Along the Coast

Beaches open! A cautious step toward normal

Pressure to unlock coast boosts jobs outweighs risk of surge in virus

By Mary Hladky

As Palm Beach County officials took the first steps toward rolling back coronavirus closures in late April, they started with recreational facilities such as parks and golf courses.

They then asked Gov. Ron DeSantis in early May to lift special restrictions placed on the county so restaurants and retail stores could reopen with capacity restrictions. DeSantis agreed, and also ended the closure of hair and nail salons and barber shops.

But beaches remained on the still-closed list, despite clamoring from the public to use the state’s most treasured resource.

That finally changed May 15 when county commissioners voted 5-2 to ratify an earlier decision to reopen public and private beaches on May 18, with beach-goers required to practice social distancing.

“We need to set policy that is for the greater good and not worry about outliers,” said Commissioner Robert Weinroth.

So why didn’t beaches open sooner? The county didn’t need DeSantis’ permission to reopen them. He had issued an executive order in March that extended beach closures but gave Palm Beach and Broward county administrators the authority to open them up.

County commissioners, however, faced a complex situation and were juggling competing demands.

Backdrop of death remains

Although some state data showed a decrease in hospital admissions and other positive signs that the rate of COVID-19 infections had stabilized or was in decline, the number of cases and deaths in the state and county continues to rise.

As of May 19, the state had 46,944 coronavirus cases, 502 more than the day before and 2,806 more than on May 15. Palm Beach County had 4,699 cases, up 41 from the day before and up 308 from May 15. The state’s death toll was 2,052, and the county’s was 284.

With DeSantis continuing to lift South Florida restrictions, some county commissioners were hesitant to further relax rules and risk a surge of new cases, possibly stretching hospitals — still struggling to obtain enough personal protective equipment — to the breaking point.

Disturbing images of people massing on Jacksonville and Naples beaches when they opened gave commissioners another concern. But Dr. Scott Rivkees, Florida’s surgeon general, has said he did not see an increased number of coronavirus cases resulting from Jacksonville’s mid-April beach reopening.

Yet Dr. Alina Alonso, health

See BEACH on page 14

Along the Coast

Behind masks: Service club stitchers unite to shield workers

By Ron Hayes

Their mission began in March, when dozens of women took up battle positions at sewing machines along our coast.

Day after day, week after week, they cut patterns, stitched borders, folded pleats, attached ribbons and elastic bands. They made masks.

Some were experienced seamstresses, some nervous amateurs learning as they worked.

All are members of local service clubs, doing their little bit each day in the war against the COVID-19 pandemic.

By early May, these women of the Briny Breezes Hobby Club, the Ocean Ridge Garden Club, the Casuarina Woman’s Club of Lantana, and the Boca Raton Garden Club had produced thousands of protective masks.

Today, some of those masks are worn by doctors and nurses at the VA Medical Center in Riviera Beach, the Lakeside Medical Center in Belle Glade, the Lynn Memorial Hospital and other institutions.

Nurses at Delray Medical Center model the masks provided by Briny Breezes seamstresses. Photo provided

See MASKS on page 18

Memorial Day tribute

Tour the South Florida National Cemetery

Page H1
It’s been an odd couple of months, right? There were no beach walks, pedicures or hanging out with friends. The neighborhood kids studied at home, and new graduates tossed their tassels only via video streams. Easter and Passover rituals were shared using Zoom.

And yet, I’m grateful. Grateful to live in a place where people help their neighbors. Where clever, caring people find solutions to difficult problems during a deadly pandemic. Where health care workers and first responders go to work each day — even in the face of danger and anger. Where local governments work hard and wisely to keep our cities and towns operating and informed.

I’m grateful for all of the people who work as part of our Coastal Star operation. These are difficult times for newspapers. Our reliance on advertising is starting to change, but we continue to need the support of our readers. Please consider making an online donation to help us continue to serve you.

I am grateful.

— Mary Kate Leming, Editor
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Other ads were placed by local organizations to honor first responders, hospital workers, and other local heroes.

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Swimmer laments halt to beach exercise regimen

Friday, May 1, was a beautiful morning. The ocean was radiantly supercharged from the rainstorm the preceding afternoon and crystal-clear smooth from a cool, offshore breeze. How well I know and love these weather metrics!

Under normal circumstances, I would have pursued my swimming regimen: 350 strokes freestyle out, float, pause, somersault in about 10 feet of water a half-dozen times, 350 strokes parallel to the shore and then back to sun dry on a beach towel. Then I return home from my secluded spot, 2-plus miles past the catamaran hangar site at the north end of Delray Beach.

And, yes, I go on foot, along the shoreline. I enjoy the solitude my regimen provides. I stand about as much chance of catching the novel coronavirus en route as a snowball has of being made in hell.

The Gulf Stream police know who I am: A worried member of a nearby roofing crew summoned them because he spotted me so far out to sea swimming with joyful abandon. Hey, bungee boarders, surfers, sailboarders, kayakers, fellow distance swimmers, snorkelers, paddleboarders: We’re “together, forever, as one!” to quote Chris Cuomo.

It ought to be readily apparent to the police, lifeguards and all others in positions of authority that the folk engaging in these activities, while doing so, pose no threat to social distancing. These are not contact sports, people! And since we arrive accessorized for our chosen activity, we are readily discernible from the throngs who want to sunbathe, wade, socialize and party hearty. (Mind you, I’m not condemning anyone for that, but now we are living the “new normal.”)

Undeniably, tri-county South Floridians must heed concessions to their lifestyles. However, I was agast to see people paddleboard and kayak in the Intracoastal Waterway, with the beach being a prohibited access to the ocean. The Intracoastal is neither a healthy nor safe place for those activities.

I recently spotted the “beach closed” sign at the intersection of A1A and Woolbright — how draconian! The virus doesn’t care… people need to use good judgment and common sense to avoid it.

And finally, there is the sargassum seaweed cycle, which will soon head toward our local beaches. It’s part of the natural world here and we have to allow for it, unpleasant though it may be. The ocean beckons and we must make smart choices with regard to the health benefits it offers us.

— James W. Stonehouse
Delray Beach
Reclaimed water project was mismanaged, city admits

By Jane Smith

The city’s reclaimed water project was mismanaged, according to a May 11 email, as we’re trying to fix it.

George Gretsas, city manager, speaking to the City Commission in a May 11 email to The Coastal Star that he was not told of any problems when he was in office from 2013 to 2018. “Further, neither I nor my commission colleagues were made aware of any system functionality problems during any public meetings,” Gretsas said.

Once repaired, all violations will be forwarded to state and federal regulators to stop sending raw sewage into the ocean.

The Florida DOH had a complaint Jan. 2 about cross connections between drinking and reclaimed water. Christine Ferragam, an inspector with the Utilities Department, provided notes to the investigation showing how the program was mismanaged from the start.

Gretsas, though, argued that the DOH letter failed to agree that the city would shut off its reclaimed water citywide to investigate. He wanted to avoid the boil-water order, which would have forced the hospital and restaurants to comply.

The city had to hire a contractor to create a database showing the locations of the drinking water and reclaimed water meters and the presence and types of backflow preventers on the drinking water systems.

City staff discovered that 237 reclaimed water customers citywide didn’t have backflow preventers, Gretsas said March 2.

The devices are an extra layer of protection against the mixing of reclaimed and drinking water.

“We were not doing the types of things that need to be done in asset management,” Gretsas said. “We just didn’t know where the devices were.”

The lack of information was evident in a spreadsheet the city sent to the DOH on March 6. It had many blank spaces, lacking dates when the reclaimed water was first connected, when the backflow devices were installed and when they were reinspected.

In the meantime, Delray Beach went with backflow preventers that have a 5 year lifespan because they were cheaper, Gretsas said city staff told him.

But that should change soon with new management, he said. Hassan Hadjimiry will start June 2 as the city’s water utilities director.

Gretsas said he did a national search and found the best candidate nearby. Hadjimiry retired May 5 from the county as its deputy director of water utilities.

Hadjimiry, who started with the county in 1982, was named as the Water Reuse Person of the Year in 2009. The Florida Water Environment Association has an annual statewide award annually since 2004.

Once Hadjimiry starts work, city commissioners will have more options put before them.

They can select the types of backflow preventers, an inspection and replacement program or, if they prefer, go to injecting the reclaimed water underground — which would be more costly, Gretsas said.

The commissioners will also hear about the costs of fixing the system. They include paying overtime for city staff, hiring contractors and consultants, adding new backflow devices, and providing water and a crew to irrigate lawns while the reclaimed water system was down. The amount spent since Feb. 4 was not available.

Delray Beach has hired a company run by Fred Bloetcher, a Florida Atlantic University associate dean in the engineering department, to investigate the reclaimed water program, Gretsas said.

To the city’s reclaimed water customers, Gretsas said, “I’m sorry this happened and sorry it went on for a decade.”
Ocean Ridge

Misdemeanor conviction to stay on Lucibella’s record

By Steve Plunkett

Businessman and magazine publisher Richard Lucibella has lost his courtroom quest to be cleared of all charges resulting from a backyard dustup with police in 2016 when he was the town’s vice mayor.

The 4th District Court of Appeal affirmed without comment Lucibella’s February 2019 conviction of misdemeanor battery on Ocean Ridge police Officer Richard Ermeri. The appellate judges delivered comparatively swift justice, issuing a “per curiam affirmed” on April 16, just seven weeks after oral arguments. The court’s website advises that a panel can take up to six months to reach a decision. During his criminal trial he was found not guilty of two felonies: resisting criminal trial he was found not guilty of two felonies: resisting a criminal trial he was found not guilty of two felonies: resisting a criminal trial he was found not guilty of two felonies: resisting

“In the end, I’ll settle for 99% vindication, for now,” he said.

The charges stemmed from an Oct. 22, 2016, confrontation in Lucibella’s backyard as police investigated reports of gunfire phoned in to 911. During a face-off Lucibella poked Ermeri with his finger through the officer’s bulletproof vest, “a forceful poke,” Ermeri, who has since been promoted to sergeant, testified at the original trial.

Leonard Feuer, Lucibella’s appellate lawyer, told the judicial panel on Feb. 25 that Lucibella had a right to defend himself after Ermeri, Officer Nubia Plesnik and Sgt. William Hallahan showed up.

“I’m not seeing this showing of force” by the police, Judge Alan Forst said. “Clearly they weren’t involved in, but they didn’t come in with guns blazing.”

Senior Assistant Attorney General Melynda Melear, representing the state, told the judges that Lucibella “walked into” Ermeri’s extended arms “by Plesnik that accuses him of gun aficionados, is still care organization” for doctors and publishes a magazine for gun aficionados, is still care organization” for doctors and publishes a magazine for

His lawyers in that case have suggested, again saying the original charge of battery on a law enforcement officer.”

Lucibella, who is chief executive of an “accountable care organization” for doctors and publishes a magazine for gun aficionados, is still care organization” for doctors and publishes a magazine for

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this year, the 4th DCA needed to rule on the legality of these officers entering my property. They chose to kick that down the road by not issuing a written opinion,” Lucibella said.

“Regardless of the (Circuit Court) jury found the officers to be acting outside their authority—that’s why they ruled my case lost,” Lucibella said.

He left during an investigation of sexual harassment claims involving a woman employee. De Jesus had hired the woman while he was serving his second stint as interim city manager.

On Feb. 27, Gelin hired the labor lawyer at the firm of Bordeaux & Blue to investigate the claim, based on allegations of suggestive texts that de Jesus had reportedly sent last fall. Suhaili Morales, of the firm’s Coral Gables office, issued a report on March 26 stating she had interviewed several female city workers, including department heads, along with the woman employee. She tried to interview de Jesus, but the ex-fire chief declined unless his lawyer was present.

Morales found “insufficient evidence to conclude that (the woman employee) was subjected to unlawful harassment.” She recommended that all employees be issued copies of the city’s harassment and reporting policy and acknowledge receiving them with signed receipts. Also, Morales advised the city to provide its managers with training on its harassment and complaint procedures.

Gelin declined to say whether she followed the suggestions, again saying the city does not comment on personnel matters.
Town wants to curtail transfer of offshore sand to neighboring cities

By Rich Pollack

In what might be shaping up as part of a continuing battle over beach-compatible sand offshore, Highland Beach is hoping to find ways to keep the valuable but rapidly vanishing resource off its coast from going to neighboring cities. It may be an uphill fight, however. The town has no legal claim to the sand used to replenish beaches, according to one attorney who specializes in coastal issues, and state regulators have already approved plans to dredge offshore for Boca Raton beach restoration projects for the next several years.

The question of whether Highland Beach has a way to stop another government from removing beach-compatible sand from a nearby “borrow area” surfaced after residents complained about offshore dredging done in March to restore Boca’s public beach. That North Boca Raton Beach Nourishment Project is complete, but additional projects in Boca that may result in dredging off the Highland Beach coast could begin in 2026.

The issue of how to preserve offshore sand first surfaced in Highland Beach during a commission meeting in May after Commissioner Peggy Gossett-Seidman began looking into the residents’ complaints. She told fellow commissioners that a limited quantity of beach-compatible sand exists off Highland Beach — sand that is about the same size and color as that on the beach — and that much of it is likely to go to other communities for their restoration projects.

She also found that Boca has a permit good through 2028 from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to remove sand off the town’s coast for additional projects.

“We are aware the town of Highland Beach does not own the sand off our shores,” she said. “Our concern is that a catastrophic hurricane such as Michael or Andrew strikes Highland Beach, wipes out our beaches and puts residents’ homes at risk, we could not rebuild our beach with our offshore beach-compatible sand because it would have already been removed.”

What the town can do to prevent other communities from depleting sand off its shore, if anything, is still being explored. During their second May meeting, commissioners agreed to hear a presentation at their June 2 meeting from a coastal engineer and discussed possibly interviewing environmental attorneys should legal action be needed.

The commission is also considering asking for reports from the state Department of Environmental Protection to show that all permits are being complied with.

Sand for Boca Raton beach renourishments through 2028 will come from the shaded area, the same area used for a project finished in 2019. SOURCE: City of Boca Raton

“Should the town challenge a permit to a spokesperson for the state Department of Environmental Protection. One issue that concerns Gossett-Seidman and some residents is what they consider a mislabeling of the location of the borrow areas in the permit application. Although a map in the application labels the area west of the borrow area as Boca Raton, the area is in fact Highland Beach.

That is not an issue, the state DEP spokesperson said, because the agency uses “reference monuments” or coastal survey markers to map project boundaries, not municipal boundaries.

Should the town challenge the existing permit for Boca, it would likely have a tough time.

“The town of Highland Beach has a lot of obstacles if it wants to challenge the permit now,” said Ken Oertel, a Tallahassee lawyer who specializes in environmental and land use law. Oertel said that challenges to a permit are accepted during a 20- or 30-day review period prior to approvals. After that time, it is very rare for challenges to be considered.

“Once that door closes, you’re pretty much out of luck,” he said.

Gossett-Seidman and other commissioners said they hope the issue can be resolved amicably through conversations with neighboring towns.

“A long-term cooperative program is what I’m currently proposing,” she said.

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COASTAL STAR

May/June 2020

News 9
Boca Raton

Interim police chief gets full reins to department

By Mary Hladky

Michele Miuccio, who had served as Boca Raton’s interim police chief since Dec. 1, has been promoted to police chief. She assumed her new role on April 27.

Miuccio has been with the department for more than 30 years, starting as an officer and rising through the ranks to deputy chief. Miuccio replaced Dan Alexander, who retired as chief on Nov. 30 after he was hired by the Palm Beach County School District to fill the newly created position of director of school police, serving as second-in-command to school district Police Chief Frank Kitzerow. Alexander led the city police department for 13 years.

“While serving as the interim police chief for the past five months, Michele’s steadfast leadership has provided consistency in the department’s mission and service,” City Manager Leif Ahnell said in an announcement of her promotion. “I’m confident the police department will continue to thrive and grow under her direction as chief.”

“I’m humbled by the opportunity to serve in this position and work alongside the dedicated men and women who keep Boca Raton safe and protect our residents,” Miuccio said in the announcement. “Together, we can make one of the finest police agencies even better.”

The city’s police department has 216 officers and 107 civilian employees. Police officer starting salaries were increased to $70,198 last year.

Along the Coast

Boynton, Delray name new fire chiefs

By Jane Smith

Boynton Beach and Delray Beach have promoted their interim fire chiefs to chief in their respective cities.

In Boynton Beach, Matthew S. Petty, 39, was promoted to fire chief on March 9 by the Boynton Beach city manager. In Delray Beach, Louis “Keith” Tomey III, who had served as interim fire chief three times, was named the chief on March 31.

Petty, previously deputy chief, took over as interim chief on Nov. 29, after Glenn Joseph resigned to contemplate a career move.

In 2008, Petty joined Boynton Beach as a firefighter. Over the years, he rose through the ranks at the department.

“I’m very excited to lead the organization and better serve the community,” Petty said. His salary is $150,000.

Boynton Beach has contracts with the barrier island towns of Briny Breezes and Ocean Ridge to provide fire-rescue services.

Tomey has spent more than 33 years in the fire service.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to be appointed to lead this great department,” Tomey said in a prepared statement. “Together, we have accomplished so much in the past few years. My goal is to keep moving forward and to keep improving.”

Tomey, whose father was also a fire chief, started his career in Miramar in 1986, when he was hired as a firefighter/paramedic. He rose through the ranks at Miramar Fire Rescue and eventually served as fire chief from January 2014 to December 2016. Then, he was hired at Delray Beach Fire Rescue as assistant fire chief.

Tomey promoted Battalion Chief Greg Giaccone to the rank of assistant chief in charge of operations.

Delray Beach provides fire-rescue services to the towns of Gulf Stream and Highland Beach on the barrier island.
Larcenies account for small towns’ uptick in reported crimes

Increase mainly due to thefts from unlocked cars

By Rich Pollack

South Palm Beach County’s small coastal communities saw crime increase in 2019, bucking both countywide and state trends, but their total number of crimes still remained low.

While Highland Beach, Gulf Stream, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan and South Palm Beach saw an uptick in major crimes, the area’s larger cities all experienced declines.

Numbers released by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for 2019 show that South Palm Beach, Manalapan and Ocean Ridge each had small increases in reported crimes, while Gulf Stream and Highland Beach saw larger increases.

In all, the five small communities had 117 reported crimes, up from 78 in 2018.

Larcenies, which can be anything from missing items to thefts from unlocked cars, were up significantly in Gulf Stream.

Gulf Stream recorded 12 larcenies in 2019 compared to 19 the previous year.

Highland Beach saw 28 larcenies in 2019 compared to 19 the prior year.

Seven of the dozen Gulf Stream larcenies were thefts from unlocked cars and one was theft from an unlocked landscape trailer. The town reported one auto theft, which was the result of keys being left in an unlocked car.

Thirteen of Highland Beach’s 28 larcenies were thefts from mostly unlocked vehicles, according to Police Chief Craig Hartmann.

"The simple message we’ve always had is lock your car doors," Hartmann said.

That message has also been extended to lock all the doors in your home.

Highland Beach saw burglaries jump just from one in 2018 to six last year, with four of those occurring a few minutes apart. They were attributed to three females who entered the homes through unlocked back doors. The out-of-town suspects, two juveniles and an adult, were arrested and charged in connection with the break-ins.

Locking doors, Hartmann says, not only helps reduce the loss of valuables but can also serve as a deterrent for future crimes. If thieves find that residents are locking doors, they are less likely to return to that community, he said.

Crime in South County’s larger cities continued to fall for the second year in a row. Boca Raton recorded a 7.7% decline, Boynton Beach a 7.5% drop and Delray Beach a 6% reduction.

In Lantana reported crimes dropped 6% following a 6.2% increase the previous year.

Any crime in Briny Breezes prior to Oct. 1 was included in the Boynton Beach numbers while those after Oct. 1 were reported by Ocean Ridge.

Countywide, major crimes declined about 8% while crime statewide dropped 6.3%, according to the FDLE’s Uniform Crime Report.

### South County numbers in 2019 vs. 2018

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<th>Murder</th>
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* Crimes occurring in Briny Breezes were incorporated into Boynton Beach and Ocean Ridge’s overall crime reports.

**Source:** Florida Department of Law Enforcement
**Ocean Ridge**  
**Discussion is short-lived on merger with sheriff**  

**By Dan Moffett**

An ocean ridge union representative, told commissioners during the discussion period that nearly 100% of the town’s police force favors joining the sheriff. “Pretty much, we’d rather merge than have layoffs,” Pilon said. “Our town is very small. We can’t compete with the county’s benefits package.”

Matt Deloy, a spokesman for the Palm Beach County Police Benevolent Association, told commissioners that a merger would almost certainly cut the town’s expenses. “The numbers almost always come out to be a cost savings,” Deloy said.

Ocean Ridge took a serious look at a merger with the sheriff in 2012, but residents objected to losing their police department and the idea fizzled. This time it appears to be on hold.

said Town Manager Tracey Stevens. “I don’t have to hear discussion regarding the sheriff’s department taking over the town’s law enforcement duties.”

In other business:
* By a 3-2 margin, commissioners installed de Haseth as mayor during their meeting on April 6, with Wiescholek and Susan Hurfburg voting their opposition. Police Chief Steve Cox voted for Cox, who was installed as vice mayor after serving the last 18 months as mayor.

Wiescholek said he cast the deciding vote for de Haseth because he believes in a “rotating commission” and thinks that the town will need to work more with other communities and agencies going forward.

Given the condition we are in and the situation we are in, Kristine would be the better choice simply because she has connections with the League of Cities and with her connections can bring more to the town over the next year,” he said.

• Building and public works official Wayne Cameron resigned in April to take a similar job with the town of North Palm Beach. Stevens said she is interviewing replacement candidates and hopes to have the job filled by June.

She said she intends to hire someone only as a building official — not also a public works director — to reduce the position’s workload.

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**South Palm Beach**

**South Palm considering candidates to improve communication services**

**By Dan Moffett**

The Town Council is moving closer to hiring a communications contractor to improve South Palm Beach’s internet connections and emergency communications with residents. During their May 12 meeting, council members approved drafting a contract with The Moffet Group Inc., a West Palm Beach public relations firm headed by former state legislator Sharon Merchant.

Another West Palm Beach firm, FY Group, is also competing for the contract. The two companies scored highest in council members’ evaluations of services from several applicants.

If we have to decide what we need,” Manny Botte, “We’re not that close right now, and I think we’ll need a workshop to promote discussion.”

Fischer said she wants the town’s website to do a better job reaching out to residents and enlisting their involvement in government and recreational activities. Vice Mayor Robert Gottlieb believes a town Facebook page might be part of the solution.

“We’re a unique small town,” Fischer said. “We have to figure out how to reach people. A lot of our residents don’t even have cellphones.”

Improving communications took on a new urgency last Thanksgiving weekend when a water main broke outside the Mayfair condos, parts of the town lost service and utilities officials put out a boil-water advisory. Fischer said she had no way to quickly alert residents and had to post flyers in the lobbies of condo buildings.

The council is looking for a way to send out mass email test messages to a mass of the town’s population as possible.

In other news:
* Mayor Robert Kellogg and Fischer distributed several thousand surgical face masks throughout the town last month. Council members endorsed buying the masks to promote public safety in dealing with the coronavirus.

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**Briny Breezes**

**Town asks state to slow boaters near marina**

**By Dan Moffett**

Briny Breezes is hoping there’s strength in numbers of neighbors when it comes to slowing down boaters in the Intracoastal Waterway. The Town Council voted unanimously on April 23 to fill a petition begun by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to create an “idle speed, no-wake” zone adjacent to the Briny marina.

The resolution is modeled after one passed by Delray Beach in February. And council members are hopeful Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge and Gulf Stream to adopt similar measures.

Mayor Gene Adams said a low-speed zone has become increasingly necessary because of rising water levels, flooding and the damage trailblazing boaters leave behind them.

“It really tears up our sea wall as well as our marina area,” Adams said. “So, otherwise Briny is going to have to spend more money to repair things that we would normally.”

The proposed zone would extend about a half-mile south from Woolbright Road, past the marina to Briny’s southern border.

Adding FWC officials to make the change won’t be easy, said Town Attorney Keith Davis. “That’s a very long shot.”

They made the decision, he said, “It’s not going to be a walk in the park.”

It’s a process. There’s always push-back from the recreational boating community.”

Davis said he was looking for a way to get the FWC to create a slow-speed zone for a municipality in northern Palm Beach County. It took about a year of persistence. Davis said it might be easier to get the FWC to approve a slow-speed zone, rather than a no-wake zone. “That’s less of an ask,” he said.

But the strongest parts of Briny’s case to the state was the fear that without a state safety zone, “The marina is our best bet as a leveraging tool.”

Several previous petition drives calling for a no-wake zone in Briny failed without gaining any real traction. State officials are generally reluctant to change the status quo without compelling evidence or significant public pressure.

The Delray Beach City Commission’s resolution asked the FWC to create a no-wake zone between Atlantic Avenue and the north end of the town. It also called for the use of or “full-time” for the boat traffic it draws.

“The one thing we have in our advantage is that we have adjacent marina facilities,” Davis said. “That may be a plus.”

Adams agreed: “The marina is our best bet as a leveraging tool.”

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**Cracium**

**Former South Palm Beach resident Lucille Flagello died on April 4, in Delray Beach, N.J., after a short illness. She was 79.**

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Mrs. Flagello was active in South Palm community events and a frequent participant in council meetings. Her son Joseph Flagello Jr., a chiropractor, served as the town’s vice mayor until dying suddenly at a heart failure at the age of 51 in 2017. Both were members of the Palmsela condo association.

“She was a wonderful person with a wonderful personality,” Fischer said. “Look at the son she produced.”

The council appointed Mrs. Flagello to serve out the remainder of her son’s term after his death. **
Gulf Stream

Plan presented to widen streets, fix roadway ponds

By Steve Plunkett

Sections of the town’s narrowest roads could be widened at least 2 feet to combat water ponding on the pavement and run- ers from vehicles that go off the asphalt. The widening project, estimated to cost $238,386, could be finished by next winter. The proposal is posted on the town’s website, www.gulf-stream.org, for townsfolk to review.

“I think it’s something that the core [area] residents should evaluate and consider,” Mayor Scott Morgan said. “It’s not terribly expensive; it addresses the issues that have been raised every single day as long as I’ve been in this town. And I don’t think it would set back the future road improvements.”

Consulting engineer Baxter & Woodman Inc. presented photos at the May 8 Town Commission meeting documenting what are routine sights in Gulf Stream’s core area: rainwater backing up and completely covering parts of roadways, water ponding several inches deep at dysfunctional drains and deep ruts created by multiple cars and trucks.

The engineering firm recommends adding 1 foot of pavement to both lanes of Polo Drive from south of Palm Way to Old School Road, on Old School Road from Polo to Wright Way, on Banyan Road from Polo to Gulfstream Road, and on Lakeview Drive east of Gulfstream. That would make Polo Drive’s lanes 10 feet wide and the lanes of other roads up to a minimum 9 feet wide.

The two blocks of Lakeview west of Gulfstream Road will get 2 additional feet of asphalt in each lane, while the east side of Gulfstream will become 3 feet wider from Lakeview to Gulfview Drive.

The town is in the second year of its 10-year capital improvement plan to replace water mains and rebuild streets. Planning for the re- construction of Polo, Gulfstream and other roads in the core area is scheduled for fiscal 2021, with the work coming in fiscal 2022.

This year’s capital improvement work focuses on the water main along the northern section of State Road A1A. Also in May, town commissioners awarded a 51.9 million contract to Wellington-based low bidder Foster Marine Contractors Inc. for that work.

In other business:

- Town Manager Greg Dunham told commissioners that AT&T has stopped putting its fiber optic underground and wants more than $1 million to finish the work. Its existing contract was for $420,000.
- “This is coming at the very tail end of the project—they probably aren’t that interested,” Morgan said.
- Dunham said he would meet with Danny Branch, the town’s main consultant on the underground utilities project, and the lawyer in Tallahassee who negotiated the contract with AT&T in 2017, to determine whether the higher cost is justified. FPL and Comcast were able to adapt to unexpected changes in the project without adjusting their fees, Morgan said.
- The eyesore house at 2775 Avenue Au Soleil was sold after the town reduced its lien to $125,000 and lifted its demand that the existing building be razed. But buyer Chet Snavely, who is also president of the Place Au Soleil Homeowners Association, plans to demolish the home anyway and “leave it as a lot,” Commissioner Donna White said.

Delray Beach

Commissioner Boylston agrees to fine to settle ethics violation case

By Jane Smith

Boylston

Delray Beach Vice Mayor Ryan Boylston has agreed to pay $2,000 for violations of state ethics laws over votes taken when he was a board member of a taxpayer-funded agency.

At the June 5 State Commission on Ethics meeting, commissioners plan to review a stipulation, agreeing to a time limit to investigate.

Ryan Boylston was appointed in July 2011 to the DDA, which promotes downtown Delray Beach and its owners in its 340-acre district.

The following year, 2012, he and others founded The Pineapple Newspaper, now known as the Delray Newspaper.

Boylston, whose DDA term ended in June 2017, said he did not violate state ethics laws.

“I never voted to directly send advertising to my former newspaper,” Boylston said in mid-May. “It was up to the DDA staff to decide where to spend their advertising dollars.”

From 2014 through 2017, the DDA spent $22,710 on ads in Boylston’s newspaper.

When he announced he was running for city commissioner in October 2017, he stepped down as publisher of the Delray Newspaper. He sold his shares a few months later.

“I didn’t fight it,” he added. “The hearing was in Tallahassee and I would have had to hire an attorney to represent me. Then the COVID-19 lockdowns started and I was losing business.”

Boylston runs a marketing company, now called 2To, to help businesses with branding, advertising, web design and development, and photography and video production needs.

Martin Reeder, a media industry lawyer in West Palm Beach, had pointed out possible ethics violations by Boylston two years ago when he was running for a City Commission seat.

“All we want our public officials to abide by Florida ethics laws,” Reeder said recently.

Chris Davey, a residential real estate consultant, filed the complaint because “the citizens of Delray Beach deserve elected officials who act in their interests. … Ultimately, the $2,000 fines are a slap on the wrist, but the test will be next March when Boylston is up for re-election.”

Boylston became vice mayor at the commission’s March 31 reorganization meeting.

Davey said he knows the Florida ethics laws from his stint on the city’s Planning and Zoning Board and his current seat as chairman of the Board of Adjustments.

The state did not proceed on four other ethics complaints filed by Davey, who ran for a City Commission seat in March but lost.

The county Commission on Ethics said those alleged DDA violations occurred outside its time limit to investigate.

However, that agency issued a letter of instruction to Boylston on Feb. 6 over a vote last year for his client Azur Development. That complaint also was filed by Davey.

The letter agrees that Boylston relied on advice from the city attorney, “which ultimately was incorrect,” when the commissioner voted in May 2019 for an Axara project.

But the letter also told Boylston to take “reasonable precautions” on questions of voting conflicts in future situations.

They include asking the person “appearing before the City Commission if he or she has a financial interest in a project.”

Boylston sees the letter as basically “a suggestion on what to do in the future.”

Reeder, though, said, “It’s not a get-out-of-jail-free card. The next time, more of the burden will be on him.”

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Palm Beach County
director in Palm Beach County, has urged commissioners to be cautious, saying in early May that reopening too soon or without proper protocols could cause a spike in cases. At the same time, many laid-off or furloughed workers desperately needed to return to work, and businesses faced the prospect of shuttering for good. And county residents going stir-crazy in their homes badly wanted a return to something like a normal life. Beaches occupied a special place in their hearts, and by May many were no longer willing to be kept away from them.

James Stonehouse of Delray Beach does distance swimming, surfing, kayaking and snorkeling. These activities reduce the stress of a health condition and the demands of caring for his 90-year-old mother. His beach activities are "very therapeutic," he said. "I have been beside myself that I haven’t been able to get to the beach," he said. "People pursuing health-sustaining activities shouldn’t be allowed to pursue them," especially those he practices that "align with social distancing."

Chris Currie of Ocean Ridge said he is an "ardent user of the beach" with activities including scuba diving, swimming and sailing. He has let town commissioners and De Santis know that he wanted beaches opened and has broadcast his feelings on social media. De Santis’ order closing beaches was "total overkill," he said.

“I also believe there is absolutely no scientific basis whatsoever (for the closure), not even a rational basis for it. All my research says there is probably no more conducive environment to social distancing than the beach," he said. "There is no environment more hostile to COVID-19." Currie had intended to file a lawsuit over beach closures but backed off when he learned that one of the commissioners was about to reopen them.

“I can assure you, if they are ever stupid enough to do this again, they will be up in litigation in the first 10 minutes," he said. Palm Beach County could have legally prevented residents of other counties from using its beaches, County Attorney Denise Nierman said. But she recommended against doing that because many of the beaches have received grants for beach restoration and other improvements. The grant agreements include clauses that prohibit restrictions on who can use the beaches, she said.

While county residents who want beaches reopened have not been shy about making their feelings known to city and town council members and county commissioners, there is also strong opposition.

A family visits the municipal beach in Delray Beach on May 18. Lifeguards patrolled the beach for unsafe activity while police officers made sure beach visitors did not violate any of the rules posted on signs all along A1A and at beach accesses. Rachel S. O’Hara/The Coastal Star

Gregg Weiss said that the county should delay a reopening decision until officials have data showing whether the reopening of parks, golf courses and other recreation facilities has led to an increase in coronavirus cases. Similarly, the county has no data yet on the impact of limited reopening of restaurants and retail businesses.

 Asked in a May 13 interview about why the commission did not address reopening beaches sooner, Weiss said it was trying to balance reopening businesses to alleviate the loss of jobs and other economic hardships caused by COVID-19, the desire of residents to have parks and beaches open and the health and safety of residents. "You have this very difficult balance the board is trying to address," he said.

"If something doesn’t go right and we have to shut it down, I will have no problem reversing the decision."

County commissioners opened public and private beaches before Broward and Miami-Dade counties took similar action. As of May 19, those counties had not announced when their beaches would open. Broward County Mayor Dale V.C. Holness said it would not happen until at least May 26, the Tuesday after Memorial Day weekend. The fact that Broward and Miami-Dade counties did not act in concert concerned Ocean Ridge Town Manager Tracy Stevens.

"The thing we are worried about the most is if Broward and Miami-Dade don’t open beaches, we will get an influx of people to the beach," she said on May 13. She agrees with the assessment of lifeguards that they cannot enforce social
distancing and limit crowd size by themselves. But police officers in the town, which has no lifeguards of its own, are limited in what they can do. “Our concerns are that it is going to be really hard to enforce something when we don’t have a huge police force,” she said.

Even so, she did not intend to place greater restrictions on beach use than the county has. If every city and town has different restrictions, “it makes it too confusing and too hard to enforce,” she said.

Beaches present a special challenge, she said. While a restaurant or business has a limited capacity that makes it easier to regulate how many people flocking to an area all at once, “You have thousands of people flocking to an area all at once,” she said.

Doctors still urge caution

Like the county health chief Alonso, other physicians urged caution on reopening. “I completely understand how everyone is feeling about being cooped up at home... but the other side is to caution everybody we are still in the middle of this pandemic,” said Dr. Terry Adirim, a professor and senior associate dean for clinical affairs at Florida Atlantic University. “A lot of us feel we are early in the pandemic.

“We have not made a sacrifice yet and don’t practice social distancing, he said. “That number needs a ‘really good, coherent strategy’ for reopening. That includes more testing, contact tracing and developing plans for quarantining people exposed to those sickened by COVID-19, she said.

“The number of cases will continue to rise until herd immunity is achieved,” said Adirim. “This number needs a ‘really good, coherent strategy’ for reopening. That includes more testing, contact tracing and developing plans for quarantining people exposed to those sickened by COVID-19, she said.

Benda agrees with Adirim that it is critical to have a significant increase in diagnostic and antibody testing. Reopening is difficult because not enough is known about the best way to do it. It is also complicated by the fact that some people won’t give up partying and don’t practice social distancing, he said.

“We haven’t made a sacrifice since the draft in the Vietnam War,” he said. “This is the first time in a long time we have been asked to make a sacrifice, and a significant proportion don’t want to do it.”

Benda, a surfer who loves the beach, said. “We haven’t made a sacrifice since the draft in the Vietnam War,” he said. “This is the first time in a long time we have been asked to make a sacrifice, and a significant proportion don’t want to do it.”

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Along the Coast

Signs of changing times during coronavirus outbreak

Birthday celebrations, graduations, hair appointments — few things in everyday life look as they did before COVID-19 arrived

A member of the National Guard instructs drivers on protocol at the COVID-19 testing site at the South County Civic Center in Delray Beach on April 7. Testing is done only by appointment for residents over age 16 who show symptoms. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Linda Loch, owner of Briny Beauty Salon, puts curlers in the hair of a longtime client. Loch wears a mask to help protect her customers. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

People in the citizen-driven South Florida Tri-County Car Caravan traveled throughout the area to encourage local and state officials to lift restrictions that eventually stood in place for about six weeks before they began to be phased out. Here the caravan makes its way along Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach on April 19. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Thirteen-year-old Kenzi Mendel rides on the back of a golf cart with her mother, Amani. Kenzi celebrated her birthday by motoring around her neighborhood in Ocean Ridge and accepting gifts and posters from dozens of neighbors and friends, like Sharon DeCardenas (right). Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Graduates from Saint John Paul II High School were honored by posters lined up in the front yard of the school in Boca Raton. Photo provided

Linda Loch, owner of Briny Beauty Salon, puts curlers in the hair of a longtime client. Loch wears a mask to help protect her customers. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star
Along the Coast

Virus makes hurricane shelter planning even more vital

By Rich Pollack

Should a hurricane threaten this year, residents could have to choose between leaving their homes to avoid water and wind or remaining home to avoid contracting a deadly and highly contagious virus.

The decision, emergency managers say, is an easy one. "Don’t not evacuate because of the coronavirus," says Bill Johnson, director of Palm Beach County’s Emergency Management division.

Throughout Palm Beach County, emergency managers and law enforcement officials are brainstorming ideas on how to ensure residents stay safe should a hurricane threaten while the coronavirus remains a health concern.

The topic has been surfacing in daily meetings, where discussions include issues such as how to manage shelters during a pandemic as well as how to keep first responders safe.

"This hurricane season will be unique," said Highland Beach Police Chief Craig Hartmann. "It’s not just the threat of a storm, it’s also the threat of a virus we can catch from one another."

One topic of special concern to coastal residents is how to manage evacuations and how to ensure people fleeing a storm have safe places to go.

"Countywide, emergency management teams are working to assure we are capable of handling COVID-19 and evacuations at the same time," said Ocean Ridge Police Chief Hal Hutchins.

However, the clear message is that the virus threat should not stand in the way of leaving home if you’re told to go. "The risk to your safety is less if you evacuate than if you stay," Hutchins said.

With hurricane season’s official beginning on June 1, Johnson and others say now is the time for people who live in evacuation zones to start making plans for where they will go should they be asked to leave their homes.

As always, the recommendation is to find shelter nearby rather than far away. At the same time, people should also search for ways to minimize the risk of contracting COVID-19.

"Is there a way you could shelter with family and friends and still maintain a safe distance?" says Chris Bell, Delray Beach’s new emergency manager.

Johnson says residents should have a Plan B in case the relatives or friends they expect to stay with start feeling ill.

Those who plan to evacuate to a hotel might also want to have a backup plan because hotel rooms could be harder to find — especially if they are used as shelters. "Potentially there could be fewer hotel rooms available," says Bell, who served as the director of preparedness for the state of Vermont. "If your plan was a hotel, think of a family you can go to as a backup."

Statewide and locally, emergency managers are also exploring options to ensure that people who have no other place to go can shelter together safely. In addition to possibly using hotel rooms, alternatives could include setting up special COVID-19 shelters or requiring those using community shelters to wear masks and stay a specified distance apart.

Hutchins said managers are also looking at ways to ensure that people with transportation needs are able to get to shelters if needed.

Johnson says that no matter where you go if you have to evacuate, the social distancing rules in place now would still apply. Those same rules would apply to first responders who are often called upon to stay together at a central location during a storm.

Bell says a lot of the practices in place for emergency workers — temperature checks when they enter a building and the wearing of masks even inside — will be employed during a storm emergency.

While evacuations in coastal areas would be likely should a hurricane threaten, Johnson says those evacuations may not be as widespread as they have been in the past. The county, he said, has been working with the National Hurricane Center on modeling of storm surge to determine degree of threat to certain coastal areas and to help further tailor evacuation zones.

That could lead to ordering evacuations on a case-by-case basis.
Continued from page 1

Cancer Institute in Boca Raton and the Delray Medical Center. They’ve been sent to fire departments in Indiana and the Keys, a homeless shelter in New York, hospitals in Georgia and Oregon, families and friends in Colorado, Connecticut and Arizona.

“We’re all quilters, so we have lots of scraps and fabric stashes,” explained Marla Guzzardo, president of the Briny Breezes Hobby Club. Using patterns they found online, the women began sewing both masks and head coverings in early March, working together in their clubhouse until safe-distancing guidelines shut it down. Then they took the club’s nine sewing machines home and worked alone.

“I drove around in my golf cart collecting the masks,” Guzzardo said. “We’re quarantined, so we’ve been sewing fools.”

By May, the women had sewn more than 2,000 masks and head coverings.

Club member Christina Adams, a registered nurse, sent a mask to her friend Tricia Marinella, who’s been screening employees and patients at Lakeside Medical Center in Belle Glade since her regular job as a school nurse at Park Vista High School vanished when the county’s schools closed.

“Lakeside saw the masks and thought they were really cool, so I reached out to Christina and they sent us about 20 masks and 20 head coverings,” Marinella says.

Then Adams sent more to a nurse she knows at a hospital in Tifton, Georgia.

Gabrielle Taylor, another nurse and club member, brought 80 masks to her colleagues at the VA Medical Center.

Guzzardo sent 40 to the Tavernier Police Department in the Keys.

Like a benign and loving virus, the masks were spread far and wide by word of mouth.

In Ocean Ridge, Mayor Kristine de Haseth was given the Briny Breezes pattern and a couple of masks by Christina Adams. The mayor called Stella Kolb, a member of the Ocean Ridge Garden Club and an experienced seamstress.

Together they turned the club’s attention from gardening to sewing.

All they needed were fabric and ties.

“I was doing something in my granddaughter’s bedroom and I saw a headband and it hit me,” Kolb recalled.

She and de Haseth hit the Dollar Stores, buying up elastic headbands, five for a buck. Some were hot pink and fluorescent, with fake rhinestones. But they would do.

Next, Kolb stood in line at the JoAnn Fabric store in Boynton Beach for an hour and multi-widths of fabric. She and de Haseth hit the Dollar Stores, buying up elastic headbands, five for a buck. Some were hot pink and fluorescent, with fake rhinestones. But they would do.

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JoAnn’s customers to make the masks and bring them back as donations to local hospitals and health care providers.

“The majority were not brought back,” Burtch said. But working together, the women had sewn 102 masks by May, including some of green material for the Sheriff’s Department. And they’re still turning them out.

“Since I’m not teaching, it’s good to be doing something,” Mouring said. “I’m bored to death.”

On March 23, members of the Boca Raton Garden Club got the message by email. Calling all seamstresses! Mary Kaub, president-elect, had seen the need and knew the club could help.

“Holiday House is our biggest craft sale of the year, and we had all this leftover material,” she said. When Bianca Boone got the message, she knew she was just what the project needed.

As a teenager growing up in Brazil, she’d learned to sew patterns from a neighbor who gave lessons. But then her career intervened. She came to Boca Raton and worked as an engineer at IBM, then retired. Two years ago, she joined the garden club.

“I never thought I’d be in the garden club sewing, but I’m loving it,” she said. “Working at home, I get into a production line. I work about three hours a day. I don’t work that long, but you get more and more efficient. I think I’ve sewn about 400 now.”

On Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m., the women, about 21 of them, drop off their masks at the club and pick up the fabrics to make more.

“Our seamstresses find a pattern that works best for them and they turn those in,” Kaub said. “We’re not picky. I’m quarantined, so I sew at night, and I can make about a dozen a day.

So far they’ve donated about 1,200 masks, to the Lynn Cancer Institute and Boca Raton Fire Department, as well as hospitals as far away as Oregon and New York.

“We’re using cotton materials,” Kaub said. “All cotton, and we wash them to make sure they go out clean.”

The basic patterns and rules for mask-making don’t vary.

Christine Burtch at JoAnn Fabric recommends a 6-by-10 inch rectangle of 100% quilter’s cotton, sewn in two layers. Some mask makers leave the top open to create a pocket in which a paper towel or coffee filter can be slipped to enhance the protection. And some use different colors for the front and back so wearers can tell which side they’ve put over the mouth.

Health care workers wear the donated masks over their medical-grade N95 masks to extend the life of the professional protective gear, not as a substitute.

For all the women wielding their sewing machines in the war on COVID-19, function always comes first. But that doesn’t mean they can’t accommodate a touch of style, too, and a smile.

“I wanted a Lilly Pulitzer mask,” Stella Kolb of the Ocean Ridge Garden Club said. “All pastel pinks and greens and blues. So I wound up taking a Lilly dress I hadn’t worn in 10 years, cut it up, and I even sewed the buttons on because they had her name on them. I got about 12 or 13 masks out of it, for me and my friends.

“I’m a Lilly,” she explained. “There’s a lot of Lilies along here.”

Off er valid Sunday – Thursday through September 30, 2020. Prix fixe menu changes weekly and includes a bottle of house wine. Does not include tax and gratuity.

Thank you!

I would like to convey my thanks and appreciation to all those who helped with my campaign which resulted in my being elected to our Town Council.

Overwhelming respect and thanks to everyone who voted for me as well.

Most Sincerely,

Ray McMillan

South Palm Beach Town Councilman
A good rule of foot: Step aside but not onto road shoulder

By Rich Pollack

Drive along State Road A1A in southern Palm Beach County and you’ll likely see quite a few more pedestrians than you normally might were it not for the coronavirus pandemic. You likely also will see people practicing social distancing by walking along the shoulder of the road, between the white line and the swale. That, say some in law enforcement, is a bad idea — and in some places it’s also against the law.

“Please don’t walk in the roadway because we don’t want you to get hit by a car,” said Ocean Ridge Police Chief Hal Hutchins. “If a sidewalk is provided, stay on the sidewalk.”

Hutchins said he and his officers saw a huge increase in the number of pedestrians on the sidewalk along A1A during the shutdown, in part because more people worked from home and because gyms, beaches and other exercise areas were closed.

That was also the case in most other coastal communities with walkways, including Highland Beach.

With so many people outside, it can be difficult to keep the recommended 6-foot separation. But Hutchins says people can do it with common sense and common courtesy — and without having to step on the shoulder of the road.

He says people can step into a driveway or onto the grass if they see pedestrians approaching and want to keep 6 feet away.

“You should step aside if you have the ability to do so,” he said.

He also recommends wearing a mask if you’re walking along a heavily used path.

“We’re asking people to wear a face covering so they don’t have to walk in the roadway,” he said of Ocean Ridge.

In fact, he said, state law requires pedestrians to walk on a sidewalk if one is available. While the goal is to ensure the safety of pedestrians, keeping walkers off the road also can help with the safety of bicyclists.

Bicyclist John Shoemaker, who is a Highland Beach town commissioner, said that when pedestrians walk on shoulders, which essentially serve as bike lanes, they pose a hazard for people on bikes.

“If pedestrians spill into the bike lane, then bicyclists have to go out into the roadway,” he said.

For his part, Hutchins believes people can be safer if they follow two simple instructions.

“Use common sense, and follow the state statutes,” he said.
Delray Beach cancels fireworks; Boynton opts for postponement

By Jane Smith

Fourth of July celebrations with fireworks, music and vendors will not take place this year in Delray Beach and Boynton Beach, their leaders decided May 19.

"None of us are excited about canceling," said Metot, Delray Beach Parks and Recreation director. The fireworks and barge would have cost an estimated $70,000, he said.

Delray Beach commissioners asked for a smaller scale event that would not draw such a large crowd. City staff will prepare suggestions for discussion at the June 2 commission meeting.

Boynton Beach commissioners decided to postpone the fireworks display, with staffers to return with ideas on July 15. The fireworks cost $62,000, City Manager Lori Laverriere told commissioners, with a five-year contract giving flexibility on when they may be used.

Lantana will shoot off fireworks on July 4, but it will close Bicentennial Park to prevent crowds from gathering. Cities nationwide have been advised by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention not to hold events with large crowds, to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus.

CDC guidelines also call for people to keep a social distance of 6 feet, to wear face masks when they are closer, and to sanitize surfaces.

The current site of Boynton Beach’s fireworks at Intracoastal Park was jammed with 6,000 spectators in 2019, Laverriere said.

Boynton Beach had planned to celebrate its centennial on July 4. In addition to the fireworks, the city wanted to set up a temporary postal branch on site for residents to write and send postcards to friends and families who live out of town.

Along the Coast

Care facilities ask for compassion, help amid struggles with virus

By Charles Elmore

Even as Florida moves to reopen many businesses, COVID-19 deaths of residents at 18 long-term care facilities in or near Boynton Beach, Delray Beach and Boca Raton add to a mounting statewide toll that frustrates hopes to relax visitor restrictions at centers that care for older and medically vulnerable people.

By May 18, deaths among residents and staff at long-term care facilities around the state passed 900, state records show. That represented more than 40% of all virus-related fatalities Florida has identified. New cases of infection continue to emerge.

Shopping short of lifting a ban on most visitors, Gov. Ron DeSantis expressed concerns that misinformation from loved ones comes with its own psychological and emotional costs.

“We’ve now been two months where visitors have not been allowed at these facilities,” DeSantis said May 13. “My view has been that I want to get to ‘yes’ on that. I just want to be able to know that we have procedures in place that if someone goes to visit their mother, that two weeks later we are not going to have 50 infections roll a nursing home or a long-term care facility.”

State rules effective May 18 allowed gyms, museums, restaurants and retailers to reopen or expand capacity. Officials have been grappling with what to do about visits to long-term care facilities.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force, recommended to governors on a May 11 call that all residents and staff at long-term care facilities be tested as soon as possible.

DeSantis said his office’s March 14 executive order banning visitors to the centers helped slow the rate of the virus’ spread compared to that in many other states. He noted that teams of Florida National Guard medics have tested 32,000 residents and staff of long-term care facilities.

Senior advocates said the testing has not gone far enough to protect residents facing the highest risks in the pandemic, in a state with nearly 200,000 beds in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.

“It is clear we have made significant investments to help protect the safety and well-being of our residents and team members,” Chris Winkle, CEO of Sunrise Senior Living, said in a May 12 letter posted on the website of Stratford Court in Boca Raton. “But when it comes to federal funding to support this critical work, unlike the airlines, hospitality and other industries, assisted living has been left out of the conversation. And, the incredible efforts of our heroes, the team members on the front line serving our seniors, are going unnoticed.”

Records posted by the Florida Department of Health show Stratford Court with seven deaths of residents as of May 15, one more than a week earlier.

Eight resident deaths were reported at Boulevard Rehabilitation Center in Boynton Beach on May 15, compared to six a week earlier, records show. The center’s website says it serves residents in short-term as well as longer stays.

Boulevard is “doing everything possible to limit COVID-19’s impact at our center,” a spokeswoman said.

“Our professional staff are doing heroic work through this crisis, and we are adhering to recommended protocols and guidelines from local, state and federal public health agencies and medical experts,” the center said.

Ten residents and 10 staff members tested positive for the virus at a state-run facility in Boynton Beach, Lantana will shoot off fireworks, the city wanted to celebrate its centennial on July 4. In addition to the fireworks, the city wanted to set up a temporary postal branch on site for residents to write and send postcards to friends and families who live out of town.

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NEWS 21

Along the Coast

Care facilities ask for compassion, help amid struggles with virus

By Charles Elmore

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News 21
Restaurateurs adapting to new guidelines for reopening

By Jan Norris

For most restaurants, the start of the state’s reopening is at least some relief from what Luke Therien calls “the most difficult” time he’s faced as a restaurateur. His family has owned Banana Boat in Boynton Beach for 41 years, and Prime Catch for 16.

Hurricanes, construction and other setbacks don’t compare to the loss of business that COVID-19 and the state’s subsequent shutdown have caused the hospitality industry, he said.

“Nobody’s seen anything like it,” he said. “But we’ll get through it.”

Now they’re gradually coming back after the governor started lifting closures. With Phase 2 implemented after a week of soft openings, most restaurants are reopened, including favorites such as John G’s and Johnnie Brown’s.

Guidelines effective May 18 called for reducing capacity for indoor seating to 50%, and outdoors, table seating 6 feet apart. Bars remained closed.

Restaurateurs have different approaches to comply with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sanitation rules and stipulations for occupancy. However, none can predict what the new business model will look like completely.

Most have reconfigured dining room seating, by spacing out tables, and dedicating workers to clean and sanitize spaces between guests’ arrivals. Todd Herbst of the Big Time Restaurant Group, owner of Elisabetta’s, Louise Bossi’s and Rocco’s Tacos in Delray Beach and Boca Raton, says through it all, they’ve taken it one day at a time.

The restaurants moved out tables and roped some off. Bar areas are off limits to patrons except to walk up and order a drink to take to a seat elsewhere, or else servers can bring the drinks to diners. The social-distancing rule of 6 feet applies throughout.

“None is allowed to stand or sit at the bar,” Herbst said.

The outdoor seating can make up for it: There is no limit to outdoor capacity as long as it’s spaced according to guidelines. “We’re lucky in some regards. Louise Bossi’s in Boca has a large exterior, and Lisabetta’s has two floors of outdoor space,” Herbst said.

Rocco’s downtown Delray has some. That’s still not a hell of a lot of space.

Vaughan Dugan, co-owner of Kapow! and The Dubliner in Boca Raton’s Mizner Park, is excited about reopening.

“The City Council has been great working with us, and they woke up close to the start. We got a tent coming with tables so we can set them six feet apart.

“We had to think outside the box. I think the creativity we’re seeing as the restaurants face the challenge is exciting,” Dugan points to Death or Glory in Delray Beach. It is using blow-up dollas as seat placeholders to maintain the 6-foot separation inside the restaurant.

He saw another restaurant that solved the bar situation by pushing high-top tables for two up against the bar. “Technically, they’re at the bar, but at a table.” The tables prevent patrons from gathering at the bar.

Loyal bar customers at Kapow! are confused, Dugan said. “They come in to drink and we have to tell them they have to take it to a table. They’re a little lost — they don’t know what to do.”

His first week open at Kapow! was down only slightly from business during season, he said. “But it’s too soon to comment. We did all right despite having only three tables in the restaurant. We’re small inside anyway.”

He’s partnering with other chefs and restaurants, helping them out. For a pop-up in The Dubliner, the staff is using Troy’s BBQ from Boynton Beach to put barbecue ribs on the menu.

As for safety compliance, staffors wear masks and sanitizing “holsters” that have spray and hand sanitizer; menus are disposable paper that are tossed after every use.

“We just had a staff meeting to teach them how we’ll be doing things: how to change gloves properly, sanitize tables and wash hands.

“But we explained why we’re doing it more than anything. It’s for the safety of our guests and our staff,” Dugan said.

Jason Sobel, operations manager for Casa D’Angelo in Boca Raton and Angelo’s Elia Pizza, Bar and Tapas in Delray Beach, said the company is going beyond guidelines, using new technology to keep diners safe.

The company purchased UV wands to sanitize tables, and installed hand-sanitizing stations through the restaurants and at doors. “There will be temperature checks of staff as well,” he said.

They seat at every other table rather than remove tables.

“The extra tables will act as barriers, and it’s nice to have a lot of tables in the restaurant,” Sobel said.

For now the two restaurants set tables on demand, taking only customers with reservations. Diners will no longer see tableware such as salt and pepper and other dispensers that would be reused. “Everything is going to be brought out, and cleaned in between usage,” Sobel said.

At Rosie’s Daughter and Brule in Delray Beach, owner Suzanne Perrotto has bought air-scrubbing machines.

“They are amazing. You can tell the difference in the air immediately,” she said. Several of her staffers have asthma and can’t wear masks, so she’s using the machines, sanitation stations and a revamped dish station that has sanitizer at every stop. Each restaurant also has plenty of outdoor seating.

She’s schooled her staffers in sanitation and told them that reopening is all about creating jobs, not making money. “We’re a business, of course, and we want to make money, but we want people to have jobs, too. To get back to work. That’s the most important thing right now.”

Therien is watching it all unfold, too. He opened Banana Boat during Phase 1, but Prime Catch remains closed until the end of May. It has to do with parking lot construction and not the virus.

“There’s no place to park, he said. “It’s literally impossible.”

Diners would have to park too far away and get through a construction zone to make it to the waterfront restaurant.

“If the parking lot had been done, we’d have opened. Over half of our seating there is outside.

“Our staff is ready, and anxious. Since we reopened, we haven’t lost any staff.”

Benny’s on the Beach management brought back its staff of 90 members. Benny said their partner Max Lipton said they could be needed soon, since the city of Lake Worth Beach has worked with Benny’s to reconfigure more seating space outdoors, both on the east and west ends. Benny sits on the entrance to Lake Worth Pier.

It turned the bar area into table seating since no bar patrons can congregate there.

Benny’s is open for breakfast and is one of the few around with outdoor seating waterfront.

“We are hoping and praying we’re one of the first beacons of hope for everybody,” Lipton said. “We’d like to think we might get a pretty decent surge of business. We want everybody to be safe and comfortable but we want to do as much business as possible.”

Over at Driftwood in Boynton Beach, Jimmy Everett said reopening to diners coming in to eat was another adjustment after he did so much take-out.

“There were longer wait times than we wanted, trying to get the food out for take-out and to the tables,” he said. “But everyone was just so glad to be out, they were respectful and understanding.

Take-out will still be part of the new model, he said. Customers have come to expect it. “We make adjustments daily. We’re able to sustain this for the time being,” Everett said.

Now he’s seating guests in every other booth and has added outdoor tables.

“I’m not going to be putting in partitions between booths or anything like that,” he said.

“You can’t kick someone out of the restaurant if they cough. We definitely plan on having signs and letting people know if anything they do is making others uncomfortable, they’ll be asked to leave.”

The challenging part is being cautious about that. Too. It’s a concern. You don’t want to open your doors if we know we’re going to be kicking people out if they’re disrespectful.”

All in all, Everett said, beyond the guidelines set forth, it’s all new territory for restaurants. “There’s not a right or wrong way, we’re just adapting and doing the best we can based on new information.”

He says he’s somewhat worried it’s too soon to reopen, despite attempts to keep non-essential traffic out of the restaurant and sanitizing beyond specifications.

He thinks opening too soon, then facing another shutdown could be worse than the initial closures. “It’s very important that it is done right, and this doesn’t happen again.”

Herbst is optimistic things will rebound in time. “In the meantime, we’re one of the few around in Boynton Beach and we’re one of the first beacons of hope.”

“Which is how we get to the other side, who knows? I like to quote Churchill: ‘When you’re going through hell, keep going.’

“The quicker, the better.”

ABOVE: Customers expecting to pay for meals at Cafe Frank-ie’s in Boynton Beach watch Dena Balka insist the food is free. She and other employees handled out dozens of meals for a few hours on May 6 after one of the regular patrons gift-ed them with enough money to ‘feed the needy.”

LEFT: Ren Kuikahi and Pam Edwards enjoy breakfast at Vida Luna Rosa in Del-ray Beach on May 12. The restaurant employed social distancing with more space than usual between tables and most patrons sitting outdoors.

Photos by Jerry Lower/
The Coastal Star

June/July 2020 22 News The COASTAL STAR
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Municipal Meetings

These listings take into account the next edition of The Coastal Star, scheduled for delivery the weekend of July 4.

5/26 & 27 - Manalapan - Manalapan Town Hall, 600 S Ocean Blvd. 10 am. Agenda: manalapan.org
5/27, 6/9 & 23 - Boca Raton - Boca Raton City Hall, 201 W Palmetto Park Rd. 6 pm. Agenda: myboca.us
6/1 - Ocean Ridge - Ocean Ridge Town Hall, 6450 N Ocean Blvd. 6 pm. Agenda: oceanridgeflorida.com
6/2 & 16 - Boynton Beach - Boynton Beach City Hall, 100 E Boynton Beach Blvd. 5:30 pm. Agenda: boynton-beach.org
6/2 & 16 - Delray Beach - Delray Beach City Hall, 100 NW 1st Ave. 4 pm. Agenda: delraybeachfl.gov
6/2 & 16 - Highland Beach - Highland Beach Town Hall, 3614 S Ocean Blvd. 1:30 pm. Agenda: highlandbeach.us
6/8 & 22 - Lantana - Lantana Town Hall, 500 Greynolds Cir. 7 pm. Agenda: lantana.org
6/9 - South Palm Beach - South Palm Beach Town Hall, 3577 S Ocean Blvd. 4 pm. Agenda: southpalmbeach.com
6/12 - Gulf Stream - Gulf Stream Town Hall, 100 Sea Rd. 9 am. Agenda: gulf-stream.org
6/23 - Briny Breezes - Briny Breezes Town Hall, 4802 N Ocean Blvd. 6 pm. Agenda: brinyybreezes-fl.com

NOTE: Many meetings are being held via teleconferencing. Please check websites for information on participation.

Lantana

By Mary Thurwachter

Plans to make better use of space and add a meeting room and outdoor reading garden to the town library won the approval of the Lantana Town Council on May 11.

The proposal, promoted by the Library Foundation and its chairman, Robert Barfknecht, boasts ADA-compliant restrooms, a centralized circulation desk, special spaces for children and teens and a community center for adult activities.

The lead architect for the project, Sam Ferreri of PGAL of Boca Raton, said the 4,000-square-foot library is headquartered in a former bank building with bookshelves breaking up the space. The bank’s old covered drive-thru isn’t being used, he said, but is a perfect location for a meeting room addition and is in close proximity to restrooms. So the meeting room can be used even when the library isn’t open, it will have a separate entrance.

Four parking spaces will be added to the current 14 in the north parking lot, and 25 more spaces are available on the Third Street lot. A few on-street parking spaces are available on Third Street and Ocean Avenue. The library’s main entrance will be from the north parking lot.

“The challenge with libraries is to have flexible space,” said Ferreri, who has designed libraries both large and small. “You’re very lucky to have a building, the bank building, with good bones. It’s very open and very flexible. I think there’s a lot of opportunity here and I’m very excited to be part of this.”

Barfknecht said that among all the architects with whom the foundation worked, six plans were considered. “The one you’re seeing tonight is the one that’s got us all very excited,” he said. “It solves so many problems and it gives us an additional 13% more space for library users. It’s also very children-centric.”

Cost of the project is $748,636, but the town has already put aside $400,000 for the library from Palm Beach County’s 1-cent sales tax distribution. The Library Foundation paid for the design fees and studies and will donate $50,000 for an outdoor reading garden on the south side of the meeting room.

Council members agreed to take the balance needed to complete the project — about $300,000 — from undesignated reserves.

While the renovation plans were well-received and eventually approved, the council delayed a decision until it had a chance to hear from local developer Michael Mauro, who pitched some alternative plans for the library at the same May 11 meeting.

Mauro, who wants to build a 10- to 12-story hotel (the town’s height limit is five stories) on and around the former bowling alley property next to library, is interested in purchasing the current library or exchanging it for another parcel to construct a new building, or building a new library near Town Hall. He said appraisals for the current library ranged from $730,000 to $750,000.

Mayor Dave Stewart wondered if Mauro could totally finance the construction of a new library on Greynolds Circle, near Town Hall. Mauro said he would have to consult with his partners about that.

Vice Mayor Lynn Moorhouse said he favored the Library Foundation’s proposal. He said it could be complete in about a year, while building an entirely new library would take much longer.

The foundation’s plan also drew overwhelming support from residents, many of whom spoke during the meeting or sent letters.

The library has been at 205 W. Ocean Ave. since the early 1990s after the Carretier Savings & Loan failed. Before that, the library, initially run by the Lantana Women’s Club, was housed in the former bridge-tender’s house on Ocean Avenue since 1947.

Next year Lantana will celebrate its 100th birthday and Barfknecht said it would be a perfect time to mark the occasion with a renovated modern library.

In other business during April and May, the town:
• Agreed to put on a Fourth of July fireworks show on the Intracoastal Waterway off the shores of Bicentennial Park. However, because of the pandemic, no events are planned in the park on that day.
• Set 5:30 p.m. June 8 as the date for the first budget workshop at Town Hall.
• Awarded a $141,762 contract to CH Global Construction to build new public restrooms at Bicentennial Park.
• Approved a $57,350 contract with Baxter Restoration of Boca Raton for the biomediation and rehabilitation of the marine safety building at the beach.

Library on track for renovation, modernization

Mike Rodgers from EES Design, fabricator of ‘Reflections’ by renowned kinetic artist Ralfonso, helps install Town Square’s gateway feature. The 21 bird-like wings on three columns of the sculpture will intersect via the wind and be colorfully lit at night. The display represents Boynton Beach’s diversity and unity. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Kinetic art installation

Town Square, Boynton Beach — May 1

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24 News
The COASTAL STAR
May/June 2020
t was no surprise some years back when Hydropolo Island resident Robert Barfknecht, a voracious reader, became a dues-paying member of the Lantana Library Foundation. Then, about 10 years ago, he became chairman of the foundation’s board of directors.

"I made the mistake of giving them too much money one year and they immediately invited me to become a member of the foundation’s board of directors," Barfknecht recalled with a laugh. "I accepted delightedly. I like giving back to the communities where I've lived and prospered."

"Sid Patchett, the director for so many years, worked hard to make it different, through the quality of the literature that was to be found there," Barfknecht said.

Patchett died last year and Barfknecht oversee the hiring of his replacement, Kristina Kreidler.

But now he and his board have a much larger assignment. The 1-cent sales tax increase levied by Palm Beach County a few years ago has allowed Lantana to improve some public utilities and, according to Barfknecht, much of the money for a significant upgrade in the library this year's budget.

The foundation interviewed four architectural firms and hired PGAL of Boca Raton, which has designed more than 30 libraries. Former Greenacres Mayor Sam Ferrari is the lead architect.

"What we have in that plan are some wonderful spaces for children, special rooms for teens, a teen creation lab, and also a community center for adult activities. That's something that's missing here," Barfknecht said. "It's going to enrich our community and bring us forward for the next decades."

The plan was approved by the Town Council at its May 11 meeting. Barfknecht was praised for his dedication to the effort.

As it happens, the meeting coincided with Barfknecht’s 82nd birthday. "I can't imagine a better birthday present. Our birthday," and I can't imagine the Town Council at its May 11 Lantana Library Foundation.

"As a voracious reader, became a dues-paying member of the library," Barfknecht said. "Later Sandy left, and I was got elected chairman of the foundation."

Located for the past 25 years in an old bank building on Ocean Avenue just west of the railroad tracks, the library is not in the county system but is maintained and supported by the town of Lantana.

"Sandy "Sandy" Beach was the foundation director at the time "and he was very, very passionate about the library," Barfknecht said. "I later Sandy left, and I was got elected chairman of the foundation."

In 1991, I was offered the opportunity to become president and CEO of a wonderful company called EDI. We left our home in Tuscany to come to Wisconsin for my new career. We had softened the bitterly cold winters of northern Wisconsin with frequent visits to our condo in Lantana but looked forward to retirement in the tropics.

Q: What is your favorite part about living on Hypoluxo? A: We are as happy today as we were when we bought it 20 years ago or maybe even so. We have found good friends here, very interesting people who have worked hard at their profession that we appreciate the tranquility and beauty of this place.

Q: What is your favorite activity? A: I like giving back to the Lantana library some 15 years ago.


Q: What music do you listen to when you want to relax? When you want to be inspired? A: We have instituted opera night every Friday during the pandemic. We will prepare a special dinner and follow it with an opera film. This started when our local opera of the Palm Beach Opera season, Eugene Onegin, was canceled due to the virus. I bought a copy of an old (1958) Russian film of the opera and we started with a 7:30 curtain time that Friday evening. This was so much fun that we started doing our own Friday night at the opera.

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

Q: Is there something people don't know about you but should? A: I have a show of my watercolor paintings hanging in the Manalapan Library and I have been working with commissions for paintings that hang both in the library and in the new Manalapan Council Chambers.

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Donald Clayman

By Dan Moffett

SOUTH PALM BEACH — Donald Clayman guided South Palm Beach through one of its most difficult periods in its history with an upbeat attitude and a common-sense approach, according to friends and admirers in a Boston accent.

When he was appointed to the job of mayor in 2010, the town’s budget was in crisis because of the national recession and its image tarnished because of a scandal involving his predecessor.

But the retired podiatrist kept his focus and optimism. When he left office in 2015, the Town Council asked him to receive an award for his service. He gave a gracious thank-you to office and employees and said he would walk out the door.

“I want to leave when everyone is still applauding,” Mr. Clayman said.

The applause swelled as he left the chambers.

Mr. Clayman died May 7 in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, after a short illness. He was 84.

Natalie Shulman Clayman, his wife of 59 years, had died in 2016.

“For Mayor Clayman, community service was his passion,” said Yade Alvarez, the town clerk who served alongside him. “Mayor Clayman had the ability to bring people together to drive positive change. He made the world a better place and will be sorely missed.”

Born in Boston, Mr. Clayman loved youth hockey, which he coached, and Red Sox baseball, with which he would discuss with anyone willing to listen. He was a proud member of the Kiwanis Club, Florida League of Cities and the Palm Beach County Medical Society.

Mr. Clayman served two years as president of the Palm Beach Harbour Club and sat on the condo board. He was president of the Ocean Lodge B’nai B’rith in Winthrop, Massachusetts.

“He was a very active man with great energy, and he was never on the sideline,” said Ellen Salih, who served with him on the condo board. “He threw his whole heart into everything he did.”

Salih said Mr. Clayman volunteered his medical services to help poor communities in South Florida. He also drew on his expertise to help flu clinics and an HIV virus prevention program in the town.

“He had a warm smile and a firm handshake,” said Elvadianne Culbertson, a former council member. “That’s the kind of thing you want to remember.”

Mr. Clayman earned his doctor of podiatry degree at Kent State University in Ohio. He raised his family in Winthrop, where he resided for 40 years.

He is survived by his children, Bryan, Lindy and his wife, Debbie, of Stoughton, Massachusetts; Cynthia McKee and her husband, Tony, of Salem, New Hampshire; and Alycia Avery and her longtime partner, Jeff Ouellette, of Hudson, New Hampshire; five grandchildren, Rodney, Jayme, Alexa, Dylan and Zachary; his brother, Burton Clayman of Destin, his sister, Marcia Fricke of Florida; as well as a great-grandchild expected this fall.

Bonnie Fischer handed Mr. Clayman his only election loss in 2015 after a hard-fought campaign for mayor.

“I ran in to him after the election and he told me he was going back north to live in New Hampshire. I’m going to miss him,” Fischer recalls. “He told me he was glad I’d won. ‘Everything worked out for the best,’ he said. That was important to me. We kept our good relationship. He left town on a high note.”

Lanie “Adaline” Hall Gray

OCEAN RIDGE — Lanie “Adaline” Hall Gray of Ocean Ridge and formerly of Kinston, North Carolina, died May 7. She was 91.

Born to Frank and Lanie Hall on Sept. 7, 1929, in Lenox County, North Carolina, and graduated Ms. Hall attended Contention School and Dover High School, graduating valedictorian of her class. She worked at Martin’s Drug Store before starting her career at a telephone operator at the Carolina Telephone Co., where she worked for 33 years.

Family was the joy of Mrs. Gray’s life and she treasured the time spent with her children, their spouses, her seven grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. She was thrilled as well to spend time with her beloved sisters and their families.

Mrs. Gray was a longtime and devoted member of First Free Will Baptist Church and Westside Free Will Baptist Church until moving to Florida in 1999, where she attended Bibletown Church, Lakeview Baptist and most recently, First Baptist Church of Hulopoloa.

Mrs. Gray dedicated her life to the Lord’s work, whether it was teaching Sunday school, directing church plays, visiting her beloved Cragmont Camp or speaking in churches about her love of missions, including her trips to Mexico and the Philippines.

Always a witness through word and deed, Mrs. Gray led many to find the Lord through her lifelong example of Christ’s selfless love. Her home and heart were always open to everyone and she was loved by all who knew her.

Mrs. Gray is preceded in death by her parents, her husband, George Edward “Pete” Gray, her brother Elwood Hall and her sister Jean Phillips.

Mrs. Gray is survived by her sisters, Helen (Leland) Potter, Alice (Bruce) Sloan and Kay (Roy) Hinz. Additional survivors are her son George Edward “Eddie” Gray Jr. and his wife, Debbie Gray, of Kinston, North Carolina; her daughter Marsha Gray Hill and her husband, Gregg Hill, of Ocean Ridge; granddaughters Gregg (Stephanie) Hill of Winter Park; Lauren (Chip) Kelso of Atlanta; Britt (Neil) Carter of Atlanta; Gray (Courtney) Hill of Maili, Hawaii; Jeff (Julie) Hill of Winter of Winter Park; Dara (John) English of Greenville, North Carolina; and Gray (Courtney) Hill of Atlanta; Brittany (Neil) Carter of Atlanta; and a great-grandchild expected this fall.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Cragmont Assembly in Adaline Gray’s name, Cragmont Assembly, 1233 N. Fork Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711.

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I n days to come, what will “business as usual” look like? Here’s how our chambers of commerce see it.

Stephanie Immelman, CEO of the Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce, says the chamber and its members are “pivoting” in various ways in reaction to the coronavirus.

“We are going to continue providing online content, such as webinars and forums,” she says, while mentioning other local businesses looking at new ways to operate.

“We have worked closely with the Business Assistance Task Force, made up of the city, CRA, DDA, and chamber, and we worked with about 25 local business leaders from all industries to garner their input for best practices for the phased reopenings,” Immelman said.

SEP Communications, a printing company, is selling personal protection equipment online to help employees of essential businesses stay safe; Signarama is providing customers with plexiglass shields to help with distancing and health safety as businesses reopen, and Studio B2, a photography service in Delray, is working with clients to improve their online presence via search engine optimization.

“Our goal was to be the primary source of relevant information for our membership and our community during this time,” Immelman says.

The chamber has continued with its Delray Morning Live Facebook show with Amanda Perna and Ryan Boylston at 8:30 a.m. Wednesdays. It’s been sending out daily email blasts with city news and tips for members. It has redesigned DelrayBeach.com, initiated weekly lunch-and-learn webinars on Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. and continued online meetings with the Government Affairs, First Friday Forum.

“Not only we have a lot of participation online, many others watch later — so we are reaching a bigger audience,” Immelman says.

“We will continue with all these initiatives, even when we are able to meet in person because it has extended our reach and our audience.”

The Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority suggests that people check out downtowndelraybeach.com/emergency11 for up-to-date information. It includes safety measures, to support small businesses, and lists of restaurants and other businesses open during the phased process.

Executive Director Laura Simon notes that “many have adjusted their operating style to navigate the new normal. They have ramped up or launched a social media presence. Restaurants have added curbside takeout and increased delivery and carryout. The fitness studios are doing online classes and have found that they are reaching a wider audience.”

Businesses are finding that such practices can drive sales, create interest from outside Delray Beach and enhance their marketing efforts, so they plan to continue along these avenues, Simon said. What this crisis has also provided is time for them to stop, re-evaluate and adjust their business models, which in turn will aid them in the future.

Monthly First Friday art walks, for example, have gone online, and a couple of the hotels are offering specials to first responders.

Gulf Stream resident Carrie Delafeld’s three stores, PetWrinkle, Morley and Coco & Company, started a “Send A Little Sunshine” promotion in which they put together a surprise package of items for shoppers to send to someone to brighten their day.

Although the Boca Chamber is heavily involved with a Moving Business Forward initiative on how to reopen businesses and nonprofits safely, CEO Troy McLellan acknowledges that by a chamber’s very nature, it is about members connecting in person for workshops, meetings and so on.

“However, the current atmosphere has given us the opportunity to think about how to communicate,” he says. “We’ve cranked out so many virtual meetings, which the coronavirus made necessary, because in-person meetings necessitate protocols regarding social distancing and disinfecting the venues afterward.

“I plan to bring my team back to our office when we can, but we are going to look at our structures as well as our remote-working policies.”

As businesses reopen they have the top priorities of keeping their employees and customers safe, McLellan says. “I believe that the amount of activity they will see will be driven by consumer confidence and it will be up to the businesses to instill that confidence in their customers. They are doing a great job with complying with guidelines and that’s been good to see.”

The Lantana Chamber of Commerce, which usually has in-house group activities and weekly meetings, has instituted a twice-a-month Zoom get-together and business card exchange, says the chamber’s president, David Arm. He says that he’s seeing brick-and-mortar businesses being hit harder than legal, insurance and accounting firms that are conducting business without meeting face-to-face with their clients.

“The insurance business seems to be doing quite well,” he says. “The restaurants were obviously severely restricted, and most were surviving by offering takeout and delivery services.”

Now restaurants and retail businesses have reopened on a limited basis, “but many are still doing specials and take-outs,” Arm says of restaurants. “And in Lantana, they can apply for outdoor seating permits, for free.”

Other than that, it is seeing businesses prove “not really so much,” he says. “Most people are considering this situation as a temporary phenomenon that could have permanent implications. This will eventually go away.

Realistically, I think this whole experience is going to be a work in progress for some time. We don’t know how the customers and clients are going to react. Are they going to be gun-shy? And so, I think it’s a matter of businesses adapting, and once they open up, they will change their game plans and the way they do business on an ongoing basis.”

In other local business news:

Delivery Dudes has gone the extra mile with its launch of Dudes Bodega, which rolled out in Boca Raton, Delray Beach and Boynton Beach.

A solution to help residents who need essential supplies but can’t or shouldn’t leave their homes, Dudes Bodega offers pickup and delivery from anywhere for a flat fee of $5.

Delivery Dudes, based in Delray Beach, has also secured health care professionals to train team members on how to conduct health and temperature checks before every shift at all Delivery Dudes hubs.

Customers can visit DeliveryDudes.com, use the app, or call 561-908-7600 to place an order.

Lang Realty agents spent the last week in April delivering meals to first responders, donating money and food to area food banks and sponsoring 250 meals for people in need. Lang Realty’s corporate office presented a $1,000 check to The Soup Kitchen of Boynton Beach, and its Boca Raton office delivered several boxes of dried and canned goods to Boca Helping Hands.

Lang also sponsored the hot meals service at Trinity Lutheran Church in Delray Beach, the charity partner for the Socially Distanced Supper Club.

Send business news to Christine Davis at cdavis9797@gmail.com.
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DIRECT INTRACOASTAL WATERFRONT | $1.548 M

Watch passing boats, manatees and amazing water views from your back yard. In a quiet East Delray Bch neighborhood, access from the multi-million-dollar properties of Gulf Stream. This 3 bd/3 ba 1-level home is a boater’s dream with 75 ft of water frontage.

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Newly updated Deepwater home on the widest canal in Boca Harbour – just three lots from the ICW on 80ft of Deepwater.

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POINT MANALAPAN | $1.300 M

Sited on 1/2 Acre of Perfect Privacy, this 3 BD/3.1 BA residence offers a semi-attached 2-car garage plus a beautiful heated pool with 2 covered lanai areas and a full house generator. Ownership conveys with Gratu’s Membership to LaCoquille Club.

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BOCA RATON | HIGHLAND BEACH | DELRAY BEACH

GULF STREAM | OCEAN RIDGE

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Hallowed ground

Our garden columnist unearths the evolution of the National Cemetery from an overgrown wetland to a worthy shrine for the military — including her husband

By Deborah S. Hartz-Seeley

On Memorial Day, we honor our fallen military members with parades, speeches and plenty of pomp and circumstance. But this year, the onslaught of the novel coronavirus has changed just about everything.

That's why we are lucky that we have a shrine to honor our veterans year-round, day or night, rain or shine and, yes, even during a pandemic. It's the 335-acre South Florida National Cemetery, one of the busiest, and, I think, loveliest in the state.

“This cemetery is designed to be a lasting

See CEMETERY on page H6

ABOVE: The 335-acre South Florida National Cemetery has impeccably maintained burial grounds nestled within pine flatwoods and surrounded by cypress domes that enable it to exude a sense of calm.

LEFT: Amy Pena, grounds forewoman at the cemetery, checks that the headstones are properly maintained and aligned.

Photos by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star
Keynote speaker shares abuse experience at luncheon

More than 400 members of the community gathered in late February for the Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service of Palm Beach County’s No Excuse for Abuse Luncheon, where they enjoyed boutique shopping from local vendors. Keynote speaker was Linor Abargil, a lawyer and former Miss Israel and Miss World who is a survivor of sexual violence and now advocates for other victims. Abargil’s story was retold in an Emmy Award-nominated documentary.

The nonprofit’s Domestic Abuse Program assists in identifying abuse, creating personalized safety plans for victims and their children and providing direction to local and national resources. In other news, the Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service of Palm Beach County is offering financial assistance for Jewish college students through the Thelma & Isador S. Segall College Scholarship Fund and the Jewish Educational Loan Fund. The Segall fund will award scholarships up to $5,000, and the loan fund will provide interest-free allotments for college, graduate school and vocational programs. For information on eligibility requirements and to apply, visit www.alpertjfs.org scholarships-loans/ and www.jelf.org. For questions, call 561-684-1991.

Gift puts Marleen Forkas’ name on Palm Beach County’s No Excuse for Abuse Luncheon

Florida Atlantic University’s Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters has received a $1.125 million gift from benefactor Marleen Forkas to name the Marleen Forkas Studio One Theatre.

The theater serves as a training facility for production and performance students as well as a venue for public events. “The arts bring beauty and expression to the world,” Forkas said. “My hope is that the Marleen Forkas Studio One Theatre will continue to be a place for students and the community to immerse themselves in the essence of theater and the arts and that they will carry that experience with them for the rest of their lives.”

College Dean Michael Horswell added, “It is vital that we have state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for our students to be well-prepared for future careers. This gift clearly shows Marleen’s love of the arts and especially of our students whose lives she continues to enrich through her generosity and her continued presence at our performances.”

Pre-COVID-19 gala raises funds for at-risk children

As the coronavirus cripples the economy and jeopardizes aid to at-risk children, Boca West Children’s Foundation is providing $800,000 to its 25 partner charities.

The foundation already has granted $315,500 to 11 local nonprofits that care for thousands of youths each day; it will distribute the remaining funds soon.

“In this trying time, Boca West Children’s Foundation now, more than ever, is embracing our granted charities and the at-risk children they serve,” said Arthur Adler, founder and chairman.

One of the difficulties the current crisis creates for these charities is that they are being forced to cancel fundraising events planned to raise everyday-needed funds to care for kids.”

The money was raised during the 10th Anniversary Gala attended by 900 guests and featuring entertainment by stand-up comedian Jay Leno.

Community Foundation helps to combat dire times

Through money raised for its COVID-19 Response Fund and grants directed from Donor-Advised Funds, the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties will make a $2.3 million local impact.

As of early May, a total of $700,000 had been granted to local nonprofits on the front lines of the global pandemic.

“Community foundations are uniquely well-positioned to identify, activate and strategically connect people in the greatest need to lifesaving resources in these challenging times,” said Brad Hurburt, the foundation’s president and CEO. “We are strengthening our trusted partnerships with multiple nonprofit agencies to quickly and proactively help the most vulnerable in our community with immediate basic needs such as payments for utilities, child care and rent.”

The foundation’s staff is working to quickly deploy grants to organizations providing food, housing assistance and access to health care. For information, call 561-659-6800 or visit www.yourcommunityfoundation.org.

High-impact grants to be awarded May 28

The 10 finalists selected by Impact 100 Palm Beach County are another step closer to receiving one of five $100,000 high-impact grants.

The grants are designed to fund transformational community programs in southern Palm Beach County. The organization will announce the winners May 28.

“Each of the finalist programs have the potential to positively change different aspects of our community in an impactful way,” organization President Kathry Atkins said.

“For the first time in our history, our trusted partnerships with local nonprofits are uniquely well-positioned to address the greatest need to lifesaving services. Through money raised and provided by the rest of the global pandemic.”

The Addison is donating 700 hot meals weekly to Boca Helping Hands to help manage the needs of the nonprofit’s homeless and other hungry clients during the pandemic. Volunteer drivers from the venue are making deliveries to 30 homeless residents three times a week. The balance of the meals are offered to people who rely on Boca Helping Hands for food.

“Since the COVID-19 crisis began, we have been preparing packaged hot meals for pickup each day,” Executive Director Greg Hazle said. “The need has doubled. In addition, we’re now giving out 300 pantry bags a day, up from 160.

Another feeding program allows clients who are able to drive to Boca Helping Hands to be handed hot meals through their car windows. Hours are 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays along with 4:30 to 6 p.m. Thursdays.

In the interest of protecting the health of not only clients but also employees and volunteers, the food center will be closed until further notice. All job training, classes, mentoring sessions and in-person interviews are temporarily suspended. For more information, call 561-417-0913, ext. 202 or visit www.bocahelpinghands.org.

Support Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County

Donate today. Your tax-deductible donation will help provide literacy services to adults, children and families who are working to achieve a better life by improving their literacy skills.

Help the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County

Donate today. Your tax-deductible donation will help provide literacy services to adults, children and families who are working to achieve a better life by improving their literacy skills.

Help for homebound, hungry amid coronavirus

The Addison is donating 700 hot meals weekly to Boca Helping Hands to help manage the needs of the nonprofit’s homeless and other hungry clients during the pandemic. Volunteer drivers from the venue are making deliveries to 30 homeless residents three times a week. The balance of the meals are offered to people who rely on Boca Helping Hands for food.

“Since the COVID-19 crisis began, we have been preparing packaged hot meals for pickup each day,” Executive Director Greg Hazle said. “The need has doubled. In addition, we’re now giving out 300 pantry bags a day, up from 160.

Another feeding program allows clients who are able to drive to Boca Helping Hands to be handed hot meals through their car windows. Hours are 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays along with 4:30 to 6 p.m. Thursdays.

In the interest of protecting the health of not only clients but also employees and volunteers, the food center will be closed until further notice. All job training, classes, mentoring sessions and in-person interviews are temporarily suspended. For more information, call 561-417-0913, ext. 202 or visit www.bocahelpinghands.org.

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

Keynote speaker shares abuse experience at luncheon

The 10 finalists are Boca Helping Hands, Coastal Conservation Association, City House, Community Greening Corporation, Compass, Florida Atlantic University Foundation, GVIT, Junior Achievement of the Palm Beaches & Treasure Coast, Roots and Wings, and Spady Cultural Heritage Museum.
## Congratulations

### Class of 2020 Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>This Fall</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lily Grace Schleifer</td>
<td>American Heritage School Graduate</td>
<td>Accepted to Auburn, Clemson, Appalachian</td>
<td>Florida Gulf Coast University this Fall</td>
<td>Jack’s quote: “Tremendous!” Love you, Trenti, Emmy, Mommy, Daddy &amp; our zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Alexander Davis</td>
<td>American Heritage School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending University of Central Florida</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>Congratulations! Love, Mom, Dad, Max, Yaya and Pop Pop and the cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn Lowery</td>
<td>American Heritage School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending University of Central Florida</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>We are so proud of you and all you have accomplished. The best is yet to come... and the adventure begins now! Go Knights! With all our love and support, your family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Lowery</td>
<td>American Heritage School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending Florida State University</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>You are extraordinary and gifted at all you do. You are going to crush it at Florida State! Go Noles! With all our love and support, your family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Gregg</td>
<td>American Heritage School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending University of Central Florida</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>Hunters Quote: “My favorite memory at high school was meeting people from so many different cultures” Congratulations from the entire family!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon Michael Maier</td>
<td>American Heritage School Graduate</td>
<td>Studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Central Florida this Fall</td>
<td>Congratulations Brandon! We’re so proud of your accomplishments and look forward to your future. Aim high, dream big and remember to have fun and enjoy the journey! We love you! Mom, Dad, Kendall, Nona and Papa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan Charles Nixon</td>
<td>American Heritage School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending University of Central Florida</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>Logan’s Quote: “Everything negative, pressure, challenges, is an opportunity for me to rise.” Kobe Bryant We’re extremely proud of your hard work &amp; achievements! Congratulations on your acceptance as a Top 10 Knight at UCF! Love... Mom, Dad, Brooke &amp; Aidan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grayson Kim Westine</td>
<td>Atlantic High School International Baccalaureate Graduate</td>
<td>Attending University of Central Florida Biology major</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>We are so proud of all you have achieved and the beautiful young woman you have become. You brighten the lives of all around you. We love you! Mom, Dad, John and Mann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gianna Marie Edwards</td>
<td>Boca Raton Community High School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending Florida State University</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>We are excited for you to begin this next exciting chapter of your life. Always remember, “Little girls with dreams become women with vision.” We love you, Mom and Dad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard “Ricky” Roehm</td>
<td>Boca Raton Community High School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending University of Florida</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>Congratulations Ricky! We are so proud of you and everything you have accomplished and the man you have become! Love Mom, Dad, Samantha and Chissy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah V. Vivenzio</td>
<td>Cardinal Gibbons High School Graduate</td>
<td>Attending Florida Gulf Coast University</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>So proud of you! Love Mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giorgina Ritota</td>
<td>G-Star School of the Arts Graduate</td>
<td>Attending FAU Boca Campus</td>
<td>this Fall</td>
<td>Congratulations Giorgina. It has been a fast 4 years and we now look forward to watching you navigate this next chapter in your life and what the future holds for you. Love Mum, Dad, Brianna, Ivan and Vanessa xoxoxo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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A great big shout out to local seniors from Palm Beach Travel and some of our closest friends:

- **Palm Beach Travel**: 3255 S. Ocean Boulevard, Plaza del Mar, Palm Beach 561-853-5885 Palmbeachtravel.com
- **Dee’s Upholstery & Pillows**: 3939 East Ocean Avenue, Lake Worth 561-582-1889 OldKeyLimeHouse.com
- **Dawne Edwards Salon**: 3240 Tangelo Terrace, 819 Delray Beach 561-272-7722 DawneEdwardsSalon.com
- **John P. Ritota D.D.S. and Theodore C. Ritota D.D.S.**: 1011 East Okeechobee Road, Delray Beach 561-272-6664 DelrayDental.com
- **From the FRANCHIA FAMILY**
- **From the HEGLIN FAMILY**
- **From the MGCHEENIN FAMILY**
- **From the MILLER FAMILY**
- **From the YALE FAMILY**
Editor's note
These photographs were taken before wearing face masks and practicing social distancing became part of our everyday life during the coronavirus pandemic.

Corporate Partners Business Speaker Series
Kravis Center, West Palm Beach — Feb. 13

George Elmore took the spotlight at the second installment of the Kravis Center’s speaker series, moderated by Kravis board Chairman Jeffrey Stoops. Elmore, founder and president of paving contractor Hardrives, talked about his successes and career milestones. He also praised the Kravis Center and its impact on the area. ‘It would be tremendously different if the Kravis Center wasn’t in West Palm Beach,’ he said. ‘I don’t think we would have had CityPlace, now Rosemary Square, or the Palm Beach County Convention Center. It brought a lot here and continues to raise the bar for arts and culture as well.’

Autism Speaks Walk
Meyer Amphitheatre, West Palm Beach — March 1

The world’s largest autism fundraising event celebrated a local version along the downtown waterfront to support the mission of Autism Speaks. The sensory-friendly and family-family event attracted more than 3,000 participants. ‘Knowing you have the support of the Autism Speaks community will help families navigate their journey and help them not feel alone,’ said walk Co-Chairwoman Marla Garachil, who received the nonprofit’s inaugural Wright Legacy Award.

Founder Members Dinner
Kravis Center, West Palm Beach — Feb. 19

Nearly 250 of the performing arts center’s major donors attended a special evening in their honor. It featured a cocktail reception, a three-course dinner and a performance by Michael Feinstein. ‘Thank you for your continued support during our Kravis 2020 capital campaign,’ CEO Judith Mitchell said. ‘There is no doubt the Kravis Center is a unique cultural and economic landmark recognized worldwide as a source of the finest entertainment for all Palm Beach County residents and tourists.’ Mitchell welcomed new founder members James and Laurie Bay, Robert and Meg Biscup, Peter and Stephanie Lamelas, David Moscow, Donna Kesselman Raggio, Lynda Rothstein and Leonard and Beth Wilf. INSET: Stephanie and Peter Lamelas. Photo provided by CAPEHART

Love of Literacy Luncheon
Kravis Center, West Palm Beach — March 12

Proceeds totaled nearly $200,000 from the 29th annual Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County fundraiser. The money will go toward child, adult and family literacy programs. Jean Kwok, a bestselling author who wrote ‘Searching for Sylvie Lee,’ was the headline. ‘We could not have asked for a more inspiring speaker,’ said Kristin Calder, the nonprofit’s CEO. ‘Jean’s moving story of her personal journey from impoverished child of immigrants to best-selling author reminded us all that looks and reading truly have the power to transform lives.’

Literary Society series
The Colony Hotel, Palm Beach — March 5

MorseLife had its final gathering of the season with best-selling author Andrew Gross, a Palm Beach resident. Gross detailed his life as a writer and how he did not initially set out to become one; instead, he started off as a businessman, with several failed ventures. For 12 years, MorseLife has brought presenters from authors like Gross to audiences while introducing the programs and services it provides to seniors living in the community.

Anniversary Gala
The Breakers, Palm Beach — March 8

Il Circolo, the Italian Cultural Society, rang in its 44th annual affair with a theme of Celebrazione delle Donne. The sold-out dinner dance featured music from Gino DeMarco’s band, concert pianists Sergio and Barbara Salani, tenor Carlos De Antonis and Italian pop singer Alessandro Coll. The party began with a Tuscan cocktail hour followed by dinner. Sally Valentini was honored for 35 years of service. ABOVE: Valentini (center), with Chairs Antonella Brancaccio and Chris Salamone. Photo provided

Luncheon and Fashion Show
Arturo’s Ristorante, Boca Raton — Feb. 29

The women of the Highland Beach chapter of UNICO National put on their second fashion fete with more than 120 guests, who enjoyed a perfectly prepared meal and delightful designs from Mario Pucci Boca. Models ages 3 to 9 strutted the runway, showing off children’s clothing from Once Upon a Time in Delray Beach. Proceeds from the event will fund the music therapy program at the Palm Beach Children’s Hospital in West Palm Beach. ABOVE: (l-r) Committee members Terry Weiss and Gail Guy; the hospital’s Lisa Baron and Liz Lung; Bree Gordon, director of Creative Arts Therapies of the Palm Beaches; Chairwoman Susan Gengo; and committee member Madeline Lotte. Photo provided
**Celebrations**

**Be Great Dinner**  
Quail Ridge Country Club, Boynton Beach — March 10

The Boys & Girls Club of Delray Beach celebrated its eighth annual event by honoring dentist and philanthropist Dr. Craig Spodak and Youth of the Year Widnie Marcelin while raising more than $100,000. Guests enjoyed a cocktail hour and a meal featuring a special performance by youth violinists. Dr. Spodak received the Forrest and Frances Lattner Community Impact Award for his years of support. The evening wrapped up with a live auction that raised more than $20,000. ABOVE: Widnie, 17, and Dr. Spodak. Photos provided by Tim Stepien Photography

**Grand Tasting**  
Boca Raton Resort & Club — March 7

The 18th annual Boca Bacchanal attracted 1,400-plus attendees and raised more than $275,000 for the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum. In all, four events celebrated the best in food and wine: Bacchus Beckons, Bubbles & Burgers, a series of vintner dinners and the Grand Tasting. ‘We are honored to be supported and embraced by so many residents and visitors,’ museum Executive Director Mary Csar said. ‘We are also proud that our events keep getting better each year. As one of the oldest and most popular food and wine festivals in South Florida, it is very gratifying that the Boca Bacchanal remains the gold standard for introducing people of all ages to outstanding restaurants, talented chefs and noteworthy wineries.’ ABOVE: (l-r) Al and Joni Goldberg with Thom and Joyce DeVita. Photo provided by Michele Sandberg

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**If you have over $50,000 in an IRA or Retirement Account you may be missing Huge Tax Savings**

Boca Raton, FL — An IRA expert has prepared a free report that reveals many little-known tax savings strategies that many IRA holders with at least $50,000 invested in an IRA can utilize. “Using these strategies could save many IRA holders thousands of dollars in taxes on their IRA account over their lifetime,” explained Fred Sundin, local financial advisor and IRA expert. Sundin has prepared a free report that will be distributed to IRA holders while supplies last. When asked who should order this free report, Sundin answered, “Any IRA holder with at least $50,000 invested in their IRA account(s) would likely benefit the most from the information that’s contained in this report.”

To get your copy of this report simply call (800) 966-9548 toll free, for a 24-hour, free recorded message. Recording your name and email address after the tone or visiting us at https://www.sunedinfinancial.com/ira_mistakes_dp will ensure that your copy of this free report will be rushed to you.
tribute to our veterans so that not only current family members but generations to come can visit and reflect on their loved ones and the services they provided to their country,” says Kevin Ridgeway, who was the assistant director of the cemetery until recently, when he became director of the Hampton National Cemetery in Virginia.

With mitigated wetlands and carefully maintained cypress domes buffering manicured burial fields set within pine flatwoods, the cemetery exudes a sense of calm and respect for not only our country’s warriors but also nature.

I know that’s true because on June 10, 2019, I buried my husband, a Korean War veteran, in this hallowed ground. And since then, I’ve visited it often to find peace and comfort in this very South Florida setting.

But it wasn’t always this way. The cemetery was inspired by need when early in the century, the Department of Veterans Affairs identified more than 420,000 veterans living within a 75-mile radius of the Palm Beach County area.

“It is critical for our veterans to have a cemetery in close proximity to where they live,” says Michael Kroll, CEO and president of Miller Legg, the civil engineering and landscape architecture firm that was charged with designing the cemetery.

Up until then, the closest facility was in Bushnell, about a 3½-hour drive north.

In 2002, the VA purchased a 300-acre parcel along U.S. 441 in Lake Worth (the cemetery later grew to 335 acres with the purchase of an adjacent nursery).

Then the search was on for the people who could bring to it “the level of design required of a cemetery of shrine status,” explains Kroll.

He believes his firm was selected because it had created many other Florida cemeteries and had expertise in working with Florida’s ecosystems. “We prefer leaving the land in its more natural state rather than doing a very formal planting that you see in many national cemeteries,” he says.

On his first visit to the location, Kroll found established Florida habitats, but he also remembers fighting his way through a bramble of blackberries on his way to wetlands.

The natural areas also had been covered by large swaths of invasives, including melaleuca, Old World climbing fern and Brazilian pepper that shaded out and strangled native species, says Katharine Murray, president of Environment Quality Inc., the Tequesta company hired to oversee and preserve the wetlands.

Nathan Williams, southeastern district agronomist for the VA National Cemetery Administration, recalls an early visit by saying, “There were a lot of wetland areas and a lot of trees including some cabbage palms, some scrub oaks and quite a few pine trees. But then there was sand and a whole lot of underbrush.”

This being South Florida, one of the first orders of business was to start the permitting process to protect the wetlands, a process that involved multiple agencies and could take up to three years.

Next, Kroll and his team went to work on a master plan. More CEMETERY on page H7

Featured Properties

Steven Solomon

South Palm Beach | $3,375,000 | From its contemporary exterior to its luxurious custom-crafted residences and amenities specifically designed to enhance an active lifestyle, 3650 South Ocean redoubles the chic sophistication of its surroundings. This fully-furnished penthouse residence features approx. 2,728sq ft of air-conditioned living space, 2 bedrooms, 3 full and 1 half bathrooms, floor-to-ceiling glass windows and sliding doors to approx. 5,400sq ft of outdoor entertaining space with incredible ocean views. Monthly maintenance $2,739. Web # RX-10570141

Manalapan | $26,695,000 | A classic Mediterranean style estate located on South Ocean Blvd in the exclusive community of Manalapan in Southeast Florida on approx. 3.92 acres from the ocean to the Intracoastal. Consisting of approximately 12,000sq ft of air-conditioned living space and approximately 42,000 total square feet, this property has 8 bedrooms, 8 full baths and 2 half baths. In addition there is a home theater, exercise room, office, game room, garage space for 30 vehicles, dockage on the Intracoastal and an underground tunnel leading to the ocean and beach house. Web # RX-10457812

elliman.com
This was not an easy project as there was pressure from local veterans and state politicians to “get the place open.”

The first veteran was interred on April 7, 2007, in what was considered to be the cemetery’s “fast track” element. It was set on 8 acres buffered from traffic by naturally occurring pine trees and dense understory, according to Ridgeway.

Just after it opened, my husband and I visited. What I remember from that first visit was sweating uncomfortably as the sun beat down on unshaded white marble headstones lined up starkly in white sand, making the place glaring and hot.

A parking lot, fashioned from construction rock, housed a trailer that served as the administrative headquarters where we picked up a pamphlet explaining the veteran’s right to be buried here, as well as a spouse or dependent child. By the time we left, I told my husband there was no way that, when the time came, I was leaving either him or myself at this cemetery. But my husband had different ideas.

From that day, he had faith that the VA would create a fitting memorial for military members who chose to make this their final resting place. And unbeknownst to me, who didn’t return to the cemetery for another 11 years, that’s exactly what happened.

During the first phase of development, which covered 185 acres and was completed in 2010, Kroll and his team continued to remove invasives, adding wax myrtles, sabal palms, slash pines and other native foliage to the natural areas that were left as buffers between the burial fields. And they continued to excavate what is today a central lake that’s also used for irrigation. Here too they used the fill to raise the existing pine flatlands, making them suitable for additional grave sites.

“In our designs, we appreciate the contrast between natural landscapes and manmade landscapes,” says Kroll. “Here you see a very dynamic contrast between areas of highly maintained marble headstones and, behind them, lush forests of pine trees or oak trees with understory plants. The contrast between these two habitats’ textures are fantastic.”

Kroll also added unobtrusive administrative and maintenance buildings; loop roads; columbariums and burial plots to hold cremated remains; and a memorial walk as well as committal shelters. It is in the shade of these shelters that, just before a burial, taps is played and an American flag officially folded and presented to family members as they honor their deceased loved one. Through all this, Kroll and his staff preserved and created habitat that welcomed nature’s other inhabitants, including largemouth bass, butterflies, snakes, alligators, woodpeckers and even a pair of bald eagles spotted in the back of the property.

With this completed, it was time for my husband and me to return to the South Florida National Cemetery to take another look. We did so in early 2019, when we knew his health was retreating and finding a burial place was heavy on our minds.

Here, instead of blazing sun and blinding marble, we discovered birds singing in the lush tree-filled buffer areas, sabal palms clearly outlined against blue sky, a cool breeze wafting across the manmade lake ringed with purple blooms of pickerel weed, and tiny lizards playing hide-and-seek among the gravestones.

People regularly were coming and going as they quietly and reverently visited their loved ones’ graves, giving what could be a very deserted and regimented place a pleasant sense of activity. There was plenty of thriving habitat for everyone and everything.

It took only that one visit to convince me that the South Florida National Cemetery is a unique place. And I agreed to commit my husband and myself to its perpetual care.

With time marching on, the cemetery is readying itself for a $31 million Phase Two that is slated to begin this summer and include the northwest quadrant of the property.

It will add a new entry gate and sign, as well as a public assembly area with garrison-size flag on an 80-foot pole, memorial walkway, memorial wall and committal shelter as well as columbariums and burial fields for about 20,000 interments.

With Memorial Day approaching, I am grateful for the care and respect this cemetery and its staff show our veterans and their loved ones, even when the world is turned upside down.

A killdeer stands in front of a grave at South Florida National Cemetery. The birds build nests among the gravestones.

Thank you to all the front-line workers during the pandemic.

And when this is over, please support our local merchants.

Gratefully,
Carolyn and Price Patton
Delray Beach

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WWII veteran marks 99th birthday with call to protect future generations

By Margie Plunkett

A small group armed with signs such as “Think About the Grandchildren” marched through Mizner Park in late February, singing and chanting to bring attention to how we should leave the world for those who follow. A 99-year-old World War II veteran led the rally, which coincided with his birthday March 3.

Arthur Metzger, in a wheelchair powered by his son, was joined by his family and friends, all supporters of his wish to urge politicians and residents to do what’s right for coming generations.

“What do you mean?” Weller said.

“Maybe it would dawn on them that we should be thinking about our future and what we should do about it,” Weller said.

Arthur Metzger kisses his great-granddaughter Ciena Parisi after the march.

Metzger recalled that during his four-year Army stint, he was promoted to lieutenant by the end of the war and was decorated for his service.

His decorations and citations included the World War II victory medal, American campaign medal, European African Middle Eastern ribbon with two battle stars and the bronze star.

When Metzger returned to the United States, he became a pioneer in the plastics industry, building a global company called Amco Plastics International in New York. With his background as self-made — knowing what it was like to be practically homeless and penniless — he became a very charitable man, Weller said. He was involved with a long list of issues, including his children’s education, Jewish causes and politics nationally and locally.

Metzger stopped actively working at his company nine or 10 years ago, remaining as chairman of the board or 10 years ago, remaining as chairman of the board for another five years. The company was run by his son, Gary, until about five years ago, when it was sold.

“We hope was that people along the way would see the signs and think, ‘What are they talking about?’” Weller said.

“Maybe it would dawn on them that we should be thinking about our future and what we should do about it. That was the whole idea. We felt it was successful.”

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Arthur Metzger is surrounded by family and friends on a parade through Mizner Park ahead of his 99th birthday. The march, which urged residents and politicians to make the planet better, was Feb. 29, before the coronavirus halted such gatherings. Photos by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star
The ArtsPaper

Seeing EYE TO I

Boca Museum of Art gives artists' self-portraits a virtual showcase

By Sandra Schulman
ArtsPaper Art Writer

Artists make art in a search for self. Eye to I: Self-Portraits from the National Portrait Gallery, a stunning show at the Boca Museum of Art, now being exhibited through June 14 via online and digital programs, brings solo works together of major artists of the 20th and 21st centuries and dating from 1901 to 2015. There are treasures large and small here; the sheer delight of seeing the artist’s aesthetic applied to their own visage is revelatory.

The exhibit was created to commemorate the National Portrait Gallery’s 50th anniversary. The premiere in Boca Raton of this traveling exhibition is different from the Smithsonian Museum show previously on view in Washington, as all of the works on paper are new and were chosen especially for the national tour, as are several of the paintings. Self-portraits include work from Native American artist Fritz Scholder, whose powerful large painting Self Portrait with Rita (2003) was the last self-portrait he made before his passing in 2005, painted when he was battling complications brought on by diabetes.

The black background and dark, moody canvas has Scholder boldly facing the viewer sitting back in a chair as he leans on his cane. His eyes are covered by tinted sunglasses as they are in most of his portraits. The tubes from his oxygen tank are visibly snaking from his nose to the shadowy floor, which can be seen as a reference to the “shadow of death.” His ghostly cat looks on as his sketchbook sits forlornly on the ground. Roger Shimomura has one of the largest works, Shimomura Crossing the Delaware, which takes up the whole of the entry wall. The artist and his family were imprisoned during World War II at an internment camp, face to face with the anti-Japanese sentiment at the time. His response is to replace George Washington with himself and have the soldiers be Samurai warriors — a role reversal played out in his wildest art history dreams.

Thomas Hart Benton, known for his sweeping WPA-era murals, is in his more intimate Self Portrait with Rita assuming a movie-star-like pose seaside with the fetching Rita, who holds a violet flower. Benton was known to admire dashing actor Douglas Fairbanks and is perhaps seeing himself in his image here. A rare drawing from rocker Patti Smith is intense in its dedication and mystery. All the Things He Gave Me, from 1974, is dedicated to Allen Lanier of Blue Oyster Cult, who was Smith’s boyfriend at the time. She holds a figurine of a camel, wearing a color and striped blocked shirt. Around her neck is a cross, while an odd creased hat is pulled down low over her eyes. Her penetrating blue eyes pierce the viewer with a hard glance.
Woody Allen’s memoir: Not nothing, but not a lot of something, either

By Hap Erstein
ArtsPaper Writer


It seems unlikely that the employees of Hachette Book Group who walked out in protest of that company’s effort to publish Woody Allen’s new memoir, Apropos of Nothing, actually read the manuscript before taking umbrage that the firm would be associated with such an innocuous, albeit entertaining, tome.

Cries of censorship could be heard beyond the insular publishing world when Hachette abruptly halted its association with Allen’s autobiography defense against long-since litigated and exonerated accusations of child molestation. In any event, Arcade Publishing, an imprint of Skyhorse, quickly picked up the option and has released Apropos, though whether as a First Amendment rights crusade or a genuine effort to turn a profit remains unclear.

If the publisher’s motive was the latter, perhaps it too had not read the book, for Allen details in his off-handed, stream-of-consciousness, apropos-of-nothing way how many movie distributors have been involved with his near annual film output, only to learn how small his fan base really is. Still — if like myself — you consider yourself to be among his cult following, there is plenty in these pages to find alternately fascinating and disappointing, just like so many of his movies.

It begins with a breezy, joke-laden look — “examination” would be too strong a word — at his middle class Brooklyn childhood. Allen recalls his hatred of school, his surprisingly athletic youth, his obsessive pursuit of magic as an avocation, the long hours spent in the local movie theater, his eventual discovery of that wonderland known as Manhattan and his frustrating pursuit of a love life or “as one might have called it, Theater of the Absurd.”

I usually skim over a subject’s early years in a memoir, eager to get to little-known details of his or her adult accomplishments that are the reason for the book’s existence. But that would be a mistake in Apropos of Nothing, for the section on the early days of young Allan Stewart Konigsberg absolutely reads like his stand-up routines, while his later discussion of his films is frustratingly shallow.

Granted that he conceives he has no interest in analyzing his movie output or in looking back on any of them once they are wrapped and in the can. Still, he takes the advice of one of his idols, Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher Satchel Paige (“Don’t look back. Something may be gaining on you”), way too seriously.

But why else would he write a memoir — except for his lengthy and repetitious account of his long-time girlfriend Mia Farrow, her efforts to turn her children against Allen and, most important, to pursue various legal actions against him, accusing him of sexually molesting her 7-year-old daughter, Dylan?

About 200 pages in, Apropos of Nothing takes an abrupt, darker tone as Allen reiterates the accusations against him, investigated by the Child Sexual Abuse Clinic at Yale-New Haven Hospital and New York State Child Welfare. Both investigations cleared Allen of any wrongdoing, the charges being “a total fabrication from start to finish,” in his words.

But with another of Farrow’s children, Roman (née Satchel, fatherhood in doubt between Allen and Frank Sinatra), continuing the accusations in the court of public opinion and pressing the point that led to the Hachette manuscript dump, Allen has suffered a contract dispute with Amazon, the producer of his latest film, A Rainy Day in New York, which has kept it from being released in the United States.

Various stars of his films have denounced him in a media pique-on, though according to Allen, in the case of Timothée Chalamet, he was advised to do so to help his chances of winning an Oscar for Call Me By Your Name. Allen is clearly aware of his larger self-inflicted wounds: Allen made a “failed” attempt and, as to the Chekovian September, he says: “It was Chekhov all right — Mike Chiklov the plumber.”

Late in the book, Allen seems to lose his attention span and off his movies with one-line opinions. Crimes and Misdemeanors, one of his finest in my view, he considers a bad mash-up of comedy and drama and is particularly hard on the comic half. He likens it to “a bite from the tsetse fly. It caused shock when he first did it.”

As for Blue Jasmine, his attempt to be Tennessee Williams, he says, “Nice try, no cigar.” If his assessments seem too harsh, others are far too positive. For instance, he calls his second attempt at evoking Williams, Wonder Wheel, with Kate Winslet, “my best yet,” with no further explanation. Huh?

Come to think of it, a shoddy cut-and-paste job is a pretty good description of Apropos of Nothing. The second half feels like he pulled notes out of his desk drawer — a filing system he has owned up to for his movie ideas — and then hastily added those notes to the book. Still, if this is the autobiography we are going to get from Allen, his fans will understandably devour it for the new morsels it provides.

Allen has made nearly 50 films, yet his prime regret in life is that he never made a great one. Again a tough assessment, though it would be hard to disagree with his thought that “all my films could profit by a do-over.” And the same could be said of his memoir.
other portraits include a moody Elaine de Kooning, a serious, sketchy Alexander Calder, a blocky Louise Nevelson, and Robert Rauschenberg embedded in a narrative collage with a parachute strapped to his back. These artists looked inward in ways we can connect with in our modern time. They created a lasting mirror effect for future audiences that most of them could not have foreseen,” said Irvin Lippman, executive director of the Boca Raton Museum of Art, in a prepared statement. “These artists steered themselves away from the traditional poses of the past into new realms of self-reflection. Their self-depictions cut across time and media, emerging from the quasi-mystical into the thoroughly modern. Their self-portraiture away from the traditional provides a window for those of us who continue to grow and evolve, and to continue to give back to the community,” Lippman said in the statement. “These artists in Eye to I is looked inward in ways we can connect with in our modern time.” In addition to the virtual exhibits through Facebook and Instagram, innovative online initiatives have been created, especially for families who have children at home from school.

FRIEDMAN

Continued from page 9

Ambassador and a Kretzer Kid. Karthi Kretzer, president of the Kretzer Music Foundation, first met Friedman and her mom, Liz, in 2015. “At only 15, Skye already exhibited great talent, not only with her singing, but with her stage presence and charming personality,” remembers Kretzer. As a Kretzer Kid, Friedman performed concerts with other talented youths in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and children’s hospitals.

“Skye always lights up the room when she performs and brings a spark that very few performers can deliver,” says Kretzer. “She is a joy to watch and passionate about her craft. She will undoubtedly go far in the entertainment world.”

Still undecided as to which college she will attend, Friedman has applied to the BFA programs in more than 20 schools across the country, including NYU, USC, Pace, Penn State, CCM, Ithaca College and NYU Tisch. At this juncture, says she is leaning toward New York, where she will be able to pursue both theater and on-camera roles.

An Anglisthe pre-school, when she starred as Mary Poppins in her preschool’s production of the musical, Friedman grew up watching Shirley Temple movies, a big influence, and admiring Robin Williams as her “uniqueness and admiring Robin Williams movies, a big influence, and watching Shirley Temple school’s production of the Mary Poppins in her pre-school, when she starred as Agnes, were never installed. After a number of owners, including the Malitz’s The Audience in 2016. Julie Rowe, director of education at the Jupiter Theatre, has worked with Friedman since 2009 in a variety of productions, including The Sound of Music, Billy Elliot and The Audience.

“Skye is incredibly dedicated and focused on her craft,” says Rowe. “She’s very diligent and eager to learn. She jumps right in and strives to give a genuine authenticity to her roles.”

“Her performance just blows me away. Whenever she hits a note, it’s like she’s connected to a beam of energy,” says Friedman’s mom, Liz and Glenn Friedman, and says they never pushed her but always supported her endeavors. In her free time, she loves to read plays and go ziplining with her dad at Treetop Trek at the Brevard Zoo. Where does Friedman see herself in 10 years? “I’d love to be living in New York City and starring in an original Broadway play, creating a character from scratch and shooting a TV show during the day — the best of both worlds,” says Friedman. “You have to dream big,” she says. “Arts and acting are important, powerful forces which allow us to make a difference in the world.

“I’m confident she will continue to pursue both theater and on-camera roles. Whether she’ll be on stage or on TV, Skye will carve her own unique path as Skye.”

Friedman credits her parents, Liz and Glenn Friedman, and says they never pushed her but always supported her endeavors. In her free time, she loves to read plays and go ziplining with her dad at Treetop Trek at the Brevard Zoo. Where does Friedman see herself in 10 years? “I’d love to be living in New York City and starring in an original Broadway play, creating a character from scratch and shooting a TV show during the day — the best of both worlds,” says Friedman. “You have to dream big,” she says. “Arts and acting are important, powerful forces which allow us to make a difference in the world.

“I’m excited to be a part of this community and to have the good fortune to spend my life doing what I love.”

Skye Alyssa Friedman proudly shows off her I Vote Newtown. The 18-year-old is still contemplating where she will attend college, but is leaning toward New York City. Photo courtesy Skye Alyssa Friedman.

Friedman continued to develop in her free time, reading plays and exploring new opportunities. She was proud to be a part of the latest virtual offering from the Museum, the Smithsonian’s Eye to I exhibit.

“While the museum is temporarily closed, we will continue to give back to the community,” Lippman said in the statement. “These artists in Eye to I is looked inward in ways we can connect with in our modern time.” In addition to the virtual exhibits through Facebook and Instagram, innovative online initiatives have been created, especially for families who have children at home from school.
How to ease pets back into spending time alone

There is no argument that our pets love us tremendously and unconditionally. But after more than two months stuck spending 24/7 with us in our homes, dogs and cats may be running out of patience with us and clamoring for some me-time.

They may express this by acting out. Just like us, our pets are adjusting to this new norm created by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Your calm dog may now unleash a bark barrage every time an Amazon delivery person puts a package on your porch. He may feel the need to be extra vigilant because you are homebound. Your usual affectionate cat may now let out a hiss or dash away when you approach to pet him for the 10th time of the day. In his feline way, he is saying, please let me enjoy an uninterrupted nap.

Changes are noticeable even in the homes of pet behavior experts.

“My dog, Maverick, is thoroughly enjoying the increased opportunities to beg for food and clean up the floor as we are eating most of our meals at home,” says Lisa Radosta, DVM, DACVB, a board-certified veterinary behaviorist who runs the Florida Veterinary Behavior Services in West Palm Beach and is the co-author of a best-selling book, From Fearful to Fear Free: A Positive Program to Free Your Dog from Anxiety, Fears and Phobias. “I think that he will miss this most when we all go back to work and school.” And what about her cat, Chewie? “Our kitty was very attached before, but now he has become our shadow,” says Radosta. “We are trying to make sure that he is very enriched and spends some time away from us each day because we are concerned that he will have a bit of separation anxiety when we go back to work.”

Lack of mental and physical stimulation can prompt some pets to become hyperactive, engage in inappropriate chewing (like on your coffee table legs), paw your leg for attention, engage in marathon barking or meowing, surf kitchen counters and other unwanted behaviors.

Solution: You need to find the “joy factor” in your pet. That idea motivated Radosta and her team to launch an online learning program called Dog Nerds. It is available to anyone in Palm Beach County and beyond who seeks help to keep dogs feeling happy and secure.

As we take steps to resume our work and travel schedules interrupted by COVID-19, use this time to help your pets make this transition for their sense of security — and to reduce their feelings of separation anxiety or frustration. Radosta offers a win-win plan for you and your pets. “Now is the time to prepare for what is coming,” she says. “For our dogs and cats, that is about independence and enrichment. We want to make sure that they have things to do which do not involve the pet parent so that they are not completely reliant on the pet parent for happiness.”

Start now by putting your dog in his crate or carrier or closed spare room for about 15 to 60 minutes a day with a favorite stuffed food toy. Or take a walk without him. “Try to shoot for some independence for your dog,” Radosta says. “We want your dogs to know that you are still leaving sometimes, and they will be OK.”

Cats also need time away from us each day. I have resisted the temptation to wake up my orange tabbies, Casey and Rusty, when they are leaving sometimes, and they are cuddling together on the couch. “They have been lying on our laps 24/7 for more than six weeks now,” Radosta says. “Get to shopping online for toys that will occupy your cat. Catit (https://usa.catit.com) makes some great toys. Save the boxes and packing material for your kitty. These can provide them with hours of fun.” I recently adopted a stray small dog during this pandemic and named her Emma. As much as I love spending 24/7 with her, I have followed Radosta’s savvy advice. As I write this column in our backyard office, Emma — and the rest of my furry Brady Bunch — are napping in the main house. And I no longer toss tennis balls to Kona, my terrier mix, to two or three times a day. Everyone, including pets, needs and deserves some me-time. Emma, Kona, Casey and Rusty definitely.

Arden Moore, founder of fourleggedlife.com, is an animal behavior expert and host of the Oh Behave! show on petliferadio.com. Learn more at www.ardenmoore.com.

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Katie Cupcake
misses her friends in Ocean Ridge and so do we... — Don and Jerry MaCruder

Paws Up for Pets

Dogs need to rediscover alone time once home isolation ends for their owners.

Photo provided

The COASTAL STAR
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Elective surgeries, other procedures return with safeguards in place

Tenet Palm Beach Health Network’s Palm Beach hospitals resumed elective care on May 4, as the state lifted the relevant executive order related to the coronavirus. “Many patients have postponed medical care or are in need of treating new symptoms. Our health system is ready to provide this care to our community again,” says Tenet Palm Beach Health Network CEO Maggie Gill. “The Palm Beach Health Network is committed to the universal protection and safety of our patients, physicians and staff.”

“We have rigorous infection prevention protocols in place, and they are working. We have well-trained and experienced staff. We have clear pathways to care for COVID-19 patients separate from those with other illnesses. We have also invested in rapid testing capabilities and personal protective equipment.”

Delray Medical Center is a part of Tenet Palm Beach Health Network.

Baptist Health South Florida began to reopen its facilities on May 6 for elective surgeries, endoscopies and interventional procedures. Enhanced protective measures, including mandatory face masks, social distancing guidelines, and enhanced hygiene screenings, will continue to be utilized.

Baptist Health also notes that patients should call their doctor’s offices for the status of appointments that were canceled because of the pandemic. Regularly scheduled appointments with Baptist Health Medical Group physicians are going as planned, though visitor restrictions are in place.

“We want people in our communities to know that Baptist Health has taken all the necessary precautionary actions to keep our patients, staff and visitors safe and healthy,” said Anexis Lopez, R.N., manager of infection control at Doctors Hospital, part of Baptist Health South Florida.

“The steps we have taken are consistent with guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Baptist Health is also working closely with local and state public health officials.”

In mid-April, the Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization for Baptist Hospital of Miami Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory at Miami Cancer Institute to perform a new COVID-19 swab test in-house, which was developed at the Miami Cancer Institute. This testing, sponsored by Miami Cancer Institute to perform a number of tests twice a day and receive results within 24 hours. The lab is able to perform 40–80 tests per day, with capacity for more in the near future.

In early April, a team from Florida Atlantic University’s College of Engineering and Computer Science and Institute for Sensing and Embedded Network Systems rapidly produced protective face shields in response to a request from Baptist Health South Florida.

Making the inexpensive, disposable face shield requires only clear polyester plastic, elastic fabric bands, and a laser cutter, and it’s simple and quick. Baptist Health South Florida requested an initial order of 4,000 face shields, which the FAU team completed, and Baptist ordered 4,000 more.

Another innovative solution, this one by Florida Atlantic University’s Cane Institute for Advanced Technologies at A.D. Henderson University School and FAU High School: Through April, students ranging from ages 5 to 18, along with two faculty members, worked to create more than 1,200 3D printed face shields, 36 intubation chambers and 2,000 ear savers for several hospitals in Palm Beach County.

The intubation chambers, a unique form of PPE for hospitals, provide an extra layer of protection for doctors and nurses when they are intubating patients who need to be put on respirators.

He also stresses the need for respiratory therapists to stay proficient and that they are working. We have rigorous infection prevention protocols in place, and they are working. We have well-trained and experienced staff. We have clear pathways to care for COVID-19 patients separate from those with other illnesses. We have also invested in rapid testing capabilities and personal protective equipment.”

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A grateful community gives thanks to first responders, other heroes

Throughout south Palm Beach County, residents and businesses are showing support for hospital workers and first responders on the front lines battling the coronavirus.

TOP: Sandi Savia, EMS liaison at Boca Raton Regional Hospital, blows a kiss through her mask to Boca Raton Fire Rescue crew members as they and more than 20 other first-responder vehicles parade past the Emergency Room entrance on April 17 as a show of support for hospital workers. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

ABOVE: Delray Medical Center staff enjoyed complimentary ice cream in the hospital parking lot courtesy of Abbey Delray, Abbey Delray South and Harbour’s Edge, which partnered with Maypo’s Ice Cream truck in an effort to thank health care workers on May 2. Members of the hospital pharmacy staff pose for a selfie: (l-r) Graciela Almazan, Lourdes Black, Lisa Stephani, and Antonia Pasvantis, the assistant pharmacy director. The gesture is part of the communities’ Heroes in Health Care campaign, aimed at showing appreciation for the dedication and sacrifice of health care professionals during the pandemic. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

RIGHT: At 7 p.m. April 17, residents of the Boca Highland Beach Club & Marina in Highland Beach stood on their balconies to applaud first responders and health care workers for their work during the coronavirus outbreak. Pictured top to bottom (l-r): Irma and Seymour Andrus; Matthew Tyroler, 20; Richard Tyroler and Amy Tyroler; and Debbie Romanyk. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star
A COVID-19 began its aggressive spread and stay-at-home orders followed, cellphones went from being necessary, sometimes intrusive devices to becoming virtual lifelines. Friends and family members took to voice and video to pierce isolation and diminish anxiety — checking in, catching up and lifting spirits.

Doctors and mental health professionals quickly joined that virtual support network. Insurance providers like Florida Blue and Aetna offered telephone and video health care visits as a benefit prior to the pandemic. But with the coronavirus public health emergency declaration on Jan. 31, Medicare moved to expand its coverage of telehealth services for the duration of the emergency. Other insurance companies and health care providers followed suit.

Now, even as elective surgeries have resumed and access to medical offices is widening, telemedicine may well be part of the new normal.

‘OK, use that one.’ It was that simple.” Greene said. “I absolutely would continue to use it. For someone who works full time like me, to take an hour and a half off to go to a doctor’s appointment that’s going to take me five minutes, is a pain in the neck,” she said.

FAU Medicine’s primary care practice stepped into telehealth — diagnosing and treating nonemergency conditions — for the first time in March, said Dr. Leonard Berkowitz, lead physician. The practice maintained office visits only for patients with conditions that would be difficult to manage with virtual care, he said.

“I think what we’ve learned from this experience is that there are definite advantages to telemedicine. For someone who might have transportation issues, they’re able to be seen right from their own home.

Also, for someone who might have a medical condition where they may not want to be exposed to other patients sitting in a waiting room,” he said.

“We’ve really covered a lot of the common areas that we treat in primary care: diabetes and hypertension management, rashes and skin conditions, sore throats, respiratory infections, and strains and sprains. We’ve also been dealing with mental health issues as well, like anxiety and depression. It’s been a very stressful time for a lot of patients.”

Ocean Ridge psychotherapist Mya Breman said welcome the telehealth coverage expansion for just that reason. She sees, and hears, the anger, fear, anxiety and grief the pandemic is generating and wants people to find the support they need.

“I don’t think people are reaching out the way they do in normal times. And that’s a shame because now, more than ever, they should be reaching out,” she said.

“What you need is someone to talk this out with. And I think a best friend who knows how to listen is fine. But they have their issues, too. So, I think a practitioner, a professional, is now even more essential because you need someone who’s really going to listen, be rational, be on your side and really respond to your individual needs. You know … someone who is there for you 100%.”

But, as people meet up on Zoom or reach out by phone, Breman offered a meaningful way we can offer support.

“I think the main thing is to validate each other’s feelings because we’re all in this together. And it’s normal that we’re all feeling these things, whether it’s glee, I’m really happy to get off the Ferris wheel, or oh, I’m so miserable. So, find people that can validate you and say you’re not crazy; it’s very normal to feel whatever it is that you’re feeling.

Breman began offering telephone psychotherapy sessions many years ago, to serve clients who live across the country and around the world. She has since added video sessions but leaves the choice to the client.

“Telehealth really is very effective,” she said. “If you trust your therapist, there’s not much difference between telehealth and face-to-face, in person.”

“Obviously, telemedicine was here before the COVID-19 pandemic,” Berkowitz said. “But I think doctors are curious to see what role it will have afterwards. I would not be surprised if it’s a part of doctors’ practices moving forward. What part of it remains to be seen.”

Joyce Reingold writes about health and healthy living. Send column ideas to joyce. reingold@yahoo.com.
Easter sunrise
Delray Beach public beach — April 12

ABOVE: Delray Beach residents Jennifer Magi, Sue Magi and Jimmy Magi stop along A1A to watch the Easter sunrise. Easter Sunday usually draws hundreds of people on A1A just south of Atlantic Avenue for a nondenominational service, but not during the coronavirus pandemic. The Magi family has attended the Easter service for over 30 years.

LEFT: Delray Beach residents Jim Reynolds and Sue Beil photograph the sunrise. Photos by Tim Stepien/ The Coastal Star
Finding Faith

Virtual services prove valuable but not preferable

How about some good news?

People are showing up at virtual church and temple in increasing numbers. While there are few (if any) places practicing public worship in Palm Beach County, many more people are seeking out a virtual spiritual connection.

When "coronavirus" was just a whisper, Rabbi Shmuel Biston, co-director of Chabad of East Delray Beach, closed the doors of his newly opened facility on First Avenue almost immediately. But Biston, an Apple watch-wearing millennial, made a seamless transition to virtual worship, which was easier for groups that already had a strong online presence through Facebook or YouTube. Others scrambled.

St. Joseph's Episcopal in Boynton Beach amassed every tool it could find, Father Marty Zlatic says. "We started a church Facebook page, we instituted a YouTube channel for the church, and we bought a subscription to Zoom. We're investigating the cost of installing a permanent video broadcasting system so we can more easily offer livestreaming of our services even after the quarantine is over.

Father Brian Horgan at St. Lucy Catholic Church in Highland Beach celebrates Mass every day, but he's leaving the streaming to others. "So many others are doing it, and we don't want to send out something that's not as effective," he says. He keeps in touch with the congregation through daily emails and he answers his cellphone. "We want the parish to know they're not forgotten." Still, reopening is the goal. Paul J. Kane, rector at St. Paul's Episcopal in Delray, says, "I can't imagine online becoming the normal means of worship. The church is a community. Being together in prayer, fellowship and service is at the heart of who we are. So, in that sense, I don't think online church can ever become the normal. But this pandemic has certainly demonstrated the importance of the church having a strong, accessible presence on the internet."

The quantity and content are changing too, local clergy said, along with its audience.

Zlatic says, "Since the day the quarantine started, we started posting a worship experience of some sort every day on our social media pages to give the congregation a touch from the church. It's been a ray of hope to our congregation, especially those who are quarantined alone."

Rabbi Ruvi New of Chabad of East Boca Raton says he's seen a significant spike in participation in the daily prayers he offers, with as many as 1,000 viewers showing up from around the world.

"I'm inspired and humbled by it," he says. "We're embracing this disruption of life as we knew it. It's about how we utilize the opportunities and make the most of it that matters."

Kane says daily emails to parishioners ("spreading God's love, not the virus") have "become a sort of lifeline in the midst of a lot of loneliness and isolation."

For a successful reopening, everyone agrees the key is to act responsibly and safely with new protocols in place. Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito of the Catholic Diocese of Palm Beach spoke to his flock and acknowledged that all want to reopen as soon as possible, but everyone must respect social distancing and follow policies in a "careful and thoughtful way."

Horgan says that St. Lucy's will follow the diocese's lead. "The church has taped off pews to enforce social distancing and removed all the books and hymnals. It is working on safe ways to offer the sign of peace, formerly a handshake or embrace, and Holy Communion."

"People need human touch," Horgan says. "Our people are so willing to make changes, which is a tremendous blessing, but it's been extremely hard. I can't be a priest without people. But I'm optimistic about the future."

Biston says, "We have to be cautious. We have a lot of seniors so even when it's safe, we'll keep attendance in check and take it one day at a time."

No one is sure how places of worship will decide who comes. Reservations only? Maybe a lottery? Kane says that St. Paul's will follow the Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida, which plans to take a phased approach to reopening.

"The next phase," Kane says, "will likely involve having congregants wear PPEs, sitting at least 6 feet apart and not receiving Communion from the common cup."

The biggest factor in determining what worship will look like six months from now will be the development of a vaccine, Biston says. But whether we're asked to wear masks, check our temperatures at the door, provide proof of vaccination or other mandates, Biston says, "We're humans. We adapt. We forge on."

New says he expects a new appreciation for relationships and a lot of excitement around the communal nature of worship.

"That feeling of pooled energy, a greater sense of connection from sharing space," are what we're missing, he says. He expects people to be almost giddy. Right now, the feelings aren't so positive. But New says not to lose faith.

"My message is to relieve yourself of the burden of worry. God's divine orchestrations cannot be understood by man. We are on the cusp of a better, brighter world," New says.

Janis Fontaine writes about people of faith, their congregations, causes and events. Contact her at janisfontaine@outlook.com.
Fishing, diving and boating along the coast of Palm Beach County was tightly restricted for five weeks after Palm Beach County officials closed boat ramps and marinas March 22 to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. The reason: Many boaters ignored social-distancing guidelines by using their vessels to gather for shoulder-to-shoulder parties at popular raft-up spots such as Lake Boca and the Peanut Island sandbar.

County officials opened marinas and boat ramps April 29 — but with restrictions on boat occupancy and boater behavior.

As of early May, the public health restrictions for recreational boaters included:

• A prohibition on any marine recreational activity that does not comply with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines related to the spread of COVID-19.
• No anchoring or mooring boats within 50 feet of each other.
• No activity that results in a gathering of more than 10 people.
• No beaching, landing or anchoring on open shorelines or sandbars.
• Capacity limits for non-commercial boats. Boats 25 feet or smaller, for instance, are allowed to carry up to four adults, plus two youths age 17 or younger, a maximum of six people.
• Other restrictions apply to charter fishing boats, dive boats and other for-hire boats in Palm Beach County.

Charter operators have been told to mark seating locations to maintain a minimum of 6 feet between customers.

Fish-cleaning tables are limited to one person at a time. The captain, crew and patrons of for-hire boats are to wear protective gear such as face masks and gloves, according to the county’s emergency order.

Dive tanks are to be filled by appointment only and picked up curbside, according to guidelines in the county’s Emergency Order No. 5, signed April 27.

Personal watercraft are limited to one person per vessel — or one adult and one child who is an immediate family member.

Canoes, kayaks and paddleboards are limited to one person unless two people can occupy them and still maintain 6 feet of separation.

At boat ramps, one boat should launch per boat ramp bay at a time to minimize contact with others. On fishing piers, a distance of 10 feet between anglers must be maintained. Tackle shops and fuel docks are allowed to operate if they follow CDC guidelines.

For details, visit discover.pbcgov.org. Click on “updates” and look for Emergency Order No. 5.

As of early May, group fishing boats (head boats) such as the Lady K in Lantana were operating with restrictions.

The Lady K’s parent company, Bar Jack Fishing, limits trips to 10 anglers to maintain a 6-foot separation between anglers. The ticket price increased to $60 per person from $45. Face masks are encouraged, and anglers are encouraged to bring their own fishing gear.

The Living on Island Time head boat based at Palm Beach Yacht Center in Hypoluxo and the Sea Mist III based at Boynton Harbor Marina were offering fishing trips with the same restrictions: 10 people maximum at a cost of $60 each. Reservations are suggested.

Scuba diver killed off Palm Beach

A Melbourne diver died after being pulled under the boat and trapped March 29 off Palm Beach.

According to a preliminary report by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, Mollie Ghiz-Flynn, 37, was diving from the Southern Comfort dive boat about 1.5 miles south of Palm Beach Inlet. She was pulled under the boat and “trapped by the propeller” while the captain was picking up divers.

Other divers freed Ghiz-Flynn from the propellers, pulled her onboard and administered CPR. Firefighters met the boat at Riviera Beach Marina, where they pronounced her dead. The FWC is investigating.

Event updates


July 11: Big Dog & Fat Cat KDW Shootout fishing tournament is planned, based at Saltfish Marina in Palm Beach Shores. Captain’s meeting July 10 at Saltfish Marina. Entry fee $200 per boat through July 6 or $250 thereafter. Visit www.bigdogfatcat.org.

Postponed: No date had been set (as of early May) for the 26th annual Lantana Fishing Derby. For updates, call 561-585-8664 or visit www.lantanafishingderby.com.

Postponed: This Boca Raton-based nonprofit Marine Education Initiative (formerly Fishing for Families in Need) postponed its Cruise for a Cause fundraiser, originally set for April 4. The new date is Nov. 7. Tickets can be used on the new event date or refunded. For details, go to www.marineinitiative.com.

Canceled: This year’s Palm Beach County KDW Classic fishing tournament originally

Boating and fishing reopen, but with restrictions

Joel Cortes, the assistant public works director of Lantana, paints directions on the pavement at the public marina south of Ocean Avenue at the Intracoastal Waterway early on April 29. Pier anglers are required to keep at least 10 feet apart, and only one person at a time can be at the fish-cleaning station. Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

This view of Lake Boca Raton on April 19 gives a small sense of the crowds that usually attend the annual Boca Bash on the state-controlled lake. BELOW: But a week later, FWC and Boca officers found no bash to police. Boaters heeded advice from an organizer and the city and stayed away. Photos by Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Canceled: This year’s Crossing for Cystic Fibrosis, the annual Father’s Day fundraising paddle from Bimini to Lake Worth Beach. The next crossing is set for June 19, 2021. Details: www.crossingforcysticfibrosis.com.

Canceled: Palm Beach International Boat Show. A virtual boat show was scheduled for May 14.

Tip of the month: NOAA Fisheries and Salt Water Sportsman magazine have organized a fishing photo contest intended to showcase Americans’ passion for saltwater fishing. Recreational anglers should submit a photo and the story related to their favorite catches. Prizes include an expense-paid fishing trip to the Florida Keys. Enter on Instagram at #NOAAsFavoriteCatch or go to www.saltwatersportsman.com/noaaphotocontest.

Jessika Harvey and Rush Rashidi show the 103-inch broadbill swordfish they boated March 23 after a 24-hour fight. They hooked the swordfish off Palm Beach County on the evening of March 22 and drifted north in the current. The fight ended off Vero Beach. Estimated weight: 400 pounds. Willie Howard/The Coastal Star
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