PR professional and a close friend who nominated Rubin. "She is an inspiration to me and to everyone that knows her."

Autism After 21 promotes physical and mental well-being through therapy, mentorship, employment, education and social opportunities. The organization focuses on those transition years when young adults leave school and begin looking for jobs.

Rubin collaborates with the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to help clients needing transition services so they can join the workplace and learn independence.

The nonprofit also offers the Summer Opportunity for Adult Readiness (SOAR), a college campus-based residential and job skills program, as part of the groundwork for successful futures. The program, established in 2015, operates at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and at Florida International University in Miami, with plans to expand into Tampa.

"Students get an opportunity to live in the dorm and start to



Michelle Rubin continues to teach life skills to her son Scott, 31, who works two jobs. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

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learn what it's going to be like to be away from home as an adult and what it could be like to establish your career," Rubin explained.

The independence can be life-changing, she said.

Rubin's son Scott was also born with an intellectual disability so she knew his only chance at work would be some kind of hands-on training. Today, Scott works part time at All-Tag Manufacturing and Rocco's Tacos in Boca Raton.

Part of what Autism After 21 does is educate employers about what it's like to have someone on the spectrum in their workplace, Rubin said.

"This generation of employers are now much more open to giving it a try than they've ever been," she said. "When I speak to a public group and ask people in the room if they know someone with autism, most people's hands go up."

Scott was diagnosed at age 2. At 18 months, he began developing repetitive behaviors like the hand flapping often associated with autism and he didn't speak at all, his mother said. Rubin taught him sign language and he communicated that way until age 14, when he suddenly began to speak.

"He started saying 'mom' and 'dad.' And then he asked for pizza," she recalled.

"I was constantly pushing

him out of his comfort zone.

It was just intuitive to me that he could not have a life the way he was. Probably the other best thing I ever did for Scott was to have two more children," Rubin said. Scott's brothers accepted him and pushed him to be his best self, she said.

"For my husband and other two kids, the positive impact has far outweighed the negative," Rubin added.

Today Scott rides his bicycle to the bus stop every day and takes public transportation to his job at All-Tag, where he helps sort anti-shoplifting security tags. He has worked there 11 years.

Joe Sirak, director of finance at All-Tag, said Scott was the first special needs person the company hired. It worked out spectacularly well.

"A light clicked on, and we realized this could be really useful," Sirak said. "Now we have a 500-square-foot room where we have 10 people on any given day doing all the sorting. It turned into a very big project."

Scott is probably the company's most dedicated employee, Sirak said. "If he ever misses a day of work, he is usually upset about it. He is a great guy and works very hard."

The skills taught at SOAR make such experiences possible, Rubin said. The hands-on, job-coaching program teaches participants self-determination skills that are life altering.

"They move in on a Monday and by Wednesday, they are different people, because they're empowered," Rubin said. "They realize they can do it. They can be on their own." ★

Editor's Note

Lights, magic of season bring welcome respite

Witnessing the aurora borealis is on my bucket list. In general I understand the science, but those wavering colored lights in the northern sky to me are nothing short of magical — and magic has been in short supply lately. Too much hate in the world. Too much anger. Too many calls for retribution, for blowing things up. All with alienating results.

During the holiday season when loneliness and sadness can mar an otherwise lovely day, a random act of kindness may just help a stranger through a difficult time. Maybe we should all give it a try. What's needed to get through the hectic holidays are empathy, compassion and humor. And a sprinkling of magic.

If we look around this month, it's easy to find magic:

children running and laughing at public holiday displays, music performed with skill and love to grateful audiences, voices raised in song, prayer and celebration, and all those twinkling lights wrapped around palm trees swaying in the tropical breeze.

Regardless of faith or belief, the month of December brings a celebration of light. Everyone can embrace the magic of candles flickering, Christmas trees glowing, a full moon rising from the ocean, a night sky filled with stars.

And maybe some day, if I travel north, the northern lights.



— Mary Kate Leming, Editor

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Ocean Ridge

True-blue therapy dog finds police service a treat

By Larry Barszewski

Ocean Ridge police now have a dog on the force — one that is more likely to jump onto your lap and nuzzle up to you than take down a criminal suspect.

“We’ve gone from K-9 dogs that sniff out drugs and bombs and bite people, to ones that give hugs,” Police Chief Scott McClure says.

Meet Dash, police therapy dog, sidekick to community policing Officer Debra Boyle.

Officer Deb had no doubt her 3-year-old Dash could do the job, as he has helped her through tough times of her own since she got him as a puppy.

“He brought comfort to me and brought my anxiety down,” she says — exactly the on-the-job talent Dash displays whether he’s visiting a town resident in the hospital, tagging along on a wellness check to the home of a sick or elderly resident, or just hanging his head out the open window of Officer Deb’s patrol vehicle, greeting passersby on Old Ocean Boulevard.

“He’s just got such a gentle soul. He’s great with the elderly. He’s great with everybody,” Officer Deb says.

Dash graduated at the end of October from the Paws & Stripes College of the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office, part of its second graduating class of police therapy dogs.

He gives new meaning to “backing the blue.” He’s a purebred blueblood — a Cavalier King Charles spaniel — and he works for blueberries.

“He loves blueberries,” says Officer Deb. With so



Ocean Ridge Police Officer Debra Boyle watches Dash, a trained police therapy dog, interact with residents Martha Stanfield and Marion Moon. **Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

many people feeding him treats throughout the day, the blueberries are a healthy alternative and help Dash — all 20 pounds of him — stay fit and trim.

At the Portofino condominiums, Dash makes regular visits to the home of Marion Moon and Martha Stanfield.

“Can he have a T-R-E-A-T?” Stanfield asks as Dash arrives with Officer Deb. “I won’t say it out loud because I know that’s what he wants.”

Quickly, Dash is in the lap of Moon, who turned 96 in November, and he’ll stay there for most of the visit as Moon lavishes him with affection.

“I just love him. He’s so sweet,” says Moon, who gets by using a walker. Her husband died in 2017, as did Josephine, the precious poodle the couple had for 16 years. “He just makes me so happy,” she says of Dash.

Though Dash primarily visits Moon, he makes time for Stanfield, too.

I think he’s got the softest fur of any animal,” Stanfield says. “It’s just so soft, like silk.”

It’s not so much the breed as the dog itself that matters most when determining which are cut out for therapy dog work, Officer Deb says.

She also has a 6-year-old shepherd mix named Gunner and a 1-year-old Cavalier King

Charles spaniel named Tucker.

“All three have different personalities,” she says. “This one, I call him the king of the house.”

Unlike Tucker and Gunner, who are content to play with their toys, Dash will jump right into Officer Deb’s lap at home.

“He’s a people person,” Officer Deb says. And you know what she means.

“He loves to come to work,” she says. “He knows when I put the uniform on” and he’s ready to go himself.

Dash will have other emotional support duties as needed. Police therapy dogs can work with victims of crimes, making them feel more

Paws Up for Pets
Yes, there is such a thing as therapy cats.
Page AT25

comfortable talking about what they experienced. They can be in the courtroom at the foot of a victim testifying on the stand, helping that person through what can be a traumatic experience.

“Dash is there for a number of reasons: the mentally ill, victims of violence, kids, the sick, our elderly population,” McClure says.

Teaming up with Dash also helps Officer Deb break down barriers or discomfort people may have with police.

“It initiates conversations,” she says. “It just bridges the gap between law enforcement and the public.”

Dash’s eating habits could be a good influence on kids in town.

“I give him frozen vegetables with his dinner. He loves peas and carrots and green beans. He loves fruit,” Officer Deb says.

Dash isn’t the first police therapy dog in the area. Boynton Beach added a therapy dog in 2016 and now has Elliott, who graduated from the PBSO program in 2022. PBSO has 10 therapy dogs on its force, and Delray Beach had two therapy dogs graduate the course along with Dash.

Officer Deb says the goodwill that therapy dogs deliver can’t be measured.

“If I can leave somebody with a smile on their face, that’s made my job worth it,” she says. ★

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Manalapan

Four commissioners resign; replacements in the wings

By Larry Barszewski

Manalapan is down to only two town commissioners — not six — as four have resigned rather than submit to a more detailed disclosure of their personal wealth that the state is requiring of elected municipal leaders starting in 2024.

Mayor Stewart Satter said he, too, will be leaving the commission.

“Regrettably, due to the new financial disclosure rules requiring that I disclose my net worth publicly, I am resigning from my role as Mayor effective this December,” Satter wrote in a Nov. 27 email to *The Coastal Star*.

Fortunately for the town, the massive shake-up underway isn’t as dire as officials first feared, as enough town residents have stepped up and offered to fill the commission’s new vacancies.

While the two remaining commissioners and the town’s nonvoting mayor aren’t enough for a quorum to run the commission’s next scheduled meeting on Dec. 18, the Town Charter allows that as few as two commissioners can vote to approve replacements for the commissioners who have left, Town Attorney Keith Davis said. Once that’s done, the commission can get back to

business.

Commissioners Aileen Carlucci, Kristin Rosen and Richard Granara announced in October their intentions to resign, and Commissioner Chauncey Johnstone announced Nov. 13 that he was leaving for the same reason.

But the commission found out at its Nov. 14 meeting that there are still residents willing to be appointed, even with the new financial reporting disclosures, known as Form 6.

Thanks to a Nov. 1 town email blast seeking residents willing to serve, Vice Mayor John Deese and Commissioner Simone Bonutti will be able to restock the dais on Dec. 18.

The expected commission appointees are:

- Orla Imbesi to replace Johnstone
- Dwight Kulwin to replace Carlucci
- David Knobel to replace Rosen
- Elliot Bonner to replace Granara

Three of the appointments would end in March, while Knobel’s appointment would be until 2025.

Only two of the planned replacements — Imbesi and Bonner — filed papers in November to run in the March election. Because no one else

filed for the two seats, Imbesi and Bonner are automatically elected to the term that begins in March, Davis said.

Because Kulwin didn’t get his qualifying papers in on time, the town is expected to hold a second qualifying period Jan. 2-12 for that seat, which would give Kulwin time to file his papers if he is still interested, or allow for others who may decide to run.

If the four appointments are made as expected Dec. 18, the four can be sworn in and begin serving immediately.

However, if Kulwin does not file qualifying papers in January, his service would end in March — unless no one else files and the commission were to reappoint him to the seat.

Satter hedged at the November meeting about whether he would resign.

“I would not comply with Form 6. So, if I decide to stay, I would just willfully not comply,” Satter said at the time.

But he is now set on leaving after the Dec. 18 meeting.

“Given how things have fallen into place, I think we’ve found some good candidates,” Satter said. “I feel much more comfortable that we’ve left the town in good hands.”

Once Satter’s resignation takes effect, the commission

would be able to appoint someone to finish his term, which ends in March 2025, Davis said.

Some of those resigning are still willing to volunteer time if needed. Rosen, a former

member of the Architectural Commission, said she would be willing to return to that board and replace Knobel, a current member who will have to step down if he is appointed to the Town Commission. ★

Manalapan News

Assistant town manager hired — The Town Commission on Nov. 14 approved a three-year contract for Eric Marmer to be assistant town manager, with the understanding that he would take over for Town Manager Linda Stumpf after her planned retirement in September 2024. The contract provides a \$150,000 salary. While it is expected that Marmer will succeed Stumpf, the contract says that is a decision the commission will have to make when Stumpf retires.

Police chief gets a contract, too — Police Chief Carmen Mattox has been in his position for more than 10 years, all that time without a contract. That changed Nov. 14 when the commission approved a five-year deal for him. Mattox said he never felt the need for a contract, but he and other town officials agreed it made sense with all the changes taking

place in town government. His salary is \$145,821.

Surprise landing on Lands End — Police Chief Carmen Mattox received a one-hour heads-up the morning of Nov. 14 that a private helicopter would be landing at a vacant lot at 1475 Lands End Road, where it was picking up some “VIPs.” The landing was unusual in town, but appeared to be legal and no complaints were received. Mattox had a fire truck stationed nearby just in case, because of overhead power lines in the area and the smaller size of the lots on The Point.

Cul-de-sacs getting some loving — The planned reconstruction of the cul-de-sac island at the end of Lands End Road is underway. Manager Linda Stumpf told commissioners Nov. 14 that fresh landscaping will also be coming to the two other cul-de-sac islands in town.

— Larry Barszewski



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Ocean Ridge

Hutchins, Aijala to join Town Commission in January

Four candidates qualify for three spots on March ballot

By Larry Barszewski

The Ocean Ridge Town Commission has appointed David Hutchins and Ainar Aijala Jr. to fill two upcoming vacancies on the commission.

Hutchins, a retired airline pilot who currently sits on the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, and Aijala, a retired longtime executive with the auditing and consulting firm Deloitte, will be sworn in at the commission's January meeting.

"I would like to thank you guys for putting some faith in me," Hutchins said after the 3-0 vote for him at a special Nov. 9 commission meeting. "I think the experience I got at



Aijala



Hutchins

P&Z will be helpful and I'll do everything I can and I'm sure I will learn a lot more."

Aijala was not present at the meeting. He was appointed on a 2-1 vote. Former Commissioner Robert Sloat, who served for three months in 2019 in an appointed capacity, also received a vote.

The two appointees will replace Commissioners Ken Kaleel and Philip Besler, who turned in their resignations effective Dec. 30.

Their seats, as well as Mayor Geoff Pugh's, will be up for

election March 19. Candidate qualifying for the election closed Nov. 17, with four candidates in the running for three open seats.

Hutchins, Aijala and Pugh have all qualified to be on the ballot, as has Nicholas "Nick" Arsali, who handles real estate development, investment, portfolio management and brokerage for Southern Engineering and Construction.

The top two vote-getters in the election will fill the two, three-year term openings on the Town Commission and the third-place finisher will receive the remaining two-year term.

Kaleel is resigning rather than be forced to submit a more comprehensive financial disclosure form that the state will be requiring from elected municipal officials beginning in 2024. Besler said he was resigning for personal reasons.

Kaleel and Besler were appointed to their positions in May, following the resignations of Commissioners Martin Wiescholek and Kristine de Haseth. Both had previous experience as commissioners.

This time around, Sloat was the only applicant to have served on the commission, a three-month appointment in 2019 to finish former Mayor James Bonfiglio's term.

Kaleel and Besler were not allowed to vote for their replacements, so the decisions fell to the same three members who appointed them: Pugh, Vice Mayor Steve Coz and Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy.

The three made their selections from eight applicants — five who originally applied when the two seats were open in April and three who submitted their names in October.

The other applicants were Arsali, Craig Herkert, Victor Martel, Mike Mullins and Peter Wolf.

Aijala served 38 years at Deloitte, including four years as CEO of its world leading global consultant practice. He retired in 2020 and has lived in town since 2019.

Aijala has served on the global board of Junior Achievements Worldwide. He has also served on the board of governors at The Little Club in Gulf Stream.

"I have always been committed to serving the communities in which we live, but until my recent retirement I was only able to fulfill this commitment through my involvement with charitable and not for profit organizations. I am now able to serve the residents of Ocean Ridge without conflict and would be eager to do so," Aijala wrote in his application for the position.

Hutchins has been a town resident since 1990. He has been a member of the planning commission since 2017 and was an alternate member 2015-17. ★

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Ocean Ridge

Crown Colony crosses fingers, hoping its remaining injection well doesn't fail

By Larry Barszewski

One of two deep injection wells at Ocean Ridge's largest wastewater package treatment plant has been out of service for more than a year, which officials say could leave three communities uninhabitable were the plant's second well to malfunction.

The Colonial Crown Manor Wastewater Treatment Facility services 290 residential units in Crown Colony, Colonial Ridge and Ocean Manor.

Wastewater issues are not new in town or in some other barrier island communities, which have grappled for years with whether or how to replace package plants or septic systems — which potentially threaten the coastal environment — with some type of sewer system.

"If a failure did occur, we would need to abandon the three communities, all 290 units, making \$100 million worth of property unusable," said Ron Kirn, president of Colonial Crown Manor Disposal Systems Inc., in a statement read by Commissioner Carolyn Cassidy at the Nov. 6 Town Commission meeting.

Kirn's statement said

the Florida Department of Environmental Protection may yet approve the necessary permits to replace the injection well, but that within a decade the department may require an upgrade to an "Advanced Waste Treatment" status, which Kirn said could cost about \$1.5 million. The failed injection well was originally completed in 1984.

Other communities with injection wells or plants that use drain fields could "experience this same nightmare" in the future, he said.

"It is clear that the FDEP does not want these plants or septic systems in either single or multifamily homes. These outrageous costs and bureaucracy is hoping that towns will be pressured into installing municipal sewer systems where mandates have yet to be issued," Kirn said.

Ocean Ridge has discussed the possibility of hooking up to Boynton Beach's sewer systems or finding another alternative. Kirn was a member of a septic-to-sewer committee the commission appointed to investigate the issue. That committee's chairman made a report to commissioners at their May 1 meeting, but the

commission took no action at the time.

"We really need to start considering Boynton Beach sewers and getting away from septic systems," said Paul Smith, who lives at Crown Colony Club, at the Nov. 6 commission meeting. "I installed septic systems in New Jersey, so I know a lot about them and I just think it's time. I mean, this whole town is built out, so every home is on a system. It's just mind-boggling to me that we haven't considered this earlier."

The town has set aside \$924,943 from the county's local infrastructure sales-tax proceeds as a start to dealing with a septic-to-sewer conversion, but there have been questions about whether or when the state will mandate such a conversion.

Cassidy said the town of Sebastian is now under orders by the state to convert.

A new law called the Indian River Lagoon Protection Program is requiring residences still on septic tanks in Indian River County, including Sebastian, to hook up to available sewer lines or to install enhanced nutrient-reducing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems by 2030. ★

Ocean Ridge News

Coastal construction rule changes approved — The Town Commission gave final approval Nov. 6 to a pair of ordinances that relax some restrictions the town placed on coastal construction in 2020, eliminating the need for homeowners to get a variance in many situations where construction only involves changes to non-living spaces, such as patios and pools.

It also changed the status of older homes on Old Ocean Boulevard between Anna and Corrine streets built east of the 1979 Coastal Construction Control Line, moving them from "non-conforming" to "conforming" structures. That change will make it easier for homeowners there to rebuild.

Minimum flood elevations levels in limbo — The town can't enforce the preliminary FEMA maps it adopted in 2019 because they won't be official until after Palm Beach County's ongoing litigation over the maps is concluded. The state preempted local governments from using preliminary FEMA maps for any rules for permitting.

Commissioners are concerned some property owners in a high hazard flood zone could build to a lower height than would be allowed under the FEMA maps, putting their homes at greater risk of flooding. Commissioners asked to have the town send notices to affected property owners

seeking to build, warning them of potential consequences of building lower than the levels in the contested maps.

Limit sought on bridge openings — Vice Mayor Steve Coz, who lives near the Woolbright Road bridge, wants to see limits on how often the bridge opens and has asked Town Manager Lynne Ladner to bring up the issue with the county. Although the drawbridge opens "on demand" and timed openings — such as on the hour and half-hour — aren't permitted, Coz said the county bridge tenders should make sure at least 15 minutes pass between openings.

— Larry Barszewski

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Delray Beach

Boylston leads in fundraising as nine candidates qualify in city races

By Larry Barszewski

Nine candidates have qualified for Delray Beach's March 19 municipal elections, with three each running for mayor and two other City Commission openings.

Vice Mayor Ryan Boylston has raised more than \$110,000 in his bid to become mayor, far outpacing the other five candidates who have filed campaign treasurer reports through September, the latest period available. Not counting any personal loans to campaigns, Boylston has raised about \$35,000 more than the five others combined.

The remaining three candidates opened their campaign accounts since September and won't have to file a treasurer's report until January.

"I can't really take credit for raising the funds that I raised. I

announced and checks started rolling in," said Boylston, who announced in May. "I don't refuse money."

Boylston said he's shooting for \$150,000 to \$200,000, which he said is typical for a mayoral campaign in the city. He said he's not being bought.

"I have a voting record," said Boylston, who founded 2TON, a creative marketing agency. "I've voted against my supporters as many times as I've voted with my supporters."

Mayor

Boylston is in the race along with Shirley Johnson, who served six years on the commission before being term-limited this year, and Tom Carney, who served on the commission from 2011 to 2013, including a short stint as acting mayor.

Mayor Shelly Petrolia was term-limited from seeking re-

election.

Through September, Boylston had raised \$111,140, which included a \$1,000 personal loan. Johnson, who retired from IBM, reported raising \$23,690, but most of that — \$20,000 — was a personal loan. Carney, an attorney, won't have to file a campaign report until January.

Boylston reported 98 contributions of \$1,000 each so far, the maximum amount an individual can contribute. More than 40 of those contributions were from outside Delray Beach.

By category, Boylston has received more than \$18,000 from real estate professionals, at least \$15,000 from contractors and other development-related businesses, at least \$12,000 from hoteliers, restaurants and other hospitality-related businesses, and \$5,000 from local car dealerships.

Boylston has also raised \$3,860 from 66 contributions of \$100 or less.

Seat 1

The current commissioner, Adam Frankel, is term-limited and is planning to run instead to be Palm Beach County's next public defender.

The three candidates who

qualified to run for the seat are James Chard, Tennille DeCoste and Thomas Markert.

Chard, a retired business executive, was elected to the commission in 2017, but served only a year when he resigned after an unsuccessful attempt to become mayor. DeCoste is a former human resources director for the city who now holds the same position in Boynton Beach. Markert is a market research industry executive who previously worked for AC Nielsen; he also served as a senior vice president at Office Depot.

DeCoste raised \$27,490, which included a \$500 personal loan, through September. Chard raised \$20,117, partially funded by a \$2,792 personal loan. Markert isn't required to file a contributions report until January.

Seat 3

Looking to move into Boylston's current commission seat is former Commissioner Juli Casale, along with Anneze Barthelemy and Nicholas Coppola.

Former Commissioner Christina Morrison, who was appointed to fill a short stint on the commission in 2013, had opened a campaign account to

run for the seat, but in the end opted not to qualify. Morrison said she decided against running after Casale's late entry into the race, saying she feared having too many candidates would split the vote and give Casale a chance at returning to the commission.

Casale, an ally of Petrolia, served for three years beginning in 2020 before losing to newcomer Rob Long in March. With that election, the working commission majority switched from Petrolia, who had been aligned with Casale and Johnson on many key votes, to Boylston, Long and newly elected Commissioner Angela Burns, who replaced Johnson.

Coppola, a retired electrical contractor, held the early fundraising lead in the race with \$39,370 — including a \$20,000 loan from himself — through September. He is the chairman of the city's Code Enforcement Board.

Barthelemy, who has 23 years of experience as a social worker, reported raising \$10,708, which included a \$1,300 loan.

Casale, a community activist who has also served on other city boards, does not have to file a campaign treasurer's report until January. ★

The next edition of *The Coastal Star* will be distributed the weekend of Jan. 6

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Delray Beach

City and developer finalizing plans for Veterans Park parking, expansion

By Larry Barszewski

The latest plans for Delray Beach's Veterans Park tweak past proposals for the site. They would expand the park by absorbing the existing parking lot to its west. New parking would be made possible by sacrificing the park's shuffleboard and lawn bowling courts.

The new parking lot construction work is to be done and paid for by Atlantic Crossing developer Edwards Cos., which projects to have the new parking lot design completed by January and — after receiving the necessary city approvals — for construction to begin in March and for the new lot to be completed in August.

City commissioners were supportive of the plans presented at their Nov. 7 meeting, directing staff to put together an agreement with the developer for the project.

"I'm super-excited about this. I can't believe we're going to have the opportunity for what is kind of a public-private partnership, in a way, to fund this," Vice Mayor Ryan Boylston said. "One of the rare jewels that we don't really talk about is that we have green space like this on the Intracoastal. Not every city can say that."

The company, in a written offer to the city, said "in exchange for this significant private investment in the park we would ask that the city fund the balance of park improvements pursuant to a plan to be developed."

Once the new parking spaces are added and available, Atlantic Crossing construction crews will move their heavy equipment staging to the old spaces on the west side of the park. The park expansion into that area would have to wait until the Atlantic Crossing construction is finished and the equipment removed.

The new design includes almost the same number of parking spaces as currently, 92 vs. 94, but adds a drop-off spot close to the park's community center. Boylston said a drop-off would be helpful.

"Sometimes when you park in that parking lot, you're very far away from that community building. It's a long hike for some of our residents," he said.

In addition, there's the possibility of adding spaces designated for golf cart parking on Northeast First Street on the north side of the park.

"We have talked about taking some of the on-street parking that exists now and will continue to exist, and

dividing that up into golf cart parking, which will double the amount of parking spaces available in that area and resolve some community requests for additional golf cart parking in the downtown area," Public Works Director Missie Barletto said.

Mayor Shelly Petrolia supported having those spaces.

"I think there are a lot of people within the town, the city, that use golf carts," Petrolia said. "That'll actually be a positive, a net positive for us."

The new parking lot will also have a direct connection to the park's walkway along the Intracoastal Waterway. The expanded park to the west is expected to have paths connecting it to Atlantic Crossing's retail, residential and restaurant spaces.

"There is slightly more green space as a result of this reallocation of asphalt than there is in the park now," Development Services Director Anthea Gianniotis said. "It's not a tremendous amount, but it is a more vegetated area than previously. Part of that is because the courts [to be removed] certainly are not green. They're recreational area, though, to be fair." ★



A construction worker died Nov. 9 when an excavator toppled over onto him at a home demolition in Delray Beach. Photo provided by Delray Beach Fire Rescue

Construction fatality under investigation

A construction accident that killed a worker during a home demolition Nov. 9 on Lewis Cove was still under active investigation by Delray Beach police late in the month.

An excavator being used to move debris with its claw raised teetered over and fell onto the cab of a nearby grapple dump truck, where the victim was working, pinning the worker under the claw of the excavator, police spokesman Ted White said.

Firefighters were able to free the man and transport him to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead, officials said.

Police have not released the worker's name or additional

details while the incident is under investigation. The home, which sold in March for \$2 million, was at 1041 Lewis Cove, on the west side of State Road A1A a couple of blocks north of Atlantic Dunes Park.

An official with the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration identified the company involved in the incident as Guthrie Hauling Co., which the company website says is based in Loxahatchee and serves all of Palm Beach County.

OSHA had no additional information to release. Investigators have six months to file a report, the official said.

— Larry Barszewski

Delray Beach News

Water treatment plant construction negotiations underway — Delray Beach received five proposals for design-build construction work planned for the water treatment plant and it is negotiating contract terms with CDM Smith Constructors Inc., the top-ranked firm.

Fire union contracts approved — Delray city commissioners approved two, three-year fire-rescue contracts, one for rank-and-file department members and the other for unionized supervisors, with modifications that will have a \$20 million-plus impact on the city budget over the next three years. Only Mayor Shelly Petrolia voted against the contracts, concerned about their impact on the town budget.

The average work week for shift employees will go from one day on and two days off to one day on and three days off beginning in October 2025.

Planning and Zoning Board appointments made — Because of a revamping on how planning proposals are handled by different city boards, commissioners restarted the city's Planning and Zoning Board from scratch, making new appointments for its seven seats.

Commissioners reappointed four members of the board — Christina Morrison, Chris Brown, Greg Snyder and Julen Blankenship — and named three new members: Alison Thomas, Morris Carstarphen and Aaron Savitch. Former Board Chairman Chris Davey, who filed an ethics complaint that was dismissed against Commissioner Rob Long earlier this year, did not make the cut.

Site Plan Review and Appearance Board appointments made

— Commissioners also reconstituted the city's Site Plan Review and Appearance Board. Reappointed were the previous chair, Dana Adler, along with members Annette Gray, Linda Purdo and Steven Cohen. Newcomers to the board are Jose Alvarez, Keith Beal and Adam Nelson.

Let's get digital — The city received a Top 10 Digital Cities Award for 2023 by *Government Technology* magazine and the Center for Digital Government. The city's website, social media and other information technology ranked No. 4 in the country in cities with populations under 75,000.

— Larry Barszewski

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Gulf Stream

Town will ask more questions to protect its Australian pines

By Steve Plunkett

People living on State Road A1A will face a higher level of scrutiny in the future if they plan any kind of construction near Gulf Stream's beloved Australian pines.

Workers replacing the privacy wall at 2817 N. Ocean Blvd. caused a near-disaster when they dug perilously close to more than a dozen Australian pines, prompting an emergency visit from the town arborist and a \$5,250 bill to the homeowner to save the trees.

Making things worse, Assistant Town Attorney Trey Nazzaro had been assured the construction would cause no harm before the project got permission to proceed.

"I specifically asked the applicant whether or not there was enough distance between the excavation and the Australian pines and she was under oath and she said yes. So I said, 'OK, I'm going to trust what you're going to say' and that ended up not being true.

"So obviously that was not enough. We need some additional review," Nazzaro told town commissioners on Nov. 9.

In an email to the landscape architect in charge of the construction, Nazzaro bluntly expressed the town's fears.

"In addition to the significant damage to the root system, much of the dirt from the excavation was just thrown on top of the trees, which as I understand may suffocate them over time," he wrote.

The arborist, Jonathan Frank of Bartlett Tree Experts, gave Nazzaro a document titled "Tree Preservation Standards During Construction" that he had created for another client and recommended using "tree preservation language" relating to industry standards in any change to the town's ordinance governing construction applications.

"He mentioned that with our water main project along A1A, the contractor working for the town implemented tree protection fencing that worked

very well with a goal to keep any construction equipment and things away from the roots and trunks," Nazzaro said.

He and Frank also talked about requiring a meeting with the arborist before any excavation if the digging would happen within 10 feet of existing Australian pines, "something that's very innocuous and easy that gives us some leeway to sort of lean on his expertise."

Commissioners told Nazzaro to continue working on an ordinance for them to consider at their Dec. 8 meeting.

The arborist pruned the affected pines to reduce their height by 25% to make them less susceptible to wind, pruned damaged roots and excavated the trees' root collars. He also treated the trees with potassium phosphite when the damage was discovered in October and will return in January for a second dose.

Brian O'Neill bought the oceanfront mansion for \$29 million in September 2022.

The state planted Australian



Work to replace a privacy wall came too close to more than a dozen Australian pines and their roots. Photo provided

pinos on both sides of A1A in the early 1900s to address high winds along the highway. "The Town of Gulf Stream is the only

remaining stretch where the Australian Pine Canopy still remains," the town boasts on its website. ★

Smith steps down from Town Commission

By Steve Plunkett

After 19 months as a Gulf Stream town commissioner, Thom Smith has called it quits, resigning his position at the end of the board's Nov. 9 meeting.

"I have been honored and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve the town I feel so strongly about," he read from his prepared resignation letter. "We have a very special place to live and recreate and I look forward to it remaining so for many years to come."

Outside the meeting, Smith said he resigned to have more

time to devote to his accounting business and to family members who live outside of town.

He was not worried, he said, about having to disclose his net worth and other financial details on the state's Form 6 had he remained on the dais. Filing the Form 6 is a new requirement this year for elected municipal leaders in office as of Dec. 31.

"I could have handled it," Smith said.

Smith, who was born and grew up in Gulf Stream, was appointed to the commission in April 2022 after serving as chairman of the town's Architectural Review and Planning Board. He replaced Donna White, who moved to Palm Beach Gardens.

Smith joined the ARPB as

an alternate in May 2008 and became a full board member in March 2009. He took the reins as chairman in June 2018.

Also at the Nov. 9 meeting, town commissioners accepted the resignation of Jorgette Smith from the ARPB "for personal reasons" and elevated Michael Greene, an alternate member, as a full member of the board.

Jorgette Smith joined the planning board as an alternate in December 2017 and became a full member in June 2018.

Thom Smith's departure will give the commission a chance to add someone from Place Au Soleil, whose residents filled a commission seat continuously from 1998 until Smith's appointment last year. It's up to commissioners to appoint

someone to fill the seat, which isn't up for election until 2026.

Though out of office, Smith was still expected to attend the December meeting and maybe more, lending his financial expertise to reviews of higher-than-expected bids for road and drainage work in the town's Core District and of a proposal to make Boynton Beach the town's provider of drinking water instead of Delray Beach.

"It makes sense to go to Boynton, but the costs seem very high," Mayor Scott Morgan said.

Assistant Town Attorney Trey Nazzaro said Boynton Beach's water rates are lower than Delray Beach's, but Gulf Stream would have to pay \$2 million up front to connect to its system,

making the break-even point seven years in the future.

Morgan also noted the September passing of Commissioner Joan Orthwein's husband, Percy "Perk" Orthwein II, who Morgan hailed as a good husband, good father and a patriarch of one of the oldest families in town.

"What I remember best about Perk is that he was a remarkable raconteur," Morgan said. "He was a wonderful man to tell a story. He could regale you with a story that (was) sometimes factual, sometimes apocryphal but always with a sense of humor. Sometimes a touch of sarcasm, but it always made for the most interesting story. And that's how I like to remember my time with Perk." ★



Smith

Police to wear a bit of Gulf Stream on their sleeves

By Steve Plunkett

Gulf Stream's police officers soon will be adding a burst of color to their shoulders.

Police Chief Richard Jones tapped into his inner artist after deciding the current shoulder patch was "very poor, at best" and did nothing to connect his department to the town it serves.

"I looked at the patch and I was trying to figure out its significant value to us as an organization. We really could not figure that out," he told town commissioners on Nov. 9. "So, we designed a new patch ... that incorporates the town seal and the history of the town into the Police Department's patch and insignia."

The new patch is triangular and shows the town seal's familiar golfer, polo player and sailboat with a cluster of palm trees and a rising sun. When he sent it to the company making the patches, "They were



The shoulder patch for Gulf Stream police officers is getting a makeover. At left is the old version and at right is the new one. Photos provided

very surprised at the number of color elements that we were requesting," he said.

Capt. John Haseley, who with an outside artist helped Jones create the new emblem, passed out samples to get



commissioners' reactions.

"I think it looks great, much nicer," Commissioner Joan Orthwein said.

The patch it replaces used elements from the state seal: a less dramatic sun behind a cocoa tree, steamboat and an

Indian woman.

Mayor Scott Morgan had Jones model the new patch by holding it up over the old one on his uniform.

"The white from the previous patch stands out very well on your blue uniform, whereas the background here is blue. You want to put that over your patch, let's see what it looks like," Morgan said.

All agreed the new one is an improvement. "The yellow kind of makes it pop," Orthwein said.

Jones, who also created a new patch for Ocean Ridge three years ago when he was on that town's police force, said the change to the new design will be gradual.

"It will take us, you know, probably a year to transition so that we're not spending money unnecessarily on new uniforms," he said. "But all of our new officers and all the uniform replacements that we will begin doing immediately, we will start putting the new patch on." ★

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Along the Coast



Heavy weather just shy of a tropical storm rating brought days of wind, rain and intense waves in mid-November. **LEFT:** Guests staying at Delray Sands Resort in Highland Beach take selfies with crashing seas behind them. **RIGHT:** Diners eat lunch behind the protective plastic curtain at Caffe Luna Rosa in Delray Beach. High winds accompanied the rain, with some areas along the South Florida coastline experiencing gusts up to 70 mph.

No-name storm pounds coast for days



Corey Merritt and his son Henry, 6, avoid the incoming tide as it crashes into and erodes the dunes at the north end of Delray Beach.



LEFT: Residents of Southeast Wavecrest Way in Boca Raton drive through their flooded neighborhood in a golf cart. **RIGHT:** Ocean Ridge resident Edward Sivri works to clear his driveway after winds knocked over this sea grape tree. Photos by Tim Stepien and Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Lantana

Newcomer challenging Lythgoe in mayoral race

By Mary Thurwachter

Lantana voters will have a choice for mayor in the March 19 election.

Challenging incumbent Karen Lythgoe will be George Velazquez, 57, an alternate on the town's planning and zoning board. Although his legal name is "Jorge," his friends call him "George" and he is using that name.

Velazquez is a political newcomer, but he has helped friends with campaigns and served on the county's Hispanic Vote committee. He was born in Chicago, raised in Miami, and has had a home in Lantana since 2017. A former commercial real estate agent, Velazquez worked in a federal prison in Miami from 1996 to 2009.

"I've thought about this for a while," he said, when asked about running for office. "I saw that there was a need in Lantana. I'd like to see more transparency in our town."

He speaks three languages — Spanish, English and a little Italian — and was on Lantana's education committee until it was disbanded about a year ago.

Lythgoe, 64, says she is seeking election to a full three-year term "so that I can continue the work our current council is doing to improve public safety, replacing our aging infrastructure and ensure property values stay up."

She was elected to the council in 2020 and was acting mayor after Robert Hagerty resigned last year. During a special election earlier this year, she ran unopposed to complete the rest of Hagerty's term, which ends in March.

Lythgoe, who works for LexisNexis Risk Solutions, said that during her tenure "we were able to obtain \$6 million in grants and have the projects in flight to upgrade our water mains throughout the town. What the council has been doing is having the effect of reversing the look of the town in general. The synergy between council and staff is the best it has been in recent memory, and I don't want that to stop." ★



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Profiles of candidates in municipal elections will appear in February's edition

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Lantana

Town manager receives high praise from council, 5% merit raise

By Mary Thurwachter

For the second consecutive year, the Lantana Town Council gave a generous merit raise — 5% — to Town Manager Brian Raducci and heaped praise on his work.

“We’re one of the luckiest councils in Palm Beach County having him as our manager,” Vice Mayor Lynn “Doc” Moorhouse said during the manager’s yearly performance evaluation on Nov. 13.

“He has done an absolutely amazing job in catching up the infrastructure and going forward with some preemptive stuff. We’re getting a lot of grant money, we have a person in Tallahassee working for us and this town is moving in the right direction better than it ever has.”

Moorhouse also praised Raducci for uniting the council. “There’s nobody on this council that’s mad at anybody — Brian’s brought that closer together.”

Other officials also extolled Raducci’s virtues.

“It’s been a pleasure to work with Brian and I agree with what Doc said about the grant money bringing a lot of improvements,” said Chris Castle, the council’s newest member.

This year, the town received \$2.8 million in grants and appropriations. The bulk of the money — \$1.2 million each from the federal and state governments — will be used for water main replacement.

Grant money will also go toward improving the stormwater drainage system and a future-needs analysis; an asset inventory and Ocean Avenue vulnerability assessment; and to pay for ADA door openings and parts of the library garden.

Council member Kem Mason said Raducci has “dragged us into the 21st century” and works well with law enforcement, receiving nothing but praise from the police and their union. “He’s a great communicator. He’s always available to answer any questions and is doing a great job.”

Vice Mayor Pro Tem Mark Zeitler said “so far, so good. I like the grant money, and he has brought us all together.”

Mayor Karen Lythgoe was as effusive as Moorhouse.

“You make all of our lives much easier,” Lythgoe said. “The whole staff looks up to you. You’ve empowered your directors, you guide them. Everybody knows what they’re supposed to do.”

With that said, Lythgoe said she wanted to keep him.

“I brag about you when I go off to be with the rest of the folks at Florida League of Cities and I have to tell myself ‘shut up, Karen,’” fearing someone will steal the manager away.

Raducci began working for the town in October 2021 with a starting salary of \$175,000.

Last year, the council gave Raducci a 5% cost-of-living adjustment and a 4% merit raise, bringing his salary to \$191,100. This year on Oct. 1, he got a 5% COLA increase, upping his pay to \$200,655. The latest advance brings it to \$210,687. ★

Lantana News

Resistance to setback change — An ordinance to modify the rear setback requirements related to waterfront lots sailed through the Town Council on its first reading in October, but it faced pushback from Hypoluxo Island residents on the second reading Nov. 13.

“This is a staff-initiated text amendment in an effort to mitigate some of the more commonly council-approved variance requests,” said development director Nicole Dritz.

Currently, all above-ground structures on waterfront lots are required to maintain a 20-foot rear setback from either the high-water line or the existing sea wall, Dritz said. “Such structures located on non-waterfront lots in both the R1A and R1 zoning districts are only required to have a 10-foot rear setback. The ordinance proposes to amend this regulation to allow structures that are less than 8 inches above the surrounding grade to be constructed within 10 feet of either the high-water line or the existing sea wall.”

Media Beverly, a Hypoluxo Island resident who has been successful in getting the council to reverse decisions in the past, fell short this time, despite preparing a diorama to illustrate negative aspects of the proposed change.

“Just because a few builders wanted to add pavers inside the 20-foot waterfront setback, doesn’t support changing the entire ordinance allowing pools to be built 10 feet from the water,” Beverly said. “Little by little, Lantana, as we knew it, is on the way out.”

Two other island residents voiced objections. Ann McGlenn-Work said the ordinance was poorly written and left the door open for future issues. Erica Wald said sea walls are already crumbling and easing up on setbacks would only exacerbate the problem.

But Town Attorney Max Lohman said the current ordinance wasn’t working and needed to be changed. The council agreed, unanimously.

Clerk works from Tennessee — Town Clerk Kathleen Dominguez will be working remotely from 856 miles away. Dominguez says she has the town’s blessing to do her job from Nashville, Tennessee, where her husband has taken a job. Holding down the fort locally will be Maria Rios, the executive assistant to the town manager and deputy town clerk hired in July.



Staffers of the Dune Deck posted this photo on their Facebook page alerting customers the eatery was closed due to storm damage.

Dune Deck’s canopy takes flight — Vice Mayor Pro Tem Mark Zeitler took a spin around town the morning of Nov. 16 to check for any damage caused by the wind storm the previous night. The main casualty: the Dune Deck Cafe at Lantana Beach. High winds tore apart a large blue and white striped canopy over the café’s outdoor seating area, ripping the metal framework out of the concrete where it was anchored. It landed on the roof of the restaurant’s northern section, Zeitler said. The restaurant was closed for about 24 hours but reopened with table umbrellas replacing the canvas canopy.

Employees recognized — Department directors presented employees with service awards at the Nov. 13 Town Council meeting. The longest-serving employee honored was Jerry Darr, who has been with the town for 35 years. Other long-serving workers recognized were Darrell Blom, 30 years; Karen Dipolito and Gerardo Aponte-Rentas, 25 years; Suzanne Woodward, 20 years; Thomas Dipolito and Joseph Margolis, 15 years; and Peter Cummings, 10 years.

Recognized for working for Lantana for five years were Shanker Doobay, Christian Vargas, Charles Benedict, Justin Dorfman, Anthony Harvey, Miguel Perez, Carla Smart and Loretta Miller.

— Mary Thurwachter

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Along the Coast

Tolls now charged in express lanes as I-95 project nears finish line

By Steve Plunkett

Final asphalt paving completed? Check.
Drainage ponds at Glades Road interchange done? Check.
Tolls being collected on Interstate 95's new express lanes? Check.

The clock is winding down on the Florida Department of Transportation's multiyear \$148 million project to add toll lanes on I-95 from south of Glades Road to south of Congress Avenue, raze and rebuild the Clint Moore Road overpass between Congress and Yamato

Road, and build a diverging diamond interchange, in which traffic on Glades flows to the left side in each direction above the highway.

The agency started collecting express lane tolls in both directions on Nov. 18. And Dec. 1 marks day 1,627 of 1,680 planned construction days and the work being 96.8% completed.

"We are anticipating final acceptance ahead of schedule," project spokesperson Andi Pacini said.

But it will be years before the express lanes, or "managed lanes" in FDOT lingo, are extended north through Delray Beach and beyond, said Guillermo "Billy" Canedo, the agency's district communications manager.

The FDOT is currently conducting a Project Development & Environment — or PD&E — study to provide additional managed lane capacity along I-95 from south of Linton Boulevard to north of Okeechobee Boulevard, he said.

"The design and construction phases are currently unfunded in the department's Draft Tentative Work Program for Fiscal Years 2025 to 2029," Canedo said. "The expected completion date of the study is May 2025."

Boca Raton's diverging diamond interchange, or DDI, opened on April 3. Pacini said the FDOT's traffic operations team continues to work with the city's Traffic Engineering Department to observe, modify and optimize signal timing for all movements. Both the FDOT and the city continue to emphasize that the posted speed limit within the DDI is 35 mph.

Still ongoing are installation of small signs, laying of sod, and final thermoplastic striping.

Roadway, lighting, ramp signals and Intelligent Transportation System elements await final inspection and punch list work.

For southbound I-95 traffic, entrances to the express lanes are south of Congress Avenue and south of Glades Road; exits are north of Glades and north of Hillsboro Boulevard. On northbound I-95, entrances are north of Hillsboro and north of Glades; exits are south of Glades and south of Congress. Customers must have an active SunPass or a Florida-compatible transponder properly affixed to the windshield.

Tolls in Miami-Dade County, the first to get I-95 express lanes, vary from 50 cents to \$10.50, depending on distance, time of day and congestion. The goal is to keep traffic in the express lanes moving at an average speed of 45 to 50 mph, the FDOT says.

Motorists with hybrid or fully electric vehicles travel toll-free after registering. ★

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PARKS

Continued from page 1

said state Rep. Peggy Gossett-Seidman, R-Highland Beach. “It appears they’re just playing with numbers to achieve an arbitrary goal that doesn’t really serve the population in a commonsense way,” Gossett-Seidman said. “This park isn’t going to make that big a difference. It’s tiny. It’s a drop of water in a bathtub of parks.”

Palm Beach County has 296 acres of developed beach park with the potential to top 390 acres. The biggest county-owned beachfront property that has not yet been developed, Karen Marcus Park in the Jupiter area, would add about 70 acres.

County staff has lined up money to design improvements to the park but not the estimated \$10 million to do the work.

The Milani property, which straddles State Road A1A, offers a great opportunity, said one Highland Beach resident who lives nearby and opposes a public park on the land.

“Better to sell it and use the money elsewhere,” said Ron Reame, president of the condo association at neighboring Dalton Place.

Residents have voiced concerns about safety and privacy, and Town Manager Marshall Labadie says he has “not met a single person in town who is in favor of this project.”

The public will get a chance to speak out Feb. 1, when county leaders including Commissioner Marci Woodward will host an outreach meeting at the Highland Beach library.

What future might hold

While some counties have no real standard for developed beachfront, Palm Beach County has kept a standard even after the state Legislature made such thresholds optional in 2010.

The figure provides a benchmark, county officials say, for comparing the county’s level of service against other cities and counties nationwide.

Broward County doesn’t specify how it is doing in providing beachfront parks but instead loops beaches into its count of overall parks, both small and large. Broward’s goal is 3 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.

Palm Beach County has 471 acres of beachfront parks, of which 296 acres are developed. That means the county has done construction, often to install bathrooms or showers, and continues to maintain those amenities.

The county’s acreage calculations do not include city or state parks.

It’s possible to add more beachfront — with money. Beachfront makes up some of the most expensive land in the county and it would be cost prohibitive for the county to start buying up huge swaths of beach now.

Yet the population continues to grow, topping 1.52 million and projected by the University of Florida to hit 1.64 million in



Staff graphic/Bing maps

2030 and 1.77 million in 2045.

So that leaves the county with the land it owns now: Milani Park’s 5.6 acres, the 70 acres at Karen Marcus Park and the 21-acre Coral Cove South in Tequesta.

Once those three parks are developed, barring a gift of waterfront land or a shift in

spending practices, the county would have about 393 acres of developed beachfront land.

Just adding Milani and Karen Marcus Park would push the ratio to 0.24 acres per 1,000 residents at today’s population and to 0.20 based on the 2045 population.

Adding Coral Cove South would push the number even higher in 2045, to 0.22 acres per 1,000 residents.

But those numbers could shift because county officials plan to weed out beachfront acreage that no longer can be counted as developed.

The county also has the option of lowering its target or eliminating it altogether.

There’s risk involved in that approach as well.

“Beaches are the most important feature of Florida’s brand, accounting for 25.5% of the state’s attractiveness to visitors,” a 2015 study by the Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research found.

The variables make it hard for those opposing Milani Park to sympathize with the

County-operated beachfront parks

A north-to-south list shows the biggest parks to the north and the proposed Milani site as one of the smallest. Not all of the parks are considered fully developed.

- Coral Cove North Park, Tequesta: 10.93 acres
- DuBois Park, Jupiter: 21.84 acres
- Jupiter Beach Park, Jupiter: 46.49 acres
- Carlin Park, Jupiter: 120.31 acres
- Ocean Cay Park, Jupiter: 13.44 acres
- Juno Beach Park, Juno Beach: 5.24 acres
- Loggerhead Park, Juno Beach: 17.26 acres
- Ocean Reef Park, Riviera Beach: 12.62 acres
- R.G. Kreusler Park, Palm Beach: 4.33 acres
- Ocean Inlet Park, Ocean Ridge: 11.39 acres
- Ocean Ridge Hammock Park, Ocean Ridge: 8.54 acres
- Gulfstream Park, Gulf Stream: 6.83 acres
- Proposed - Milani Park, Highland Beach: 5.6 acres**
- South Inlet Park, Boca Raton: 11.10 acres

Source: Palm Beach County Parks & Recreation

county’s position.

“If the population doubles in 20 years and there is no more land available, I guess what we’ll do then is we’ll change the standard,” Highland Beach resident Reame said. “What really makes sense here?”

The county bought the property from the Milani family

in 1987 for just \$4 million with the family’s proviso that it become a park. It has remained vacant for decades, first tied up in a legal battle and settlement and then remaining dormant as county leaders kept deferring decisions on development. ★

Rich Pollack contributed to this story.

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10 Questions

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: Ellen Barnes

Like many of her South Palm Beach neighbors, Ellen Barnes takes frequent walks along the beach. Unlike most, however, she grabs her canvas bag on her way out the door and collects the trash that washes up, then drops it in a nearby trash can or back at her residence.

"From the time you're a little kid, you're taught that when you see a paper you pick it up," said Barnes, 64. "The beach is special."

Barnes' activities earned the attention of Palm Beach County Sheriff's Deputy Donna Korb, who nominated her for a Star Resident award she received from the PBSO in October for her contributions to the community.

A resident of South Palm Beach for 22 years, Barnes said she's made the brief trip across State Road A1A at least a couple of times a week over the years, and almost daily during the times she's been between jobs.

"I love the ocean," she said. "I walk across the street and swim down to the Eau and swim back. I was on the swim team for a while. So, you want that to be clean."

She said that although she occasionally sees a few beer bottles lined up against a wall, the vast majority of the trash she collects washes up from the ocean.

"Plastic bags, pop-top cans, Clorox boxes. They have little creatures on the sides. Old ropes that come out of the ocean, and things somebody tried to float on, like bottles or milk jugs that are tied together. If it washes up, I throw them in the recycling here at my house. Whatever it takes."

She said the situation has "definitely" gotten worse in the past five years.

"There's more stuff that washes in now. I wasn't aware of it as much as I am now, but it's probably because there are more people out there now."

"They say there are places in the world with big expanses of trash. That's a nightmare for me."

Barnes works as the clinical coordinator for nursing simulations at Keiser University in West Palm Beach, running the skills and simulation labs. Her husband, Ned, now retired, was president of the Palm Beach Civic Association.

The couple travel frequently, visiting Key West "at least a couple times a year," Barnes said. They also visit her family in Portland, Oregon, and his family in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

The couple have two sons and seven grandchildren. Son Cory Lewis lives in Boca Raton and is a captain in the Boynton Beach Fire Department. Zach lives in Denver and runs Airbnbs.

— 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 Lexington, Kentucky. I attended Christ the King elementary



Ellen Barnes has been picking up trash from the beach near her home in South Palm Beach for more than 20 years. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**

school and Lexington Catholic High School.

I grew up on about 10 acres with horses, chickens, bunnies and lots of gardening chores. At the time I did not appreciate it, but later on in life, it taught me love of the land and the natural beauty around us — such a gift. In retrospect, attending Catholic school taught me how important it is to be there for one another, and that our highest calling is taking care of one another.

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

A: I worked for four years as a paraprofessional with severe and profound-to-trainable adults and children. I almost became a special-ed teacher. Shortly after that I had an amazing birth experience which led me to nursing, my chosen profession.

Working side by side with fellow nurses, midwives and doctors as a labor and delivery nurse has always been a great source of pride for me.

I have also worked as an educator,

which has been almost half of my 32 years in nursing. I feel I have been able to share my strengths and experiences with nursing students and to emphasize how important it is to be a compassionate and competent caregiver.

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

A: The path is not always clear. Start moving in a direction and that experience, if it is not the right one, will lead you to something suited for you. Your accomplishments and especially your failures on that path are invaluable in learning who you are, and what you will be best at.

Keep moving — there is something for you! Also, I've been telling nursing students for a long time that if you know what you want, but can't get right into it right away, get as close as you possibly can: I mean emotionally, physically, mentally and even geographically. Keep your ears and eyes open and that will lead you to an opening in the career/position that appeals to you most. Then go for it.

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

A: My boyfriend (now her husband) lived in South Palm Beach when we were dating. In love, and on the water, beautiful paths to walk on, and the stunning ocean right across the street. What could be better?

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

A: I have made incredible friends here alongside the beauty of the ocean. It is my happy place!

Q: What book are you reading now?

A: *Horse*, by Geraldine Brooks. I was raised in Lexington and this book takes place there during the Civil War. One family that owned slaves had a Black man who worked as a trainer, which was unheard of at the time. My sister read it and recommended I read it. I rode horses all the time growing up.

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

A: Traveling Wilburys, Paula Sinclair, Jimmy Buffett, Adele. When I want to be inspired, the sound of the ocean does the trick. I guess it's hard to see a pattern there. When I'm driving to work I listen to Paula Sinclair, who's like a folk singer. I like Jimi Hendrix, too. I'm kind of all over the place.

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

A: My parents raised 14 children: I was the ninth child in a mix of eight girls and six boys. My father, who passed away more than 25 years ago, was a pediatric surgeon who worked amazingly hard and loved the land.

My mom, the bearer of all those children, kept that whole unit together, which is spectacular. Today she is 100 years old and living happily in Portland, Oregon, surrounded by several of my siblings.

They inspired me to work hard, always to be persistent and always keep showing up. They led by example. I know it was not easy; they had their struggles but kept showing up. I feel my life has been truly blessed because of their presence in my life.

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

A: People tell me I look exactly like Linda Hamilton, who was the female lead in the movie *The Terminator* with Arnold Schwarzenegger. They tell me I should be in that movie.

Q: Who/what makes you laugh?

A: Pickleball and the friends I have made because of it. What could be better than sweating and laughing with really fun people?

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Highland Beach/Delray Beach

State blames Delray for too-low fire fees, so town ponders how to keep money

By Rich Pollack

The battle between Delray Beach and Highland Beach over who owes who money for fire service fees heated up after a preliminary report from state auditors showed the city failed to bill the town \$2.2 million, mostly for pension contributions dating back several years.

At the same time, Highland Beach leaders are sticking to their claim, made before the state's Joint Legislative Auditing Committee earlier this year, that Delray Beach owes the town money because the city used the wrong calculation to determine the fees.

How the conflicting viewpoints will be resolved could end up being decided through mediation or even in a courtroom, with Highland Beach Town Manager Marshall Labadie telling commissioners that the town is developing a pre-litigation strategy.

"If we have to go to mediation, so be it," he said, adding that he spoke to an attorney specializing in these types of issues within days of the preliminary audit report being made public early in November. The audit was ordered by the state committee in March.

While Delray Beach officials have not come right out and said that they will seek to get the \$2.2 million that they should have billed Highland Beach, City Manager Terrence Moore said that the city will

use forensic auditing services to determine the precise calculation of the balance due to the city.

"Final data analysis from this exercise will be reported to the City Commission, enabling consideration relative to mediation and/or other opportunities available to both parties," Moore wrote in a note to his commission.

In Highland Beach, town leaders said if it turns out the state auditors are correct and the city didn't bill the town properly, the town shouldn't be responsible for resolving the issue.

"Because they underbilled us, doesn't mean we should have to pay," said Highland Beach Commissioner Evalyn David, an attorney. "There's an argument to be made that this is on them."

In the preliminary operational report, which focused on the financial processes used by Delray Beach's Fire Rescue Department as part of its agreement with Highland Beach, the auditor listed a handful of findings that showed flaws in how numbers were calculated.

"During the period October 2019 through December 2022, the City experienced significant turnover in certain key management positions, which may have contributed to the control deficiencies and instances of noncompliance disclosed in this report," the auditor from the State Auditor General's Office wrote.

Among the findings were:

- Firefighter salary and benefit amounts recorded in the city's accounting records and billed to the town did not agree with employee timekeeping records.

- City purchasing policies and procedures did not ensure that goods and services ordered, received and distributed to the town's fire station were accurately billed to the town.

- The city didn't perform timely collection efforts on the town's nonpayment of billed services totaling \$517,654.

The auditors also found that Delray Beach didn't use consistent actuarial information to calculate how much Highland Beach should have contributed to the pension fund for the firefighters who were assigned to serve the town.

Some members of the Delray Beach commission in published reports have portrayed the auditor's report as a win for the city, but Highland Beach leaders say it is just the opposite.

"I would be embarrassed if I was Delray," said Town Attorney Glen Torcivia. "Delray looks like it wasn't mismanaged, it looks like it wasn't managed at all."

Labadie told commissioners that Delray Beach's financial issues and inability to provide the town with adequate records were factors behind Highland Beach's decision to start its own department, which will take over from Delray Beach in May.

"That's one of the reasons we wanted to leave," he said. ★

Obituary

Carol Titcomb

By Brian Biggane

LANTANA — Longtime Hypoluxo Island resident Carol Titcomb died surrounded by family on Nov. 23. She was 91.

Born Carol L. Milemore in Northport, New York, on Jan. 14, 1932, Mrs. Titcomb planned to attend Cornell University to become a brain surgeon until she met Ray, who became her husband of 73 years. After a brief romance, the pair was married and headed to Bridgeport, Connecticut, where Ray studied to become an industrial engineer.

Not long after, Mrs. Titcomb became pregnant with the first of their four sons and became a full-time homemaker.

In 1952 the couple learned Woodbury Pewter in Connecticut was up for sale and decided to buy it and began selling reproductions of early American pewter.

"If Ray needed something shipped out at night," Mrs. Titcomb told *The Coastal Star* earlier this year, "I would have the kids fed by 6 o'clock and go to the shop and help Ray pack until 12 or 1 o'clock." The business remains in the family, now run by son Brooks.

Mrs. Titcomb became "very involved" with the Newtown (Connecticut) Town Players, producing a play, doing makeup, production and promotion.

In 1985 the couple took a trip to Florida and found a house on the water on Hypoluxo Island. Learning the "For Sale" sign was about to go up, they arrived early the next day to check it out.

"We looked out to the water and said, 'This is fabulous,'" she said. "We made an offer, and they took it."

In her nearly 40 years in south Palm Beach County she traveled extensively in the U.S. and Europe, particularly enjoying Italy; was a member of the Hospice Guild of South

Palm Beach County; and enjoyed card games with the ladies at St. Andrews Club and The Little Club.

"We have gotten literally hundreds of messages pouring in from all over the place," said son Jamie Titcomb, the town manager of South Palm Beach. "My mom was very influential in her effect on every person she met."

"Other people would call her 'Mom.' She had the ability to make everybody heard and listened to, give them sage advice, and everybody came away feeling enriched by the experience."

Mrs. Titcomb is survived by husband, Ray, sisters Barbara and Lois, sons Jeffrey, Brooks, Jamie and Gordon, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Per her wishes, there will be no funeral, but a celebration of life will be held on a date to be determined.

"If you knew her, you loved her ... and she loved you too!" her son Gordon wrote in a Facebook post.

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Continued from page 1

scenery, a craving they often satisfied abroad on bike tours to places like Bali, Italy, Croatia and France.

Wherever they pedaled, they were mindful of cars and trucks, especially ones entering their path from side roads and condo entrances.

"We always are cognizant of cars pulling out and we always establish eye contact and wave," she said, "and 99% of the time we get the wave back."

From bike to roadside

Around 3:30 p.m. Aug. 2, a week before she and her husband were scheduled to go on a bike trip in Portugal, Pohanka hopped on her trusty brown Specialized hybrid and took off from her driveway on a solo ride. It was a brilliant sunny South Florida day.

About 30 minutes into her ride, as she pedaled south in the bicycle lane past Red Reef Park, just north of her Palmetto Park Road turnaround spot, she approached the entrance to the Sun and Surf Club, a gated community on Coquina Way.

Just ahead on her right, she noticed an eastbound white Chevy Silverado approaching the Coquina Way stop sign at A1A, preparing to turn north. She looked toward the driver and waved, expecting him to slow down and wait for her to pass.

Knowing she had the right of way, and assuming the driver had seen her, she kept pedaling.

"My memory is his windows were tinted too dark for me to see him, and that was my mistake," she said.

When she looked to her right again, she saw the truck's massive front coming right at her.

The driver never hit the brakes, she said, and the truck broadsided the right side of her bike, including her leg. The impact ejected Pohanka off the bike saddle and onto A1A.

She said she remembers lying on the road, unable to move, for at least two minutes, wondering if anyone would come to her aid, before a motorist looking out a car window asked her if she wanted him to call 911.

Moments later, another stranger arrived to help, a man Pohanka would call "my angel."

Boca Raton Ocean Rescue Lt. Frank Ganley was on his way to work when he got caught in a line of traffic backing up on A1A. Wondering what was going on, he flipped on his truck's emergency lights, drove up the shoulder of the road and found Pohanka sprawled across the pavement not far from her damaged bike.

"I first made sure she was conscious and breathing and had a pulse," he said. "I knew she had some serious injuries. I knew rescue was coming so I stayed with her."

Ganley, a certified EMT, immediately sensed how scared she was.

"She latched on to my one arm with two hands. I was just trying to keep her calm. Rescue got there and we were putting her on the backboard and she wouldn't let go of my arm," he said.

Reflecting on that day months later, Pohanka said she is disheartened that she lay on the road for what felt like too long before someone stopped to help her.

"I was trying to understand why nobody was coming for me. I could not move. I didn't know if I was dying," she said. "I think it's really a sign of the times. People don't want to get involved. It's not instinctual in people, it wasn't that day, to go help somebody."

When Ganley knelt on the pavement next to her, he offered the compassion Pohanka desperately sought. "He was my



LEFT: Tasks like getting out of bed required a pair of nurses during the early days of Diane Pohanka's recovery.

BELOW LEFT: An X-ray shows the multiple rods and pins required to repair her leg bones. BELOW RIGHT: Pohanka stopped by to thank Lt. Frank Ganley, who came to her rescue: 'He was my lifeline, my angel.' Photos provided and by Tim Stepien /The Coastal Star



lifeline, my angel," she said.

Pohanka lay on the pavement facing north, unable to move her body or her head in the direction of the truck that hit her. Worried that she'd be the victim of a hit-and-run driver, she kept telling Ganley, "Is the driver still there? Don't let him leave."

The driver of the truck, Omar Miranda of Boynton Beach, stayed at the scene and spoke to police. But Pohanka said he never came to her aid.

Miranda, 46, was cited for running a stop sign, according to a police report. He told police he was watching for an opening in traffic before he pulled out to turn left on A1A. He said he never saw Pohanka, according to the report.

Charges dismissed

At a Nov. 8 traffic court hearing held via Zoom, Pohanka, under questioning from Miranda's attorney, admitted she never saw the driver of the truck that struck her. A judge dismissed the charge against Miranda, court records show.

Pohanka said the dismissal was as emotionally devastating to her as the accident.

"I never saw him because I couldn't move. I never saw him because he never came to my aid," she said in an interview after the hearing.

She hopes to get justice from a civil lawsuit filed Oct. 6 against Miranda.

Court records show Miranda has been cited for at least 25 traffic violations since 2001, including speeding, driving with a suspended license, running a red light, and improperly driving in an HOV lane. Most of the citations, 23, were issued between 2001 and 2014, including a charge in 2008 that the windows of his vehicle were too dark.

In October 2022, Miranda was cited for texting while driving in a school zone, court records show. He pleaded no contest and agreed to go to traffic school. But four months later, his license was suspended and his plea changed by the judge to guilty when he failed to show up for traffic school. His license was reinstated on July 7, a little less than four weeks before Pohanka was struck.



Pohanka spent three weeks at Delray Medical Center before starting rehab exercises at Miller Physical Therapy in downtown Delray Beach.

"It's painful. I'm hoping it's helpful," she said. "I feel like I'm quite robotic in my walking. It's like I'm talking to my legs to get them to walk, but I'm doing it."

Around the house, she uses a wheelchair and cane, constant reminders of how radically her life has changed.

"I used to work out seven days a week. Now, there's no morning beach walks. There's no rushing to get anywhere. It's just way different. Every step I take is calculated and almost mechanical," she said.

"I'm a gimp," she added. "It really has changed my life."

Before Pohanka and her husband moved to Gulf Stream in 2015, they racked up more than 20,000 miles on the treadmill in their Virginia home, a testament to the five miles she used to run every day.

Now they have no idea when, or if, she will be as active again.

"You're only as strong as your weakest link and right now her legs are her weakest link," Chris Pohanka said. "She is sore a lot. She is doing what she can but it is very limited."

Then there are the psychological scars the accident has left. Chris said just riding in a car down A1A makes Diane nervous, especially when she sees cyclists.

"You hear people saying, 'Oh, you shouldn't ride on A1A,'" he said. "Well, it's just a matter of time and when something does happen, you've got no idea how much it changes your life. Things change in a second."

Accident numbers on the rise

Despite the pain of her recovery, Pohanka knows she is lucky to be alive, especially as bike crashes in Palm Beach County have been trending in an alarming direction since 2020.

According to state records as of Nov. 28, there have been 620 bike crashes in Palm Beach County this year, including 11 fatalities. Last year, there were 486 bike crashes and 14 fatalities. The county recorded 424 bike crashes (eight fatalities) in 2021 and 373 (12 fatalities) in 2020.

Pohanka said she knows there's always a chance for an accident when bikes share the road with motor vehicles. But what surprised and frustrated her is the location of where the truck struck her.

"This little stretch of A1A where he hit me was the safest part of the whole road," she said. "No obstacles, along a golf course, no trees, no visual impairments."

She is determined to ride her bike again, but she said her rides will be exclusively in parks and natural areas, on paths without any motor vehicles. Pohanka said she has "asked Santa for a bike rack" for her car.

One person who is confident she will achieve her goal is Ganley. He has stayed in touch with Pohanka since the September day she showed up at Ocean Rescue headquarters to thank him for the compassion he showed in the immediate aftermath of her accident.

"I received a call on the radio from one of the guys at headquarters. He said, 'There's a woman here, Diane. She's the one who got hit by the truck. She'd like to see you and thank you,'" Ganley recalled.

"I'm walking back thinking she's going to be in a wheelchair, kind of preparing myself. I walk in and she's there with just a cane. I was like, 'Wow!' The injuries she had were really serious. It was great to see her," he said.

"I walked over, she stood up and gave me a hug and thanked me and started crying."

Pohanka and Ganley said they hope her story encourages motorists and bicyclists to be more careful on the road.

"I've been doing this for 31 years now and I really hate seeing people having the best time of their lives and then something tragic like this happens," Ganley said.

"I was just amazed how far she has come. It was really good to see her moving around. She's not going to let this stop her from living her life." ★

Along the Coast

Police chief, bicycle club president offer safety tips for A1A

By Mary Hladky

The Beach Condo Association of Boca Raton, Highland Beach and Delray Beach is all about safety.

To that end, members have surveyed the Spanish River Boulevard bridge and portions of State Road A1A, documenting needed road and pavement repairs and giving that information to the state Department of Transportation so the work can be done.

They also lobbied Boca Raton officials to install 11 crosswalks on A1A. Pedestrians can press a button to activate flashing lights that alert motorists to

stop.

On Nov. 21, they invited Highland Beach Police Chief Craig Hartmann and Boca Raton Bicycle Club President Michael Simon to speak on how drivers and bicyclists can coexist safely on the road.

Their presentations answered questions many residents have, such as why do bicyclists often travel in large packs and why do they veer out of the bike lanes onto A1A.

Bikers ride in groups because it is safer to do so, Hartmann said. "The bicycle club will tell you to 'ride big.' Bikes are hard to see. They will tell you it is safer in

bigger groups."

It is perfectly legal for bicyclists to leave the bike lanes and ride on A1A, Hartmann said.

That's because the existing bike lanes are not actually lanes. They are paved shoulders. That distinction allows travel on A1A.

But that will change when the FDOT installs new actual bike lanes on A1A in Highland Beach next year and in Boca Raton in 2027. That is part of a large and long-awaited road improvement project.

Highland Beach's lanes will be 4 feet wide, and Boca Raton's will be 6 feet.

Once the new bike lanes are

completed, bicyclists will have to use them exclusively.

Simon offered safety tips.

He said bicyclists can buy a radar detector that informs them when cars are behind them and getting closer, giving them time to pull over to the right side of the road.

He urged bicyclists to wear reflective clothing so they can be easily seen. And even though they can ride on A1A, he encouraged them to use the existing bike lanes for greater safety.

Above all, Simon said wearing a helmet is a must. In fatal accidents, 97% of the bicyclists were not wearing one. ★

Boca Raton

Separate lanes for bikes coming to Boca's stretch of A1A in 2027

By Mary Hladky

The Florida Department of Transportation is preparing to embark on a \$7.3 million project that will completely make over the nearly 5-mile stretch of A1A that runs through Boca Raton.

The project is still four years off, starting in the fall of 2027, but planning is well underway.

FDOT District 4 officials outlined the project during a Nov. 15 in-person and virtual public meeting in the city's Downtown Library and took questions from the audience.

A major component of the project is adding 6-foot buffered

bike lanes on both sides of the road. The city's avid bikers have long pressed for robust lanes to improve safety.

The work, which will take one year to complete, will be done between Southeast 31st Street, the city's southern limit, to south of Grand Court in Highland Beach.

It includes milling and resurfacing the travel lanes, shoulders and an asphalt shared-use path.

Travel lanes will be reduced from 12 feet to 11 feet to accommodate the wider bike lanes.

A new sidewalk will be built

along the east side of A1A between Southeast 31st Street and Camino Real.

New lighting will be installed at the Camino Real and Spanish River Boulevard intersections so drivers can better see pedestrians and cyclists.

Pedestrian curb ramps will be upgraded to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Drainage improvements will be made in front of the Marbella Condominium, located immediately south of East Palmetto Park Road, to eliminate localized flooding on both sides of A1A.

A similar project on

Highland Beach's 3.3 miles of A1A will start next spring and end in summer 2025. That work will overlap a project in Delray Beach on 1.6 miles from Linton Boulevard to Atlantic Avenue starting in fall of 2024 and continuing to winter 2025.

Attendees at the Boca Raton meeting were told that work will be done in phases so that not all of the road will be torn up at once.

Residents will not lose access to their properties at any time, no detours will be required and no work will be done on Sundays.

One meeting attendee said

he would prefer that a barrier be used to separate the bike lanes from vehicle traffic, rather than FDOT's plan to use white lines as a separation.

Another said he had the impression that the agency's plans were final, and no design changes would be made as a result of audience comments.

Henry Oaikhena, FDOT District 4 project manager, said that was not the case.

"We can go back and make the design better," he said. "We will be doing that." ★

Lantana

West Construction chief indicted on charges of defrauding U.S. project

By Mary Thurwachter

A Lantana contractor is among four men indicted for their alleged roles in fraudulently obtaining a multimillion-dollar construction contract from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

Matthew West, 52, chief executive of West Construction, Inc., in Lantana, was indicted on Oct. 4, according to the Middle District of Florida's U.S. Attorney's Office in Tampa. Also indicted were Kevin Kutina, 61, of Ramona, California, Roberto Gonzalez, 58, of Palmetto Bay, and William Gonzalez, 51, of Orlando.

The four were charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, substantive counts of wire fraud, and major fraud against the United States.

West Construction did not respond to a request for comment. Earlier this year, in work unrelated to the case, West completed a job remodeling Lantana's Town Library.

According to the indictment issued by U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg, the VA issued a request for bids in July 2016 for a contract to build the Cancer Infusion Therapy Center at Bay Pines in Pinellas County. The contract, valued between \$5 million and \$10 million, was for construction of a 14,909-square-foot building to augment the VA medical center's existing radiation oncology clinic. The contract was set aside for small businesses

owned by service-disabled veterans and required bids from qualified businesses.

The indictment claims that the conspirators used Maxon Groupe, LLC, a company owned by service-disabled veteran Roberto Gonzalez and William Gonzalez, to submit a bid containing false statements and omissions. That led the VA to award the contract to Maxon, the indictment said.

The conspirators falsely represented that qualified employees from Kevcon, Inc., owned and operated by Kutina, would serve in supervisory roles, the indictment said.

The conspirators also failed to disclose to the VA contracting officials that Maxon was a pass-through for West's company, which managed the work for the contract and received most of the payment, the indictment said.

West Construction was not eligible for the VA's disabled veterans set-aside contract.

The indictment alleges that between March 2017 and January 2019, the conspirators submitted multiple invoices for payment, with the U.S. Treasury paying Maxon approximately \$4.8 million. During the same time, the conspirators transferred approximately \$4.2 million of that money to West, and in turn, West transferred approximately \$1.1 million to Kevcon, the indictment said.

If convicted, the defendants face a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison on each of the conspiracy and wire fraud counts, and a maximum of 10 years behind bars on the major fraud count against the United States. ★

Briny Breezes

One council seat filled; mayor's race draws two candidates

By Steve Plunkett

Alderwoman Kathy Gross was reelected without opposition Nov. 28 when qualifying for the March election ended, and Briny Breezes residents will have a choice to make in the mayor's race.

Ted Gross, the alderwoman's husband, and Keith Black, who sits on the Planning & Zoning Board, filed papers to run for mayor.

Both also submitted letters of interest in being appointed to the position, which Mayor Gene Adams is leaving effective Dec. 15.

No one filed to run for the seat being vacated by the Town Council's president, Christina Adams, who like her husband is resigning effective Dec. 15. But Jeffrey Duncan, a son of onetime council President Matt Duncan, sent a letter of interest in being appointed.

Duncan's parents moved to Briny in the mid-1980s, and his father spent 16 years on the Town Council, from 1991 to 2007, the

last eight as its president.

Kathy Gross was first elected to the council in 2018.

The council will meet on Dec. 7, the first Thursday of the month, instead of its customary fourth Thursday, which conflicted with both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Council members have asked Town Attorney Keith Davis to prepare a resolution for the December meeting asking the county supervisor of elections to hold a second qualifying period the first two weeks of January, in case there were not enough candidates because of the state's new requirement that municipal office holders disclose their personal finances in detail.

Alderwoman Liz Loper declared at the October meeting that she is staying on the dais. Davis encouraged the other council members to decide as soon as possible if they will stay or quit. ★



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South Palm Beach

Pedestrian's death a 'wake-up call' to make A1A safer, but how?

By Brian Biggane

The hit-and-run death of a pedestrian on State Road A1A the evening of Nov. 10 and what comes next brought a large crowd to the November meeting of the Town Council in South Palm Beach.

Hatixhe Laiqi, 73 and a resident of the Barclay condominium, was struck crossing A1A just after 6 p.m. by a 2016 GMC Terrain and pronounced dead by first responders shortly afterward.



Laiqi

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office announced three days later it had recovered the vehicle and identified the driver as a 43-year-old Boynton Beach woman. Charges depended on the outcome of an investigation.

"This is a wake-up call," council member Robert Gottlieb said. "Other people have been hit and injured in the years before. A1A is not our road. We need to do something because people are scared."

Mayor Bonnie Fischer recalled a man was killed in 2019 in front of the Imperial House and said there have been



Flowers on the west side of State Road A1A in South Palm Beach memorialize Hatixhe Laiqi, who was killed by a hit-and-run driver on Nov. 10. There were no skid marks or other easily visible evidence that showed an accident had occurred. The condo in the background is the Barclay, where Laiqi lived. **Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

several near-misses since on the north-south highway that falls under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation.

"It's such a tiny, little street and a lot of people," Vice Mayor Bill LeRoy said. "I haven't come up with anything, nobody has come up with anything. It's not my job, it's FDOT's job. They need to get in here and figure it out."

Since the only pedestrian walkway alongside the road is located along its west side, Fischer said repeated efforts have been made to build another along the east side. But the town's homeowners associations would all have to agree to it, making it highly unlikely, if not impossible.

A crosswalk with flashing

lights was suggested, but that would be FDOT's decision. Council member Monte Berendes said residents need to wear light and even reflective clothing and carry flashlights to call attention. The latest fatality occurred around nightfall.

James Donatelli, one of two residents who spoke, suggested that the kind of blue lights on airplanes would create less glare for drivers and that the streetlights could be brighter, though Fischer said they were installed just six years ago.

"A tragedy happened and we don't want it to happen again," Fischer said. "This is a very active community that likes to go on walks and I've had a lot of complaints from my neighbors. We're going to try to move forward with some solutions."★

South Palm Beach News

Palmsea fence and gate installation debated — The Town Council meeting in November featured a spirited conversation regarding the approval of a fence and gate installation at 3520 S. Ocean Blvd., on the property of the Palmsea condominium.

Palmsea ultimately received the council's approval.

Palmsea representative Kevin Hall said sheriff's and fire departments would have access to the beach through the new gate to address emergencies but that other town residents would not. Residents without access to the beach typically have negotiated through their homeowners associations to pay for beach access through agreements with the beachside condos. Otherwise they must walk or drive to Lantana beach.

Council member Monte Berendes said he doesn't feel it's fair that people who don't have access to the beach are still paying taxes for beach improvements, which he said results in "taxation without representation."

"It should be that anyone who lives in South Palm Beach should have access," he said.

Added Vice Mayor Bill LeRoy, "The fact some of these condos are making money off their neighbors is terrible."

Hall said a phone app now in use tells those with electric bikes they can access the beach

through the Palmsea easement, resulting in several calls to the Sheriff's Office in recent weeks.

"And if (that rider) breaks his neck going through there, that's our liability," Hall said. "We just can't stand the liability."

Gottlieb opts not to run — Longtime council member Robert Gottlieb, who attended his first meeting in person in November after spending several months up North, has decided not to run for reelection in March. Gottlieb said at the last meeting that he was concerned about having to divulge more of his financial information under Form 6 but had not yet decided. Raymond McMillan, whose four-year term also expires in 2024, has filed to run. The council voted to hold a special qualifying period Jan. 2-7 for people interested in filling the vacancy.

Grant received — Manager Jamie Titcomb reported the town has received the \$75,000 grant it requested from the state for a vulnerability assessment study. The town has until 2026 to implement it.

Bids expected for new Town Hall — Town Manager Jamie Titcomb said he is "pretty confident" he will have by the December meeting the minimum of three bids for the council to determine both the owner's rep and design and build contractor for the new Town Hall project.

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Lantana

Demolition of cottages, redevelopment anticipated for Ocean Avenue

By Mary Thurwachter

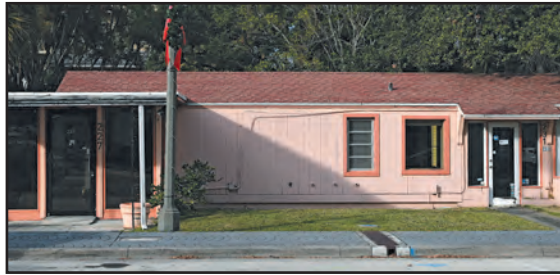
One by one the last occupants of those cute, colorful — but ramshackle — Key West style cottages on the north side of Lantana's Ocean Avenue have moved elsewhere.

First, Jeannie's Ocean Boutique relocated to Plaza del Mar in Manalapan. Then Mario's moved to Lake Worth Beach. And just last month, the owners of Oceano Kitchen, whose lease was not renewed, took their popular restaurant to Lake Worth Beach.

Other locations on the 200 block have been tenantless since 2004.

Town officials have wanted to amp up business on the avenue for years and have been frustrated with the declining condition of the 12 cottages between Oak Street and Lake Drive.

Last month they reported some progress, and Nicole Dritz, Lantana's development services



A sampling of the vacant cottages on Ocean Avenue includes one that was home to Oceano Kitchen (top left), whose owners moved out last month. **Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star**

director, said: "It is expected the structures will be demolished and redeveloped."

Mayor Karen Lythgoe found this news encouraging.

"For the first time in years something is finally happening," she said. "We look forward to entertaining proposals for

redevelopment."

The cottages are owned by Marsha Stocker and Steven Handelsman, who are siblings. They plan to hold on to the land, but may be open to development ideas.

"They have indicated a desire to enter into a land lease, not

sale," Dritz said.

Although no developer has expressed interest yet, Town Manager Brian Raducci, Town Attorney Max Lohman and Dritz have been working with the property owners to find one. And Lythgoe said she has been talking to residents who have

contacts with developers to try to find someone interested.

Stocker and Handelsman inherited the properties after their parents, Burt and Lucille "Lovey" Handelsman, died. The Handelsmans once owned a real estate empire worth \$550 million, including properties on Worth Avenue in Palm Beach.

But the cottages have fallen into so much disrepair that code violations for the properties have resulted in fines in excess of \$833,000 and are growing at \$1,000 per day, Dritz said.

Any new development would need to be in line with the town's new master plan for the C1 Downtown Overlay. The master plan suggests "a balance between preserving existing structures with the greatest architectural and historical character and building new."

Attempts by *The Coastal Star* to reach the property owners have been unsuccessful. ★

Boynton Beach

Interim director of CRA appointed after unexpected firing

By Tao Woolfe

Boynton Beach has named an interim Community Redevelopment Agency director and determined that a permanent CRA director should be sought by seeking bids from executive recruiting firms.

The city could also look into using a familiar public sector recruiting firm such as GovHR USA, City Manager Daniel Dugger said at a Nov. 14 CRA meeting.

An invitation to bid on recruitment services was issued on Nov. 19 and the sealed bids are due by Dec. 18.

City commissioners, sitting as the CRA board, agreed unanimously at their Nov. 13 meeting to promote Assistant Director Timothy Tack to interim director.

Tack, who joined the CRA in 2021, is a licensed engineer with more than 18 years' experience in the public and private sectors. The commissioners agreed to raise his salary by \$28,000 to a total of \$167,852 while Tack serves as interim director.

Former CRA Director Thuy Shutt was fired from her post by the commission, for largely unspecified reasons, at a tumultuous CRA meeting on

Oct. 10.

The three commissioners who initiated the dismissal — Mayor Ty Penserga and commissioners Aimee Kelley and Thomas Turkin — cited only unspecified "communication issues" between Shutt and city employees.

Many members of the public at the October meeting spoke out against the commission's action and praised Shutt's award-winning work.

Among them was Mildred Hay, wife of Commissioner Woodrow Hay.

"You do not deserve this,"

Mildred Hay said to Shutt. "I pray God blesses you on your trail as you go."

Status update on The Pierce

The City Commission received a status update on a stalled development — The Pierce — from its newly hired in-house city counsel, Shawna Lamb.

A lawsuit challenging the abandonment of three streets leading into the mixed-use project "is still a problem," and is pending in Palm Beach County Circuit Court, she told the commissioners at the Nov. 14 CRA meeting.

An adjacent property owner — F. Davis Camalier, of 209 N. Federal Highway — filed suit against Pierce developer Affiliated Development and the city this summer.

Boardwalk Italian Ice & Creamery leases space at that location.

Camalier is claiming that the city improperly abandoned three streets to accommodate Affiliated's winning bid to build The Pierce, a \$100 million mixed retail and commercial development that will contain 300 apartments. ★

City grants 30-day extension to proposed Magnuson House eatery

By Tao Woolfe

The city has again given an extension to the developers of a restaurant proposed for the grounds of the historic Oscar Magnuson House — even though the project could cause the house to lose its historic designation.

The 30-day extension for the property at 211 E. Ocean Ave. was unanimously approved during the Nov. 13 meeting of the Boynton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency.

Developer Anthony Barber told city commissioners — sitting as the CRA board — that he and his partner were having trouble financing their restaurant project because of rising costs.

"The cost is not the cost we originally projected," Barber said. "We have owner financing of \$800,000, but the [construction] cost now is

looking like \$1.2 million."

Making matters worse, Barber said, the cost of borrowing money has escalated.

"We've sought financing from a couple of places. Lending rates are terrible right now," Barber said. "We need more time to get this going."

About a year ago, Barber told the commission he wants to redevelop the Magnuson House into a 3,000-square-foot, full-service American-style restaurant consisting of the home and five shipping containers.

The restaurant would be open seven days a week and would be called Pauline's, Barber said, to honor his grandmother.

The plans originally called for renovating the two-story Magnuson House for inside dining. Before completing that renovation, Barber said he

planned to use the shipping containers for the kitchen area, walk-in food storage, restrooms, an artisan bar and a rotisserie grilling area.

In June, the CRA granted the partners a six-month extension to submit a site plan application. Barber has said he submitted two site plans to the city, but they were rejected for being incomplete.

Barber told the CRA board last month that he may have to ask the city to remove the Magnuson House's historic designation — and its attendant restrictions — to make the project more acceptable to lenders.

"We hope to have something within two weeks," Barber said, referring to word from lenders.

Barber, who also owns Troy's Barbeque on Federal Highway south of Woolbright Road, told commissioners last year he has lived in Boynton Beach for 35

years and had always wanted to open a restaurant in his home city's central downtown area.

During their most recent discussion of the matter, city commissioners seemed willing to give Barber an extension of up to six months, but Mayor Ty Penserga said he preferred giving a 30-day extension and revisiting the matter at that point, if necessary.

His colleagues agreed, as did Barber.

"I don't want to waste anybody's time," Barber said.

The Oscar Magnuson House is a two-story wooden structure which was built around 1919, according to the city's historic preservation program records. The building retains many of its original external features, including the wood frame double-hung sash windows, wood siding and exposed rafter tails at the eaves. Its big front porch has been removed.

The original owner, Oscar Magnuson, ran a fernery on High Ridge Road — somewhere between Gateway Boulevard and Hypoluxo Road, according to historical records. The ferns were packed in ice and shipped by rail to northern markets. Magnuson also grew and grafted mango and avocado trees.

Although originally designed as a single-family residence, the structure and the site were used as a commercial plant nursery in the 1980s, according to city records.

As envisioned, the restaurant would employ some 30 people, Barber has said. Barber's partner, Rodney Mayo of the Subculture Group, has said he would provide about \$1 million in financial backing. The partners' development company is known as 306 NE 6th Avenue LLC. ★

Business Spotlight

Ground broken on Delray Beach’s \$11.5 million fire station

Delray Beach officials broke ground on the city’s newest fire station in late October. It will be more than double the size of Station 113, which was demolished on the same site at 651 Linton Blvd. in April.

At the old station, engines had to back in from Linton. The new station will be a two-story, 15,857-square-foot space with three drive-through bays. It will also have sleeping quarters for 13 people. The station will cost about \$11.5 million to build and is scheduled for completion in early 2025, the city said.

“This is the station that the residents in that area deserve,” Fire Chief Keith Tomey said. “It will be functional, efficient, safe and accessible.”



The groundbreaking ceremony for the new station at 651 Linton Blvd. included (l-r) John Scherer of contractor Gulf Building, Delray Beach Public Works Director Missie Barletto, Commissioner Adam Frankel, City Manager Terrence Moore, Commissioner Rob Long, Mayor Shelly Petrolia, Commissioner Ryan Boylston and Fire Chief Keith Tomey. **Photo provided**

Fortune Christie’s International Real Estate opened a new office at 101 Plaza Real South, Boca Raton. Marie Mangouta and Adam Elmer of the Worth Group spearheaded its opening on Nov. 1. Ruth Palma is the managing broker. The office has around 20 agents, most of them agents of the Worth Group.

El-Ad National Properties is partnering with **Plant the Future**, a Miami-based art

studio that seeks to connect people to their natural environment, for the second phase of Alina Residences in Boca Raton.

Plant the Future’s design is “Flying Over the Everglades,” a series of natural moss murals and installations commissioned by interior designer Garcia Stromberg and El-Ad National Properties. It will include one installation in Alina 210’s two-story lobby, and multiple

installations in Alina 220 on the deck level. “Flying Over the Everglades” draws inspiration from organic textures and shapes found in nature.

Boca Helping Hands received the 2023 Encore Palm Beach’s Wisdom & Experience business award in Encore’s small nonprofit sector, recognized as being an employer committed to recruiting, retraining and retaining mature

workers.

“Sixty-eight percent of our employees are age 50 or older. We are proud to promote an inclusive work culture where the contributions of employees of all ages are celebrated and respected,” said Greg Hazle, executive director of Boca Helping Hands.

Florida Atlantic University’s Leon Charney Diplomacy Program was recognized

as the best at a competition organized by National Model United Nations for receiving a conference record of nine delegation awards and two position paper awards. The conference was held Nov. 10-12 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott hotel, Washington D.C.

“We are all so proud of our students for putting in weeks of preparation and performing at the highest level,” said Haven Gray, FAU faculty chairperson for the delegation. Three colleges and 94 undergraduate students represented FAU at the competition, which included 65 universities from the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa.

For more information, go to www.fau.edu/artsandletters/pjhr/diplomacy/.

Nonperishable food items are being collected through Dec. 14 at **Lang Realty** offices from Port St. Lucie to Boca Raton for Lang’s annual fall drive to benefit Move for Hunger. Move for Hunger distributes the food to shelters and food pantries. For a list of collection sites, visit www.langrealty.com/office-locations.php.

A new contemporary residence, **La Plage Villa** at 4005 S. Ocean Blvd., Highland



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The new spec home at 4005 S. Ocean Blvd. in Highland Beach sold for \$30 million. Photo provided

Beach, built for speculation by Sabal Luxury Builder, sold in October for \$30 million.

On a .58-acre lot with 100 feet on the ocean, the four-story, 9,054-square-foot home comprises seven bedrooms, 12 bathrooms, a rooftop deck, theater and five-car garage.

The D'Angelo/Liguori team at Premier Estate Properties represented Sabal Development in the sale, while Nadine Cory of City Real Estate Corp. represented the buyer, 4005 South Ocean Blvd. Land Trust. Sabal originally purchased the property in August 2016 for \$4.4 million.

George Gann, executive director and chief conservation

strategist for the Institute for Regional Conservation, received the Bradshaw Medal 2023 from the Society for Ecological Restoration. Gann and his co-authors were recognized for the best paper published in Restoration Ecology 2022, Volume 3, "Restoration, reclamation, and rehabilitation: on the need for, and proposing a definition of, ecological reclamation." The institute is based in Delray Beach.

Stephen Gaulden, an Allstate insurance agent, received the Business Person of the Year award at the Greater Lantana Chamber of Commerce's inaugural awards dinner in November at the Carlisle Palm



Gaulden

Beach. The Commitment to Community Not-For-Profit award was presented to LaShaundra Highsmith for the Palm

Beach County Food Bank. Alexandra Dupuis, for Ravish Off Ocean restaurant, was presented with the New Business of the Year award. The Emerging Young Professional award went to Kristine Kreidler, director of the Lantana Library. Underground Promos received the Small Business of the Year award.

Arts Garage announced its four new board members: Delray Beach residents Robin Greene, Chuck Halberg, Elise Rubenstein and David Crespo. Greene joined the board in June, the others in October.

Concierge Property Solutions LLC, a commercial, residential and association property management company in Boca Raton, named Tricia Schmidt as director of operations. Previously, Schmidt worked with Stiles Property Management, starting as a property manager and rising to general manager overseeing Palm Beach County operations.

Michael Rosa is the new general manager of The Seagate Country Club in Delray Beach. Previously, Rosa was GM at Lake Nona Golf & Country Club in Orlando, and at La Gorce CC in Miami Beach.

The Seagate Hotel & Spa has launched its Beachside Winter Escape package. Guests who book four-night stays through April 19 will receive a fifth night free. They will also receive two cocktails. When booking, guests must use the promo code "WINTER" to activate discount options. The Seagate is at 1000 E. Atlantic Ave., Delray Beach. For more info, call 561-665-4800 or visit seagatedelray.com.

The League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County hosted 220 guests to its "I Stand With the League" luncheon and awards event in October at Benvenuto's in Boynton Beach. Highlights included the presentation of the league's annual Maverick & Heroes Award to Wendy Sartory Link, Palm Beach County supervisor of elections, along with memorial tributes to Nancy Cohen and Corinne Miller.

A Florida Atlantic University survey recently

found that Floridians appear to be more convinced that climate change is happening and want government action, compared with Americans in other parts of the United States. For example, the latest edition of the university's Florida Climate Resilience Survey found that 90% of Florida respondents believe climate change is happening. That compares with 74% of Americans as a whole as shown in a recent Yale University survey.

"Floridians might be more likely to believe climate change is happening due to their experiences with hurricanes and other extreme weather," said Colin Polsky, Ph.D., founding director of FAU's School of Environmental, Coastal, and Ocean Sustainability.

The survey found that newer Florida residents exhibit higher levels of belief in human-caused climate change than people who have lived in Florida longer than five years. Polsky believes these trends might explain the state's investment in recent years of more than \$1 billion in climate adaptation projects.



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

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New Listing | 6110 N Ocean Boulevard, 4 | Ocean Ridge
\$3,170,000 | Waterfront dream home in Pelican Cove with two private, protected dock slips up to 60' each.
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Ocean Ridge | \$649,000 | Chic updated 2 BR, 2 BA nestled between the Intracoastal and the ocean.
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Active | 5 Winthrop Lane | Boynton Beach | \$1,199,000
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Web# RX-10884284



Around Town

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December 2023

The Coastal  Star



Holiday boat parades will entertain crowds from Boynton Beach and Delray Beach on Dec. 8 and Boca Raton on Dec. 16. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Embracing the magic

Community activities to ignite the holiday spirit

By Mary Thurwachter

Haven't leaned into the ho-ho-ho state of mind yet? Here are some activities that can spark your interest in the most wonderful time of the year. From boat parades to tuba concerts to a living Nativity program, coastal residents looking to welcome the holiday season have many options.

Christmas at Cason Cottage

Back for the seventh year, Christmas at Cason Cottage invites visitors to gather 'round the Christmas tree inside its historic 1926 bungalow and listen to a classic story read by one of the Delray Beach Historical Society's popular elves.

"The campus and gardens will be decorated for the holidays so visitors can wander the garden paths and enjoy the beauty," says Winnie Diggans Edwards, executive director of the historical society.

Event begins at 6 p.m. Dec. 14 at 3 NE First St., Delray Beach. \$5 admission. www.delraybeachhistory.org/events/christmas-at-cason-cottage/

Boat parades

A jolly, hand-waving Santa will be on board for local boat parades, long-standing waterway events not to



be missed. Boats large and small will be adorned with twinkling lights and other festive décor.

Boynton Beach's Holiday Boat Parade starts at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 8, forming at the Ocean Avenue bridge in Lantana near Old Key Lime House and traveling south to the C-15

See HOLIDAY on page A10

On Dec. 14, take a look back in time with classic stories provided at Cason Cottage by elves from the Delray Beach Historical Society. Photo provided

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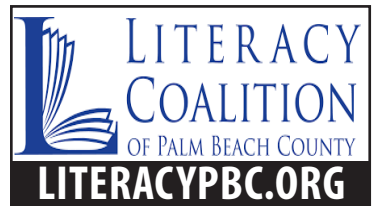
Note: Events are current as of 11/26. Please check with organizers for any changes.

DECEMBER

Tuesday - 12/5 - Boys & Girls Club of Delray Beach's Cocktails for the Club at The St. Andrews Club, 4475 N. Ocean Blvd. Delray Beach. Kick off the holiday season with a social featuring entertainment, gourmet food stations, signature cocktails and a silent auction to support club activities. 6-9 pm. \$195. 561-676-5472 or bgcpcb.org.
Saturday - 12/9 - Palm Beach County Food Bank's Empty Bowls Delray Beach at Trinity Delray, 400 N. Swinton Ave. Join a national grassroots event that raises money for hunger relief in the community by enjoying a simple meal of soup, bread and water. 11 am-2 pm. \$35. 561-670-2518 or pbcfoodbank.org.
Sunday - 12/10 - Hanley Foundation's Brice Makris Brunch at Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Drive, Boca Raton. Have a day of fun featuring entertainment and live and silent auctions to raise funds that will help save lives from substance abuse. 11 am-2 pm. \$200. 561-268-2346 or hanleyfoundation.org.

JANUARY

Sunday - 1/7 - Boca Ballet Theatre's Stars of American Ballet and "A Starry Night" Gala Dinner at Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton and The Boca Raton, 501 E. Camino Real. Watch today's brightest ballet stars in action and then enjoy an elegant meal to support the troupe. 3 pm. \$400. 561-995-0709, Ext. 225 or bocaballet.org.
Saturday - 1/13 - The Rotary Club of Boca Raton's OPAL Awards at Boca West Country Club, 20583 Boca West Drive, Boca Raton. Celebrate Outstanding People And Leaders with cocktails and dinner. 6:30-11 pm. \$300. 561-477-7180 or rotaryclubbocaraton.com.



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John and Diane Brewer, Empty Bowls Delray Beach event chairs. Photo provided

Pay It Forward

Buy a bowl, savor soup in support of Palm Beach County Food Bank

By Amy Woods

More than 130,000 local households experience food insecurity — not knowing where one’s next meal or meals will be sourced — according to the Palm Beach County Food Bank.

The large nonprofit that distributes 13 million pounds of food to the needy each year serves not only those 130,000-plus but also 70,000 additional

neighbors facing hunger.

“Palm Beach County is one of the richest counties in the nation, and at the same time we have this food disparity,” said John Brewer, event chairman of Empty Bowls Delray Beach, a fundraiser for the food bank. “The main thing is to get more people aware and more people involved and to understand that this is a problem in our backyard.”

If You Go

What: Empty Bowls Delray Beach
When: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 9
Where: Trinity Delray, 400 N. Swinton Ave.
Cost: \$35
Information: 561-670-2518 or pbcfoodbank.org

Set for Dec. 9, Empty Bowls Delray Beach invites attendees to enjoy a wide variety of soups from area restaurants, freshly made breads from Old School Bakery and bottled waters. The theme of the three-hour affair is to “eat simply so others may simply eat.”

“It’s a great day of friendship and fellowship for a good cause,” Brewer said. “If everybody gives a little bit, it really can make an impact.”

In its eighth year, Empty Bowls Delray Beach will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Trinity Delray. Handcrafted bowls will be available for purchase, and music and entertainment will take place as aproned volunteers ladle out the hot stuff for guests.

“It’s such an amazing event and a way to bring the community together,” said Diane Brewer, John Brewer’s wife and event chairwoman.


“Unfortunately, with inflation and everything else that is going on — I even balk at some of the prices at Publix when I go shopping — I can’t imagine what it’s like to feed a house full of kids on a limited income.”

The Palm Beach County Food Bank houses food in a 28,000-square-foot building in Lake Worth Beach. The distributions are made possible by nearly 200 partner agencies. Food pantries, soup kitchens and housing programs work to connect families and the elderly population with products procured from farmers, stores and wholesalers that include culturally appropriate food.

Jamie Kendall, the food bank’s CEO, explains the last bit: “It means serving a variety of neighbors from many different backgrounds and ethnicities and holding space for the cultural practices around the preparation and consumption of the food.”

As Hanukkah and Christmas approach, the issue of food insecurity becomes that much more apparent, Kendall said.

“The holiday season can come with stress for a lot of families,” she said. “It’s up to us and Empty Bowls participants to ensure they have a holiday meal to put on the table and that they are nourished going into the new year.” ★



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Philanthropy Notes

Holiday card sales support The Arc of Palm Beach County artists

The Arc of Palm Beach County is offering a creative collection of handmade holiday greeting cards crafted by its talented clients.

Proceeds from sales of the cards support their makers through an earned commission with every purchase.

“The Arc is spreading holiday cheer through personalized art that also gives back to our gifted clients,” CEO Pamela Payne said. “Our artisan program brings people with disabilities together to create unique artwork throughout the year, including mosaics, acrylic paintings and mixed-media pieces.”

The Artisan Program this year features Margie-Lee Rodriguez, a Special Olympics gold medalist. Margie-Lee designed her Holiday Joy collection in her signature folk art style of painting, including vibrant motifs and custom stencil designs.

To buy cards, visit The Arc Shop at arcpbc.org/artisans. For more information, call 561-842-3213.

Arts Garage, Impact 100 get drums to student band

In 2014, Impact 100 Palm Beach County awarded a \$100,000 grant to Arts Garage in part to develop a dynamic youth drumline.

For six years, the audience-rousing percussionists went through multiple iterations at the Delray Beach theater prior to the coronavirus shutdown.

Now, Arts Garage is partnering with the philanthropic group to get some more noise out of the dormant program.

“After locating the drums this past summer, I contacted JoAnne Greiser, grants

management adviser at Impact 100 Palm Beach County, to which ownership of the drums had reverted, to discuss what to do with the valuable instruments,” said Marjorie Waldo, Arts Garage’s president and CEO.

“After they were inspected ... we collectively decided to donate the 18 drums and uniforms to the Boynton Beach High School Band.”

Waldo added, “Receiving the original \$100,000 grant from Impact 100 Palm Beach County was a real blessing, and we are very pleased that together we can keep the generous drumbeat going strong in the years to come.”

For information about Arts Garage, call 561-450-6357 or visit artsgarage.org. For information about Impact 100, call 561-336-4623 or visit impact100pbc.org.

Boca Helping Hands appoints board member

Dr. Sarah Lochner, a nearly decade-long volunteer at Boca Helping Hands, has joined



Lochner

its board of directors.

Lochner has worked closely with the agency’s job training department, identifying

companies that align with its mission for potential partnerships. She also has scouted employers that can offer job placement for clients and prepare them to meet industry requirements.

“We are delighted to have Dr. Lochner join the board of directors,” said Greg Hazle, Boca Helping Hands executive director. “She has been such an outstanding volunteer with

our organization for years and has made such a difference for our clients. Her knowledge and talent will be an asset to the board.”

For more information, call 561-417-0913 or visit bocahelpinghands.org.



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



Special Olympian Margie-Lee Rodriguez created a collection of Holiday Joy cards. Photo provided

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Celebrations

Welcome reception

Kravis Center, West Palm Beach — Nov. 1



The performing arts center organized a welcome-back party for its board members, life trustees and committee volunteers to kick off the 2023-24 season. More than 100 gathered in Dreyfoos Hall for cocktails and passed hors d'oeuvres. CEO Diane Quinn welcomed guests and acknowledged reception sponsors Mitchell Rubenstein and Laurie Silvers. 'Tonight, it is my honor and privilege to thank each of you for your commitment to the center,' Quinn says. 'Through your time, talents and your treasures, we are able to welcome more than 300,000 audience members through our doors. You make this possible.' **ABOVE:** (l-r) Jim Coleman with Katherine and Gary Parr. **Photo provided by Capehart**

Hometown Hero

Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton — Oct. 21



The Boca Raton Airport Authority has partnered with FAU to honor the brave men and women who serve the country and the community through the Hometown Heroes initiative. One such man is Florida Highway Patrol Sgt. J.R. Wigfall, who was recognized on the football field during homecoming. 'As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Boca Raton Airport, we take great pride in honoring Sgt. Wigfall as a Hometown Hero,' says Clara Bennett, executive director of the BRAA. 'We thank him for his hard work and the sacrifices he has made to help our community soar.' **ABOVE:** (l-r) BRAA Vice Chairman Randy Nobles, board member James Nau, Bennett, Chairman Robert Tucker, FHP Lt. Indiana Miranda, Wigfall and BRAA officials Scott Kohut, Robert Abbott, Florence Straugh, Hannah Oakland and Melvin Pollack. **Photo provided**

Lois' Vision4Kids

Palm Beach County Food Bank, Lake Worth Beach — Oct. 28



A new initiative launched by Lois Pope in conjunction with the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute provides free vision screenings and eyeglasses for children ages 2 and older from schools and youth organizations in Palm Beach County. 'My mother suffered terribly for years from macular degeneration,' Pope says. 'I saw firsthand how vision impairment affected her physical and emotional well-being. Can you imagine what it does to a child? ... They may feel stupid because they can't see and read. No child should ever have any barrier to learning.' **ABOVE:** Pope with Bascom Director Dr. Eduardo Alfonso. **Photo provided by Capehart**

Woman Volunteer of the Year Luncheon

The Boca Raton — Nov. 10



The Junior League of Boca Raton honored Lee Williams, of 211 Palm Beach and Treasure Coast, as the 2023 Woman Volunteer of the Year. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Betsy Owen, of the Rotary Club of Delray Beach. 'Lee Williams and Betsy Owen are an inspiration to our community,' says Meghan Shea, league president. 'We are so grateful to the support of our community in recognizing women volunteers.' **ABOVE:** (l-r) Mark Larkin, Shea, Williams, Owen, event Chairwoman Nancy Dockerty and Mayor Scott Singer. **Photo provided**

Boca Raton Mayors Ball

Boca West Country Club — Nov. 11



The celebration of city visionaries and black-tie dinner dance honored the Boca Raton Airport Authority with the 2023 George Long Award. 'We are immensely proud to have been honored at this year's Boca Raton Mayors Ball,' BRAA Executive Director Clara Bennett says. 'We have been fortunate to be part of the community for the past 75 years and look forward to soaring to new heights in the future.' The Faulk Center for Counseling and philanthropist Marta Batmasian also were honored. **ABOVE:** (l-r) Bennett with Batmasian and the Faulk Center's Gwensia Collins and Jonathan Price. **Photo provided**

Charity bicycle ride

State Road A1A, Delray Beach — Oct. 28



The Witches of Delray's Halloween event raised \$33,000 for the Achievement Centers for Children & Families. Taking flight on a new seaside route, the 12th annual spectacle unfolded on A1A and was highlighted by an awards presentation for the best costume (Brandy Lee), the best witch cackle (Luba Fry), the best decorated broom (Dr. Francesca Lewis) and the best group theme (Living the Dream Witches). More than 400 witches participated. **ABOVE:** (l-r) Dr. Diana Carrau, Lewis and Marisa Randazzo. **Photo provided**

Celebrations

Florida Gala

The Ray Hotel, Delray Beach — Nov. 9



The Jed Foundation's fourth annual affair raised \$200,000 to benefit mental health and suicide prevention programs for area students. Nearly 200 guests attended the special event, including celebrities, educators and mental health advocates such as former Miami Dolphins player Rob Konrad, who served as emcee. The foundation honored youth ambassador Adison Schwartz and insurance brokerage and benefits consultant NFP Corp. with leadership awards. **ABOVE:** NFP Chairman and CEO Doug Hammond and Konrad. **INSET:** Dr. Elvis Grandic with Florida Gala Chairwoman Alissa Sklaver Rabin. **Photos provided**



Securing Our Future Soiree

Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club, Boca Raton — Oct. 26



The Boys & Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County's fifth annual fundraiser had a record-breaking year, bringing in more than \$374,000 to help the nonprofit's hunger relief initiatives at its Boca Raton location. 'It was an incredible night of giving and support from so many within our community who truly care about the Boys & Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County,' Chairwoman Michelle Hagerty says. 'The attendees were moved by the emotional stories from the Boys & Girls Clubs alumni, and it showed with the record-breaking donations we received.'



ABOVE: Michelle and Michael Hagerty. **INSET:** Matt Liebman and Michael Passeroff. **Photos provided by Colby Kessler**

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Dining

Cooking classes, food tours make good holiday gifts

Choosing that great gift can be a conundrum. For a food lover, it might be easier if you consider a few experiences.

Try a cooking class that benefits a top hunger-relief organization in South Florida. **Feeding South Florida** is offering cooking classes at its warehouse kitchen in Boynton Beach.

Choose from two classes stretching into next year: Beef (Beet) Wellington class, where students learn to prepare a cranberry feta dip with pistachios as an appetizer, then a beef Wellington (or the beet version for vegetarians) as an entree for a holiday meal; or the Homemade Pasta class, where participants make pasta dough, then roll and cut it by hand into fettuccini noodles. It will be paired with a pistachio pesto sauce.

The instructor is Susan Taves, director of culinary services for Feeding South Florida.

The Beef Wellington class is 6:30-7:30 p.m. Dec. 12. The Homemade Pasta class is 6:30-7:30 p.m. Jan. 17.

Participants must be at least 18 years old, and cost for each class is \$60. A portion of the money supports FSF's programs to end hunger in South Florida.

Classes are at the Feeding South Florida Community Kitchen, Palm Beach County Warehouse, 4925 Park Ridge Blvd., Boynton Beach. To sign up, go to feedingsouthflorida.org/events/

Sur La Table offers cooking classes in its Mizner Park store for adults and kids. The cooking equipment retailer has group lessons throughout the year.

Upcoming for the holidays are classes on Holiday Paella (Dec. 5); Family Fun: Baking Together (Dec. 7); Build and Take: Bouche de Noel (Dec. 10), and Holiday Entertaining: Hors



ABOVE: House-made chicken gyoza, Nanban chicken and spicy cauliflower highlight the menu at Ramen Lab during one variation of the Craft Food Tours in Delray Beach.

LEFT: Anthony Guzman and Matt Guidice, the company's co-founders. **Photos provided**

D'Oeuvres (Dec. 19).

A gift-and-class idea? Buy a chef's knife from the store, and take a class in knife skills (Dec. 9). Date night classes for couples include An Evening in Thailand (Dec. 7).

For a full schedule and prices, click on the calendar of classes for Boca Raton at surlatable.com/in-store-cooking-classes/ or call 561-953-7638.

Eat, walk, learn

Maybe there's a newcomer to South Florida on your list. Consider giving a food/history tour.

Through **Craft Food Tours**, you have choice of a food and drinks tour or a dinner and drinks tour. Discover some

off-the-beaten-path eateries on the lunchtime three-hour walk around Delray Beach's Pineapple Grove area, about a mile in all.

It kicks off at El Camino restaurant, and the group visits places offering Mexican, Asian and other street foods. Any age is welcome. A history of the "Village by the Sea" that's become the "Most Fun Small Town in America" is given in the walk-along lecture.

The Night Out in Delray Dinner and Drinks tour provides samples of eight foods and four craft beverages, with demos along the way. It's approximately a 1-mile stroll along Atlantic Avenue, rain or shine. Your meet-up restaurant is given on the ticket.

Tours are unique, with restaurant visits rotating based on availability. Dietary restrictions or allergies can usually be accommodated; post them on the registration form. Groups are limited to 14 people, ages 13 and older, though private tours and corporate events are available.

Cost is \$99 per person, and gift cards never expire.

For more information, go to craftfoodtours.com and click on the tours drop-down.

Eat, drink and be merry

If a food gift is on your list, several specialty shops have unique items for the holidays.

Palm Beach Bakery & Café in Lantana bakes up Finnish and Scandinavian traditional foods for the holidays. One of our favorites is the cardamom, raisin and almond loaf.

But other traditional foods are available, popular among Scandinavian friends, including rye breads, Danish pastries and

But create your own flavors. The store will take on custom orders if it can make them.

As with all bakeries and specialty shops at the holidays, order well in advance.

Two Fat Cookies is at 32 SE Second Ave., Delray Beach. 561-265-5350 or twofatcookies.com.

Stone crab claws are that perfect Florida seafood at the holidays.

Captain Clay and Sons Seafood Market gets fresh loads from the Keys in season.

Look also for Atlantic seafood such as triggerfish and others you don't find at many seafood counters, along with Florida lobsters, snappers and the sweet lionfish.

Captain Clay and Sons is at 1319 N. Federal Highway, Delray Beach. 561-266-2068 or captainclayseafood.com

Need caviar, or maybe all the seven fishes for your Italian seven-fish dinner?

Hit up **Capt. Frank's Seafood Market**, where scallops, shrimp, mussels, clams, octopus, fish fillets and all things seafood can be found. (Order ahead!)

King crab legs and stone crab claws are ready to eat; just fix a sauce and you have a ready-made appetizer for a pot luck. Sushi is made fresh daily, making it great for a casual party take-along.

Also available for gifting: wines, including champagnes, and prepared food items including Stonewall Kitchen's famous jams and dips.

Capt. Frank's Seafood Market is at 435 W. Boynton Beach Blvd., Boynton Beach. 561-732-3663.

Hot buttered rum and traditional punches such as the Tom and Jerry are trending this year.

Ingredients for your drinks and some mixology advice are available at the **Wine Room Kitchen and Bar**, where you can taste any number of wines before buying full bottles. The servers are knowledgeable, and the chef knows pairings as well.

You also can put together a charcuterie board from the selections of cheeses and meats, or buy one already made for takeout.

The Wine Room Kitchen and Bar is at 411 E. Atlantic Ave., Delray Beach. 561-243-9463 or thewineroomonline.com/delray-beach.

And for people who can't decide, or the procrastinators, call your favorite restaurant or market and order a gift certificate. Make it generous enough to cover two meals — nobody likes to dine alone.



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



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HOLIDAY

Continued from page AT1

Canal in Delray Beach (south of Linton Boulevard).

The parade partners with the Marine Industries Association and Sea Tow to collect new, unwrapped toys for Toys for Tots. Boats traveling with the parade will stop at individual docks along the route to collect toys. Just wave a flashlight and a boat will come directly to you for pickup.

Visit www.boyntonbeachcra.com/business-promotions-events/business-promotional-events/holiday-boat-parade for more details.

Boca Raton's annual Holiday Boat Parade lights up the Intracoastal Waterway beginning at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 16 at the C-15 Canal, traveling south to the Hillsboro Boulevard bridge. Visit www.myboca.us/1464/Holiday-Boat-Parade

Christmas trees

The holidays wouldn't be complete without a visit to one of the magnificent municipal Christmas trees in our neck of the woods. Among the most stunning is the 100-foot sparkler at Old School Square in Delray Beach. This year marks the tree's 30th anniversary.

While you're there, stick around to enjoy musical performances, culinary creations, crafts and holiday village with carousel, ice skating and mini golf. Hours, which continue through the end of the year, vary. See www.delraybeachfl.gov/our-city/things-to-do/100-ft-christmas-tree for details.

In Boca Raton, the Christmas tree is in Mizner Park, which has been transformed into a holiday wonderland with 50,000 LED lights decorating 75 palm trees throughout the park. Visit www.myboca.us/1466/Holiday-Tree-Lighting for details.

Boynton Beach's trees can be found at Centennial Park and Amphitheater. Two banyan trees on East Ocean Avenue have trunks and branches wrapped with 25,000 LED mini lights, and a kapok tree on East Ocean and Seacrest Boulevard has its trunks and branches wrapped with 20,000 LED lights.

A 30-foot custom lighted holiday tree can be seen at Centennial Park just east of City Hall. Gracing each side of the holiday tree are a menorah and a kinara display. See www.boynton-beach.org/Calendar.aspx?EID=636

Living Nativity

A favorite holiday event at St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Boynton Beach, the Living Nativity uses costumed actors to bring the story of the birth of Jesus to life. In this case the actors are children, who couldn't be more earnest and adorable. Considering the pandemic, the program was held outdoors in past years, but



Community events scheduled this month for people ready to embrace the holiday season include (clockwise): menorah lighting at Old School Square in Delray Beach; posing for photos with Santa at Town Center in Boca Raton; the 100-foot-tall Christmas tree in Delray Beach; and the children's Living Nativity scene, here from 2018, at St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Boynton Beach. **Photos provided**



it's back in the church again.

Called the Spontaneous Christmas Pageant, the show starts at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24. "Cast members are chosen, dressed and placed in position for our Christmas tableau as we tell the Nativity story, with periodic breaks for Christmas carols and dressing the characters in costume," says the Rev. Marty Zlatic, whose wife, Dee Zlatic, is the children's minister coordinating the event.

"We also have the 6:30 p.m. contemporary service on Christmas Eve with our Live Hymnal Band," he says. "Then our choir and organ, supplemented with brass instruments and timpani, provides a mini concert at 9:30 p.m. followed by our midnight-like service at 10 p.m."

All three of these services include the lighting of candles and singing of *Silent Night*.

On Christmas Day, the church has a service with congregational carol singing beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Visit www.stjoesweb.org

Tuba carols

Let's hear it for tuba players, those big brass stars who gather throughout the world each year to oompah-pah their way through Christmas carols via the organization Tuba Christmas. The musicians, some of whom perform Dec. 3 in Mizner Park, make no apologies for tooting loudly. Many wrap their instruments in tinsel and battery-powered Christmas lights.

The Mizner Park players are volunteers brought together

by Marc Decker, director of athletic bands at Florida Atlantic University. "It's always quite fun," Decker says.

Bring chairs and blankets and be prepared to sing along. Concert begins at 5 p.m. at Mizner Park Amphitheater in Boca Raton. Free. www.fau.edu/artsandletters/music/events/tubachristmas/

Street parades

Old-fashioned street parades remain part of local holiday traditions. In these cases, Santa rides on a float instead of a boat.

Boynton Beach's parade takes place 4-6 p.m. Dec. 2. Attendees will see a spectacular parade with eye-catching entertainment, award-winning marching bands, local schools and community organizations.

The route extends from downtown on Federal Highway between Boynton Beach Boulevard and Woolbright Road.

Visit www.boynton-beach.org/Calendar.aspxEID=1164&month=12&year=2023&day=2&calType=0 for details.

Boca Raton's parade, with floats, bands and community groups, will be 7-9 p.m. Dec. 6 starting on Federal Highway at Southeast Fifth Street and traveling north to the Mizner Park Amphitheater. Visit www.myboca.us/1465/Holiday-Street-Parade

Menorah lighting

To mark Hanukkah, the Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and subsequent rededication of the Second Temple at the beginning of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century, Delray Beach is hosting a festival and menorah lighting 5-7 p.m. Dec. 7 at Old School Square. The free festival will feature live music, game trucks, holiday snacks and crafts. For information on other Hanukkah events, see Religion on page AT21.

Photos with Santa

In years past, going to the mall to have your children's pictures taken with Santa was something everyone did. But malls aren't what they used to be — and there aren't as many malls. Town Center in Boca Raton touts a "Santa Experience." You can still go see Santa for free, but the mall is promoting reservations that (for a fee) allow families more time (15 minutes) with Jolly Ol' St. Nick, a professional photo, story time and a personal phone call from Santa. Arrangements can be made to have Santa photographed with pets, too.

Visit www.whereissanta.com/mall/0376

Handel's Messiah

Let's hear a "Hallelujah" for the Masterworks Chorus of the Palm Beaches, an all-volunteer 60-voice chorus bringing Handel's Messiah to the Royal Poinciana Chapel at 7 p.m. Dec. 10. The three-hour performance has become a yuletide staple and definitely warrants a drive to Palm Beach. General admission is \$35.

Visit www.masterworkspb.org/calendar-tickets

'A Christmas Carol'

If you're lucky enough to score tickets, you can see actor Timur Kocak playing every role in *A Christmas Carol*, a one-man version of Charles Dickens' holiday classic, at the Delray Beach Playhouse. Tickets to the show, which begins at 12:30 p.m. Dec. 15, are \$49 and include lunch. Visit <https://delraybeachplayhouse.com/shows-by-month/>

For a more complete list of holiday events, see page AT30.

The Arts Paper

Wearable Art

Crucial links

Jewelry designer Maeda's culturally relevant pieces featured in Morikami show



Pieces by Asagi Maeda on display at the Morikami Museum include the necklace *Red Carpet*, made from silver and gold; and the bracelet *We Meet by the Law of the Universe*, crafted from silver, gold and enamel, with the story depicted in enamel and engraved on the back of each link. **Photos provided**

By Jan Engoren
Contributing Writer

"7.7 billion stories are happening on this planet right now at the same time. These are concurrent and endless stories. ... You may be happy, sad, full of joy or crying in regret. You may be relaxed, nervous, living an ordinary or unordinary life. Everybody lives this moment of life on this planet, Earth, continuously going around the sun."

— Asagi Maeda

With miniature figures set inside silver or gold geometric designs, Japanese jewelry artist Asagi Maeda creates one-of-a-kind pieces that tell a story. Working in precious metal embellished with pearls and gemstones that she polishes herself, Maeda creates mini-sculptures reflecting slices of life that double as wearable art.



Space Flight (The Sequel to a Dream), a ring made from sterling silver, opal, 18k gold and acrylic.

Over 40 of Maeda's creations are on view at the Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens. The exhibit, *Stories on the Planet*, opened Nov. 4 and runs through April 7 in conjunction with the Mabilia Gallery in Cambridge, Mass. In addition, the museum store will feature wearable jewelry, starting at \$60, by Maeda and works by Akiko Maeda, the artist's mother and mentor.

"It's been a longtime dream to have

a solo exhibition at a museum," Maeda writes. "So, I am really happy and thankful from the bottom of my heart to Mabilia Gallery and The Morikami Museum."

Stories on the Planet, her signature design, is a wearable piece of art portraying 32 cities in 28 countries, constructed with eight removable brooches combined into one necklace. Using wood, plexiglas, resin, enamel, silver, gold, and semi-precious or precious stones, she engraves and paints her works conveying narratives about daily life, family and society.

Maeda's family worked in the pearl industry: Her grandfather made cultured pearls and her mother, also an artist, strung the pearls and crafted them into jewelry for sale.

At Tokyo Zokei University, Maeda studied sculpture and worked with marble and granite. After she

See **JEWELRY** on AT12

Theater

FAU Theatre Lab to reveal 'Berlin Diaries' to world

By Hap Erstein
ArtsPaper Theater Writer

As she began to write what became *The Berlin Diaries*, Andrea Stolowitz knew two things. One, the play would be based on the journals of her great-grandfather Max, who escaped Germany in 1939 and came to New York. And two, it would need to be told in an unconventional format to prevent it from seeming like just another Holocaust play.

Developed in part by Florida Atlantic University Theatre Lab, *The Berlin Diaries* will open there Nov. 25, in a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere. It will be presented here first, followed by independent productions at Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis and CenterStage in Rochester, N.Y.

In effect, Stolowitz has written a detective story, in which she travels to Germany to research the history of ancestors previously unknown to her and brings it into the light. As she says of a character based on herself, "Andrea is on a detective search to unearth the past, really so she can live peacefully in the present."

The play's 14 characters are played here by Avi Hoffman and Niki Fridh, each taking on all 14, often switching roles one line at a time.

"I remember early on talking to her about it. She knew she wanted to play with form, so that's kind of where it began," says Theatre Lab artistic director Matt Stabile, who is staging the production.

"And she also had a sense that the character of Andrea has a schism at the beginning of the play, that gets healed by the end of the play. So she had the idea of splitting that character and

See **BERLIN** on AT15



Stolowitz

Music

Veteran area drummer soldiers on, despite collapse from leukemia

By Bill Meredith
ArtsPaper Music Writer

For every veteran musician, there are shows etched into memory over the course of a career. They're usually high-water marks: a gig at a lauded festival, a reunion, an opening slot for a national to international touring act, and/or a night when everyone on stage performed with uncommon synchronicity.

And then there's the other kind of memory, one West Palm Beach-based drummer/vocalist Charley Lugo (Electric Rubber Band, the

Feeder Band, Rumour Hazit) would forget if only he could. The date was Sept. 1; the setting the Blue Pointe Bar & Grill in Jupiter, where the Feeder Band was playing a reunion show that would also prove dubiously memorable for how it ended.

"They'd just finished one of their last songs," said Lugo's wife, Lorie Kelley Lugo. "It was 'Get Ready' [the Smokey Robinson composition that became a hit for both the Temptations and Rare Earth], and they were about to take a group photo when Charley just passed out, fell, and hit the ground. He was

unconscious and unresponsive. We thought it might be heat exhaustion, then maybe tonsillitis, but his swollen glands eventually proved to be the result of acute myeloid leukemia."

She was speaking by phone from her husband's room at JFK Hospital in Atlantis, where Lugo had just finished his second round of chemotherapy last month.


"I feel pretty good, considering," Lugo said. "I could've died onstage when everything went black, but woke up to paramedics. The first

See **LUGO** on AT14



Drummer Charley Lugo recuperates in his hospital bed. **Photo provided**

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JEWELRY

Continued from page 11

graduated in 2000, she traveled to New York to study gemology at the Gemological Institute of America and enrolled at the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she honed her jewelry-making skills and learned most of the techniques she uses today.

“Maeda has a unique, artistic voice,” says Carla Stansifer, Morikami’s curator of Japanese art. “She’s adept at weaving a narrative into her work and drawing out everyday moments and making them seem precious.”

One of Stansifer’s favorite Maeda creations is a sterling silver, 18-karat gold and turquoise ring titled *Poolside*



Maeda

“I loved writing stories since I was a child,” she writes on her Instagram page. “During elementary school, I drew picture books. In university, while creating sculptures, I exhibited poetry alongside them. So, the idea of incorporating stories into jewelry naturally emerged within me. Stories are an integral and inseparable part of my work and creative process.”

One of her favorite pieces is one she calls *Many Thanks Much Love*, created after her father’s death two years ago.

During her grieving, she reflected on childhood memories with her father and created miniature scenarios displayed in open-woven metal flowers, which she connected into a necklace-like lei.

“I cried as I created each memory, but through the process, I began to heal and was able to focus more on the (good) time in my father’s life rather than on his painful final days,” she says in an email from Japan. “This work is special to me as it encapsulates the experience of transforming sadness into love and gratitude.”

Living in Tokyo, Maeda is fascinated by urban life, the hustle and bustle of the city, the lives of the commuting Japanese salarymen and the fleetingness of it all. She recalls a large

Ring, depicting stick figures poised to dive into the turquoise pool. Maeda came to her love of storytelling as a young girl.



Stories on the Planet, the signature piece, depicts 32 cities in 28 countries, with eight removable brooches combined into one necklace. **Photo provided**

earthquake in Japan on March 11, 2011, that taught her that the daily life we take for granted is actually extremely fragile and can easily fall apart.

She’s grateful for each day, having a bed to sleep in, food on the table and friends and family with whom to laugh. “I hope that the simple things in life help us realize that we all have something in common and that the world will become more peaceful,” she says.

She loves to create imaginary worlds within her jewelry — from the residents in an apartment building or crowded subway, to the bottom of the ocean, or images from a daydream. Maeda peeks into the inner world of anonymous people and brings them to life.

In *Day of a Train*, a large-scale necklace made with sterling silver, 18K yellow gold, acrylic and glass, Maeda depicts each subway car on the Shinkansen, the Japanese bullet train traveling from Osaka to Kyoto and Tokyo, with slices of life unfolding inside each one — vignettes of mother and child, lovers, school kids, etc.

She finds inspiration when she discovers the right stage for each piece. Once she chooses a stage — be it a train, a movie theater, or a tree-lined avenue — what remains, she says, is to

If You Go

Stories on the Planet runs through April 7 at the Morikami Museum, 4000 Morikami Park Road in Delray Beach. **Hours:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday **Tickets:** \$16; \$14 seniors; \$12 students **Info:** 561-495-0233 or morikami.org

contemplate the kind of story to unfold upon that stage.

For the exhibit, Maeda created five videos detailing how each piece came to be.

She also custom designs what she calls “nonfiction jewelry,” based on people’s real life-stories, using a client’s personal narrative. For one client, it was about folding laundry.

She created a pendant depicting family members’ clothing items, using amazonite to represent soap bubbles. She framed the pendant in a custom case, taking a moment in time and locking it forever inside the piece of fine jewelry.


Most satisfying for Maeda are the reactions from clients and others when they view her work.

“My goal is to create true jewelry that can penetrate and brighten the eyes of those who see it,” Maeda says on her website. “I would like to deliver my heart to your heart.”

“It would be great if every day had a little sparkling,” she says.

“I create my jewelry with this in mind.”

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Dance Review

New dancers help reinvigorate Miami City Ballet in its 'Fall Mix'

By **Tara Mitton Catao**
ArtsPaper Dance Writer

I caught the *Fall Mix* performances by Miami City Ballet at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts on Nov. 5, and it was a satisfying starter for the 2023-24 season.

A host of new faces were dancing new roles, and it was exciting to see talented young dancers given the opportunity to move up in the ranks of the company. These changes bring a freshness to both the established repertory and the new works being performed.

At the Nov. 5 performance, the dancers looked invigorated, moving with confidence and finesse through the range of dance styles required to perform George Balanchine's classic *Serenade*, Twyla Tharp's explosive *In the Upper Room* and the torso-undulating modern movement of Jamar Roberts' *Sea Change*.

Artistic Director Lourdes Lopez continues the tradition of honoring Balanchine's legacy. The company's 38th season marks not only the 75th anniversary of New York City Ballet (which Balanchine cofounded in 1948), but also the 40th anniversary of his death — and what more appropriate way to usher in the season than to open the first of its four programs with Balanchine's most iconic work, *Serenade*?

Choreographed in 1934, this timeless ballet opens with 17 women, dressed simply in long, pale blue tulle, spread across the stage motionless with one arm raised — a sight etched in the memory of everyone who has seen this work.

It is every ballerina's dream to dance in it. In this performance, Ashley Knox, Taylor Naturkas and Petra Love danced the lead female roles, leading the corps through Tchaikovsky's expressive and melodic *Serenade for Strings* (in C, Op. 48), which was beautifully played by the MCB Orchestra/Opus One Orchestra under the baton of MCB's music director Gary Sheldon.

Naturkas is an articulate, quick-footed dancer with a lovely clarity of line and she radiated an elegant ease in her role, especially in her beautiful airborne grand jetés.

In her role debut, Love looked especially confident and glowing in *Elegy* as she piqued into her lovely arabesque for the difficult partnering where she is rotated from her ankle by her partner who is hidden on the floor behind her. For a moment, she is the epitome of a ballerina turning on top of a music box.

Another iconic dance on the program — but in genre of "crossover" ballets — was *In the Upper Room*, the ultra-high-stamina work by Twyla Tharp choreographed in 1986. In this 39-minute work with its driving score by Philip Glass, the dancers are introduced as

two different "teams" — the stompers and the bomb squad (originally called the bunheads). Footwear and movement style distinguished the two groups. Wearing white sneakers, the stompers were free and loose movers while the bomb squad, wearing pointe and ballet shoes, used ballet vocabulary as their movement idiom.

MCB dancers met the challenge of the choreography even though some looked as if they were not enjoying it as much as others were. Standouts in this performance were Nathalia Arja and Alaina Andersen, the two stompers who bookended each other as they set the dance in motion. Adding their own distinct spice to the mix was the bomb squad duo, Knox and Naturkas, who were dazzling in their side-by-side, minutely synchronized, rapid-fire crossings.

The music, like the



Hannah Fischer and Steven Loch in MCB's *Sea Change*, choreographed by Jamar Roberts. Photo by Alexander Iziliaev

choreography, notched up, gear by gear, during the nine sections of the work like a well-oiled machine to the finale, where all 13 dancers were onstage together for the first time in full rev, now with bare arms and legs exposed, skin glistening in the sidelights.

Offered in between these two ballets was the world premiere of *Sea Change*, a contemporary work by Bessie Award-winning artist Jamar Roberts, which was set to *Phrygian Gates* (1977), by the post-minimalist

composer John Adams. The challenging piano score was performed by guest pianist Ciro Foderé, who is known for his versatile and fiery playing.

Roberts, who is Miami-born and raised, is the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre's resident choreographer.

The curtain opened on a projection of the sea's surface. The ensemble of 12 dancers, silhouetted in front of the screen, mimicked the undulating movement of waves: torsos curving, arms rippling

as dancers pooled together and dispersed as if caught in an irregular current. Focus turned to the tall and sinewy Hannah Fischer, who danced her solo under a single downward ray of light. Alexander Kaden was a fury of energy and Arja was a delight of dynamics in her solo.

Another highlight was Francisco Schilireff's dancing, followed by a strong solo by Steven Loch. Then, Fischer joined Loch and together in partnership they created small unexpected moments in their continuous flow of movement.

Though the connections between the dancers could have been more fulfilled and authentic, it was rewarding to see the quiet intensity that the dancers showed as they worked to get Roberts' torso-centered movement just right.

MCB will present Program Two (*Winter Mix*) at the Kravis Center on Feb. 3-4.

CULTURE TALKS

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This season, each talk pairs a leader from a Palm Beach County cultural organization with a journalist from *The ArtsPaper* to discuss cultural trends, the upcoming season, arts activism, and more.

January 13, 2024
Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach's **Ahmad Mayes** talks with **Greg Stepanich**

January 20, 2024
The Wick Theatre & Costume Museum's **Marilynn Wick** talks with **Hap Erstein**

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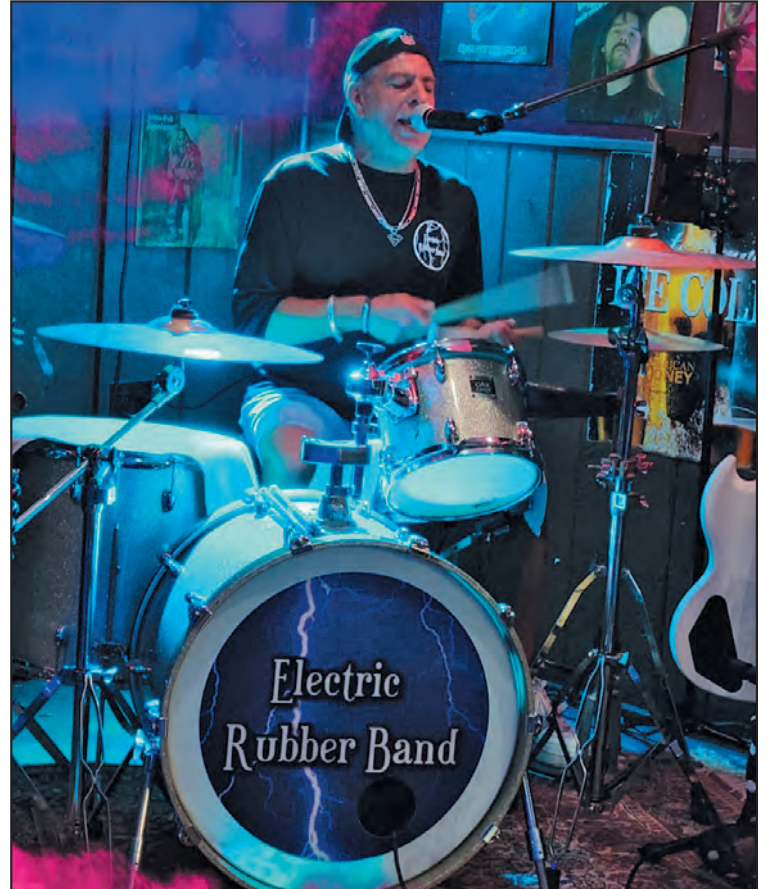
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Drummer Charley Lugo performs with the Electric Rubber Band. Photo provided

LUGO

Continued from page 11

chemo round was for seven days and 24 hours straight, and it was pretty bad. I woke up one night, couldn't breathe, and there were about six doctors standing over me, so it was touch-and-go.

"Thankfully, they let me go home for a few days after round one, which energized me. The second round was also 24-hour but for five days, and better, although I have some new issues. They've had to constantly poke me with IVs, and I have blood clots in my arms."

"They're checking for blood clots in his legs just to be on the safe side," Lorie Lugo added. "He got pneumonia during the first round and blood clots during the second. And we found out from the oncologist that round two did not get rid of the leukemia."

At the oncologist's suggestion, the Lugos set up an appointment in late November with the University of Miami's Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, which has more targeted and specialized treatment options.

Prior to his collapse, Lugo had become one of the hardest-working men in area show business. With his wife handling public relations, the 2-year-old Electric Rubber Band trio had become a frequent booking through Palm Beach and Martin counties. Vocalist/guitarist Tommy Hernandez and bassist/vocalist Galen Rowe have since performed several shows with Angels of War drummer Kevin Fruge filling in, but some bookings became casualties.

"I already have the ERB booked for the first half of next year," Lorie said, "so we're anticipating Charley's return, although his arms are very weak and he'll have to get back into playing shape. But about 20 of the previously booked shows had to be canceled."

At this point, Lugo can only look toward an inexact return

sometime in 2024, despite the progress he's made in his cell counts.

"His first test came back with a really high percentage of blast cells, so he was really sick," Lorie Lugo said. "After the first round of chemo, he was down to 1 percent."

"But if they release him, they know that the 1 percent will multiply. He has to get down to 0 percent to be considered in remission."

The couple is retired from their day jobs, which allows Lorie to spend ample time with her husband as he recovers. She's also avoiding crowds as a precaution. But the Lugos don't have health insurance — a fact that makes this climb even more steep.

In late November, the Blue Pointe Bar & Grill hosted a benefit featuring the Kevin Kelly Trio, Tulucci & Friends, the Raub & Suma Duo, the Mighty Quinn, the Big Dog Band, the Feeder Band, and the Electric Rubber Band, with guest drummers Fruge, John Tulucci and Rob Stevenson.

The venue donated 10% of its earnings during the event, and raffles and auctioned merchandise brought additional revenue toward the cause. A second benefit in January is being discussed with Johnny Q's in Palm Springs. But a GoFundMe page had already been set in preparation for what's certain to be massive hospital bills.

"We won't even get our bills until we leave," Lorie Lugo said, "so we have no idea what the amount will be."

"But I'm so blessed," the drummer said. "Lorie has been such a trouper, and there are so many people out there who have been so supportive. I'm very surprised and thankful for that. It's very touching."

"I feel like I'm ready for anything that might happen, but that all helps to create the positive energy I need now."

To donate to Lugo's GoFundMe page, visit <https://gofund.me/d9e32a06>.

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BERLIN

Continued from page 11

that's where I think it began for her."

Stolowitz felt certain that her narrative had to be in "a form that no one's ever seen before. If it were done in some conventional form, people would immediately say, 'I know that story. I've seen that story. That's not that interesting to me.' That's what I would say, what I would feel."

"I think the form keeps people just off-balance," says Stabile. "It's impossible to get ahead of the story. And I think that's a good thing. When people get ahead of the story, they tend to lean back and they're not as engaged."

Hoffman likens Stolowitz's script to three-dimensional chess. "When I read the script for the first time, I read the first two or three pages and I went, 'I have no idea what's happening. Let me start from the beginning again, with the understanding now of how this needs to work.' Once I did that, I was so enchanted by how she had chosen to tell the story. It's so exciting, so visceral."

Himself the offspring of Holocaust survivors, Hoffman identifies strongly with the play. "For me, in many ways, this is my own personal story. There is so much in this play that is my world. My family, my realization, my discovery," he says. "It brings back the horror for me, but it also brings back the hope for me."

Fridh, who was first involved with *The Berlin Diaries* when it had a staged reading in 2018 in Theatre Lab's Playwrights Forum, feels that any audience confusion over the form is only momentary.

"Any confusion disappears, I think, once you do that first scene which sets up that we are Niki and Avi, two actors who are going to tell you this story and we'll be playing various characters," she says.

It was apparent to Stolowitz early on that she would have to be a character in the play. "I kind of suspected that would be the case from the beginning. Regrettably. Because I hate plays where the author is a character," the playwright says. "And I hate autobiographical plays. So many reasons why I would never write a play like this. But the more I resisted it, the more I saw it was inevitable."

The play's experimental form is certainly a departure for Stolowitz, but in other ways she sees the play as linked to her previous scripts. "A lot of my work uses real-life events and actual interviews and narratives," she notes. "I'm very fascinated by the real, and less interested in the fictitious. Not because I don't like a good story, but I think the real world has some very fascinating elements to it. There's a sense of authority that I want to bring into the room by letting the audience know that some aspect of this isn't just made up from my own mind, but based on real people and what they say."

If You Go

The Berlin Diaries plays through Dec. 10 at Theatre Lab on the FAU campus, 777 Glades Road in Boca Raton. **Tickets:** \$35-\$45 **Info:** 561-297-6124

Despite the play's grounding in the Holocaust, *The Berlin Diaries* has a lot of humor. "Yes, I'm a very funny person," Stolowitz concedes. "You have to make them laugh before they cry. I've stolen that completely from Chekhov."

Summing the play up, Stolowitz says, "while it is a very specific lens into my own Jewish background, it's actually a universal story of the legacy of historical events on individual families."

The character Andrea, like the playwright herself, goes on a journey in search of ancestors she never knew. The result is painful, but ultimately positive. "Sometimes finding what you don't want to find ends up

unlocking the next key and that's kind of how this show works — a lock box within a lock box within a lock box," says Stabile. "At the end of the show, she finds joy and reconnection. But you have to be willing to walk through the mud to get to the joy."

Stolowitz began working on what became *The Berlin Diaries* in 2016, not knowing it would be ever more relevant now.

"Today more than ever, if we don't remember and learn from these stories, we will continue — as we are — to relive the horrors," says Hoffman. "This story is not morbid at all. It's so vibrant and full of life and yet, we know what happened. This story is told in a way that is so different, so unique and so important that I think everybody should have to see it."

"It doesn't feel to me like a Holocaust play. Yes, that's one part of it, but it's so much more about family, discovery and connections."

"I think there's something in this play for everybody."

The Master Chorale is pleased to present a free 1-hour concert for children ages 6 to 16 and their families. In Beethoven For Kids, the Master Chorale and a pianist will demonstrate the power and beauty of Beethoven's works and explain how he was able to infuse them with joy and feelings of humanity.

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Arts Calendar

Editor's note: Events listed through Jan. 5, 2024, were current as of Nov. 26. Check with the presenting agency for any changes. Ticket prices are single sales unless otherwise specified.

ART

Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens: Through Jan. 7: *An Endangered Landscape: Recent Paintings of the Hypoluxo Scrub*, works by artist and writer Paul Gervais celebrating a wild remnant of Old Florida; through May 1: *The Divine Feminine: Contemporary Women Sculptors*, an exhibit of works by leading sculptors that highlight feminine energy. \$15. 253 Barcelona Road, West Palm Beach. 10 am-4 pm W-Sun. 561-832-5328. Info@ansg.org.

Armory Art Center: Free. 811 Park Place, West Palm Beach. 10 am-4 pm M-F, 10 am-2 pm Sat. 561-832-1776 or armoryart.org.

Boca Raton Museum of Art: Through June 2: *Félix de la Concha*, paintings by the Spanish-born artist of the Addison of Boca Raton and the nearby intersection, with the railroad tracks first laid by Henry Flagler; through May 19: *Dorothy Grace Lemeh: Cycles*, works by the FAU professor of art history chronicling human folly; through May 12: *Smoke and Mirrors: Magical Thinking in Contemporary Art*, artworks exploring magic and deception, inspired by the career of the late Amazing Randi. \$16; \$12 seniors. 501 Plaza Real (Mizner Park), Boca Raton. 11 am-6 pm W, F, Sat, Sun. 11 am-8 pm Th. 561-392-2500, bocamuseum.org.

Cultural Council for Palm Beach County: Through Nov. 17: *Whimsy and Wonder*, artworks inspired by the flamingo, with evolving special installations through the shows run. ree. 601 Lake Ave., Lake Worth Beach. Noon-5 pm T-F and second Sat. of month. 561-471-2901, palmbeachculture.com/exhibitions.

Flagler Museum: Through Dec. 17: *Bicycles: Technology That Changed the World*, drawings, paintings and photographs of the bicycle, which before the advent of the automobile was the first great emancipator of traveling mankind from the horse and carriage.

\$26; \$13 ages 6-12. 1 Whitehall Way, Palm Beach. 10 am-5 pm M-Sat, noon-5 pm Sun. 561-655-2833, www.flaglertmuseum.us.

Lighthouse ArtCenter: \$5 non-members. 9 am-5 pm M-Th; 9 am-4 pm F; 10 am-4 pm Sat. 561-746-3101, lighthousearts.org.

Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens: Through April 7: *Stories on the Planet: Jewelry by Maeda Asagi*; 30 works by the Japanese artist Asagi Maeda, who makes wearable sculptures of remarkable detail. \$15; \$13 seniors; \$9 children; free for members, ages 5 and under. 4000 Morikami Park Road, Delray Beach. 10 am-5 pm T-Sun. 561-495-0233, morikami.org

Norton Museum of Art: Opens Dec. 23: *Nora Maité Nieves: Clouds in the Expanded Field*, works by the Puerto Rican-born artist, who is the Norton's 2023-24 artist in residence. Through April 28. Through Feb. 18: *Artists in Motion: Impressionist and Modern Masterpieces from the Pearlman Collection*, an exhibit of 40 masterworks by the most celebrated late 19th-century artists including van Gogh, Gauguin, Degas, Cézanne, Manet and others. Through Feb. 4: *Symbolic Messages in Chinese Animal Paintings*, four scrolls by artists from the 18th to the 20th centuries contain layers of meanings in their portrayals of tigers, rabbits, birds and fish. Through March 10: *Presence: The Photography Collection of Judy Glickman Lauder*, 56 images by major 20th- and 21st-century photographers such as Sally Mann, Dorothea Lange, Gordon Parks, Edward Steichen and others. With *Personal Space: On Photography and Being*, memory snapshots from the Norton's collection (through Feb. 18). \$18 adults; \$15 seniors; \$5 students; free for ages 12 and under, 1450 S. Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach. 10 am-5 pm, M, T, Th, Sat; 10 am-10 pm F; 11 am-5 pm Sun. 561-832-5196, www.norton.org

Society of the Four Arts: Through Jan. 28: *Scenes of New York City: The Sarah and Elie Hirschfeld Collection*, an exhibit of 115 works depicting iconic views of the city, from such masters as de Kooning, Chagall, Hopper, Dufy, Hassam, O'Keeffe, Warhol and others. Through April 28 in the Hulitar Sculpture Garden: *Flora Imaginaria: The Flower in Contemporary Photography*, 71 photos by 49 artists, all displayed outdoors. At the Society, 102 Four Arts Plaza, Palm Beach. Admission: \$10. 100

Four Arts Plaza, Palm Beach. 10 am-5 pm daily. 561-655-7226, fourarts.org.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Sunday, Dec. 3

The Symphonia: Guest conductor Laura Jackson leads the Boca Raton-based chamber orchestra in Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony* (No. 41 in C) and selections from *Wilderness Anthology*, by the young American composer Patrick Harlin. Tenor Leo Williams joins the orchestra for a British masterwork, Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*. 3 pm, Spanish River High School, 5100 Jog Road, Boca Raton. \$55-\$90. 561-376-3848 or thesymphonia.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 6

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center: In what is becoming a Palm Beach as well as a New York tradition at Christmastime, the Lincoln Center musicians perform all six *Brandenburg Concertos* of J.S. Bach at the Society of the Four Arts. 7:30 pm. \$40. The Society is at 102 Four Arts Plaza, Palm Beach. 561-655-2766 or fourarts.org.

Thursday, Dec. 7

Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach: The violinist Tessa Lark and pianist Peter Dugan, appearing as the Visionary Duo, perform on the CMSPB series. 7 pm, Norton Museum of Art, 1450 S. Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach. \$75. Visit cmspb.org for more information.

Monday, Dec. 11

New World Symphony: The Miami Beach orchestral academy trucks up Interstate 95 to the Kravis Center for a concert led by conductor Andrew Grams. On the program is the epic Sixth Symphony of Gustav Mahler. 7:30 pm. \$35 and up. Kravis Center, 701 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach. 561-832-7469 or www.kravis.org.

Tuesday, Dec. 12

Seraphic Fire: The Miami concert choir offers its annual Christmas concert, featuring well-known songs of the season as well as ones that have become associated with the choir, such as Elizabeth Poston's *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*. 7 pm, Rinker Playhouse, Kravis Center, 701 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach. \$50 and up. 561-832-7469 or www.kravis.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 13

Palm Beach Symphony: The Japanese violinist Akiko Suwanai solos in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, and conductor Gerard

Schwarz presents another world premiere, this time of his own Sinfonietta. Also on the program is Dvorak's *New World Symphony* (No. 9 in E minor). 7:30 pm, Kravis Center, West Palm Beach. \$25-\$95. kravis.org or palmbeachsymphony.org

Sunday, Dec. 17

Itzhak Perlman: The eminent violinist returns to West Palm Beach for his annual visit, this time with his Emmy Award-winning klezmer program, *In the Fiddler's House*. 2 pm, Kravis Center. \$45 and up. kravis.org or palmbeachsymphony.org

DANCE

Saturday, Dec. 2-Sunday, Dec. 3

Ballet Palm Beach: Colleen Smith's Palm Beach Gardens-based school and troupe performs Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* in its annual production. Four performances at the Kravis Center, West Palm Beach. 2 pm and 7 pm Saturday, 1 pm and 5 pm Sunday. \$20 and up. Visit kravis.org or call 561-832-7469.

Thursday, Dec. 28-Saturday, Dec. 30
Miami City Ballet: The company gives its annual performance of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, with choreography by the Russian ballet master who turned it into a Christmas tradition: George Balanchine. Five performances at the Kravis Center, West Palm Beach. 7 pm Thursday, 2 pm and 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$39 and up. kravis.org or 561-832-7469.

JAZZ

Sunday, Dec. 3

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra: Wynton Marsalis brings his repertory orchestra to the Society of the Four Arts for a concert called "Big Band Holidays." Vocalist Ashley Pezzotti joins the band for songs of the season. 3 pm, Society of the Four Arts, 102 Four Arts Plaza, Palm Beach. \$40. As of press time, the concert was sold out. 561-655-2766 or fourarts.org

Friday, Dec. 15

Dick Lowenthal's Big Band: The retired Manhattan School of Music jazz professor brings his swing orchestra back to Delray Beach with vocalist Lianne Lyons for a tribute to the holidays. 8 pm, Arts Garage, 94 NE 2nd Ave., Delray Beach. \$50-\$55. 561-450-6357 or artsgarage.org

Trombone Shorty: The trombonist brings his Orleans Avenue band to Fort Lauderdale in the wake of two recent releases on the prestigious Blue Note label. 7:30 pm Culture Room, 3045 N. Federal Highway, Suite 70, Fort Lauderdale. \$79 and up. 954-564-1074 or cultureroom.net.

POPULAR MUSIC

Thursday, Dec. 7-Friday, Dec. 8

Bruno Mars: The Hawaiian pop singer/songwriter ("Just the Way You Are") has sold more than 130 million records and has a fistful of Grammys. 9:30 pm Thursday, 7:30 pm Friday at Seminole Hard Rock and Casino, 1 Seminole Way, Hollywood. \$400 to \$3,750. ticketmaster.com

THEATER

Through Sunday, Dec. 3

A Christmas Carol: A stage adaptation of Charles Dickens' timeless 1843 tale of redemption and the true meaning of Christmas. At the Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave., Lake Worth Beach. \$38. 561-586-6410 or www.lakeworthplayhouse.org.

Through Sunday, Dec. 10

The Berlin Diaries: Andrea Stolowitz's new play about finding the ancestors in German archives of her great-grandfather, who fled Nazi Germany in 1939 and came to the United States. At FAU Theatre Lab on Florida Atlantic University's Boca Raton campus. Through Dec. 10. \$32. fauevents.com or 561-297-6124.

She Loves Me: Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick's 1963 musical about two feuding perfumery shop workers who don't realize they are each other's secret lonelyhearts pen pals. At the Delray Beach Playhouse, 950 NW 9th St., Delray Beach. 561-272-1281 or www.delraybeachplayhouse.com.

A Christmas Carol: An adaptation of the Dickens classic about the miser Ebenezer Scrooge and his visit by three spirits. At the Maltz Jupiter Theatre, 1001 E. Indiantown Road, Jupiter. 561-575-2233 or jupitertheatre.org.

Through Sunday, Dec. 24

Bye Bye Birdie: The Charles Strouse-Lee Adams musical from 1960 about a struggling songwriter whose rock star client is drafted into the Army. Wick Theatre, 7901 N. Federal Highway, Boca Raton. Tickets: \$109. 561-995-2233 or thewick.org.

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George Luks (1867-1933), *Commuters (Transportation Problems): Study for Cartoon in the "New York World"*, 1899, watercolor and black ink on paper. New-York Historical Society, Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City.

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A DIRECT LOOK BEHIND THE REAL ESTATE ACTION

Agent Feature

WITH STEVEN PRESSON OF THE CORCORAN GROUP



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Q: A LOT HAS CHANGED IN REAL ESTATE SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER MOST ABOUT THAT TIME WHEN LOOKING BACK?

SP: You know, I remember that time in my life like it was yesterday. I was at a Miami Heat game with both my sons on March 11, 2020. Around halftime, it was announced that a player on the Utah Jazz had tested positive for COVID. The NBA announced right in the middle of the game that they were suspending the rest of the 2019-20 season. At the time I had over \$30,000,000.00 in properties under contract and I remember thinking that there was a chance that in the coming days, all these contracts would be cancelled...and every one of them did. Miraculously by the end of June, every one of those properties was back under contract. For the next 2 years we witnessed something I don't think will ever be repeated again. South Florida sold 4 years' worth of inventory in about 22 months and saw property values more than double almost overnight. It was time we all will never forget.

Q: HOW'S THE REAL ESTATE MARKET THESE DAYS?

SP: I think our real estate market is healthy. I believe we are a somewhat insulated real estate market from factors that can adversely affect property values, much more so than in any other area in the country for many reasons.

When I first began my career in real estate, I saw a buying trend indicating that for many buyers, their motivation to choose to come to South Florida, for all the obvious reasons, including our beaches and lifestyle, the warm climate, the arts, fine shopping and of course, having no State income taxes.

Today, in addition to some of those same reasons, a new wave of buyers, especially those who can work remotely from any location choose south Florida. We're also drawing buyers in substantial numbers from other markets of the country for political and economic reasons including California and Chicago. Demand has grown substantially since COVID & I don't see that changing.

Another factor has to do with West Palm Beach positioning itself as the "mini" Wall Street of the South. In recent years, we have seen over 100 financial companies relocate their corporate offices to this area. That attracts their existing employees as well as their friends and families. Those moves are a big factor as to why our housing and real estate inventory is so very low, and I don't see that changing in the future.

I have told my clients that they can sell today in a strong market, or call me in 3 years and I believe we'll be in the same position. My opinion is that we have our own little real estate "bubble." I think we are all in a pretty good spot.

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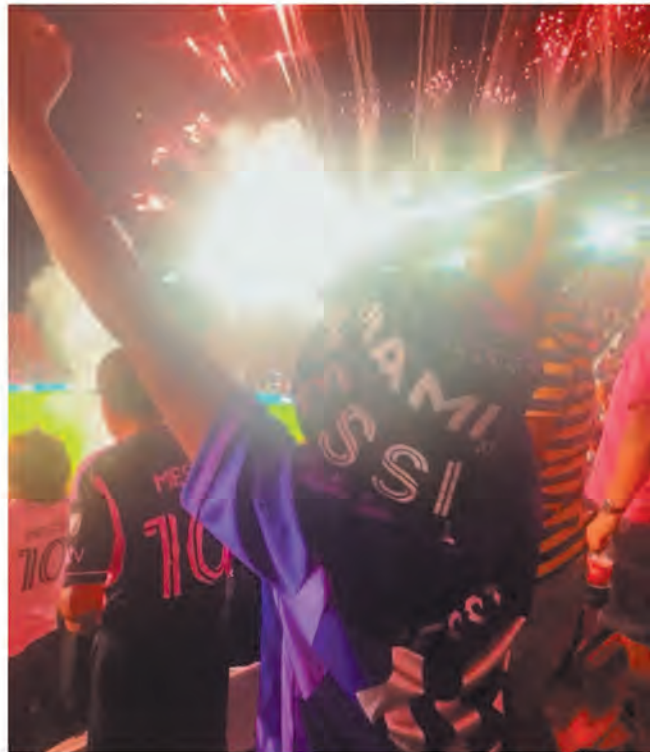
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Q: WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN OCCURRING IN OUR COASTAL BEACH AREAS?

SP: Before COVID I always believed that our very special small beach towns were very undervalued, which never made much sense to me. I would see cookie cutter subdivisions west of the Turnpike that were getting higher prices per squarefoot than the homes being sold along our coastal communities.

It wasn't too long ago for example when you could come to Ocean Ridge and buy an adorable Old Florida home on the water for a million dollars. In the last three years the little secret about our coastal communities has gotten out in a big way. Values have finally caught up to from my perspective where they should have been all along.

Also, look at what's happening in Palm Beach which has really played out to our favor. You practically have to be a billionaire to afford a typical home there which is about \$14 million for a tear down on a dry lot. Many of my largest sales the last 3 years were to buyers who were priced out of buying in Palm Beach and came down south to us. This trend will be here for a long time and will help protect our property values.



Q: IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR TEAM IS GROWING QUICKLY. TELL US ABOUT THAT AND HOW THAT CAME ABOUT.

SP: For quite some time I've had a team completely supporting my real estate business. They have assisted me in every aspect of my business from administrative support, marketing, social media & and a webmaster. It has allowed me to spend my time and focus on really being able to answer the calls and showing up for scheduled appointments and meetings. The truth is that because of them, I get to do the fun stuff.

I have enjoyed mentoring many agents who would reach out to me for advice and guidance over the years. As a matter of fact at one time I was the Head of the Education & Marketing Committee for the Palm Beach Board of Realtors overseeing about 1,400 agents. I loved doing that, and for me, it was a way of giving back to the business which has been very good to me.

This year I decided to build my own sales team and we are currently up to 21 members. It's like having my own mini brokerage firm. I've enjoyed it even more than I thought I would.

We have a great bunch of enthusiastic agents with integrity, who want to take their real estate careers to another higher level. And the best part is I get a few more calls each day to talk real estate with my team, and that's right in my wheelhouse. My goal is to grow this team to 35 agents in the coming months.

Q: TELL US ABOUT YOUR TEAM'S NIGHT WITH MESSI INITIATIVE YOU JUST STARTED.

Thanks for asking. Anyone who knows me understands my love for sports and going to sporting events especially with my kids. When Lionel Messi signed with Inter Miami and the MLS we couldn't wait to see him play. Sitting at his first

game and after spending close to \$2,000 for tickets, I paused to think of all the less fortunate families, and how much it would mean for them to be able to attend a game. It brought me back to when I was a kid. I grew up in a single-family household and I can remember my mom saving up to take us all to a Phillies baseball game each summer when the tickets were only about \$10. I had been looking to do something in the community, and we came up with a "Night With Messi" bringing less fortunate families to future games. We have since worked closely with the Girls & Boys Club of Palm Beach County, and they have helped identify families for each event. The

experience has gone so well that we will include Miami Heat games this winter.

Q: HOW ARE YOUR SONS DOING?

They're both doing well, and I couldn't be more proud. My older son Hunter just graduated from High School as he wanted to fast track his real estate career. I think he loves the business even more than I do, and he too has since joined our team. He's really motivated and is often up at 3 AM working on his databases or marketing strategies. He definitely has that "bug" and I have no doubt that he's gonna be a star. My younger son Peyton continues to chase his dream of being a professional soccer player overseas. He currently lives in Philadelphia and is a member of the Philadelphia Union Professional Soccer Academy. Many of that sport's scouting services have listed him as one of the top prospects in the country. I love living vicariously through both of my sons and watching them work and grow as they achieve their personal goals. It's been the joy and highlight of my life.



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Finding Faith

Producer reflects on retelling of Nativity story as bold musical

The film *Journey to Bethlehem*, a musical retelling of the Nativity story, begins with a disclaimer: “Inspired by a true story — the greatest story ever told.”

Director Adam Anders’ goal was to make a family movie that tells the story of the birth of Jesus and competes with the best Christmas movies.

By filling the film with catchy pop songs and comedy gags (and a devoted donkey named Fig), the movie strays a bit from biblical accuracy, but the writers were careful not to abuse their poetic license. Their carefully diluted version makes an otherwise terrifying story of Roman soldiers killing newborns and teenage fugitives on the run palatable enough for a PG rating but engaging enough to appeal to adults.

Nearly 20 years ago, Anders realized that a void existed in Christmas movie fare. A musical not centered around Santa was missing from the genre. Then five years ago, producer Alan Powell and Monarch Media came on board.

Powell and Anders had *Glee* in common and both were deeply Christian. Powell — who has a degree from bible college and was founder of the successful

pop-Christian band Anthem Lights — says, “I believed in Adam, and I believed in the story, so I poured gasoline on it.”

Film companies hesitated, largely for financial reasons. Was it good business to make a movie about the Nativity? How much profit could they really expect to make on a Christian musical? But Powell, who says real magic happens



Milo Manheim and Fiona Palomo as Joseph and Mary in *Journey to Bethlehem*. Affirm Films photo

when music and film come together, kept pushing until Sony Entertainment’s Affirm Films bit.

Powell says making a musical is about finding a balance of song and story. The rule, Powell says, “is that a character only sings when words can no longer do justice.”

Anders’ gift is his ability to slide the song into the dialogue so organically that you almost don’t notice the actors have started singing.

The soundtrack features 12 original songs written by Anders with his singer/songwriter wife, Nikki Anders, and songwriter/music producer Peer Astrom (*High School Musical*).

For Anders and his wife, whose first date was writing a song together, the release of the film is the fulfillment of a dream — a deeply personal undertaking where they felt God’s hand on theirs. Consider this: Anders was in Spain preparing to shoot the movie and they had not cast Mary. At 2 a.m. one day, Powell’s phone rang. Anders had found her: Fiona Palomo, a relative newcomer, is a Mexican-born actress who had appeared on the teen drama *Outer Banks* in 2023. “She never even had a callback,” Powell said.

Some would say she was a godsend.

“Our goal was to show these characters with some meat on their bones,” Powell said. And by flushing out the shadowy figures behind a well-known story — like Joseph, whom Milo Manheim portrays with such tender authenticity — the filmmakers illuminated the story in a new way. A touching moment comes when Mary tells Joseph that she was not the only person chosen for this. From that moment, his devotion and support and his love for Mary animate his every move.

The songs stand alone as lovely, lively, fun and even a little scary, and fans of *Glee* will surely recognize Anders’ signature on the musical. This is a film made by musicians in search of another way to tell the world about their love for Jesus Christ. The vocals are outstanding, even from the cast’s non-singer, A-list star Antonio Banderas.

What others are saying

The Christian Film Review said, “This is a must-see film and is not to be missed. Full of joy, hope and truth, it has to be one of the best and most epic Christmas movies of all time.”

But the National Catholic Register wasn’t so positive. Its criticisms of the film point mostly to the missing elements, like Mary’s fiat: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

But in the film Mary is more conflicted: What will people think? Will this bring shame upon my family? Completely understandable reactions. But as Catholics revere Mary, the Blessed Mother, only the most pure and chaste of Marys would do. So the more the writers tried to humanize her, giving her real doubts and fears, the less Catholics were going to like it.

They asked, “Where is her Magnificat? If ever there

Pastor’s review of movie

By Andrew Hagen

As a committed Christian and pastor, I never tire of the story of the birth of Jesus. Our faith community believes that God saw the darkness of our lives and sent his son as a savior. The mode of his arrival as a baby born to a poor family in a backwater village only reinforces the power of his identification with our lives and experiences.

Journey to Bethlehem succeeds when it reinforces that message and fails when it distracts from it.

It succeeds in showing us a young girl confused and apprehensive about being the mother of the long-awaited savior. It succeeds when it reminds us that her fiancé, Joseph, could have condemned her to stoning for the unexpected pregnancy. It succeeds when it portrays a king so evil that ordering the murder of mothers and babies is no great matter to him. And it succeeds in reminding us of the lowly circumstances and location of Jesus’ birth.

Sadly, it fails when it makes Mary and Joseph’s romance far more important than the child they are bringing into the world. It fails when the three Wise Men are turned into the Three Stooges as comic relief. It fails when it inserts a strange “daddy issues” turn for Herod Antipater (although he did later plot to kill his dad). And it fails when the holy family heads off to Egypt as happy travelers rather than hunted refugees. And I really missed the shepherds.

Journey to Bethlehem is a good family outing to be followed up with reading the actual story and heading to church on Christmas Eve.

It is so much better than all the holiday movies that deliver Christmas without the Christ. For those who barely know the story, it may make them curious to make their own “journey to Bethlehem”: where a baby and good news await.

Andrew Hagen is senior pastor of Advent Ministries in Boca Raton.

was a place in a musical version of the Nativity story for a major song, this is it,” the National Catholic Register aid.

But Mary sings the ballad, “Mother to a Savior and King,” where she asks, “How can I carry your son when I need you to carry me?” and “Should a miracle feel like an anchor?” It’s not very Catholic, but it’s very real and reminds us how brave Mary was.

Other critics called out Banderas’ acting as the evil Herod, saying he got too much screen time and that the lyrics of his song, “It’s Good to Be King,” could be seen to “dangerously border on the blasphemous.” And many audience members were confused by the appearance of Antipater, Herod’s first son, who isn’t part of any of the scriptures and is not the same Antipater Christians do know as the executioner of John the Baptist.

Grammy winner Joel Smallbone, who records and tours with his brother Luke as the Christian pop duo For King & Country, portrays Antipater Herod. Lecrae, a Christian rapper/hip-hop artist who won

a Grammy Award in 2013 for Best Gospel Album, the first time that a hip-hop artist won, portrays a stunning Angel Gabriel.

Last word from producer

A diverse village of people brought this carefully crafted film to the screen, a concerted team effort, and one Powell is proud of. The married father of six said, “My hope was we’d make a family movie that people will watch together and laugh and sing and dance along to. I think the timing is right for this movie.”

“But then, there’s never a wrong time to spread a message of love.”

Journey to Bethlehem is rated PG. It was filmed in and around the coast of Spain. Its runtime is 1 hour, 38 minutes. It’s in theaters now.

Janis Fontaine writes about people of faith, their congregations, causes and community events.



Contact her at fontaine423@outlook.com.

Welcome to Ascension Lutheran Church

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We are so proud of our beautiful church that is architecturally structured and designed in the round. We look forward to sharing Christmas music on our beautiful pipe organ, one of the largest in the area... and are excited to share the lovely experience of the Holiday season with everyone. Tours of our magnificent stained glass windows by Conrad Pickel, our hand sewn kneeling cushions made by parishioners, driftwood design and natural shell baptismal font and our one-of-a-kind, lovely, undulterated coral altar will be available for all to see. Home made Christmas cookies and beverages will be served.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH
For this beautiful holiday music event. Music prelude will begin at 6:30 pm MusiCaribe Project “Concert Mode Ensemble” will perform joyous Christmas music, along with our IHandbell choir. The Chancel Choir will perform a special first time Christmas song, composed by our talented musical director, Daniel Mattos. Some of this composer’s music has been played in Churches in Europe and other countries of the world. Our beautiful pipe organ (once played by Diane Bish in concert at the church) will ring out beautiful Christmas Carols for all to sing. The Reverend Tommy Dowell will bring the Christmas message to all.

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Religion Notes

Hanukkah concert star puts faith before music

By Janis Fontaine

Boca Beach Chabad brings Alex Clare to Sanborn Square in downtown Boca Raton at 7 p.m. Dec. 13, the seventh night of Hanukkah.

Clare is a devout Orthodox Jew who has chosen his faith over the music business over and over again.

To some, the sacrifices were astronomical: He said no to joining Adele on tour because too many dates fell on the sabbath or holy days. His record label dropped him because he



Clare

wouldn't work during holy weeks. But the singer/songwriter, who once dated Amy Winehouse, was stalwart and secure in his faith and trusted God to take care of him and his family.

Clare charted an unexpected hit record when his song "Too Close" was featured in some ads for Internet Explorer. Listeners sought out the song and it hit No. 7 on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100. That success brought Clare back into the record business, and he made a second album, *Three Hearts*, in 2014, and a third album, *Tail of Lions*, in 2016. But again, feeling too separated from his faith, he moved with his wife and child to Israel to reconnect.

Clare's life may be full of prayer and religious study, but his music is solidly secular, of the "blue-eyed blues" genre with raspy vocals and a growly low range. Clare calls it music for the soul. His most recent release, 2021's "Why Don't Ya," is a lamenting lost-love song, which is likeable enough with a catchy refrain, written for his wife.

If You Go

What: Alex Clare in concert
When: 7 p.m. Dec. 13
Where: Sanborn Square, Boca Raton
Cost: Free; reserved seating, \$36; VIP, \$180
Info: chabadbocabeaches.com, click on events

At first listen, his music doesn't seem to have anything to do with faith; it does simply because his life does.

Clare said "Why Don't Ya" was his way of encouraging his wife to properly "acknowledge her feelings" following the death of her grandfather around the same time that one of their children was sick in the hospital. He said in an interview with BBC.com that "As a songwriter you've got to channel your emotion or your empathy or your pathos, whatever it's going to be, without a filter. The song is the filter."

He closed by saying, "Everyone really just wants to have their sense of oneness and sameness — that's what people relate to and what people connect to. And the more that we can see our similarities with each other, as opposed to all the divisions and things that separate us, the better."

Which is a perfect holiday message, no matter what holiday you celebrate.

Seraphic Fire changes venues this year

The Seraphic Fire choir, which features professional singer-scholars from around the country, usually performs around the holidays at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Boca Raton, but church renovations have forced a change of venues.

You can see the choir perform

at 7 p.m. Dec. 12 at the Kravis Center. The concert, "A Seraphic Fire Christmas," also serves to celebrate the release of the choir's new album of Christmas music.

The Kravis Center is at 701 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach. Tickets start at \$50 at kravis.org/events/seraphic-fire-presents-a-seraphic-fire-christmas/

Littering sentence can be hate conviction next time

Jon Minadeo II, the leader and founder of the antisemitic Goyim Defense League, was sentenced to 30 days in jail in November for littering.

Minadeo and his minions were arrested for tossing antisemitic literature into yards around West Palm Beach from the back of a pickup in March. Police arrested the men, and "we used this charge of littering because it was the only tool in our arsenal against these hate-mongers," Palm Beach County State Attorney Dave Aronberg said in a news conference.

Since then, the state has put a new law on the books. House Bill 269, sponsored by Rep. Mike Caruso, makes it a felony to distribute hate speech.

Under the new law, "If a person ... intentionally dumping litter onto private property for the purpose of intimidating the owner, resident, or invitee of such property and such litter contains a credible threat, the person commits a felony of the third degree."

The state doesn't have to prove that the person making the threat had the intent to actually carry out the threat.

Minadeo, 40, is a longtime voice in the bastion of Neo-Nazis and Holocaust deniers. Goyim Defense League's flyers blame Jews for everything from 9/11 to COVID-19 to



Seraphic Fire performs Dec. 12 at the Kravis rather than at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church in Boca Raton. Photo provided

Other Hanukkah, Kwanzaa celebrations

Chabad South Palm Beach Hanukkah Celebration: 5 p.m. Dec. 10, Plaza Del Mar, 250 S. Ocean Blvd., Manalapan. Food, music, games and a menorah lighting. www.facebook.com/ChabadSouthPalmBeach

Grand Delray Beach Chanukah Festival and Menorah Lighting: 5-7 p.m. Dec. 7, Old School Square Pavilion, 51 N. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach. Join Chabad of East Delray and the City of Delray in a celebration of the first day of Hanukkah with a DJ and music, pizza by the Gifted Crust, latkes and donuts, bounce houses, face painting, crafts and games, all capped by the grand menorah lighting. See delrayoldschoolsquare.com/events/menorah-lighting
Kwanzaa: 2:30 p.m. Dec. 26, Spady Museum, 170 NW Fifth Ave., Delray Beach. Kwanzaa is a pan-African holiday celebrating African culture and heritage. Families make their own gifts and enjoy art activities, storytelling for children, and food outside on the museum grounds. To demonstrate *umoja* (unity), seven local families, consisting of three generations, share their perspectives on the seven principles. To demonstrate *nia* (purpose), 'Ms. Tea' Tammeric Itson-Scurry from the Delray Beach Public Library hosts story time for the children and will read *Seven Spools of Thread* by Angela S. Medearis. Demonstrating *ujima* (collective work and responsibility), youths will create an African-inspired dwelling and decorate the interior walls with their own artwork; and demonstrating *kuumba* (creativity), Spady Museum's Kuumba Village will be ready to help guests create gifts to give or keep. Free, but RSVP at 561-279-8883 or spadymuseum.com.

the immigration crisis. In May 2020, he co-launched GoyimTV, a video streaming platform focused on antisemitic content. In September 2022, he was arrested in Poland for hate speech after holding up derogatory posters at Auschwitz.

In May, RollingStone.com published a story about Minadeo that began, "When Neo-Nazi Jon Minadeo II

encounters children on the video chat platform Omegle, one of two things typically goes down. Either: Minadeo subjects the kid to a torrent of abusive slurs. ... Or: He coaxes the child into making a heil Hitler salute, and attempts to groom them into adopting, and even promoting, his rancid ideology of racism and antisemitism." ★

Religion Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 11/22. Please check with organizers for any changes.

DECEMBER 2

Saturday - 12/2 - C-Kids Shabbat Program at Boca Beach Chabad, 120 NE 1st Ave. Every Sat 10:45-11:45 am. 561-394-9770; bocabeachchabad.org

DECEMBER 3-9

Sunday - 12/3 - Zoom Bible Study at Ascension Catholic Church, 7250 N Federal Hwy, Boca Raton. Every Sun 7 pm. Free. Zoom link: communications#accboca.net; 561-997-5486; ascensionboca.org

Monday - 12/4 - Women's Bible Study via Zoom at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, 33 Gleason St. Every M 10 am. Free. 561-276-6338; firstdelray.com

12/4 - Rosary for Peace at St Vincent Ferrer Adoration Chapel, 840 George Bush Blvd, Delray Beach. Every M 5:45 pm. Free. 561-276-6892; stvincentferrer.com

12/4 - Recovery Church at Trinity Delray Lutheran Church Sanctuary, 400 N Swinton Ave. Worship service for those in recovery from addiction, looking for freedom from addictive/compulsive behaviors. Every M 7-8:40 pm. Free. 561-276-8458; trinitydelray.org

Tuesday - 12/5 - Tuesday Morning Prayer Service at Unity of Delray Beach Church, 101 NW 22nd St. Masks optional, social distancing practiced. 10 am. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

Wednesday - 12/6 - Men's Spirituality Hour via Zoom at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, 100 NE Mizner Blvd, Boca Raton. Every W 8 am. Free. For link: 561-395-8285; stgregorysepiscopal.org

12/6 - Patriotic Rosary at St Lucy Catholic Church, 3510 S Ocean Blvd, Highland Beach. Every W after 8:30 am Mass. Free. 561-278-1280; stlucycommunity.com

12/6 - Christmas Open House at Ascension Lutheran Church, 2929 S Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. Christmas music on Schantz pipe organ, tour of the church. 3-5:30 pm. Free. 561-732-2929; ascensionlutheranchurch.net

12/6 - Prayer for Peace & Lighting of Christmas Creche (Nativity Scene) at St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church, 840 George Bush Boulevard, Delray Beach. Follows 5:00 pm Mass. Free. 561-276-6892; stvincentferrer.com

12/6 - Catholic Men Weekly Fellowship at St. Vincent Ferrer, 840 George Bush Blvd, Delray Beach. Every W 6:30-8 pm. 512-924-4862; stvincentferrer.com

12/6 - Wednesday Evening Meditation Service at Unity of Delray Beach Church Sanctuary, 101 NW 22nd St. Led by Rev. Laurie Durgan. Masks optional, social distancing practiced. 6:30 pm. Free; love offering. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

Thursday - 12/7 - Thursday Morning Prosperity Coffee at Unity of Delray Beach Church Fellowship Hall, 101 NW 22nd St. Led by Charlene Wilkinson. Masks optional, social distancing practiced. In person 1st Th 7 am; phone meeting (720-740-9634, passcode 2152894) all but 1st Th. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

12/7 - Men's Fellowship at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach Courtyard, 33 Gleason St. Every Th 8:30 am. Free. 561-276-6338; firstdelray.com

12/7 - Women's Discipleship Group at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, 33 Gleason St. Every Th 10 am. Free. 561-276-6338; firstdelray.com

12/7 - Women's Bible Study at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church Youth Room, 100 NE Mizner Blvd, Boca Raton. Every Th 1 pm. Free. 561-395-8285; stgregorysepiscopal.org

12/7 - Islamic Center of Boca Raton Open House at 3480 NW 5th Ave, Boca Raton. All welcome. Refreshments, tour of the mosque, Q&A. 1st Th 7-9 pm. Free. 561-395-7221; icbr.org

Friday - 12/8 - Bible Study w/Dave Kirk at Advent Boca Raton Fellowship Hall, 300 E Yamato Rd. Every F 10-11:30 am. 561-395-3632; adventboca.org

12/8 - Legion of Mary at St. Vincent Ferrer Family Life Center, 840 George Bush Blvd, Delray Beach. Every F 5:30 pm. Free. 561-276-6892; stvincentferrer.com

12/8 - Virtual Shabbat Service at Temple Sinai of Palm Beach County, 2475 W Atlantic Ave, Delray Beach. Every F 7:30 pm. Free. 561-276-6161; templesinaiipc.org

DECEMBER 10-16

Wednesday - 12/13 - Alex Clare Live in Concert at Sanborn Square, 72 N Federal Hwy, Boca Raton. 7 pm. Free/concert; \$36/reserved seats: \$180/VIP reception 5:30 pm, RSVP by 12/8. 561-394-9770; bocabeachchabad.com/chanukah

12/16 - 3rd Annual A Night in Bethlehem at First United Methodist Church Boca Raton, 625 NE Mizner Blvd. Authentic Bethlehem Village; families wander through town, hear about the baby being born in the stable; visit different shops, create keepsakes to take home, food trucks on site. 5-8 pm. Entry fee: canned good donation for CROS Ministries. 561-395-1244; fumcbocaraton.org

DECEMBER 24-30

Sunday - 12/24 - Christmas Eve Services at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, 33 Gleason St. 11 am, 5, 7 & 9:30 pm. Free. 561-276-6338; firstdelray.com

12/24 - Christmas Eve Services at First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, 33 Gleason St. 11 am, 5, 7 & 9:30 pm. Free. 561-276-6338; firstdelray.com

12/24 - Christmas Eve Services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 188 S Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. 4, 7 & 10 pm. Free. 561-276-4541; stpaulsdelray.org

12/24 - Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Services at Unity of Delray Beach Church, 101

NW 22nd St. 6 & 8 pm. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

12/24 - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at Ascension Lutheran Church, 2929 S Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. 6:30 pm. Free. 561-732-2929; ascensionlutheranchurch.net

12/24-25 - Christmas Mass at St. Vincent Ferrer, 840 George Bush Blvd, Delray Beach. 12/24 4 & 6 pm, midnight; 12/25 7, 9, 11 am. Free. 561-276-6892; stvincentferrer.com

12/24-25 - Christmas Services at St. Joseph's Episcopal Church 3300 Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. 12/24 4, 6:30, 9:30 & 10 pm; 12/25 9:30 am Free. 561-732-3060; stjoesweb.org

12/25 - Christmas Day Services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 188 S Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. 10 am. Free. 561-276-4541; stpaulsdelray.org

DEC. 31-JAN. 6

Friday - 1/5 - Adoration & Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Mark Chapel, 643 NE 4th Ave, Boynton Beach. 1st F 9 am-3 pm. Free. 561-734-9330; stmarkboynton.com

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Health & Harmony

Have the holiday blues? Parents tell how measure of joy followed grief

It's "the most wonderful time of the year," but not for everyone.

While many people look forward to the holidays, for some the season brings up feelings of loneliness, dread, stress or sadness. Maybe you are single or without family nearby, or have experienced a recent loss of a loved one.

While others are making travel arrangements, partying, buying gifts or swapping cookie recipes, you may be struggling to get through the season without feeling sad, isolated or alone.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, holiday blues are temporary feelings of anxiety or depression that can be associated with extra stress, unrealistic expectations or even memories that accompany the

season.

Symptoms often begin in November and last until the start of the new year. A NAMI study showed that 64% of people with mental illness report holidays make their conditions worse.

Losing a loved one, especially a child, is never easy and the loss may be compounded during family holidays. This is the case for two families who share the premature loss of a loved one.

For part-time Fort Myers resident Suzanne Zafonte Sennett, who lost her son, Andrew, a talented musician and artist, in 2009 just before his 21st birthday during the Christmas season, the loss is especially acute.

He was celebrating a friend's 21st birthday and, after mixing drugs and alcohol, he crawled

into a friend's bed to sleep and never woke up.

Suzanne and her husband, Peter, had plans to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary that January. Andrew and his sister, Brigid, were to act as witnesses at a vow renewal ceremony.

"Over the next years — the Christmas tree and decorations were mothballed," she recalls. "We found ways to muddle through."

It wasn't until the birth of her first granddaughter in 2014, and later a second, that they began to feel joy and celebrate the holidays again.

"All of the old ornaments — with pictures of both my kids — hang alongside photos of my grandkids," she says. "We have learned to allow our sadness to be intermingled with joy."

Focus on helping others

John and Michelle Makris of Boca Raton have also learned that lesson.

They lost their son Brice in 2020 at the age of 23 to an accidental fentanyl overdose.

"We live with anticipation, but our grief is every day," Michelle Makris says. They have found joy through their 2-year-old grandson who lives in Seattle, but "we always feel Brice's presence."

She has learned to give herself permission to feel loss, grief and sadness and to indulge in what she calls "Glamour magazine therapy," or to indulge in regular massages, practice meditation and to be tended to.

To honor their son's memory, they host an annual brunch each December to raise money for the Brice Makris Endowment Fund, which provides scholarships and addiction prevention programs at the Hanley Foundation in West Palm Beach. This year's brunch is Dec. 10 at Boca West Country Club.

A focus on helping others helps the couple deal with feeling powerless over their loss, says Michelle Makris.

Celebrating both Jewish and Catholic traditions, for this holiday they plan to invite family and friends for the traditional Feast of the Seven Fishes on Christmas Eve and will light the Hanukkah menorah and say the blessing each night.

"We know Brice would want us to be happy," John Makris says.

The couple have created a circle of strength, love and "warm feelings" with their support network.

"The best thing I can say is to be authentic, reach out if you need help and know that your friends want to be of service," Michelle Makris says.

Stay in the moment

Tips for self-care during the holidays include getting enough sleep, taking time for yourself and spending time with supportive, caring friends or family.

Minimize excess food, alcohol or spending, get some exercise and set reasonable expectations for your holiday

activities.

Set aside time to relax, meet with friends, write in a journal, do yoga, sing, dance or laugh, take a walk or plan something else you like to do.

Alli Jimenez, 36, a mental health counselor at the Hanley Foundation and mother of four in a blended family, says "holidays can bring up difficult feelings."

She notes that blended families have to deal with differing traditions and separate visits such as splitting the holidays between parents.

She plans to have family and friends over for a low-key Christmas dinner and to enjoy it without feeling stressed.

"Family dynamics have changed a lot," she says. "We don't often talk about how this affects families."

To cope with these stressors, Jimenez suggests staying in the moment.

"Be mindful of the good in your life, and what you do have," she says. "Pause and reflect on the good and show grace and a bit of kindness to yourself and others."

Jan Engoren writes about health and healthy living. Send column ideas to jengoren@hotmail.com.



Jimenez

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Health Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 11/22. Please check with organizers for any changes.

DECEMBER 2

Saturday -12/2 - Sunrise Beach Yoga at The Seagate Beach Club, 401 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. 60-minute morning Vinyasa yoga. Bring mat, towel, water bottle. Every Sat 8-9 am. \$20. 561-330-3775; seagatedelray.com

12/2 - Yoga Class at South Palm Beach Town Hall, 3577 S Ocean Blvd. Every Sat 9 am. \$5/class. 561-588-8889; southpalmbeach.com

12/2 - Yoga at the Beach at Red Reef Park West, 1221 S Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Held on grass overlooking the Intracoastal. No cash accepted on-site. Every 1st Sat 10-11 am. \$10/class; 60-day membership \$65/resident, \$81.25/non-resident. 561-393-7807; myboca.us

12/2 - Judo Class at Boca Raton Community Center, 150 Crawford Blvd. Warm-up exercises, instruction, practice, tournament training. W 6:30-8:30 pm mixed ages/ranks; Sat 10 am-noon all groups. Per month \$21.50/resident; \$27/non-resident. 561-393-7807; myboca.us

12/2 - Alateen at St. Joan of Arc Catholic School, 501 SW 3rd St, Boca Raton. Every Sat 10 am. Free. 888-4AL-ANON; al-anon.org/teen-info

12/2 - OA (Overeaters Anonymous) Meeting at Unity of Delray Beach Fellowship Hall, 101 NW 22nd St. Every Sat 11 am. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

12/2 - AA Meeting at Unity of Delray Beach Fellowship Hall, 101 NW 22nd St. Every Sat 5:30 pm. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

DECEMBER 3-9

Sunday - 12/3 - Coco Connections Market at Old School Square, 51 N Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. Monthly wellness market: 30 local vendors, health/wellness professionals w/ various healing modalities; live music; 2 free yoga, meditation or fitness classes per event. Held again 1/7. 9 am-3 pm. Free. 561-870-4090; thecocoyogi.com/market

12/3 - CODA (Codependents Anonymous) Meeting at Unity of Delray Beach Fellowship Hall, 101 NW 22nd St. Every Sun 6 pm. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

12/3 - Yoga at the Beach at Red Reef Park East, 1400 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Held on grass overlooking the Intracoastal. No cash accepted on-site. Every W & Sun 6:30-7:30 pm. \$10/class; 60-day membership \$65/resident, \$81.25/non-resident. 561-393-7807; myboca.us

Monday -12/4 - Adult Zumba Class at Boca Raton Community Center, 150 Crawford Blvd. Every M 7-8 pm. \$7.50/1 class. 561-393-7807; myboca.us

Tuesday -12/5 - Grief Support Ministry at St. Mark Catholic Church St. Clare Room, 643 NE 4th Ave, Boynton Beach. Every T 2 pm. Free. 561-734-9330; stmarkboynton.com

12/5 - Tai Chi Class at Boca Raton Community Center, 150 Crawford Blvd. Beginner through advanced. Age 16+. Every T 6-8 pm. \$8-\$10/class. 561-393-7807; myboca.us

12/5 - Al Anon at St. Mark Catholic Church St. Clare Room, 643 NE 4th Ave, Boynton Beach. Every T 10 am & Th 7 pm. Free. 561-734-9330; stmarkboynton.com

12/5 - Al-Anon 12-Step Study at Unity of Delray Beach Fellowship Hall, 101 NW 22nd St. Every T 7 pm. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

Wednesday -12/6 - Stretch & Strengthening Mindfulness Class at South Palm Beach Town Hall, 3577 S Ocean Blvd. Every W/F 10:30 am. \$5/class. 561-588-8889; southpalmbeach.com

12/6 - LGBTQ AA Meeting at Unity of Delray Beach Fellowship Hall, 101 NW 22nd St. Every W 7 pm. Free. 561-276-5796; unityofdelraybeach.org

DECEMBER 10-16

Sunday - 12/10 - Yoga at the Museum at Boca Raton Museum of Art Outdoor Sculpture Garden, 501 Plaza Real. Yin yoga; all levels. 9:30-11 am. \$10/member; \$40/non-member. Registration: 561-392-2500; bocamuseum.org

DECEMBER 17-23

Thursday - 12/21 - Yoga Under the Stars at Boca Raton Museum of Art Outdoor Sculpture Garden, 501 Plaza Real. Yin yoga; all levels. 6-7:30 pm. \$10/member; \$40/non-member. Registration: 561-392-2500; bocamuseum.org

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Health Notes

FAU opinion endorses new vaccine for COVID

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recently recommended getting COVID-19 vaccines that had been granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Sept. 11.

These were issued to Moderna and Pfizer for their new and updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccines to combat the new variant that natural or acquired immunity does not confer protection.

In published commentary, researchers from Florida Atlantic University's Schmidt College of Medicine noted:

"The war on COVID-19 continues to be fought valiantly and selflessly by health care professionals in communities and hospitals across the nation," said Allison H. Ferris, M.D., chair of the college's Department of Medicine and director of the internal medicine residency program. "As competent and compassionate physicians, we must redouble our efforts to promote evidence-based clinical and public health practices, including vaccination of all eligible U.S. adults and children with the new vaccine."

The updated COVID-19

vaccines are now available at most pharmacies. Sources can be accessed at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

Health care providers can reassure patients that the Affordable Care Act mandates that insurance companies reimburse the cost for the updated COVID-19 vaccine, as well as all other vaccines that are endorsed by the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

HCA Florida JFK Hospital was recently named one of America's 50 Best Hospitals for cardiac surgery, and one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for cardiac care, orthopedic surgery and spine surgery by Healthgrades.

Also, HCA Florida JFK Hospital Breast Center was re-accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers administered by the American College of Surgeons. It has been accredited since 2010. Patients receiving care at this accredited center have access to comprehensive care, a multidisciplinary team approach to coordinate the best treatment options, and information about ongoing clinical trials and new treatment options.



The JFK Breast Center team includes (l-r) Keziah Geneve, Lisa Addesa, Tonnica Sanassas, Maria Nieto, Dawn Paynter, Dr. Georges Hatoum, Dr. Beth-Ann Lesnikoski, Dr. Dianne Georgian-Smith, Sharon Wilson, Rolando Perez, Terry Eggenberger and Eunide Destine Joseph. **Photo provided**

Delray Medical Center achieved numerous five-star ratings for specialty care by Healthgrades. For treating heart failure, it has been a five-star recipient for 22 consecutive years. Achieving ratings for the first time for 2024, it is a five-star recipient for valve surgery, treating heart attacks, defibrillator procedures, and coronary intervention procedures.

FloSpine, based in Boca Raton, has achieved 510(k) clearance for its KeyLift Expandable Interlaminar Stabilization System from the FDA.

This device addresses spinal stenosis, a condition that occurs when the spinal canal narrows,

causing pressure on the nerves and leading to back and leg pain, weakness and numbness. Traditional treatment options for spinal stenosis have often involved invasive surgical procedures with long recovery times. The KeyLift system is a less invasive alternative and can be administered in an outpatient surgery center.

The design is the result of years of research, development and testing by the FloSpine team, anchored by the late Luis Escobar, lead design engineer.

FloSpine has also moved to a new location, said Andrew Duffell, president of the Research Park at Florida Atlantic University, expanding from the Global Ventures incubator into its own space at

the Research Park.

FloSpine's growth is "an inspiration to health-tech entrepreneurs and Florida Atlantic students who see their classmates excel in an exciting, growing industry," Duffell said.

Florida Atlantic University's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing with **Cross Country Healthcare** has launched two new continuing education certificate courses designed to train health care professionals and caregivers on compassionate care of persons with dementia and nurses caring for patients in telemetry/progressive care units.

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

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Tots & Teens

St. Paul's Day School celebrates 60 years of kindness, progress

By Faran Fagen

The children at St. Paul's Day School took a collective deep breath before singing in unison: "I've Got That Joy, Joy, Joy, Down in My Heart."

It was the apex of the 60-year anniversary celebration of the Delray Beach preschool that brought current and alumni families together on Oct. 29 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Since 1963, more than 1,200 families have entrusted their young children to the intimate classrooms at Children's Village at St. Paul to begin a journey of learning, laughing, play and prayers.

"They say 'it takes a village' to raise a child," director Liz Ryan said. "We believe that to be true, so St. Paul's has provided the Children's Village as the blessed environment for 3- and 4-year-olds in our community. We surrounded them with adults who help them learn to love school."

St. Paul School's teaching philosophy is to embrace the whole child, addressing social, emotional, intellectual and physical development while creating life-long learners. Cognitive, social and spiritual growth are evident in the way the children succeed when they move on to elementary schools, Ryan said.

In that spirit, one of the most important St. Paul's values is "kindness matters." Kindness awards are delivered each week to allow the children to learn what kindness is and inspire them to show it. The Children's Village helps children build strong and lasting friendships.

The Day School is located on the serene campus of St. Paul's



ABOVE: Director Liz Ryan (l-r), teachers Kathy Yates and Cary Tobias, retired director Patti Daniell and the Rev. Paul J. Kane were part of the 60th anniversary celebration at St. Paul's Day School. **Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star**
LEFT: Longtime director Rolene Gent with a class of children in 1972. **Photo provided**

Episcopal Church on historic Swinton Avenue, two blocks south of Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach. A small school of approximately 34 students, it allows for individualized attention to each child's needs.

St. Paul's reputation is built on word-of-mouth recommendations from parents and alumni. Kathy Yates has taught there for 25 years, and her children and grandchildren have attended.

The 4-year-olds' classes fall under the state's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education program, or VPK. The Day School has been accredited through the Florida Association

for Child Care Management and has received its gold seal for quality of care.

Patti Daniell was director from 1995 to 2016, when she retired. She succeeded Rolene Gent, who was the first director from 1963 to 1995.

Daniell first became involved with the school in 1989, when her oldest son attended. In addition to the low teacher-to-student ratio (six faculty for 34 kids), she is most proud of the fact that St. Paul's welcomes all faiths.

"They come to the chapel because it's child-centered," Daniell said. "Our mission is to reach young children and create

an environment of love and learning."

Both Daniell and Ryan have seen the classrooms augmented over the years, with "centers full of learning toys and materials and child-sized furniture to inspire curiosity, exploration and imagination," Ryan said.

While the children are familiar with technology (and use it frequently at home), their primary development is advanced through play and discovery and hands-on learning.

"We reserve use of 'high-tech' tools for special units," Ryan said. "Our educational model is 'classic.'"

The biggest change came in 2010 when they started the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education program.

Though the school does offer scholarships, the addition of VPK opened doors wider to families that couldn't afford the school and allowed the school to offer after-care. Prior to offering after-care the school was open only from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

All the kindness, change and progress were celebrated at the anniversary just prior to Halloween.

On this Sunday, in addition to "I've Got That Joy, Joy, Joy, Down in My Heart," the children sang "This is the Day that the Lord Has Made" and "My God is So Great."

The children learn songs of all sorts each week in their music class, taught by Diane Gray, who imparts music terminology to enhance their singing.

Because the celebration fell right before Halloween, the children and alumni were invited to wear costumes. After receiving a Blessing of the Trick or Treaters, they were given special treat bags with candy "to start them off," and a copy of the Blessing prayer. That was followed by a reception outdoors in the Day School playground and Trunk or Treat in the school parking lot.

"It was so wonderful and full of joy, and the church was full of life," Daniell said. "Young children, parents, grandparents — all those generations in one place was so special." ★

For more information about St. Paul's Day School, visit <https://stpaulsdelray.org/day-school>.

Tots & Teens Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 11/22. Please check with organizers for any changes.

DECEMBER 2

Saturday - 12/2 - Drop-In Family Storytime at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Up to age 5. Every Sat 10-10:30 am. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/2 - Saturday Morning ART (smART) at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real. Links art making w/learning about art. Held again 1/6. Age 5+. 10-11 am. \$15/member; \$25/non-member. Registration: 561-392-2500; bocamuseum.org
12/2 - The Great Weather Diviner at Delray

Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Meet/greet, book talk and signing, snacks, raffles. All ages. 10:30 am-noon. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org
12/2 - STEM Camp: Coding at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 7-12. 10:30-11:45 am. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org
12/2 - Play & Learn Storytime at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 0-5 yrs. Every Sat 10:30-11 am. Free. 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/2 - Chess Club at Spady Cultural Heritage Museum, 170 NW 5th Ave, Delray Beach. Every Th 5-6 pm; Sat noon-2 pm. 561-352-7145;

spadymuseum.com
12/2 - Daily Aquarium Feedings & Animal Encounters at Sandoway Discovery Center, 142 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. All ages. T-Sun: 1 pm/Shark & Stingray feedings; 2 pm/Aquarium feedings; 3 pm/Animal encounters. Free w/\$10 admission. 561-274-7263; sandoway.org
12/2 - Got Gaming Club at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13-17. Held again 12/16 3-4:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

DECEMBER 3-9

Monday - 12/4 - Fun w/Fernanda: Bilingual Spanish-English Story Time at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 0-4.

3:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org
12/4 - PAWS to Read at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Join Ms. Rose and therapy dog, Cloud, to practice reading. Age 5-12. Every M through 12/18 4-5 pm. Free. 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org
12/4 - Teen Talk: Alcohol Literacy Challenge at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Age 13-17. 5-6:30 pm. Free. 561-742-6393; boyntonlibrary.org
12/4 - Audition Workshop at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Grades 4-5. 5-8 pm. \$125. 561-586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org
12/4 - Zestful Zumba at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13-17. 5:15-6:15 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org
12/4 - Youth Basketball League at Hester Center, 1901 N Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. Age 5-7 M through 3/4; Age 8-10 T through 3/5; Age 11-15 W through 3/6. 6-8 pm. \$60/resident; \$75/non-resident. 561-742-6552; boynton-beach.org
Tuesday - 12/5 - Toddler & 2 Tales at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Literacy enrichment class. Age walking to 2 yrs. 10-10:30 am. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/5 - Play & Learn for Toddlers at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Learn literacy skills during playtime. Age walking to 23 mos. 10:30-11 am. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/5 - Teen Tech Sandbox: Introduction to Podcasting at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13-17. Held again 12/12 & 19 3-4:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org
12/5 - Teen Tuesday at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Age 13-17. Every T 5-7 pm. Free. 561-742-6393; boyntonlibrary.org

12/5 - Tween Book Jam: Show Me a Sign by Ann Clare LeZotte at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 9-12. 6-7 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/5 - Tuesday Night Chess Open Play at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 6+. Every T through 12/19 6-8 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/5-6 - Sensational Story 'n More at Schoolhouse Children's Museum & Learning Center, 129 E Ocean Ave, Boynton Beach. Interactive performance, singing, movement, props. Age 2-5. Runs through 12/12-13. T 10-10:45 am & W 3-3:45 pm. Free w/paid admission. 561-742-6780; schoolhousemuseum.org
Wednesday - 12/6 - Oh Baby Story Time at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Music, stories, rhymes. Age 3 months-2.5 years. Held again 12/13 10 am. Free. 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org
12/6 - Square Off The Square: Young @ Art at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Create fun arts/crafts, learn principles of art. Age 6-9. 3:30 pm. Free. 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org
12/6 - Preschool Storytime at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 3-5. 3:30-4 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/6 - Play & Learn for Preschoolers at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 3-5. 4-4:30 pm. Free. 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org
12/6 - Pajama Storytime at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. 6:30-7 pm. Free. 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org
Thursday - 12/7 - Special Guest Storytime w/Gumbo Limbo & Luna at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Up to age 8. 10-10:30 am. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

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Paws Up for Pets

Not all cats are aloof; in fact, some make purrfect therapy animals

The time is long overdue to salute a small but vital population group: certified therapy cats. Yep, it turns out that while these cats are small in numbers compared with therapy dogs, the impact they make on people is huge in terms of boosting our attitudes and more.

Just ask Paige Finkelstein, a medical doctor who has logged dozens of therapy visits at senior centers in Boca Raton and New York City with her tri-colored feline she named Cat. Yes, Cat.

"I adopted her in 2020 from the Broward Humane Society and I named her Cat after the feline named Cat from the movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's*," says Finkelstein. "Cat has a great demeanor and greets everyone she meets with a loud, audible purr."

Paige, whose parents, Pam and David Finkelstein, reside in Boca Raton, is now in New York City completing her surgical fellowship. She and Cat completed the therapy cat certification through Pet Partners, a major organization that has supported thousands of therapy pet-people teams all over the world.

"Cat did a great job in her therapy training and evaluation and is naturally well mannered," says Finkelstein. "I take her on a pink harness and leash to senior living places. Some residents seeing and petting her begin talking about their cats that they loved so fondly. Therapy cats bring back happy memories."

I, too, know the impact a therapy cat can make. Casey, my long-legged orange tabby, has been making visits to senior centers, schools, animal shelters and other places since 2018 with another national group called Love on a Leash.



A cat named Cat cuddles with a resident at a senior center. Photo provided by Paige Finkelstein

Like Cat, Casey sports a loud purr. He loves learning new tricks and is always game to sniff out a new place and meet all types of people. On our second visit to a memory care center, one of the residents named Peggy spotted Casey entering the activity room. According to staff, Peggy rarely spoke, but her eyes lit up and she yelled, "Peggy loves Casey! Peggy loves Casey!"

The staff and I were stunned — in a good way — by this reaction. Since then, Casey has earned the nickname Pet Safety Cat Casey, as he teams up with Kona, my terrier mix, to conduct hands-on, veterinarian-approved pet first-aid classes with my Pet First Aid

4U program. Casey has traveled now to 15 states.

"Anecdotally, we've always known that people share meaningful relationships with cats, reflected in the number of requests we receive from facilities wanting therapy cat visits," says Taylor Chastain Griffin, Ph.D., national director of the animal-assisted interventions program at Pet Partners.

Pet Partners recently completed a one-of-a-kind study on the impact therapy cat teams make by partnering up with Cat Person, a company that donates 1% of its sales of cat food and other products to study the connection between cats and people.

Got a therapy cat in the making?

If you believe your cat has the temperament and willingness to be a goodwill ambassador to people in senior living centers, hospitals, schools and other places, here are two major therapy training organizations to check out:

- **Pet Partners:** <https://petpartners.org>
- **Love on a Leash:** www.loveonaleash.org

Each of these nonprofit organizations offers guidelines on their pet-people therapy team programs for dogs, cats, horses and other companion animals.

"We teamed up with Pet Partners to put data behind what we know to be true — that cats are loving, intuitive beings that improve the mental health and wellness of humans," says Meghan Knoll, CEO of Cat Person.

Study researchers interviewed 63 certified cat therapy teams and received input from managers at senior centers and other places that welcome therapy cat visits. About 200 cat-therapy teams are certified through Pet Partners. In the study, most therapy cats were 6 years or older and had been adopted from a rescue group or animal shelter or found as strays.

"We are excited to have completed, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive study on cats as therapy animals and to share results that call for a greater appreciation of the cat-human bond," says Griffin.

You can see the complete

study by visiting petpartners.org and clicking on "publications." It reports these key findings:

- None of the participants reported that they ever feel having a cat visit is more trouble than it's worth. These included residential treatment centers, assisted living/nursing homes, schools and hospitals.

- Residential facility managers reported that depression and anxiety in clients decreased by more than two-thirds after therapy cat teams began making regular visits. By lesser margins cat visits increased verbalization among senior center residents and improved their willingness to eat.

- Both cat team handlers and facility managers noted that therapy cat visits increased the sharing of stories about their own cats among residents.

Griffin's hope is that this study helps to dispel stereotypes that all cats are standoffish and unable to be trained.

For Paige Finkelstein, sharing her life with Cat provides her with daily benefits.

"Being in my surgical fellowship, my days are long and can be very stressful," she says. "But when I come home, Cat is there doing her butt wiggles and being happy and excited to see me. She definitely helps me with stress relief."

Arden Moore is an author, speaker and master certified pet first-aid instructor. She hosts a radio show, Arden Moore's Four Legged Life (www.fourleggedlife.com), and the weekly Oh Behave! podcast on PetLifeRadio.com. Learn more by visiting www.ardenmoore.com.



12/7 - Music & Crafts at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 3-5. 3:30-4:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0197; delraylibrary.org

12/7 - Family Lego Challenge at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. All ages. 4-5 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

12/7 - Community Workers & Helpers at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Age 5-12. Held again 1/4. 4:30-5:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-742-6393; boyntonlibrary.org

Friday - 12/8 - Outdoor Storytime at Boynton Beach City Library under the Banyan tree, 100 E Ocean Ave. Stories, rhymes, more. Held again 12/20 & 1/3 10-10:30 am. Free. 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

12/8 - Baby Bookworm at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Storytime for infants accompanied by an adult. Age 0 months to non-walking. 11-11:30 am. Free. Registration: 561-393-7852; bocalibrary.org

12/8 - Play & Learn for Babies at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Learn literacy skills during playtime. Age 0 months to non-walking. 11:30 am-noon. Free. 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

12/8 - Anime Club at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13-17. Held again 12/22. 3:30-5:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0197; delraylibrary.org

12/9 - Holiday Hoops Basketball Tournament at Hester Center, 1901 N Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. Age 11-14. 9 am-4 pm. \$170/resident; \$231/non-resident. 561-742-6550; boynton-beach.org

DECEMBER 10-16

Sunday - 12/10 - Chess Moves: Tournament Play at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 6+. 9:30 am-4:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

12/10 - Rookie Rooks: Introduction to Chess for Youth at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 9-12. 10:30-11:30 am. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Monday - 12/11 - Kindergarten Readiness Story Time with Ms. Tea at Catherine Strong Splash Park, 1500 SW 6th St, Delray Beach. Age 3-5. 10 am. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/11 - Mindful Monday at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Age 13-17. 5-6:30 pm. Free. 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

12/11 - Audition Workshop at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Grades 7-8. 5-8 pm. \$125. 561-586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

Wednesday - 12/13 - Suzy Hammer Storytime at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Held again 12/27. 10-10:30 am. Free. 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

12/13 - Ms. Lovely's Playdate at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Interactive play. Age 3-5. 6-7 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/13 - Pop-Up Pages at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 0-5. Held again 12/19 (10-10:30 am), 12/28 & 1/5 (10-10:30 am). 6:30-7 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Friday - 12/15 - Winter Art Make & Take at

Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. All ages. 3-4 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Saturday - 12/16 - Little Wonders at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Hike, crafts, stories. Age 3-4 w/an adult. 10-11 am. \$8/resident & member; \$10/non-member. Reservations: 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

12/16 - Madden NFL Tournament at Hester Center, 1901 N Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. Age 12-14. 10 am-2 pm. \$10/resident; \$13/non-resident. 561-742-6550; boynton-beach.org

12/16 - Blissful Yoga at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13-17. 10-11 am. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/16 - STEM Camp: Specialty Program - Hour of Code at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 3-17. 10:30-11:45 am. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/16 - Nature Detectives at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. New mystery each month. Age 5-6 w/an adult. 11:30 am. \$8/resident & member; \$10/non-member. Reservations: 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

DECEMBER 17-23

Monday - 12/18 - Story Chasers Book Club at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 6-8. 3:30-4:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/18 - Teen Advisory Board Meeting at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic

Ave. 5-6 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

Tuesday - 12/19 - Teen Graphic Novel Talks: DPS Only! by Velinxi at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 13-17. 6-7 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

Thursday - 12/21 - K-Pop Club at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Age 13-17. 3-4 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0197; delraylibrary.org

DECEMBER 24-30

Tuesday - 12/26 - Library on the Go! Umoja (Unity) Day Kwanzaa Celebration at Spady Cultural Heritage Museum, 170 NW 5th Ave, Delray Beach. Each month librarian drives Library on the Go golf cart to a different location for an engaging pop-up library program. Age 4-11. 2:30-4 pm. Free. 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/26-29 - Pop Up Winter Break Camp at The Studio at Mizner Park, 201 Plaza Real, Boca Raton. Age 3-8 (must be fully potty trained). Held again 1/2-5. 9 am-noon. \$260/4 days; \$75/day. 561-203-3742; thestudioatmiznerpark.com

12/26-29 - Winter Break Junior Tennis Camp at Boca Raton Tennis Center, 271 NW Boca Raton Blvd. Age 6-15. Held again 1/2-5. 9 am-noon. \$43-\$53.75/day; \$137.60-\$172/week. 561-393-7978; myboca.us/704/Boca-Raton-Tennis-Center

Wednesday - 12/27 - Math Magicians: Improve Your Math Skills at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Grades 2-5. 5-6 pm. Free. 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

12/27-18 - Holiday Break Camp at Sims Center, 225 NW 12th Ave, Boynton Beach. Age 5-12. M-F 7:30 am-5:30 pm. \$208/resident; \$260/non-resident. 561-742-6640; boynton-beach.org

12/27-29 - Winter Break Camp at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Games, crafts, educational activities. Learn about the importance of caring for/protecting sea turtles, other marine life. Age 6-8. 8:30 am-noon. Per day \$30/member; \$37.50/non-member. Reservations: 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

Thursday - 12/28 - Creature Feature (PG) at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Age 13-17. 2-4 pm. Free. 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

12/28 - Picture Book Club at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Age 5-12. 4:30-5:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-742-6393; boyntonlibrary.org

DEC. 31-JAN. 6

Tuesday - 1/2 - Tween Book Jam at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Age 9-12. 6-7 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7968; bocalibrary.org

1/2-5 - Surf School at Red Reef Park, 1400 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Age 5-14. 9 am-3 pm; After care 3-5 pm. Day camp \$303-\$379; after care \$20-\$25 daily. 561-393-7807; myboca.us/Facilities/Facility/Details/Red-Reef-Park-49

1/2-5 - Winter Break Theatre Camp at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 7-15. M-F 9 am-4 pm. \$300/child. 561-586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

Boynton Beach

Garden club's 85 years of growth on view throughout city

By Tao Woolfe

Linda Anderson, president of the Boynton Beach Garden Club, fretted about how to condense 85 years of accomplishments into a short speech.

Because they rarely rest on their laurels, garden club members are busy every week with myriad activities and civic responsibilities — and it has always been thus.

Anderson, clad in a white sundress dappled with peonies and roses, decided to allow the club's historian to steal the show — which was held at the First Presbyterian Church of Boynton Beach on Nov. 14.

After welcoming the audience and speaking briefly about the club's growth and enduring values, Anderson stepped aside to let Sonja Zalutko, the club's historian, plant rows of colorful images in the minds of the 50 or so audience members.

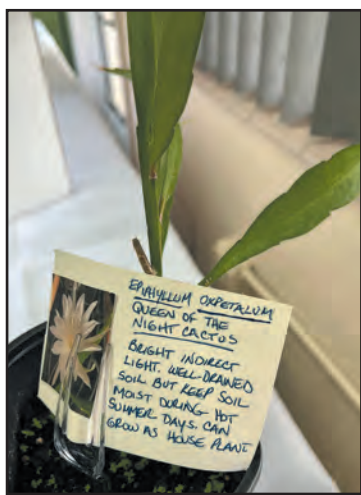
Zalutko spoke about the club's formation in 1938 by Bertha Williams Chadwell, and its mission to "encourage home and civic beautification."

Many of the club's efforts, she said, can still be seen throughout the city.

The club has planted notable trees — including two Ceiba pentandras, of the kapok family, that stood in the west yard of Boynton Beach High School. One of those trees is still in the yard of what is now the Arts & Cultural Center. The other tree was moved across the street.

In another beautification project, the garden club worked on creating a proper cemetery for the city, Zalutko said.

"Members worked tirelessly for many years clearing, planting and beautifying the grounds," she said. "In 1952 the cemetery located at the southwest corner of Woolbright and Seacrest, which was



Boynton Beach Garden Club members decorated the 85th-birthday cake with leaves and blooms; dressed up the Boynton Hills park with a new sign and landscaping; and provided plants as gifts for the celebration's raffle. **Photos by Tao Woolfe/The Coastal Star**

gardens that everyone can enjoy.

"A large component of our service to the community is a maintenance of two public gardens in Boynton Beach," Zalutko said.

"In 2010 the club was asked to take on the responsibility for a garden plot on the east side of the Schoolhouse Children's Museum on Ocean Avenue. Over many years of labor in love, a prized butterfly garden has brought pleasure to all that walk its path."

In 2018, then-Mayor Stephen Grant asked the club



to spruce up a small, damaged conservation area in the Boynton Hills neighborhood at Northwest Sixth Avenue and Seacrest Boulevard.

The former mayor attended the Nov. 14 luncheon. While Zalutko spoke about the club's growing civic involvement, Grant looked through his cellphone photos to show other luncheon guests how time, and a hurricane, had affected the Boynton Hills neighborhood's wilderness area.

It was wildly overgrown and the paint was peeling from the park's white, wooden welcome sign. Another sign, announcing that the area was a community garden, lay broken on the weed-choked ground.

"You can see why I asked them to get involved," Grant said.

And the garden club members relished the assignment, Zalutko reported.

Working alongside city parks and recreation employees, garden club members cleared hurricane-damaged trees and shrubs, defined planting areas using salvaged bricks, lined pathways with ferns and oyster plants, and replaced the welcome sign.

As their involvement deepened, the club members decided to go native.

"They introduced native plantings, including a Simpson's stopper, the lovely beautyberry bush, the once-endangered coontie, wild coffee, aloe, vinca and croton," Zalutko said.

Today, not only has the community garden been rejuvenated, the garden club is about to announce a new feature for Boynton Hills.

"The community garden is slowly being created into a small bird sanctuary for the neighborhood," Zalutko said.

The unveiling will be held on Jan. 19.

Another commitment the garden club members enjoy annually is a post-Thanksgiving visit to veterans at an assisted living facility called Rustic Retreat. The garden club members bring poinsettias, doughnuts, magazines, books and puzzles they have collected for the veterans.

"We're look forward to visiting Rustic Retreat," Zalutko said.

Zalutko finished her history with a look at the future.

"We continue to work on our goals to expand the knowledge of gardening, cultivate an appreciation of floral arts, and realize beautification efforts in our community that impact our state and nation," Zalutko said.

"We plant locally and think globally. We study, support and practice wise conservation measures, fight against pollution, and help protect our sensitive ecology in South Florida." ★

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On the Water

No, fishing yachts shouldn't be beached; here's how to avoid that

When a 92-foot Viking sportfishing yacht lost power and drifted onto the beach in Delray Beach last month, it raised questions of what boaters can do when such situations arise.

The first thing, said Capt. Chris Lemieux of Boynton Beach, is to drop your boat's anchor to prevent a powerless boat from heading into the beach or drifting far offshore.

According to a statement posted on Facebook by Viking Yacht Co., the vessel lost power because of a fuel interruption to its generators and main engines. The boat's crew was unable to manually release its anchor because it was "lodged into the deployment chute, rendering the anchor unusable."

After several days on the beach, the boat was towed to the Viking Yacht Service Center in Riviera Beach, where it is being repaired and, according to the statement, will be "back fishing, hopefully by the New Year."

Capt. Bouncer Smith noted that even after dropping anchor, boaters need to keep in mind that anchors don't always hold the bottom. One of his close calls during the 54 years that he ran fishing charters out of Miami was when he anchored his 25-foot boat offshore and went to the back to fish for bait.

He tried to pull up the chum bag, which is used to attract baitfish, but it was hung on a fish hook. Smith didn't know that and when he reached over to free the chum bag, the hook in the bag got stuck in his finger. Then the anchor broke free from the bottom.

"The boat was drifting toward the beach and I was hooked to the transom," Smith said. "So I took my fishing pliers and grabbed the hook and yanked it out of my finger and ran and got the boat started before I got any closer to shore."

The majority of boats in South Florida are a third of the size or smaller than the



A TowBoat US employee tosses a tow line to another employee to secure it on Delray Beach, where the 92-foot Viking sportfishing boat Pastime was beached on Nov. 3 after losing power. It took multiple attempts and three towing vessels to remove the boat on Nov. 5. Peter W. Cross/The Coastal Star

92-footer and powered by one or more outboard motors. Lemieux, who runs fishing charters out of Boynton Inlet, said those boaters should be prepared in case their marine batteries die and the motors won't start.

"I keep one of those cheap battery jump starters on my boat," Lemieux said. "If you ever lose power offshore, you can attach it to the battery and jump-start your motor. For \$50, it can save your day and get you back to the dock."

Boats can also run out of fuel. Lemieux said that he's seen fuel gauges go bad, indicating that his boat had more gas than it actually did. As a result, he fills his 27-foot center console with gas every time he goes fishing, or at least makes sure that he has enough fuel to fish offshore and get back to the dock.

Lemieux stressed the

importance of keeping your boat's engines in tip-top condition. A dirty motor that stops running and can't be started might require your boat to be towed in.

"Be up on your maintenance and change your fuel separators frequently," said Lemieux, explaining that the separator is a filter that removes water and particles from fuel. "Dirty gas, that's usually what people have an issue with in motor breakdown. I change the filters every 100 hours" that he runs his outboard motors.

Both Lemieux and Smith said boaters need to watch the weather before they head offshore. If your boat or your boat-handling skills are not prepared to operate in rough seas, it's better to stay home and wait for nicer weather to go boating.

"I can't tell you how many boats I've seen sitting on the

beach over the years, from freighters down to row boats," said Smith, who recalled when hazardous conditions resulted in several occupants of a 21-foot boat drowning.

The tragedy was that the boat didn't have a VHF radio or an EPIRB, an emergency beacon that, when activated, sends a distress signal to a satellite that is monitored by rescue agencies. Both provide location

coordinates. The boaters used a cell phone to call the Coast Guard, but provided the wrong location, and it took too long for the boat to be found.



Outdoors writer Steve Waters can be reached at steve33324@aol.com.

Outdoors Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 11/22. Please check with organizers for any changes.

DECEMBER 2

Saturday - 12/2 - Sand Sifters Beach Clean Up at Oceanfront Park, 6415 N Ocean Blvd, Ocean Ridge. Meet at south pavilion, lower parking lot. Bring water, hat, sunscreen. Bags, gloves, grabbers provided. 8-10:30 am. Free. jefflev02@gmail.com

12/2 - Coast Guard Auxiliary Boat America: A Boating Safety Course at Spanish River Park HQ Building, USCG Auxiliary Classroom, 3939 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Boating terminology, boat handling, navigation rules, federal & Florida regulations, more. Course provides knowledge needed to obtain a boating certificate; possible insurance discount. 9 am-5 pm. \$35/adult; \$5/teen. 561-391-3600; peauxboca@gmail.com

12/2 - Outdoor Marine Aquarium Feedings at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. All ages; child must be accompanied by an adult. Daily 12:30 pm. Free. 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

DECEMBER 3-9

Saturday - 12/9 - Intracoastal Adventures: Advanced Canoeing at Gumbo Limbo Nature

Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Short talks about South Florida's unique animals/ ecosystems. For experienced paddlers age 12-adult; child under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. 9:30-11 am. \$20/member; \$25/non-member. Registration required: 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

DECEMBER 10-16

Sunday - 12/10 - Intracoastal Adventures: Kayaking at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Includes short talk about South Florida's unique animals/ ecosystems. Age 7-adult; each child under 12 must be accompanied by one adult. Held again 12/23 9-10:30 am. \$20/resident & member; \$25/non-member. Registration: 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

12/10 - Young Scientists: Alligator Round-Up at Sandoway Discovery Center, 142 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. Outdoors, limited to 15 children. Age 3-9. 1:30 pm. \$10/non-member. RSVP: 561-274-7263; sandoway.org

Tuesday - 12/12 - Beach Treasures at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Learn about seashells, the animals that make them. Caravan to Red Reef Park, 1400 N State Rd A1A, to search for ocean treasures. All ages; child must be accompanied by an adult.

2-3:30 pm. Free. Reservations: 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

Saturday - 12/23 - Young Scientists: Lionfish Invasion at Sandoway Discovery Center, 142 S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. Outdoors, limited to 15 children. Age 3-9. 1:30 pm. \$10/non-member. RSVP: 561-274-7263; sandoway.org

DECEMBER 24-30

Wednesday - 12/27 - EcoWatch Lecture Series: On the Cutting Edge of Conservation at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Age 13 & up; child under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult. 6:30-8 pm. Free. 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

Thursday - 12/28 - Early Birding w/Al at Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, 1801 N Ocean Blvd, Boca Raton. Learn about native & migratory birds from an experienced birder; walk the Ashley Trail/boardwalk in search of warblers, gnatcatchers, woodpeckers, other avian species. Binoculars recommended. Meet on nature center front porch. Age 10+; child must be accompanied by an adult. 8:30-10 am. Free. 561-544-8605; gumbolimbo.org

Saturday - 12/30 - Sea Angels Beach Cleanup at Ocean Inlet Park, 6990 N Ocean Blvd, Ocean Ridge. Last Sat 8-9:30 am. Pre-registration required: 561-369-5501; seaangels.org

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Community Calendar

Note: Events are current as of 11/20. Please check with organizers for any changes. **NOTE: For holiday events, see page AT30.**

DECEMBER 2

Saturday - 12/2 - Pickleball at Hester Center, 1901 N Seacrest Blvd, Boynton Beach. Combines badminton & tennis. Adults. Sat 9 am-noon; M/W 6-8 pm. \$5; \$50/30-visit pass. 561-742-6550; boynton-beach.org

12/2 - Tour of Palm Beach County Historical Museum & Palm Beach Resort Wear Exhibit at 300 S Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach, Hosted by St. George's Society of Palm Beach, 9:45 am. \$20/member; \$25/non-member; dutch/lunch on Clematis. stgorgessocietyofpalmbeach.org

12/2 - Freestyle Saturdays Art Class at Boynton Beach Arts & Cultural Center, 125 E Ocean Ave. Age 18+. Every Sat through 12/30 10 am-12:30 pm. Per class \$29/resident; \$35/non-resident. Registration: 561-742-6221; boynton-beach.org

12/2 - Free Fun Saturday at The Schmidt Boca Raton History Museum at 71 N Federal Hwy. Held again 1/6. 10 am-4 pm. Free. 561-395-6766; bocahistory.org

12/2 - Calling All Serious Writers! Zoom Writers Studio presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Every Sat 10 am. Free. 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/2 - Current Events Discussion at Highland Beach Library, 3618 S Ocean Blvd. Every Sat 10:30 am. Free. 561-266-9702; highlandbeach.us

12/2 - Virtual Saturday Morning Writers' Group presented by Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Adults. Held again 1/6. 11 am-12:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7906; bocalibrary.org

12/2 - Crafted on the Ave at Libby Wesley Plaza, 2 SW 5th Ave, Delray Beach. Open-air craft market highlights local small businesses, merchants/creators of handmade products, art, other crafts/goods. 1-5 pm. Free. 561-651-9565; delraycra.org/events

12/2 - Sick Puppies Improv Comedy Extravaganza Show at Doghouse Theater, 105 NW 5th Ave, Delray Beach. Every Sat 7:30 pm. \$20-\$305. 954-667-7735; sickpuppiescomedy.com

12/2 - Elvis: In Person at Arts Garage, 94 NE 2nd Ave, Delray Beach. 8-10 pm. \$45-\$50. 561-450-6357; artsgarage.org

12/2-3 - 23rd Annual Downtown Delray Beach Art Festival, 401 E Atlantic. 10 am-5 pm. Free. 561-746-6615; artfestival.com

12/2-3 - The Nutcracker at Kravis Center Dreyfoos Hall, 701 Okeechobee Blvd. Sat 2 & 7 PM; Sun 1 & 5 PM. \$25-\$95. 561-630-8235; balletpalmbeach.org

12/2-3 - She Loves Me at The Delray Beach Playhouse, 950 NW 9th St. Runs through 12/10 F/Sat 8 pm; Sat/Sun 2 pm. \$55-\$65. 561-272-1281; delraybeachplayhouse.com

12/2-3 - The Berlin Diaries by Andrea Stolowitz at Florida Atlantic University Theatre Lab, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. Runs through 12/10. F/Sat 7:30 pm; Sun 3 pm. \$35-\$45/general admission; \$15/faculty/staff. 561-297-6124; fauevents.com

12/2-3 - Wait Until Dark by Frederick Knott at Boca Stage at Sol Theatre, 3333 N Federal Hwy, Boca Raton. Runs through 12/17. Th preview 8 pm; F/Sat 8 pm; Sun 2 pm. \$40-\$60. 561-447-8829; bocastage.org

12/2-3 - Bye Bye Birdie at The Wick Theatre & Costume Museum, 7901 N Federal Hwy, Boca Raton. Runs through 12/24. Th/F/Sat 7:30 pm; W/Th/Sat/Sun 2 pm. \$99. Reservations: 561-995-2333; thewick.org

DECEMBER 3-9

Sunday - 12/3 - Dreams & Fancies: Jody Miller, Recorder part of Music at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 188 S Swinton Ave, Delray Beach. 3 pm. \$30/person; free/age 18 & under. 561-276-4541; musicstpauls.org

12/3 - Sunday Matinee Music Series: Women of Note Chorus at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Adults. 3-4 pm. Registration: 561-393-7906; bocalibrary.org

12/3 - Friends of the Uffizi Lectures: Michelangelo: The World's First Artistic Celebrity at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real. Speaker Dr. Emily Fenichel. 3-4 pm. \$15/non-member. 561-392-2500; bocamuseum.org

12/3 - Delray Stories: Wisdom, Beauty & Inspiration at Arts Garage, 94 NE 2nd Ave, Delray Beach. 7 pm. \$25. 561-450-6357; artsgarage.org

Monday - 12/4 - Hand Crafted Greeting

Municipal Meetings

12/4 - Ocean Ridge Town Hall, 6450 N Ocean Blvd. 6 pm. Agenda: oceanridgeflorida.com

12/5 - Gulf Stream Town Hall, 100 Sea Rd. 9 am. Agenda: gulf-stream.org

12/5 & 19 - Highland Beach Town Hall, 3614 S Ocean Blvd. 1:30 pm. Agenda: highlandbeach.us

12/5 & 19 - Delray Beach City Hall, 100 NW 1st Ave. 5 pm. Agenda: delraybeachfl.gov

12/5 & 19 - Boynton Beach City Hall, 100 E Ocean Ave. 6 pm. Agenda: boynton-beach.org

12/7 - Briny Breezes Town Hall, 4802 N Ocean Blvd. 4 pm. Agenda: townofbrinybreezes-fl.com

12/11 - Lantana Town Hall, 500 Greynolds Cir. 6 pm. Agenda: lantana.org

12/12 - South Palm Beach Town Hall, 3577 S Ocean Blvd. 2 pm. Agenda: southpalmbeach.com

12/12 - Boca Raton Auditorium, 6500 Congress Ave. 6 pm. Agenda: myboca.us

12/18 - Manalapan Town Hall, 600 S Ocean Blvd. 10 am. Agenda: manalapan.org

Cards at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Create custom greeting cards. Adults. Held again 5-7 pm 12/6. 10am-noon. Free. Registration: 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

12/4 - Member Morning: Art in Public Spaces at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real. Speaker Dr. Emily Fenichel. 10-11:30 am. \$35/non-member. 561-392-2500; bocamuseum.org

12/4 - Race for the White House: Inside the Presidential Election w/Kevin Wagner at Florida Atlantic University Friedberg Auditorium, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. 10-11:30 am. \$60/annual membership; \$30/member; \$35/non-member & one-time guest pass at door. 561-297-3185; olliboca.fau.edu

12/4 - John Williams: Close Encounters with a Musical Genius w/Robert Wyatt at Florida Atlantic University Friedberg Auditorium, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. 12:30-2 pm. \$60/annual membership; \$30/member; \$35/non-member & one-time guest pass at door. 561-297-3185; olliboca.fau.edu

12/4 - Computer Basics (Windows 10) Class at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Adults. 2 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/4 - The Legacy of the Nuremberg Trials w/Robert P. Watson at Florida Atlantic University Friedberg Auditorium, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. 3-4:30 pm. \$60/annual membership; \$35/member; \$40/non-member & one-time guest pass at door. 561-297-3185; olliboca.fau.edu

12/4 - Staying Safe on Facebook at Boynton Beach City Library, 100 E Ocean Ave. Adults. 5-6:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-742-6390; boyntonlibrary.org

12/4-5 - Auditions for Grumpy Old Men - The Musical at The Delray Beach Playhouse, 950 NW 9th St. Show runs 2/2-25. Age 18+. M 7:30 pm; T 6 pm. 561-272-1281; delraybeachplayhouse.com

Tuesday - 12/5 - An Exclusive Conversation w/President George W. Bush at Florida Atlantic University Kaye Auditorium, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. Arrive early for security check; bring photo ID. 9:15 am doors open; 10 am program. \$25-\$350. 561-297-6124; fauevents.com

12/5 - The Struggle for Africa: The Battlefield for Global Powers w/Robert G. Rabil at Florida Atlantic University Friedberg Auditorium, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. 10-11:30 am. \$60/annual membership; \$35/member; \$40/non-member & one-time guest pass at door. 561-297-3185; olliboca.fau.edu

12/5 - The Myth of the Lost Cause w/Stephen Engle at Florida Atlantic University Friedberg Auditorium, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. 12:30-2 pm. \$60/annual membership; \$30/member; \$35/non-member & one-time guest pass at door. 561-297-3185; olliboca.fau.edu

12/5 - Boca Raton Garden Club at 4281 NW 3rd Ave. Every 1st T 1 pm. Free. 561-395-9376; bocaratongardenclub.org

12/5 - Socrates Café at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Philosophical discussions. Every T 1:30-3 pm. Free. 561-393-7852; bocalibrary.org

12/5 - BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Drop-In Tech Help at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Held again 12/12 & 19. 2-4 pm. Free. By Appointment Only: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/5 - Death of a Princess: Unanswered

Questions About the Tragic Death of Diana w/Jeffrey Steinberg at Florida Atlantic University Friedberg Auditorium, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. 3-4:30 pm. \$60/annual membership; \$30/member; \$35/non-member & one-time guest pass at door. 561-297-3185; olliboca.fau.edu

12/5 - Poets on the Fringe at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Adults. Every T through 12/26 4-5:45 pm. Free. 561-393-7906; bocalibrary.org

12/5 - Crafting for Fun & Small Business: Next Level Knitting: Create a Holiday Gift at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Adults. 5-7 pm. Free. Registration: 561-393-7906; bocalibrary.org

12/5 - Beginning Tap for Adults at Lake Worth Playhouse, 713 Lake Ave. Age 18+. Every T through 12/26 5:30-7 pm. \$60/4 weeks; \$20/drop-in. 561-586-6410; lakeworthplayhouse.org

12/5 - Bingo Tuesday at St. Lucy Catholic Church, 3510 S Ocean Blvd, Highland Beach. Every T 6 pm doors open; 7 pm games start. \$15/11 games. 561-278-1280; stlucycommunity.com

12/5 - Book Talks - Modern Literature: The Cazalet Chronicles by Elizabeth Jane Howard at Boca Raton Public Library, 400 NW 2nd Ave. Adults. 6-7 pm. Registration: 561-393-7906; bocalibrary.org

12/5 - English Conversation for Adult Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Every T through 12/19 6:30-7:30 pm. Free. Registration: 561-266-0194; delraylibrary.org

12/5 - Comedy Night at Arts Garage, 94 NE 2nd Ave, Delray Beach. 8-10 pm. \$5-\$10. 561-450-6357; artsgarage.org

12/5-6 - Feelin' Groovy Musical Lecture Series: The Life & Song of Pete Seeger at Delray Beach Playhouse, 950 NW 9th St. 2 pm. \$35. 561-272-1281; delraybeachplayhouse.com

Wednesday - 12/6 - Enough of Harry & Meghan Already? W/Margery Marcus at Florida Atlantic University Lifelong Learning Classroom, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton. 10-11:30 am. \$60/annual membership; \$40/member; \$50/non-member & one-time guest pass at door. 561-297-3185; olliboca.fau.edu

12/6 - Workshop: Indigo Ferns in Watercolor at Arts Warehouse, 313 NE 3rd St, Delray Beach. 10:30 am-12:30 pm. \$40. 561-330-9614; artwarehouse.org

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House of the Month



The large covered patio has a complete outdoor kitchen for al fresco dining and entertaining. A custom pool and spa help to create a paradise for outdoor living.



The expansive owner's suite has an oversized shower and free-standing tub. The suite overlooks a lush, private garden and has His and Her spacious walk-in closets with built-in shelving.



ABOVE: The great room's open floor plan evokes a comfortable lifestyle and has adjacent living and dining areas that overlook the covered patio through floor-to-ceiling impact glass walls. **BELOW:** The club room provides a secondary retreat to be utilized as a TV room and office. **Photos provided**

New construction in Gulf Stream

Influenced by the breezy architecture of Bermuda and the West Indies, the 14 home sites in Bluewater Cove at Place Au Soleil in Gulf Stream provide peaceful havens of ease and well-being. Developed and constructed by a collaboration between Courchene Development and Ironwood Properties, the homes range from single level to two-story and were designed by Affinity Architects.

The newly constructed home at 2911 Bluewater Cove is a 4-bedroom, 4½-bath, 2½-car garage design. It has hardwood floors throughout the main living areas and bedrooms and has crown molding throughout as well. A substantial mahogany front door with tongue and groove ceiling at the entryway welcomes you into the great room. Off to the right is the gourmet kitchen with island and Thermador appliances, including a 30-inch refrigerator and 30-inch freezer, dual ovens, six-burner gas cooktop and all the requisite culinary amenities including dual wine coolers and walk-in pantry.

The whole house is equipped with impact windows and doors, custom millwork and built-ins, as well as being a Smart Home featuring LED 4-inch-square recessed lighting, and a Crestron low-voltage lighting system.

Offered at \$4,875,000.

Contact Linda Lake, Sales Associate, Corcoran, 561-702-4898, linda.lake@corcoran.com or Kelley Johnson, Sales Associate, Corcoran, 561-703-3839, kelley.johnson@corcoran.com



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