By Larry Keller

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

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

The doctor was arrested at home in late July. The U.S. Justice Department charged him with conspiracy to commit health care fraud and wire fraud — fraudulently billing private insurance companies and Medicare of around $681 million, for which they paid $121 million over a span of nine years. His attorney said Ligotti “looks forward to establishing his innocence.”

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

See DOCTOR on page 10
I stepped on a bee. A tiny, industrious bee. This stinging encounter — on the beach, of all places — put me in a bed for a day with a purple, swollen foot made it difficult to pay the rent or the phone bill or buy groceries? Even one day’s pay makes a big difference to people living paycheck-to-paycheck.

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Boca Raton

Council seek proof that candidates for office live in city

By Mary Hladky

The City Council wants to tighten rules so that candidates for mayor and the council must present proof that they have lived in the city for at least one year at the time of qualifying to run for office.

At present, a candidate is required to live in Boca Raton for only 30 days before qualifying and must simply sign an affidavit stating that without offering proof. The council members also want to eliminate the homestead exemption. Instead, they would require candidates to submit petitions signed by at least 200 residents, which would indicate they have lived in the city for at least one year.

In addition, the council is changing the qualifying dates. Instead of qualifying during the first seven regular business days in January, candidates would qualify during the first seven regular business days in December so that the county supervisor of elections has adequate time to get candidate names on the March ballot.

The impetus for the proof of residency was the candidacies of Bernard Korn, a real estate broker who twice has lost elections to Mayor Scott Singer.

Questions about where Korn lived cropped up in both the 2018 and 2020 city elections. If he had not lived in the city, he was not eligible to run. In 2018, he gave an address at 720 Marble Way on the barrier island, a home owned by real estate broker Richard Vecchio. He also gave the supervisor of elections a mailing address of 19078 Skybridge Circle, a house far west of the city.

This year, he listed his address as a P.O. box at the city’s downtown post office.

Under changes the city wants to enact, candidates could prove where they live by submitting a voter’s registration card, driver’s license, recorded deed, property tax receipt, homestead exemption documentation, lease agreement or utility bill. The City Council is expected to approve an ordinance in September that will set the one-year residency and proof of residency requirements and eliminate the qualifying fee. A person who had a homestead exemption for a home outside the city within one year of the start of qualifying would not meet the residency qualification.

The ordinance includes two proposed City Charter amendments specifying those changes that people would vote on in the March 9 city election. The changes would only be made if voters approve the charter amendments.

The new qualifying dates are being set in a second ordinance that the council also is expected to approve in September. No charter amendment is needed to change the dates. Council member Jeremy Rodgers’ seat will be open in the March election; he is term-limited out of office. Fellow member Monica Mayotte’s seat will also be on the ballot; she will be ending her first term on the council.

City tax rate up 6.6%; no Beach & Park increase

By Steve Plunkett

After weathering a firestorm of protests against a hefty tax hike proposed last year, Beach & Park District officials chose the rollback rate, held a homestead exemption. How they affect individuals during September budget hearings was also how long the owner has paid almost $10 more.

The city set its tentative property tax at $3.68 per $1,000 of taxable value to decrease for most households. Meanwhile, the city’s tentative property tax at $3.68 per $1,000 for a 6.6% increase. Tentative rates can be cut during September budget hearings but not raised. How they affect individuals depends on a property’s assessed value but also how long the owner has held a homestead exemption. If the tentative rates are adopted, Deputy Mayor Andrea O’Rourke and her husband, for example, will pay about $90 in Beach & Park taxes and $374 in city taxes on their Minnet Court penthouse condo. Last year they owed a total $13 less — the same Beach & Park amount and about $361 to the city. The O’Rourkes have had homestead exemptions since well before 2008, when the state’s property tax cap became portable.

The Beach & Park District’s $38.7 million budget for the year beginning Oct. 1 includes $5 million to start building the Boca National Golf Course, $955,000 for renovations at the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center and $300,000 for beach renourishment.

“I don’t see how we cannot go forward” with funding the golf course construction, Rollins said. “We put ourselves in a box with our ad valorem revenue last year. No way can you get tax (revenue) relief this year given the business environment and the COVID.”

The City Council will have its first of two public hearings on the budget at 6 p.m. Sept. 8. The Beach & Park District’s first hearing is set for 8 p.m. Sept. 10.

Bridge over Boca Inlet closed until late fall

By Steve Plunkett

The bridge over the Boca Raton Inlet, which connects the south barrier island to all points north, closed to land traffic in August for a 60-day paint job.

The Florida Department of Transportation, which is responsible for the bridge on State Road A1A, said the construction schedule is actually 80 days, not counting weather delays and hold. It expects the project to be finished by late fall.

The bascule bridge, officially named the Haven Ashe Bridge after a long-term bridge tender, will change in color from light blue to a darker blue called Federal Standard 15052.

Materials and tarp cover both of the unmoveable portions of the bridge over the Boca Raton Inlet in late August. The bridge is getting a cleaning and new paint. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Beach & Park incumbents cruise to election victory

Boca Raton Beach & Park District Commissioners Steve Engel and Erin Wright were reelected to office by comfortable margins on Aug. 18.

Wright, the district’s vice chair, defeated challenger Nancy-Jo Feinberg with 56% to 44% of the vote to gain her second term in the seat. Engel, with 55% of the vote in the Seat 5 race, bested rival Eric Pendergraft’s 25% and William ‘Billy’ Vale’s 20%. It will be Engel’s third term on the commission. Incumbent Craig Ehrnst lost Seat 1 for a second term when no one filed to run against him. The four-year terms will begin in January.

—Steve Plunkett

Tarpon Springs contractor Seminole Equipment Inc won the $802,818 contract to clean and paint structural steel and concrete portions of the bridge as well as its concrete barriers, deck, overhang and bridge tender house.

Highway vehicles are being detoured to Federal Highway via Palmetto Park Road and Hillsboro Boulevard. The bridge, which normally opens on demand, will be kept raised so the repainting does not affect boat traffic.

The original wooden bridge was replaced by the current structure in 1964, a year after Ashe died. It opened electrically but had to be closed manually by Ashe, who became its tender in 1942, according to wikimapia.org.

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Group fleshes out plan for performing arts venue at Mizner Park

By Mary Hladky

A cultural group has added significant details to its proposal to build a performing arts center at Mizner Park and soon will seek support from City Council members.

The ambitious project now has a price tag: $126 million, including a $14 million endowment.

If the City Council gives its blessing, the group will begin fundraising and expects a 2025 opening date.

The group intends to reinvigorate the aging Mizner Park and fulfill its original vision as a cultural complex.

“Mizner Park needs its next chapter,” said Andrea Virgin, who leads the group of cultural organizations that want to create a cultural destination.

The updated plans by the Boca Raton Center for the Arts and Innovation now call for completely revamping the existing amphitheater and adding a new theater building. Those and other proposed venues would accommodate a total of 6,000 people.

City Council members have long talked about installing a retractable roof on the amphitheater to protect the audience from the elements but have balked at the high cost.

This project would do that in dramatic fashion. It would add a permanent, floating, overhead ceiling that leaves the sky light but, like photochromic eyeglasses, can darken to block some sunlight.

The amphitheater’s stage would be extended slightly to the south, and a cantilevered “curtain” would be added that can be raised and lowered to separate the stage from an outdoor plaza.

The amphitheater could be used as it is now. But it would also have a 450-seat interior performance space.

The center would feature “multi-form” theaters. Virgin said they would be the first such theaters in the Southeast U.S. and among only a handful in the nation.

Describing them as “a forward-thinking theater approach,” Virgin said they would not be used for a single purpose. They do not have fixed seating, walls, ceilings or floors. Instead, all these elements can be reconfigured to meet the needs of any foreseeable use.

That means the theaters could host concerts, stage productions, conferences, political debates, product launches, career fairs, banquets and weddings.

The center includes many other elements, such as a 99-seat performance hall, a rooftop terrace that could accommodate 200 people and outdoor performance space.

Existing amphitheater parking would be razed. A proposed five-deck parking garage would add another 300 spaces.

Virgin has long maintained that her group does not intend to create a venue that would compete with the Kravis Center or Broward Center for the Performing Arts. The main hall, for example, will seat a maximum of 1,108 people.

When Virgin outlined the plan to the Boca Chamber in a virtual meeting on Aug. 19, Chamber president and CEO Troy McLellan lauded it as a “wicked awesome presentation.”

Post-COVID-19, he said, “The one thing we will crave and need is a venue like this where we can come together and gather.”

City Council members were similarly blown away when Virgin presented the first iteration of the proposal to them two years ago. Jeremy Rodgers, then deputy mayor, called it “very, very compelling.”

Originally, the group wanted to build a performing arts complex on city-owned land east of the Spanish River Library. Last year, the group scaled back, proposing to locate it on city-owned land in Mizner Park, where people could take advantage of the Boca Raton Museum of Art, nearby restaurants and the planned Brightline station.

Council members gave “conceptual support” to the proposal at the time but were cautious. They wanted assurances that the cultural community would provide adequate financial support so the center would not become a financial burden for the city.

Virgin will make a new presentation to the council this fall. An exact date is not yet set.

A potential sticking point could be Virgin’s request for a 99-year ground lease on parcels the city owns in Mizner Park. The City Council has long been leery of giving up control of its land.

But Virgin said the city would be getting far more than it would give up. Her group’s assurance that the center would spurn economic activity that would generate $10.5 million in additional tax revenue for Boca Raton in the first five years.

The cultural group also wants the city to continue paying for amphitheater maintenance. The money would continue to be used for that purpose, Virgin said.

If the cultural group and the city reach a deal, she said, members of the cultural community would be willing to open their wallets for pay for the center. The group also will seek grant funding.

Group members include Boca Ballet Theater, the Boca Raton Museum of Art, Festival of the Arts Boca, Symphony of the Palm Beaches, Palm Beach Symphony orchestra, Harid Conservatory, Youth Orchestra of Palm Beach County and Boca Raton Theatre Group.
South Palm Beach

Council seeks to take bigger role during town emergencies

By Dan Moffett

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

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

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

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

"It has to be reshaped and discussed," Vice Mayor Robert Kellogg, who told the council he wouldn’t hesitate to "shut down Town Hall for the safety of the staff" again.

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

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

Town Attorney Glen Torcivia told the council he would look at possible revisions that might give the council more control and make emergency declarations flexible enough to deal with potentially long-running crises, such as the pandemic may be. The council expects to discuss the issue again at its regular meeting on Sept. 8.

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

But that could change.

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

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

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

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

Along the Coast

Judges give 16 awards to ‘Coastal Star’ contributors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The steady hand we need in times like these.

Paid by Mike Caruso, Republican, for State Representative, District 89.
Census response rates lag with a month remaining

By Charles Elmore

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

As of Aug. 23, response rates ranged as low as 42.4% for households in South Palm Beach, with Ocean Ridge and Highland Beach also under 50% and all 11 trailing Florida’s average of 60.9%, federal records showed. The U.S. average was 64.2%.

Lantana stood at 52.5%. Its lowest response levels came in the town’s easternmost census tract in its Hypoluxo Island neighborhood, where the rate was 41.4%.

The response snapshot can change with each passing day, but the stakes do not. Hanging in the balance is funding estimated at $1.600 lost annually for each person missed, for roads, schools, environmental and other programs, not to mention Florida’s chances to gain more seats in Congress.

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

“It’s going to hurt bad,” Stewart said. “It is a 10-year hurt, that’s what people don’t understand. We’re stuck with those numbers for 10 years.” Among other enticements, Lantana is raffling off a 65-inch TV for residents who show proof of responding to the census.

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

A federal review concluded about 94,000 people who should have been counted in Palm Beach County, or 7.2% of its population, failed to make it on census rolls in 2010. In an eventful 2020, it’s not immediately clear to local officials how much the response rates can be explained by disruptions related to COVID-19, or seasonal residents who wound up in other places during the pandemic, or immigrants wary of being counted, or residents who are here but just forgot or did not bother.

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

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

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

The 2020 census marks the first to allow wide-scale responses online as well as by mail or phone, but that had not raised overall participation rates by late August in southern Palm Beach County. Things got even more urgent when the Census Bureau moved up the deadline for all self-responses as collected in prior censuses, including outreach to non-responsive households, or whether any problems have occurred with handling responses online.

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

Whatever the reasons, response rates in the region have lagged. With little more than a month to go, Delray Beach (51.8%) trailed its final 2010 response rate (61.3%) by nearly 10 points. There’s still time to change the numbers and things could look different as September unfolds.

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

Mary Thurvaerter and Mary Hadly contributed to this story.

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A statement about why the city has continued to communicate the importance of responding.

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Gulf Stream

Consultants price new sewer system at $11 million-plus

By Steve Plunkett

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

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

Those pumps send sewage to Boynton Beach for treatment via a 10-inch force main under the Intracoastal. In Baxter and Woodman’s plan, the 10-inch main would be upgraded to also handle waste from the area east of State Road A1A from the Gulf Stream Golf Club to Sea Road.

Sewage from the south part of the town and from Place Au Soleil would be treated by Delray Beach under the plan. The new town system would also need approximately 35,000 linear feet of low-pressure mains, 2,000 linear feet of force mains and pump upgrades at three lift stations in Delray Beach.

Baxter and Woodman also looked at installing a gravity sewer system — the most common type but in Gulf Stream’s case also the most expensive — and a vacuum system that would have required three vacuum pump stations each the size of a small house.

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

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

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

In other business:

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

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

Police take warnings of car thefts door to door

By Steve Plunkett

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

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

“We’ve gone door to door really, requesting people, reminding them to be safe and remove their belongings and lock their cars,” Allen said.

Mayor Scott Morgan aimed some “finger-wagging” at residents who leave keys in their vehicles or leave them running or with doors open. Most late-model cars come with key fobs that make starting easy, he said.

“You leave it in the car — all you have to do is depress the brake and push a button and off they go,” the mayor said.

“We find them driving down the road, we catch them on the cameras either north or south. But there’s nothing you can do after that point but locate the car at some point.”

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

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

“That’s a 50% increase in coverage in our town,” Morgan said.

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

With a car camera, if you do like a traffic stop and you stop 2 feet out of the range, you’re out of the picture, you have no more picture at all,” Allen said.

A body camera “stays with the person.”

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

Big-ticket items include $200,000 for “smart” water meters and $200,778 for planning road and drainage work in the north Core area, part of the 10-year capital improvement plan. Virtual public hearings on the 2020-2021 budget will be at 5:30 p.m. on Sept. 11 and Sept. 22.

In other business, commissioners learned that the new water main on State Road A1A from Golfview Drive to Sea Road would need to go under the southbound lane instead of next to the highway.

“The area between the road and Gulf Stream’s Australian pines was too crowded with other utilities,” the engineering consultant said. The entire lane will be resurfaced as part of the project.

LETTERS: The Coastal Star welcomes letters to the editor about issues of interest in the community. These are subject to editing and must include your name, address and phone number. Preferred length is 200-500 words. Send email to news@thecoastalstar.com.
DOCTOR
Continued from page 1

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

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

In May, the seven-bedroom Inlet House in Boynton Beach was put on the market in an effort to stymie the opening of sober homes that were little more than high paying flophouses.

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

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

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

Buprenorphine is an opioid approved for suppressing withdrawal symptoms and blocking the effects of other opioids. Like other opioids, it is addictive and can be abused. If what we’re investigating is culpability and responsibility,” FBI special agent William Stewart testified at the daylong preliminary hearing. Investigators say. A dozen of those patients died while still receiving the drug, and he repeatedly prescribed drugs to more patients than his license permitted, investigators contend.

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

“Dr. Ligotti thus looks forward to establishing his innocence.”

FBI cites years of abuse
Ligotti’s arrest is the latest development in a federal and state effort to thwart the insurance frauds and shams at sober homes that earned Palm Beach County a national reputation as the epicenter of these schemes.

While Ligotti’s name was mentioned in the affidavit, the Ligotti case wasn’t limited to Palm Beach County, “we believe this to be the largest drug fraud scheme ever to involve a provider fraud in terms of dollar amount” locally, Alan Johnson, who is with the Palm Beach County chief assistant state attorney, said in an email.

Substance abuse treatment in Whole Health County was once estimated to be a $1 billion-a-year industry. Roundabouts fact led to the formation of a federal task force as well as a Sober Homes Task Force by the county state attorney’s office. Ordinances

Michael and Christine Ligotti have listed their Whole Health building on Southeast Sixth Avenue for sale for $4 million, and their home for nearly $5.7 million.

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Ocean Strand is larger and costlier than you think

By Steve Plunkett

Ocean Strand, which will soon open to pedestrians and bicyclists as a minimal park, is an acre larger than commonly thought. And its price tag was almost $1.3 million more.

News outlets including The Coastal Star have routinely reported with various rounding that Ocean Strand’s 15.2 acres cost $11.88 million. But those are just the numbers from the original 1994 purchase. To straighten Ocean Strand’s northern boundary, the district in December 1999 bought the home of William Veit, at 937 Ocean Strand, for $475,000, property records show. Ocean Strand was also the name of the street that runs through the tract.

Eight months later the district agreed to pay Veit’s neighbor, Electa Pace, almost $800,000 for two parcels that made up her home at 955 Ocean Strand. The settlement came after she sued the district claiming it was letting the surrounding land deteriorate in an effort to make her property less desirable.

It was Pace’s tireless lobbying of city and district officials that led to the purchase of Ocean Strand in the first place. She started her campaign after a developer announced plans to build 79 condominiums and six beachfront homes on the site.

“It’s the ultimate irony,” attorney Robert Sweetapple, who represented Pace in the dispute, told the Sun-Sentinel newspaper at the time.

The differing figures for Ocean Strand’s acreage came to light after the Beach & Park District in June filed a declaration of restrictive covenants with Palm Beach County stating, “Any and all future uses of the Property shall be limited to open space, which shall include parks and recreation uses.”

Accompanying the declaration was a sketch of Ocean Strand with the former Pace and Veit parcels labeled “not included.”

District attorney Jacob Horowitz, who drafted the declaration, could not immediately say whether he would need to amend the document.

“Please allow us to review. We will follow up further shortly,” Horowitz said in an Aug. 26 email.

Meanwhile, a team from Maracore Builders and AGTLand Landscape Architecture was on-site surveying the coming park in late August.

Maracore, the only bidder for the $100,000 project, plans to clear exotic Brazilian pepper trees from about one-fifth of the 13.2 acres west of State Road A1A and install a pedestrian gate at the entrance opening to a mulch trail that meanders across Ocean Strand and connects to a new kayak beach on the Intracoastal Waterway. Two picnic tables with benches will also be installed.

“It’s more of a destination point” rather than a launch site, Carol Perez of AGTLand said of the kayak area. The gate keeping A1A traffic out of Ocean Strand will remain. The beach portion of Ocean Strand will also be off-limits.

While the plan shows three spots where public artworks could go, none will be installed at this time. Beach & Park District Commissioner Robert Rollins and Maracore President Nate Custodio both mentioned having heard “rumors” of a Native American burial ground in Ocean Strand while reviewing the construction plans at an Aug. 11 meeting.

But the district’s settlement with Pace seems to memorialize the existence of Indian artifacts there:

“The parties further agree that Plaintiff’s dog ‘J.J.’ is buried in an archeological midden located on the North side of the property. Defendants shall not disturb this marked grave during construction,” it reads.

The district plans to open Ocean Strand by year’s end.

A new gate at the entrance to Ocean Strand will give pedestrians access to a 6-foot-wide mulch trail leading to the Intracoastal. Bicyclists can coast down the park’s old asphalt road. The current gate will continue to keep cars out. Kayakers can paddle in from the west.
Manalapan’s high property values likely won’t be enough to insulate the town from a modest increase in the tax rate for the next fiscal year.

Like all Florida municipalities, Manalapan faces a reduction in state and county revenue streams because of economic damage done by the COVID-19 pandemic. But the biggest hit to the town’s budget comes from its neighbor to the north. This year South Palm Beach’s property values shot up 22% because of the opening of the $70 million 3550 South Ocean building and its 30 luxury condos. While South Palm had the county’s highest valuation increase, Manalapan had the lowest at a mere 1.23%.

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

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

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

“My personal preference is not to raise the millage rate at all,” said Mayor Keith Waters. “I call that the September goal.”

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

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

The new proposed budget includes a 3% raise for town employees and covers the full staffing of the Police Department, which has undergone a major expansion over the last two years.

In other business, commissioners unanimously approved an ordinance that revises the town’s rules on signs. The changes set new requirements for the size and placement of signs and satisfy constitutional concerns, said Town Attorney Keith Davis.

“The main thrust of the ordinance is to deal with temporary signs,” Davis said. Commissioners wanted to complete the changes before the election season, when the placement and size of campaign signs have often raised complaints in previous years.

**Tentative tax rates**

South County taxing agencies have proposed budgets for 2020-2021. Here are their tentative tax rates per $1,000 of taxable value, the rollback rates and percent change.

- **Boca Raton city***: $3.68 per $1,000, $3.35 rollback, 6.6% increase
- **Boca Beach & Park**: $0.88 per $1,000, $0.88 rollback, 0% increase
- **Briny Breezes**: $10.00 per $1,000, $9.02 rollback, 10.8% increase
- **Delray Beach**: $6.85 per $1,000, $6.40 rollback, 4.2% increase
- **Gulf Stream**: $3.76 per $1,000, $3.76 rollback, 0% increase
- **Highland Beach**: $3.79 per $1,000, $3.74 rollback, 1.7% increase
- **Lantana**: $3.50 per $1,000, $3.31 rollback, 5.6% increase
- **Manalapan**: $3.30 per $1,000, $3.01 rollback, 9.1% increase
- **Ocean Ridge**: $5.35 per $1,000, $5.17 rollback, 3.48% increase
- **South Palm Beach**: $3.59 per $1,000, $3.54 rollback, 1.4% increase

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

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Briny Breezes

Briny adjusting budget to account for revenue losses from pandemic

By Dan Moffett

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

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

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

The COVID-19 pandemic added one more complication. Like municipalities across the state, Briny faces loss of revenue-sharing funds from the state, Briny faces loss of revenue-sharing funds from the state, Briny faces loss of revenue-sharing funds from the state, Briny faces loss of revenue-sharing funds from the state, and failed to disclose income she received from him.

Council to vote on six matters that financially benefited James

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

She has pleaded not guilty. Her attorney, Bruce Zimet, has repeatedly said she will not accept a plea deal.
Commissioners stay in place on property taxes

By Rich Pollack

While some communities are facing financial shortfalls and need to increase revenue for the coming budget year, Highland Beach will hold the line on its tax rate while anticipating only a small tap into reserve funds.

Faced with a budget expected to top $12 million in fiscal 2023, town commissioners tentatively agreed to keep the operating tax rate at $3.292 per $1,000 of taxable value, up 1.66% over the rollback rate. Meanwhile the debt service tax rate will be $0.5584 per $1,000 of value, a slight decrease from this year.

The overall tax rate, as a result, tentatively decreased from $3.799 to $3.788. That means that the owner of a home with a taxable value of $300,000 would pay about $1,135 in municipal taxes.

Town officials still can lower the operating tax rate in coming weeks but cannot raise it.

“We’ve held in place,” said Town Manager Marshall Labadie. “We haven’t had to have an increase in our tax rate.”

Because values on many properties in town have increased, some homeowners may see an increase in municipal taxes.

Overall, property values in the town rose by about 2.5% to about $1.5 billion, generating about $96 million in tax revenue.

To help eliminate a slight shortfall, the town will pledge about $208,000 from unassigned reserves for the coming budget year.

The reserves, however, grew by about $550,000 at the end of the 2019-2020 budget year, the result of funds that were budgeted but not used. An additional $300,000 is estimated to be added to reserves after Sept. 30, the end of the current budget year.

Within the additional money, the town’s unassigned reserves will top about $6 million, or about 52% of the overall general budget.

At least one commission member believes that is more than necessary.

“That surplus was created through taxes that were collected from residents and not spent by the town,” said Vice Mayor Greg Babij. “While a municipality should have a surplus to tap in downturns of revenues, it should not be excessive.”

Babij said that Highland Beach’s reserves are significantly higher, percentage wise, than those of other towns and believes that the town should consider using reserves for one-time costs and to avoid having to raise taxes.

Town officials say the saved money could be needed during the coming year as the town explores the condition of its aging sewer lines and deals with unexpected costs from COVID-19.

“There are still uncertainties with the pandemic,” Labadie said.

For now, Babij said, Highland Beach may be in a better position than other municipalities when it comes to facing impacts from the coronavirus.

The town derives only small amounts of revenue from sales tax and has virtually no commercial properties other than the Delray Sands Resort.

Still, with an eye to the future and the possibility of the virus affecting property values, Highland Beach has instituted a hiring freeze, limiting hiring to positions deemed essential.

Babij says Highland Beach could be fortunate and not feel any impacts on property values from the pandemic.

“We are a small seaside town, and due to the surge of exits from northern cities/states into southeastern towns such as ours, we may not actually experience a drop in property prices,” he said. “We might even see a small increase as demand may be greater than supply.”

Pedestrian-activated crosswalk lights coming

By Rich Pollack

It has taken more than 3½ years but it now appears Highland Beach will get pedestrian-activated signals at all of its crosswalks on State Road A1A.

“The day has finally come when we’ll be able to put in some type of walk improvements,” said Town Manager Marshall Labadie. In August the Town Commission authorized Mayor Doug Hillman to sign an almost $205,000 contract with Delray Beach-based Lux Solar for 16 solar-powered crosswalk lights on either side of the eight A1A crosswalks in town. The price also includes installation.

Money for the lights will come from the 1-cent discretionary sales surtax approved by Palm Beach County voters in 2016 and reserved specifically for infrastructure improvements.

The crosswalks, which Labadie says could be working within a few months, will each feature a diamond-shape crosswalk sign with a horizontal light bar below. When a button is pressed, the lights flash across the horizontal bar to alert motorists of a pedestrian in or about to enter the crosswalk.

Labadie said crosswalk lights have long been a priority for the town and were noted by commissioners when he interviewed for his job two years ago.

“It was a universally expressed concern,” he said.

One of the leading advocates for pedestrian-activated crosswalk lights was resident John Boden, who began lobbying for the improvements after nearly running into two women and several children who were crossing A1A at night and wearing dark clothes.

“I’m delighted that our town manager followed through and that we’re going to get the brightest lights possible,” Boden said. “The lights are not just for pedestrians. They’re also going to help drivers avoid hitting someone in the crosswalk.”

While the lights are a step in the right direction, the current agreement falls short of a more robust proposal town officials had previously considered.

Originally the town had hoped to include pedestrian-activated embedded lights into crosswalk improvements.

Highland Beach sought an appropriation from the state to help fund the project, but funds in the state budget were cut by Gov. Ron DeSantis following the coronavirus outbreak.

The town also discovered that the cost for installing the embedded lights was higher than had been originally anticipated. Still, Highland Beach has not given up on additional crosswalk enhancements. Labadie said the town will work with the Florida Department of Transportation resources A1A in the next three to four years.

Labadie said that establishing a rapport with state transportation officials was critical to making progress toward crosswalk improvements since the state has oversight on A1A and must approve any project affecting the roadway.

“We’ve had multiple conversations with multiple people at FDOT,” he said.

Getting the green light for improvements from the state was made easier because Highland Beach has agreed to foot the bill.

For his part, Boden, said he’s glad there’s progress on what he sees as a critical safety issue.

“Everyone wanted crosswalks but it has taken 3½ years just to get it approved.”
Consultant to examine cost of starting a fire department

Highland Beach

By Rich Pollack

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Currently, Delray Beach provides all fire-rescue services in Highland Beach and staffing for the town-owned fire station, with the town paying for the cost of 22.5 firefighters/paramedics and some administrative services.

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

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

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

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

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

The commission wants to be sure we are being charged correctly pursuant to the contract,” Labadie said.

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

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

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

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This magnificent waterfront modern transitional home showcases the most current styles and trends. This home is located in the wonderful neighborhood of Tropic Isle, just moments from the famed Atlantic Avenue and beach.

For the yachtsman, this home is situated on a wide, deep-water canal with no fixed bridges between the Boca Raton and Boynton Beach inlets. If you have been looking for a home built far above the norm, your search is over.
During these unprecedented times, the Leslie L. Alexander Foundation wishes to acknowledge the hard work of local charities that are making a difference in the lives of so many.

The Foundation sincerely thanks these organizations for their tireless efforts and dedication to the local community.

Leslie L. Alexander Foundation
110 E. Atlantic Ave. Suite 320
Delray Beach, FL 33444

Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County $846,100
South Florida Hunger Coalition $790,000
The Glades Initiative $510,000
Meals on Wheels of the Palm Beaches $495,000
Boca Helping Hands $360,000
El Sol Neighborhood Resource Center $355,000
Children’s Place at Home Safe $340,000
Cosac Foundation $280,000
LifeNet4Families $280,000
KidSanctuary Campus Foundation $245,000
Homeless Coalition of Palm Beach County $220,000
Feed the Hungry Pantry of Palm Beach County $218,000
CROS Ministries $210,000
Dr. Stanley & Pearl Goodman JFS of Broward County $210,000
Palm Beach County Food Bank $210,000
DOGS ON THE MOVE by Pawsitive 4 LIFE $205,000
Palm Beach Harvest $200,000
Family Promise of South Palm Beach County $195,000
Child Rescue Coalition $189,000
Big Dog Ranch Rescue $180,000
Pantry of Broward $170,000
The Soup Kitchen $170,000
Jack & Jill Children’s Center $150,000
Little Smiles $150,000
Operation Lift Hope $150,000
The Lord’s Place $140,000
The Humane Society of Greater Jupiter - Tequesta $135,000
Gateway Community Outreach $130,000
Hacer Ministry Corp. $128,000
Light of the World Clinic $125,000
Restoration Bridge International $125,000
100 Plus Animal Rescue $120,000
Caridad Center $120,000
American Association of Caregiving Youth $110,000
Jubilee Center of South Broward $110,000
Pets’ Broward $110,000
Sweet Dream Makers $106,000
Barkey Pines Animal Rescue & Sanctuary $105,000

Since January, the Foundation throughout Palm Beach and Broward
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In 2020, the COASTAL STAR has made or directed donations to more than 110 nonprofit organizations in six counties, all in support of the health and well-being of area families and animals.
I

n these trying times, hospitals need more friends like Mason Slaine. Slaine moved from Greenwich, Connecticut, to coastal Boca Raton in 2014 and very quickly became involved with Boca Raton Regional Hospital, being named to its board of directors a year later.

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

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

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

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

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

“That was a big issue, and the building on the (Boca Raton) campus in the coming years is going to be significant,” Slaine said. “As the ongoing pandemic has intensified the spotlight on Boca Regional and other area hospitals.”

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

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

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

Slaine, who is divorced, serves on the executive and audit committees at the hospital, working as chairman of the audit committee. He is also active in Temple Beth-El of Boca Raton, where he serves on the finance committee.

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Q: Where did you grow up and go to school? How do you think that has influenced you?
A: I grew up in the Boston area in a blue-collar neighborhood. I was fortunate enough to attend Amherst College, majoring in political science, and graduate magna cum laude. I then received immediate acceptance into Harvard Business School and graduated at age 24.

Q: What professions have you worked in?
A: What professional accomplishments are you most proud of?
A: I have principally worked in the information/technology field for the past 35 years. I have participated in developing and building many businesses, including Paradigms, the publisher of Turnitin.

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

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

Alongside I have built businesses in a broad range of areas, including tax software, intellectual property, science, chemistry, medtech, fintech, health care, financial and trade publishing, energy analytics and private company databases.

Q: What advice do you have for a young person seeking a career today?
A: Get the prerequisite training first and study hard and long!

Q: How did you choose to make your home in coastal Boca Raton?
A: I have friends and family in the area and like the weather.

Q: What is your favorite part about living in coastal Boca Raton?
A: Being near the water. Obviously, Florida has a great climate most of the year, and I love being outside as much as possible. I do a little boating and haven’t gone fishing for a while, but I just like being there, walking on the beach, that kind of thing.

Q: What book are you reading now?

Q: What music do you listen to when you want to relax? When you want to be inspired?
A: I generally like ’80s music and find Dvorak and Tchaikovsky inspiring.

Q: Have you had mentors in your life? Individuals who have inspired your life decisions?
A: I was fortunate to have had a mentor at the beginning of my career named Theodore “Ted” Lamont Cross. Ted was a brilliant businessman and was also a great fighter for justice. He was also a world-class bird photographer.

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

Q: If your life story were to be made into a movie, who would play you?
A: Matt Damon — he would get the accent right!

Q: Is there something people don’t know about you but should?
A: As a young person, I was a slave to making money. I intend to spend more of my time and resources on public service endeavors, especially in health care and children’s services.

Mason Slaine of coastal Boca Raton serves on the board of Boca Raton Regional Hospital and recently donated $1.5 million to the hospital’s ‘Keeping the Promise’ expansion campaign. Photo provided
Boca Raton
Council reshuffles after Rodgers leaves for Navy stint
By Mary Hladky
City Council members appointed Andrea O’Rourke to be deputy mayor, replacing U.S. Navy reservist Jeremy Rodgers, who has been called to active duty for an overseas deployment.

“It would be my greatest pleasure to serve as deputy mayor,” O’Rourke said before the unanimous council vote.

Monica Mayotte has assumed O’Rourke’s previous role as Community Redevelopment Agency chair and Andy Thomson became CRA vice chair.

Council members made the appointments on July 28, a month after Rodgers announced he would deploy in August to Qatar in support of NATO operations in Afghanistan. At the time, Rodgers said he wanted to complete his term of office, which ends on March 31, 2021, by attending meetings remotely. But he stepped down as deputy mayor, saying the position should be held by a council member physically in the city.

If he found he could not attend meetings, council members would appoint someone to temporarily fill his seat until his term ends. Since then, Rodgers has not attended council and CRA meetings. He has not posted any updates on his status on social media.

O’Rourke was elected to the council in 2017 and was automatically re-elected in March when she faced no opposition. Mayotte was elected in 2018.

Help coming to pay mortgages or rent
By Mary Hladky
The city soon will be making available federal funding it will receive to help those who have fallen behind on their mortgages or rent because of COVID-19.

The state allocated Boca Raton $317,332 that it received through the federal CARES Act. The city will oversee a program to distribute the money to eligible residents.

The money must be used for emergency rental assistance and mortgage foreclosure prevention.

To qualify, applicants must be city residents and have household income of less than 120% of area median income, based on household size. A family of four, for example, could have a maximum income of $105,360.

They also cannot have liquid assets over $25,000. They must have financial hardship related to the coronavirus, such as a layoff, furlough or reduction in work hours.

Recipients must have been current on their rent or mortgages as of March 1. Anyone who received similar financial aid though another program is ineligible.

Homeowners can request assistance only for a primary residence with an assessed value of $350,000 or less.

Any money awarded must be paid directly to landlords or mortgage companies.

City Council members agreed to participate in the program on Aug. 24 and will sign an agreement with the state on Sept. 9, after which the money will be sent to the city.

The city will open an online application system on Sept. 23. City officials said that payments will be issued in November and December. All payments must be issued by Dec. 30.

More information on the program will become available after Sept. 9.
Julie O’Brien
Kindergarten teacher at St. Vincent Ferrer School in Delray Beach

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

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

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

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

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

But being back on campus presents other challenges.

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

Versatility is key, she says, including a mask with a clear strip over the mouth and nose so students can see her pronounce words.

“Teachers are nothing if not flexible and ingenious. We will make it work,” she says emphatically.

Her message to others?

“The teachers are doing the very best that we can. As scared as people are to send their children back to school, I have my own worries about going back and having my son start kindergarten.”

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

— Linda Haase

The Rev. D. Brian Horgan
Pastor of St. Lucy Catholic Church in Highland Beach

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

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

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

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

“Sometimes we get in and sometimes we don’t.”

Horgan said. That means some don’t receive last rites, an important final sacrament that includes confession and absolution.

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

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

Loved ones not receiving that final Communion weighs heavily on the hearts of some families. But Horgan finds a way to comfort his parishioners.

“A priest isn’t needed for someone to be absolved of sins, but if he or she simply repents and asks forgiveness, ‘God is full of mercy and love.’

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

He senses an underlying fear that reminds him of war.

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

— Janis Fontaine

Dr. Bill Benda
Emergency room physician at St. Mary’s Medical Center, Bethesda Hospital East and Delray Medical Center, associate professor of emergency medicine at FAU

Bill Benda is less stressed than he was early on in the pandemic.

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

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

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

“When something is unknown, it is scary. Now we don’t have that overarching fear we had initially.”

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

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

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

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

Benda’s advice: Follow epidemiologists’ instructions to avoid crowds, wear masks and practice social distancing.

“Not following what they say is insane and it will lead to more disaster.”

— Mary Hladky

Kevin Saxton
Delray Beach Fire Rescue Battalion Chief

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

“It’s something I think about all the time,” says Saxton, who is 38 and in his 17th year with the department. “I’m going to take the precautions I need to take. Along with providing care, I’m still going to do my job.”

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

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

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

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

“We’ve just not spending as much time together,” Saxton says.

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

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

“It’s one fewer person who is exposed,” Saxton says. As shift supervisor, Saxton is vigilant to make sure everyone takes necessary precautions.

“You want to make sure we don’t put our guard down,” he said.

— Rich Pullock

Sue Brown
Restaurant general manager at Oceano Kitchen in Lantana

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“When everybody feels comfortable coming back, then I will be happy,” she says.

Reflections from the front line

Author biographies

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— Rich Pullock

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— Mary Hladky

— Janis Fontaine

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— Janis Fontaine

— Linda Haase

— Mary Hladky

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

Michael Varesio
Shipt shopper serving coastal communities

When Michael Varesio joined the ranks of Shipt shoppers in January, he never anticipated a pandemic that would turn him into an essential worker.
It was overwhelming: The 47-year-old Boynton Beach resident worked 61 days straight, took a day off, then toiled 21 more days, frantically buying groceries for people who feared leaving their homes.

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

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

Although the workload decreased and inventory increased, risks linger.

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

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

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

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

— Linda Haase

Valerie Jacoby
Lead postal clerk at the Highland Beach Community Post Office

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— Rich Pollack
Along the Coast

Overdose deaths double in Delray during pandemic

By Charles Elmore

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

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

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

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

Organizers scrambled to hold meetings by way of Zoom or other online services, racing to stay connected with people at risk. Some groups met outside. Because of fears of COVID-19 exposure, virtual meetings remain common even as some in-person gatherings have resumed in recent months, typically with masks and distancing. But it has been a difficult battle to break through isolation and despair.

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

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

In the first seven months of 2020, the city reported 229 overdose calls, an increase of 349%.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An annual fundraiser for Crossroads Club in Delray Beach organized by chef and restaurant owner Louie Bossi and colleagues had to be canceled in June because of the coronavirus.

Bossi, who speaks frankly about his own recovery from addiction, said at least three employees at his restaurants relapsed during the pandemic.

Bossi is a partner in restaurants including Louie Bossi’s Ristorante in Boca Raton and Fort Lauderdale and Elisabetta’s Ristorante in Delray Beach.

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

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

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

A different story from 2019

A little more than one year ago, things looked different. Palm Beach County Fire Rescue reported a 21% decrease in opioid overdose patients in the first half of 2019, compared to the first six months of 2018.

Since 2017, there had been a 61% decrease in county emergency responses to overdoses, State Attorney Dave Aronberg, working with a Sober Homes Task Force, announced at the time.

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

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

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

“The most immediate concern was meetings — meetings generally held in public spaces,” said one participant, who asked not to be identified, in a recovery group that gathers regularly in southern Palm Beach County.

Once public spaces were shut down, it was challenging. Some people weren’t as open to trying Zoom.”

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people in different ways, she said.

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

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

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

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

That requires a “reset,” he said, of efforts to help. "Jane Smith contributed to this story.
For hotels, pre-pandemic success may be 5-7 years away.

By Mary Hladky

COVID-19 has slammed the Wyndham Boca Raton.

"It is grim," said general manager Phillip DiPonio. His average occupancy rate has plummeted to 15%, which clearly does not pay the bills.

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

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

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

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

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

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

He expects a very slow recovery, with a return to a "reasonable" amount of business in 2-2.5 years. But a return to pre-pandemic occupancy, room rates, profit margins and staffing levels will take five to seven years, he said.

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

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

Hotels were showing a very modest recovery in August. Ricci said occupancy rates range from 10% to 40%, far less than the 70%-75% that is considered healthy.

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

Oceanfront hotels were doing better than those inland, with a few hitting 70% occupancy on weekends. Amidon and other hoteliers said.

Hotels that cater to leisure travelers had the edge over large conference hotels, Ricci said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"People have been able to see the elevator buttons wiped down. They want to see we are all wearing masks," he said.

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

"We will get through this COVID thing," he said. "Going forward, hotels will have things in place to keep guests safer and even protect them from cold and flu viruses. "That is a wonderful thing for the future." The Aloft Delray Beach at 202 SE Fifth Ave., a Marriott franchise hotel, has no plans to throw in the towel, but its occupancy rate and revenues are way down.

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

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

Before the pandemic, most of his guests were international or out-of-state; now they are mostly Floridians. Mindel is marketing to in-state residents and promoting his hotel's cleanliness and laid off electrostatic sprayers. Weekend day remains low, but occupancy is back up to 30% to 40% on weekends.

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

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

"We can weather it," he said. "Even so, we could really use a vaccine by the end of the year. We need to make sure Uncle Samkreasse our federal assistance."

In the spring, Cathy Ricci, travel director for the Eau Palm Beach in Manalapan, did not provide an occupancy number except to say, "It certainly is not where it was last year at this time."

The oceanside resort temporarily closed in March but continued to pay salaries and provide health insurance for three months. It has since cut almost 50% of its staff. Mindel said the hotel closed on July 1 in anticipation of strong demand for the July Fourth weekend. But the county closed beaches, dealing a blow to many hoteliers. Since the beaches opened, "we see guests returning," he said.

The resort's conference business is at a halt but couples are beginning to book weddings, albeit small ones.

Guests are mainly South Floridians who drive to the resort for stays. "They feel it is time for a break and to have a change of scenery from being at home," Gold said.

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

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

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

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Gentleman's Choice Barbers

Bob Finley

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OCEAN RIDGE — Longtime Ocean Ridge resident Gerald Allen ‘Jerry’ Goray, the dedicated chairman of the town’s Planning and Zoning Commission and a devoted philanthropist, died on June 30 of heart disease. He was weeks shy of his 81st birthday. “He will be sadly missed,” said Mark Marsh, a colleague on the Planning and Zoning Commission who took over after Mr. Goray stepped down. “It was a pleasure to work with him. His heart and soul were in Ocean Ridge.”

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

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

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

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

“He was constantly thinking more should be done, more can be done, it’s done some more,” Donna Goray said. “Quiet wasn’t him. He loved to talk.”

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

His career in real estate development began in the 1970s, when he began building houses and co-founded a law firm specializing in real estate and development. “He will be greatly missed,” said Donna Goray.

“He was always driven to do more. He had a lot of friends and he enjoyed life. All of his adult life he owned one sports car or another, starting with a Corvette. His last car was a Porsche.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Hvide’s donations were responsible for the construction of the Saint Andrew’s Lower School, but true to his quiet modesty, he would not permit the facilities to be named in his honor. Mr. Hvide was a consummate businessman who worked with absolute passion. He joined his father at Hvide Marine in 1970 and went on to become its president in 1981, CEO in 1991, and chairman in 1994. Under his leadership, the company grew from a small family tugboat operation into a global shipping company with offshore and harbor tugs, offshore supply vessels and chemical tankers. He led the company in an initial public offering in 1996, raising $1.5 billion in capital and growing the company from 23 vessels to one of the world’s leading providers of global marine support services with a fleet of 273 ships, 2,500 employees, operations in 20 countries and revenues of $400 million.

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

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

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

He is a member of the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Yacht Club, Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club, Country Club of Florida and Cat Cay Yacht Club, where he spent many years at his home, Manor House.

Mr. Hvide was predeceased by his parents and sister Elsa. In addition to his wife and sons, he is survived by grandchildren Magnus Johan, Hans Kristoffer and Hakon.

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

To him we say: “For us you were a truly special husband, father, and grandfather. Your spirit will forever live on in our hearts.”

“These are our words to you: Thank you for teaching us faith, forgiveness and perseverance; you had the heart of a lion and we can only strive to be as brave as you. Thank you for teaching us the art of listening. You were always 110% in the moment, and there is nothing more powerful than to hear what others have to say.

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

— Obituary submitted by the family
**Obituaries**

**William Thomas 'Tom' Gerrard**

By Dan Moffett

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

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

Born April 29, 1938, in St. Louis, MO, Tom grew up in St. Louis until his parents moved to Kansas City when he was 10. He graduated from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Dentistry in 1962.

Mr. Gerrard served in the Army from 1962 to 1966 as a dentistry officer. He attended the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, for two bachelor's degrees.

He moved to South Florida in 1957 and graduated from Broward Junior College and Florida Atlantic University. Mr. Gerrard established his business career as president of CMH Corp, a supplier of life-saving cranes and elevators.

He is survived by his children, Lisa Marie Gerrard and Mark Thomas Gerrard; a sister, Darcie Jean Gerrard; and grandchildren Miles Barrett and Brenden Patrick Radick, and Grace Kendall and Jack Thomas Gerrard.

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**Agnes Conroy**

By Sally James

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

Born April 29, 1938, in Lettermore, County Galway, Ireland, Mrs. Conroy grew up on a farm when times were tough. But it didn’t stop her from becoming a standout in school. She attended Ireland’s prestigious Knockmore Abbey School on scholarship, embarking on a lifetime of academic achievement.

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

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

Mrs. Conroy left the world of academia when Francis Conroy’s construction business took off.

“Mr. Conroy donated his collection of thousands of owner’s manuals, brochures, engineering diagrams, fabric samples and catalogues to the AACA Library and Research Center in Hershey,” Chris Ritter, the library’s head librarian, said.

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

**Jay H. Van Vechten II**

By Mary Thurwachter

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

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

“Jay was such a genuine friend and a real ambassador for people with special needs,” said his close friend Mark Hansen.

That was his life, always on a mission to help others, always wanting to add a voice where others couldn’t. He had a personal touch in all his ways that left lasting positive impressions to all whom he came in touch with.

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

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

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

**Ralph Goodrich Boalt II**

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

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

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

— Obituary submitted by the family
Boca Raton
Diverging diamond interchange safer
FDOT assures city
By Steve Plunkett

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Delray Beach
Utility director: ‘Safest reclaimed water system in country’ once all service is restored
By Jane Smith

Delray Beach barrier island residents have endured three reclaimed water shutdowns in less than a week.

The first two were short, under 10 days. This year, the city’s reclaimed water system was shut down for months, starting in early February. By late August, slightly more than six months after the barrier island homes were still waiting to have the reclaimed water service restored.

"This is the first time I have termed our reclaimed water system in the country," said Hassan Hadjimiry, new utilities director for Delray Beach. "It was shut down, and every installation was inspected and surveyed for crossed connections before the parcel was placed back into service.”

Delray Beach has spent at least $254,876.13 for materials, labor and services director at the Florida DOH.

"The six included two rear connected.

The other condo building, 210 South Ocean Boulevard, was shut down for months, according to the Florida DOH, as required. Apart from the Florida DOH, the city did not have to notify the Commodore Apartments residents within the Commodore plan to add express lanes to Interstate 95 through Boca Raton. The city issued a boil water order in late September, he said. Most sit on the barrier island — a little more than 5 acres, with lots of concrete," Hadjimiry said. "Homes are too hard to bring them into compliance."

The estates also sit below 801 S. Ocean Blvd., where president of Gleason Street and Langer Way. The cross connection was discovered July 7 by city inspectors.

The city notified the Florida DOH, as required. As long as the backflow device was installed, inspected and certified, the city did not have to notify the Commodore Apartments residents within 24 hours, according to a July email from the Florida DOH. The city must reuse 4.6 billion gallons a day in 2025, the city must use reclaimed water for irrigation. The golf courses, city parks and master-metered communities west of the interstate also use reclaimed water for irrigation.

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

Backflow preventers are needed to stop the reclaimed water from mixing with the city’s drinking water supply. The backflow preventers inspected every reclaimed water location earlier this year, they reported. 344 backflow preventers were missing on the barrier island — a little over 25% of the required installations.

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

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

Investigation underway
Delray Beach hired a forensics firm in late April to investigate the reclaimed water system since its start, Hadjimiry said. That report will determine responsibility of the system — including construction and inspections, department attorney said.

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

The health agency wanted Delray Beach to issue a citywide boil water order.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Backflow preventers are needed to stop the reclaimed water from mixing with the city’s drinking water supply. The backflow preventers inspected every reclaimed water location earlier this year, they reported. 344 backflow preventers were missing on the barrier island — a little over 25% of the required installations.

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

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

Investigation underway
Delray Beach hired a forensics firm in late April to investigate the reclaimed water system since its start, Hadjimiry said. That report will determine responsibility of the system — including construction and inspections, department attorney said.

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

The health agency wanted Delray Beach to issue a citywide boil water order.

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

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**WATER**

Continued from page 1

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

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

The city says it plans to improve cleaning and other maintenance at the aging plant, watching for trouble more closely than ever before.

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**Sediment in the water**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A notice was sent to residents of the north end of the city, who were told that the water was safe but not treated to the city’s color and taste standards. The city advised residents who continued to have problems to run their water for about 10 minutes and flush the system.

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

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

**Maintenance issues**

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

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

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

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

The memo also makes reference to a failure of the water plant operations team to clean the clear well — a large tank, below a series of filters that contains water as it flows through the treatment process. The clear well, however, is not subject to the same five-year inspection requirements as are water storage tanks.

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

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

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

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

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

In a Feb. 13, 2020, memo, Heller addressed each of the issues and documented improvements to the three significant issues as well as all others, which ranged from labeling unmarked chemical storage areas to removing algae and bio-growth from exterior portions of the plant.

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

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**September/October 2020**

**The COASTAL STAR**

**News 27**
Lantana/Hypoluxo Island

Council hears complaints about illegal short-term rentals

By Mary Thurlow-Flaherty

At a recent meeting, the Lantana Council received complaints from residents about illegal short-term rentals. The council was told that some rental properties are being used for house parties and other events, which is a violation of the residential zoning district (R-1 and R-1A) that prohibits the use of these houses for anything but residential purposes.

"We have been receiving complaints from residents about illegal short-term rentals," said Council Member Lyn Tate. "I understand the concern, and I believe we should take action to address this issue." The council is considering several options, including implementing a new ordinance that would prohibit short-term rentals in the residential zones. They are also looking into the possibility of fining property owners who violate the ordinance.

The council is expected to vote on the new ordinance at its next meeting on November 15th. They encourage residents to continue to report any violations they see so that they can be addressed as soon as possible.
City goes to hourly rates for watershed parking

By Jane Smith

Parking at Oceanfront Park and Harvey Oyer Jr. Park will become more expensive in some cases starting Oct. 1.

At Oceanfront Park, four meter kiosks will be added and in operation from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m., Boynton Beach city commissioners decided Aug. 4. The kiosks will replace the beach tollbooth, which had been staffed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

The new fee will be $1.50 per hour, or about $10 for an average beach stay of 6.67 hours, Andrew Mack, Public Works director, said at the Aug. 4 meeting. The kiosks accept cash or credit cards.

The in-season fee and year-round weekend and holiday fee were a flat $10. The $5 fee for summer weekends will no longer be offered.

Boynton Beach’s new beach parking rate is comparable to the hourly rate in Delray Beach. Lake Worth Beach, though, charges $3 per hour and Boca Raton charges $2 an hour on weekends and $3 an hour on weekends, Mack said.

He said the kiosks will be installed in September and then go live on Oct. 1. Park rangers will enforce the parking times with a laptop that will check each vehicle, Mack said.

“The proposed revenues from daily parking fees will be $680,000 in the next financial year,” Mack told commissioners.

The current revenue is $320,000.

“The city will see an additional $50,000 from parking citations,” he said. Parking pass income will remain at $170,000.

Boynton Beach residents will still be able to buy a beach parking pass at the same rate. The cost for annual passes stayed the same after the mayor and vice mayor, at the July 21 commission meeting, objected to the residents’ paying more.

The city will no longer sell decals, starting Oct. 1. Instead, the system will be based on the vehicle license plate, Mack said.

During a July 29 Facebook live video, Mack said there should not be backups on State Road A1A to get into the park. Searching for a place is similar to searching for space in a packed shopping center, he said.

“You ride around until you see someone leaving, then follow the person to the vehicle. Put on your blinker and allow that car to back out until you can pull in safely,” Mack said on the video.

The toll booth workers’ last day will be Sept. 30. They can apply to be park rangers. The two full-time and two part-time positions were advertised in late August, Mack said.

Hal Hutchins, Ocean Ridge police chief, said he had talked with the former Boynton Beach Recreation and Parks director about installing the kiosks about one year ago. Ocean Ridge patrols Oceanfront Park.

“The ParkMobile program is a concern to me,” Hutchins said at the Aug. 4 meeting. “We don’t have too many times when Oceanfront Park needs to be closed because there are no more parking spaces. When that happens, we will work with Boynton Beach to close it down.”

At Harvey Oyer Jr. Park, on the Intracoastal Waterway, Boynton Beach will charge up to $10 on weekdays and $25 on weekends to park boat trailers in slips.

Ten shorter spaces will be free to park users, commissioners decided Aug. 4 after Susan Oyer, daughter of the late Harvey Oyer Jr., who served as mayor, told commissioners that residents’ taxes already paid for the park.

“Boaters take up extra space,” she said. “It’s wrong that families will pay a fee for parking there when they come to play or have picnics.”

Currently, boaters pay $50 for an annual boat decal that allows free parking on weekends and holidays. Without a decal, the fee is $10 on weekdays and holidays. Boynton Beach does not charge for weekday parking at Oyer Park.

That will change in October, Mack said.

The city will charge any vehicle that uses spaces $1.50 per hour, payable at the two parking kiosks. The maximum daily charge is $10 and $25 on weekends. The rates are in effect 24 hours.

Boynton Beach will offer boat owners an annual parking pass at $50.

The city also will find free spaces for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers to use at Oyer Park, after they offered free boat inspections and teach boating safety classes.

Boat parking

Boating safety classes

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Business Spotlight

**Boca’s IMI moving into part of iPic space in Delray Beach**

International Materials Inc., an international trading and logistics provider, signed a lease on a 20,002-square-foot space in early July to relocate and expand its corporate headquarters. Moving from Boca Raton to The Offices at 4th & 5th Delray Beach, the company will occupy nearly two-thirds of the maximally utilized building’s third floor to accommodate its roster of 45 full-time professionals and have room for more.

The Offices, located a half-block south of Atlantic Avenue, is a 144,733-square-foot, factory mixed-use project, developed in a joint venture between the Boston-based Samuels & Associates development firm and American Realty Advisors, a Los Angeles-based private equity real estate investment manager.

The development consists of iPic Theater, retail space, offices, and a parking garage. In December 2019, after iPic Entertainment changed hands and filed for bankruptcy court, the lender — Retirement Systems of Alabama — canceled iPic Entertainment’s lease for headquarters office space in the new theater building, known as 4th & 5th Delray.

Founded in 1987, IMI is an independent trading company of bulk, raw materials that serves customers in cement, construction, and steel markets in more than 60 countries. In addition to its South Florida headquarters, it has offices in Madrid, Singapore, Dubai, Shanghai, Bogota, Melbourne and Hanoi.

“This IMI corporate headquarters move to the Delray Beach central business district is a testament to the strength of our city and evidence that the investments in our public-private partnerships strategically located for economic development are beginning to pay off,” said Stephanie Immerman, CEO of the Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce.

In the transaction, Samuels & Associates was represented by Keith O’Donnell and Gary Gottlieb of Avison Young, a Toronto-based commercial real estate firm, and IMI was represented by Ingrid Kennerman of Coastal Commercial Group, a Delray Beach commercial real estate firm.

**JLL Capital Markets**

announced in August that it arranged a $9.26 million refinancing for **The Forum**, a 71-unit apartment complex at 1361 S. Federal Highway, Boca Raton. JLL worked on behalf of the seller, Rosemurgy Properties, with West Palm Beach real estate attorney Maura Ziska as the trustee.

On the buyer’s side, City National Bank of Florida acted as trustee of the 2401-3315-00 Trust. The listing broker was Lawrence Moens of Lawrence A. Moens Associates.

The nine-bedroom estate and guest house, with 23,187 total square feet, features 150 feet of waterfront on its east and west sides. The 1.9-acre property was listed for $41.75 million in January and last sold in March 2017 for $11 million.

Delray Beach’s Frank McKinneny sold his latest spec home for $10.1 million on July 2. This project, a contemporary residence at 3492 S. Ocean Blvd., South Palm Beach, was bought by Republic First Bancorp Chairman Vernon W. Hill II and his wife, Shirley, with Corcoran Group agent Steven Presson handling both sides of the deal.

Last year, McKinneny told The Coastal Star that this was to be his “final masterpiece,” and he shared changes he’s seen in Florida real estate over his 30-plus years in the business. “A lot of trends that start at the top trickle down and make their way into the everyday home,” he said. “Examples include granite countertops, stainless steel and the under-the-counter coffee makers. Three decades ago, these features could only be found in luxury homes; today, they are a must in nearly every home, thanks to demand and cost reduction.”

In this five-bedroom, 7,850-square-foot residence, sold with interior design by McKinneny’s wife, Nilsa, he went above and beyond. Highlights include a kitchen designed and made of 11,000-year-old azurite-blue laval; a sphere-shaped aquarium filled with jellyfish in the living room, rooftop terrace, and a beachfront pool.

**The Thousand for 2020**

an annual national award ranking the top 1% of the nation’s real estate professionals, published its results in July, with a number of agents who are with firms servicing the coastal area in south Palm Beach County included.

Here are the results: Individuals by volume: No. 1, Suzanne Frisbie, Premier Estate Properties Inc., Boca Raton, $196,230,116; No. 74, Jamie Canfield, La Verriere Estate Properties Inc., Boca Raton, $112,360,000; No. 15, Marcy Javor, Signature One Luxury Estates LLC, Boca Raton, $79,545,500.

Individually by transaction sides: No. 68, Paul Saperstein, eXp Realty, Boca Raton, 164 transaction sides.

Small teams by volume: No. 34, Pascal Ligouri, Premier Estate Properties Inc., Delray Beach, $164,316,000; No. 51, Candice Fris, The Corcoran Group, Delray Beach, $133,158,500; No. 54, The Cotilla Luxury Team, Douglas Elliman, Boca Raton, $131,867,734.

Agent-owned brokerage by transaction sides: No. 2, Ralph Harvey, ListWithFreedom.com, Boynton Beach, 1,636 transaction sides.

Agent-owned brokerage by volume: No. 3, Ralph Harvey, ListWithFreedom.com, Boynton Beach, $444,913,020; No. 6, David W. Roberts, Royal Palm Properties, Boca Raton, $335,116,000.

The Thousand is sponsored by Real Trends and Tom Ferry International coaching.

Two South County government leaders were recognized recently for their roles.

Lori LaVerriere, Boynton Beach city manager, is serving as the secretary/treasurer on the Florida City and County Management Association board for the financial year of 2020-2021. She was elected in May. An association member for more than 20 years, she has served as a District IV director for the past three years. After serving as secretary/treasurer, LaVerriere is slated to serve as president-elect and ultimately as president of the association in the next three years.

With more than 30 years of public service, LaVerriere has worked for three Palm Beach County towns. Since 2008, she has served the city of Boynton Beach, where she became city manager seven years ago. With 16 departments, she leads a team of more than 800 employees who serve nearly 80,000 residents.

She has a bachelor of arts degree from Florida International University in business administration and a master’s in business administration from Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Hassan Hadjimiry, the new utilities director for Delray Beach, is the other honoree. In early August, he received the 2020 Government Engineer of the Year award, presented by the Florida section of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Hadjimiry has more than 38 years of management and engineering experience in the water utilities industry. He started as a staff engineer at the Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department in early 1982. Over the years, he progressed to become deputy director for the third-largest water utility in Florida.

At the county department he developed and implemented a reclaimed water program that provides more than 30 million gallons per day to local golf courses, residential areas and constructed wetlands. Reclaimed water is treated wastewater suitable for irrigation but not for human consumption.

Hadjimiry holds a master of science degree in water resources engineering from Florida Atlantic University, was named the 2009 Water Reuse Person of the Year in Florida, and is a five-time winner of the County Administrator’s annual Golden Palm Award, the highest level of recognition for county government employees.

Rocco Mangel, founder of Rocco’s Tacos and Tequila Bar, was appointed by the Delray Beach City Commission on Aug. 11 to serve on the board of the Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority. Mangel operates nine restaurants throughout Florida and New York. He has been an active member of the downtown Delray Beach community as a business owner since 2010.
Max Weinberg, the longtime drummer for Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band and a four-year resident of Delray Beach, was appointed to the Delray Beach Planning & Zoning Board by the City Commission on Aug. 18. Weinberg has purchased and restored old homes on the East Coast and in Delray Beach. Weinberg also serves on the board of the nonprofit Delray Beach Preservation Trust.

The commission also appointed Allen Zeller, a land-use attorney and Delray Beach resident since 2003, to the P&Z Board. He has also served as a board member of the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, president of the Mediterranean Historic District and serves on the Preservation Trust. Incumbent P&Z Board member John Blankenship and Robert Long were reappointed. A fifth board member will be appointed at the commission's Sept. 10 meeting.

The Seagate Hotel & Spa in Delray Beach announced the addition of two new members to its leadership team: Jamie Erler, director of membership, marketing and communications for The Seagate Clubs, and Sonny Grosso, director of golf for The Seagate Country Club.

In August, John M. Campanela was named a member of the 2020 executive council of New York Life. The council recognizes the top 21% of New York Life’s field force of more than 12,000 licensed agents in sales achievement. Campanela, a Boynton Beach resident, has been a New York Life agent since 2012. He is associated with New York Life’s South Florida General Office in Sunrise, and he works out of its offices at 401 W. Atlantic Ave., Suite 09, Delray Beach.

Debbie Abrams, president of the Gold Coast PR Council, announced in July this year’s Bernays Awards winners, honoring excellence in local public relations campaigns, marketing programs and media coverage.

The council’s Presidents Award, which goes to a person or organization for outstanding performance, was given to Sandy Collier of Hey Sandy PR & Communications in Wellington for her work on behalf of evacuees from the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian.

Other awards include: PR Campaign/Large Company or Firm award went to The Moore Agency; PR Campaign/Small Company or Firm award went to katnip Marketing; Crisis Communications award went to Loggerhead Marinelife Center; Nonprofit Project or Campaign award went to The Buzz Agency; Corporate Campaign/Nonprofit award went to Florida Atlantic University; Social Media Campaign/Corporate award went to Mugsy PR; Special Event award went to Food For The Poor; Marketing Material/Print award went to Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County; Marketing Material/Digital award went to Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County.

The organization’s PR Star Award went to Scott Benard, for the reopening of the Norton Museum of Art, the Founders Award went to Abrams, who is also senior vice president of The Buzz Agency, and Judges Awards went to Bluefly Communications and Labor Finders International.

The council paid special tribute to two previous award winners who recently died: John Shuff of IES Media, publisher of Boca Raton magazine, who was remembered by Group Editor-in-Chief Marie Speed; and Jay Van Vechten, founder of the Boating and Beach Bash For People with Disabilities in Boca Raton, a four-time Bernays Award recipient, who was eulogized by his widow, Lowell Van Vechten.

In response to increasing dependence on reliable internet connectivity due to COVID-19 stay-at-home precautions, QXC Communications’ fiber-optic network technology is offering a solution for South Florida customers. QXC designs and installs fiber-optics using Active Optical Network direct fiber-to-the-home architecture to deliver internet, WiFi, HD TV, and VoIP phone services to condominium communities, businesses, outdoor events, and U.S. military bases. Unlike coaxial cable, QXC’s AON fiber installations run a dedicated fiber strand to every home or condo directly. With this technology, in the event of a power outage, customers connected to the wireless backup won’t lose service.

QXC’s service contracts include Villa Magna Condominiums in Highland Beach, Seagate of Highland Beach, and East Wind Beach Club in Delray Beach. Founded in 2011, Boca Raton-based QXC Communications serves customers throughout the United States. For more information, visit www.qxc.us.

— Jane Smith contributed to this column.

Send business news to Christine Davis at cdavis9797@qxc.us.

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Lord & Taylor is closing its Boca Raton store in Mizner Park and has filed for bankruptcy court protection along with its new owner, clothing rental company Le Tote.

The venerable retailer, which traces its roots to 1826 in New York, joins a long list of companies that have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy since May as the coronavirus pandemic takes its toll on those that were already teetering. Others include Neiman Marcus, J. Crew, J.C. Penney and Brooks Brothers.

Le Tote and Lord & Taylor are seeking a new owner, the companies said in an Aug. 3 release. Lord & Taylor initially announced that it was closing 19 of its 38 stores, including its Mizner Park location. On Aug. 27, the company said it is closing all of its stores. All are holding closing sales.

"Today, we announced our search for a new owner who believes in our legacy and values," the company said in a full-page ad appearing in the Aug. 4 New York Times. "Part of our announcement also includes filing for Chapter 11 protection. The motivations and unprecedented strain the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on our business.

At an Aug. 3 bankruptcy court hearing, Lord & Taylor received a judge’s permission to close all of its 38 stores if that became necessary. Forbes reported. Its existing stores are down from 45 in 2019.

It is not clear how long the Mizner Park store will remain open. The Aug. 3 release did not specify, and the company did not respond to an inquiry by The Coastal Star.

Dana Romantelli Scheer, general manager for retail for Mizner Park owner Brookfield Property Partners, did not respond to a voicemail seeking information on what Brookfield will do with the Lord & Taylor building.

Lord & Taylor’s website stated in early August that returns would no longer be accepted at the Mizner Park store and that all closing sale purchases were final. As of Aug. 14, the Mizner Park store would not accept online returns. The store also would not honor coupons, mall certificates, Lord & Taylor Reward/Award Cards or prices offered at other Lord & Taylor locations.

Customers could continue to shop on the Lord & Taylor website.

Lord & Taylor stores dotted South Florida in the early 2000s. But the company exited the state in 2004, closing stores in Boca’s Town Center mall, the Mall at Wellington Green and the Palm Beach Mall, among others, in the wake of an ill-fated expansion strategy.

As the chain regrouped, Lord & Taylor opened in Mizner Park in 2013. It is the chain’s only brick-and-mortar store in Florida.

But Le Tote, which purchased Lord & Taylor last November from Hudson’s Bay Company, struggled to breathe new life into the chain before COVID-19 forced the temporary closure of many stores in March. The Mizner Park store reopened in May.  

By Mary Hladky
Live the Coastal Lifestyle

New Listing | Spectacular estate with 100’ waterfrontage | $3,900,000
4 BR, 4.5 BA | Approx. 6,200 sq ft. Web# RX-10644983

Elegant New Construction | Separate guest house | $3,800,000 | 5 BR, 5.5 BA
Approx. 6,200 sq ft living, approx. 7,500 sq ft total. Web# RX-105797661

Oceanfront Condo | Newly Priced | $1,925,000 | 3 BR, 2.5 BA | Approx. 2,912 sq ft
Web# RX-10570027

Listed and Under Contract in One Week | $1,900,000 | 4 BR, 5 BA | Golf course estate home on over one acre. Web#RX-10644908

Rarely Available | 3 BR, 3 BA | $1,645,000 | Corner unit 180-degree water views in full amenity building. Web# RX-1025454

Oceanfront Townhomes | 3 BR, 2.5 BA | $1,495,000 | Located on the sand, completely updated and designer finished. Offered turnkey. Web# RX-106480095

Build Your Dream Home | $1,299,000 | Half-acre waterfront lot across from the beach with protected views of the lagoon and nature preserve. Web# RX 10666347

Sold | Listed and under contract in 3 days | $925,000 | 3 BR, 2 BA | Charming beach area Bermuda-style home. Web# RX 10644437

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On July 14, 1920, a Wednesday that year, 50 qualified voters gathered to decide whether their little Florida community should incorporate. Forty-eight of them said yes, one said no, and one apparently said nothing. They adopted a town seal, elected a mayor, five aldermen, a marshal and a clerk, and a week later, on July 21, the town of Boynton (pop. 602) made it official.

By Ron Hayes

The city’s evolution from incorporation in 1920 to a dazzling new $118 million Town Square in 2020

Sun worshippers relax near the Boynton hotel, which opened in 1897 and was torn down in 1925.
Sun Capital gives $1 million to Boca Raton Hospital community

A $1 million donation has been made to the Boca Raton Regional Hospital Foundation’s Keeping the Promise Campaign to support the current and future needs of the medical facility.

The monetary gift from Sun Capital Partners Foundation founders Rodger Krouse and Marc Leder “is a generous gift from the Sun Capital Partners Foundation, Rodger and Hillary Krouse, and Marc and Lisa Leder, will enable our hospital to better serve the evolving health care needs of our community for years to come,” CEO Lincoln Mendez said.

“We are deeply appreciative of their past support and this new commitment to our efforts to modernize and renovate our campus, add key services and new technology capabilities and continuously improve the experience for patients and their families, physicians, staff and visitors.” For more information, call 561-955-4142 or visit https://donate.brrh.com.

$85,000 in grants go to South County initiatives

The Jewish Women’s Foundation of South Palm Beach County granted nine organizations with donations that will aid and empower women and children in the community.

“The money — $85,000 total — comes from the pooled resources of trustees who contribute a minimum of $2,000 annually. Through an intensive, hands-on process, the philanthropists decide which organizations will most effectively achieve the agency’s goals. “I am very proud to be part of JWF,” said Amy Rosenberg, grants chairwoman. “Reviewing grants, researching organizations and having in-depth discussions about key issues are an empowering experience for our trustees. We come from varied backgrounds and experiences, yet we all bring a strong desire to collaborate together to help improve the lives of Jewish women and children and strengthen Jewish families.” For more information, call 561-452-6072 or visit https://jewishboca.org/jwf.

Community Foundation awards 88 scholarships

The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties has granted 88 local students more than $1 million in scholarships, averaging $11,000 per recipient. The recipients were evaluated by an advisory committee based on applications, essays, interviews and resumes.

“The process of choosing who will be awarded each of these scholarships is undertaken with dedication and discipline,” said January Reissman, the foundation’s vice president for community impact. “The process is never easy because our student applicants are outstanding.” Since 1983, the organization has awarded $45 million in scholarships and helped nearly 2,300 youths.

For more information, call 561-659-6800 or visit www.yourcommunityfoundation.org.

Amid pandemic, nonprofits share $250,000 allocation

The Quantum Foundation has distributed $250,000 to select area charities to help their clients pay the bills and put food on the table.

A total of 20 nonprofits assisting the community’s most vulnerable residents were allocated funds in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. “The COVID-19 pandemic brought forward longstanding health inequities in disinvested communities, exposing the impacts of the social determinants of health such as economic and social conditions that influence a group’s health status,” Quantum Foundation President Eric Kelly said. “Health is not the absence of illness but rather a positive state of physical and mental well-being, and these grants are a step in the right direction.” For more information, call 561-482-7497 or visit www.quantumnfd.org.

Delray Beach museum selected for $200K grant

To maintain operations and staffing during the pandemic, the Spady Cultural Heritage Museum landed $50,000 in grant funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

“All of us at the National Endowment for the Arts are keenly aware that arts organizations across the country are hurting, struggling and trying to survive, and that our supply of funding does not come close to meeting the demand for assistance,” Chairwoman Mary Anne Carter said. “That said, I am enormously proud of the over-and-above efforts of the arts endowment staff to swiftly and professionally manage such a large amount of additional work in a relatively short period of time on behalf of the American public.” For more information, call 561-279-8883 or visit www.spadymuseum.com.

Underserved kids get much-needed computers

With the shift to distance learning amid the pandemic, a longtime Achievement Centers for Children & Families supporter saw the need for access to laptops for underserved children.

The anonymous donor partnered with the Education Foundation of Palm Beach County to donate 55 Chromebooks to ACCF, which in turn were distributed to students enrolled in the Delray Beach-based organization’s programs. Families of the students will receive guidelines on how to use the devices. “We were thrilled to receive this generous donation of 55 Chromebooks to distribute to our students for the upcoming school year,” Achievement Centers CEO Stephanie Reissman said. “These devices are a basic component to a student’s ability to work virtually and be successful.” For more information, call 561-266-0003 or visit www.achievementcentersfl.org.

South County residents join Impact 100 board

Impact 100 Palm Beach County has named Emily McMullin and Nicole Maguero of Boca Raton and Lisa Warren of Boynton Beach to the board for the 2020-21 season.

“The women will help advance the nonprofit’s mission of elevating philanthropy by combining members’ donations to create high-impact grants.” Impact 100 Palm Beach County welcomes Emily, Nicole and Lisa to the board of directors,” President Kathy Adkins said. “With all of their combined nonprofit leadership experience as well as their passion for giving back and many years of involvement with Impact 100 PBC, they will be exceptional assets to the board.” For more information, call 561-336-4623 or visit www.impact100pbc.org.

Diabetes foundation names execs, board members

Dr. David Lubetkin, former chief of staff at West Boca Medical Center, has been named president of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation’s Greater Palm Beach chapter.

In addition, Donna DeSanctis, a financial adviser who has served in several roles at the chapter, has been named vice president. Joining Dr. Lubetkin and DeSanctis on the board are members RoseMarcie Anderson, Marla Antonacci-Pollock, Summer Carter, DeSanctis, a financial adviser on the board, Executive Director Dennis, Neil Efron, Steven Fried, Scott Meece, Deborah Morawski, Nicole Oden, Dr. Miladys Palaia, Dr. Michael Patua, Mark Patten, Debbie Reoosh, Ryan Rothstein, Dane Shelden, Marc Taub, Michael Tumba and Bryan Weinstein.

For more information, call 561-686-7701 or visit www.jdrf.org/southernflorida.
History buff debuts self-guided tour of Hypoluxo Island

By Mary Thurwachter

Not long after the coronavirus prompted stay-at-home orders last spring, Michelle Donahue noticed how many people from both the Manalapan and Lantana sides of Hypoluxo Island took advantage of the time to walk, jog or bike around the neighborhood. Beaches and parks were closed, and residents were eager to get outside.

Donahue, a history buff who is president of the Hypoluxo Island Property Owners Association and author of the Brown Wrapper newsletter, used the quarantine to fast-track a project that she had been considering for a while — creating a self-guided tour of Hypoluxo Island.

The island, just 3 miles long and a half-mile wide, boasts fascinating history that few seem to know, she says. Her online guide came out just before the Fourth of July — an appropriate time, Donahue determined, since July 4 has been the annual publication that debuted in 2019 and the self-guided tour is Labor Day, she says.

Since the online version of the tour came out, Donahue, 51, published a printed version as well, and on the first Friday of each month, she began a Happy Hour History Tour of the island. Donahue, a Miami native who grew up in Delray Beach, paid for the printing and did all the writing and research.

Hannibal Pierce, an assistant keeper at the Jupiter Lighthouse, settled on the island in 1873. He built a thatched-roof cabin and other pioneers followed suit, carving a community out of the wilderness. Until the 1950s and 1960s, when snowbirds started putting up cottages, the island was sparsely settled.

Donahue's guide points out many historical sights, from McKinley Park, originally known as Beach Curve Park but renamed in the mid-1970s for Floyd Charles McKinley to honor his many years of community service to Lantana; to Casa Alva, the 26,000-square-foot, Maurice Fatio-designed home built for Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan.

Producing both the Brown Wrapper — a local history publication that debuted in 2017 — and the self-guided tour are labors of love, she says. The Property Owners Association pays printing costs of the newsletter, an annual publication.

“When you’re passionate about something, it’s more enjoyable than anything else,” Donahue says. “I really have gotten such great pleasure out of doing this and learning from it. She particularly enjoys connecting history with people who still live on the island, such as Narine Ebersold, who has lived on Hypoluxo since 1946; and Don Edge, an architect who helped create Manalapan’s La Coquille Club, where the Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa stands today.

Both have become great sources of information for Donahue, who delights in visiting with them, even now when it’s socially distanced through screen doors and wearing masks.

“It’s so important because if we don’t capture it now, we’re going to lose it forever,” she says. “It’s too important not to tell the story of the island. I just feel like we really had that opportunity.”

Donahue and her husband, Sean, live in an Addison Mizner home built in 1927. The historic house is called Casa Lillias, after Lillias Pierpont, a nationally known interior decorator who first owned the home. Since 1999, it has been declared the oldest house on the island.

Donahue’s day job keeps her very busy, and to keep in shape she runs in the morning.

“As much as I love to run, that’s my passion every day, this is just as much my passion,” Donahue says of her historical research and writing. “After dinner, when things settle down here at the house, I’ll just jump on the computer and do some more research. It’s always so fun. Especially when I find articles that are so relative to what I find to write in the papers.”

The online brochure and the Happy Hour History Tour can be found on the Historic Hypoluxo Island Facebook page, www.facebook.com/groups/1819427474979121. Printed versions of the tour are available at the Lantana and Manalapan libraries.

“Oh, of course, I don’t want to put anything out there that I haven’t totally documented or researched and ... sometimes it can take days to get the answers. But it’s a good journey to be on.”  

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Continued to celebrate its centennial. City (pop. 79,000) who wanted new City Hall, 100 vanilla towering lobby of a gleaming later, on July 21, 2020, in the occasion was toasted with Boulevard, along a stretch corner of what is now Methodist Episcopal Church, was the St. Paul African Towering lobby of a gleaming later, on July 21, 2020, in the occasion was toasted with Boulevard, along a stretch corner of what is now Methodist Episcopal Church, was the St. Paul African

Country Club in the early 20s, "Norfus recorded a plat to that would be about 5,331,000 today. The town was thriving, unless you weren't white. • Of the 602 total residents counted in the 1920 census, 157 were Black. • The oldest church in town was the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded on Feb. 5, 1892. The original building, built in 1900, stood at the northeast corner of what is now U.S. 1 and Boynton Beach Boulevard, along a stretch

On Oct. 5, the town sued again to have the payment reduced to $2,000, which Butler and the Lees accepted. Boynton hadn't been incorporated two years when Charles Stanley Weaver was born on Jan. 19, 1922, in a wooden frame house on South Federal Highway, just north of Southeast Fifth Avenue. The young Weaver, the son of Marcus A. Weaver, who owned a small dairy farm west of town, was only 6 when the great "Okeechobee" hurricane of 1928 struck. "The wind was so strong that even with the windows closed, the water was coming in," Weaver recalled in an oral history recorded for the Boynton Beach Library in 1992. "In our dining room, which was on the east side of the house, Dad finally got a carpenter's drill and drilled a couple holes in the floor. We had about 2 inches of water in the dining room." On May 15, 1931, the small community on the ocean ridge that had suffered most had only 1,357 residents. "It was a lot slower pace," he would recall for the library's oral histories. Boynton was sort of a small town between Delray and Lake Worth. There was a movie usually at both of those places and not one in Boynton. A municipal swimming pool over on the beach in both Delray and Lake Worth, but not in Boynton. "I'm not sure when the first red light went in between here and Fort Lauderdale," Dr. Weems said. "I think it was probably in the '50s. "We sold the horses and got motorcycles when I was 13 or 14."

The 1960s were a decade of change, and Boynton Beach changed a lot in the coming decades. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensured African-Americans' right to stroll, eat and swim where they wished. In the 1950s, the Negro Civic League served as an unofficial Black city commission, because Black residents had no formal representation in government.

Today, the 1956 Boynton City Commission has two Black members. Interest rate 95 was completed through the city in 1977, and in 1985 the Boynton Beach Mall opened. C. Stanley Weaver, who served on the Boynton Beach Commission from 1951-1956 and was elected mayor in 1955, died Sept. 1, 2010.


Three years after being moved to Wells Avenue, the St. Paul AME Church was destroyed in the 1928 hurricane. A new church was built on the site a year later, and in 1954 the present church building rose directly across the street. Wells Avenue is now called Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Along with those 100 cupcakes, the centennial brought a proclamation from Mayor St. John. "As significantly important it is for the city of Boynton Beach to celebrate its beginning," the proclamation read in part, "it is equally as significant to us as future residents to our future and creative future legacies."

And then, 100 years to the day after the city was incorporated, he cut the ribbon on the new City Hall/Library complex called Town Square, which cost $18 million to build. On July 21, 1920, it would have cost about $8.6 million.
BOYNTON BEACH — When Alice Weems Weaver and Curtis Weaver Sr. died five days apart in late June, the city of Boynton Beach lost a treasury of local memories, and their love story found a bittersweet ending.

Alice, known to all since childhood as Nainie, died at home on June 25. She was 89.

Curtis, 92, died at home on June 30 — their 64th wedding anniversary.

Trying to separate their lives from the city where they were born, lived and died would be as fruitless as trying to separate their love for each other.

Nainie Weems was born March 24, 1931, the daughter of Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems Sr., the town’s first physician, who opened his practice in 1925. Among the 7,500 babies Dr. Nat delivered during his 40-year career was the boy who would grow up to become her husband.

Curtis A. Weaver was born on March 18, 1928, the son of Marcus A. Weaver and Marion Grace Knuth. The Weavers owned a 90-acre dairy farm at what is now Old Boynton Road and Military Trail.

Both families were founding members of the First Methodist Church, where Curtis and Nainie were baptized, met and married.

As children, they attended the town’s one-room schoolhouse for the entire 12 years. As adults, they worked with others to resurrect the aging building as the Schoolhouse Children’s Museum.

After graduating from the University of Miami, Mrs. Weaver taught history and home economics at Seacrest High School in Delray Beach.

Mr. Weaver graduated from the University of Florida with degrees in milk chemistry and animal husbandry and, after service in the U.S. Air Force in the early 1950s, returned to work at the Weaver Dairies.

The couple were married in 1956, saw 350 friends and relatives attend the reception at the Boynton Woman’s Club, and honeymooned in Cashiers, North Carolina.

Their first child, Curtis Weaver Jr., was born in 1957, and a second, David, two years later.

Weaver Dairies grew into a 3,000-acre farm with 1,500 cows and nearly 100 employees.

“We moved to town when I was 4 years old, when David was born,” Curtis Weaver Jr. recalled recently. “Before that we lived on the farm in a small house — very, very small, wood-frame on cinder blocks with a wood joist floor with a porch patio. I would call it a shanty house or a row house.

“There were two roads built with housing, just for employees, where they lived with their families. I remember going to the barn and riding in the truck to pick up the employees.”

In the mid-’60s, the Weavers sold much of the dairy land to developers from Miami.

“And the western corridor of Boynton went from cows to townhouses,” their son said.

In 1970, the couple renovated a small hotel in Cashiers, where they had spent their honeymoon 14 years before. For the next 20 years, they rented rooms and cabins at the Silver Slip Lodge to fellow vacationers from Boynton Beach.

In retirement, they traveled to Europe and Alaska, New England and the Canadian Rockies. But Boynton Beach was always their home, and their history.

Mr. Weaver was a president of the Boynton Beach Historical Society and a 35-year member of the local Rotary Club.

In addition to their sons Curtis Jr. and David Weaver, they are survived by their daughters-in-law, Diane and Eileen; grandchildren Josh and Brittany Weaver; Chelsea Weaver and her fiancé, Thomas McKeen; Leslie and Nate Beals; Lauren Weaver and her fiancé, Cage Regneris; and four great-grandchildren.

“My parents took a great deal of pride in being from Boynton and having been a part of the history of Boynton,” Curtis Weaver Jr. said. “They were tremendously loyal people to the town, and to their church.”

A memorial service will be held at a later date at the First Methodist Church of Boynton Beach.

The COASTAL STAR September/October 2020

Obituaries

Curtis Weaver Sr. and Alice Weems Weaver

By Ron Hayes

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COASTAL STAR History / Obituaries AT5
New Boynton eatery looking forward to offering bar service

Partrners in The Butcher and The Bar worked through the COVID-19 shutdown and have managed to open — at least partially — their new eat-in butcher shop in Boynton Beach.

Eric Anderson, business partner, says the old-school, retail butcher shop and sandwich counter are open for takeout, and diners can sit inside or out and eat, but as of late August there was no table service.

“We were kind of supposed to open in April, but then contractors couldn’t send as many people at once to a job so there was a delay. We opened early August,” he said.

“Once Phase 2 is in place... we’ll be able to open the bar. We’ll start serving small plates there.”

In late August, the partners were still waiting for their liquor license to be approved.

From the counter, they serve breakfast biscuits from 9 a.m. until they’re sold out, and offer a variety of sandwiches and other prepared foods at lunch. The retail butcher case is open all day.

First and foremost, TBTB is a whole-animal butcher shop, Anderson said. “We bring in whole cows, pigs, chickens, and butcher them on site.”

From Pennsylvania are on the menu until they find a quality poultry producer in Florida, he said.

“All ground and smoked meats from the kitchen are house-made, including pork and chicken sausages, smoked bacon, tasso ham, porchetta, chicken meatballs and kielbasa. “Everything is from scratch,” Anderson said. “All our condiments — our mayonnaise, ketchup, bone broth — we make everything here.” They have a ‘pickle program’ as well.

The Bar, 510 E. Ocean Ave., Boynton Beach.

Feeding South Florida, the food bank that partners with other nonprofits throughout Florida, is on the menu until they find a quality poultry producer in Florida, he said.

All ground and smoked meats from the kitchen are house-made, including pork and chicken sausages, smoked bacon, tasso ham, porchetta, chicken meatballs and kielbasa.

“Everything is from scratch,” Anderson said. “All our condiments — our mayonnaise, ketchup, bone broth — we make everything here.” They have a ‘pickle program’ as well.

Daniel Ramos, of the critically acclaimed Red Splendor Bone Broth, is a chef partner, overseeing the menu, which changes daily.

Anderson said despite the name and concept, the shop has vegetarian and even vegan offerings.

“We had a party of three vegans who came in, and Chef Dan made them a whole vegan meal. There’s a joke there,” he laughed. “Three vegans walk into a butcher shop...”

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community to train people to work in the culinary field, both kitchen and front-of-house positions.

The goal is for graduates to find work in commercial restaurants. The program is open to anyone with at least a GED who wants to get into the culinary field or improve his or her career, she said.

The plan is for classes to be sponsored, Vatske said, with the goal that they are free for the trainees.

For now, the teaching kitchen is idle because of COVID-19. “We are hopeful by October we’ll have teaching and training,” Vatske said.

The organization also will add commercial events, such as catering large affairs.

“We will have a revenue-generating component. The money earned will be reinvested into our program,” she said.

In the past, Feeding South Florida relied on vendors to help produce its meals; FSF now will become a vendor to others, supplying hot meals for recipients of other programs.

For special events and catering work, the agency will hire from its grad pool.

“Workers on the production side are cooking and packing meals for distribution. Soups are prepared in one of the giant tilt skillets — cream of celery was the choice on a recent day. The menu rotates through a four-week plan.

Meals are cooked rapid-fire in the new combi ovens. These are high-volume ovens that perform multiple functions such as baking, steaming, poaching and roasting.

“These are amazing,” Vatske said. “They are state-of-the-art,” allowing them to turn out hundreds of complete meals much faster.

Volunteers are used to pack and seal the food trays. A cold storage area is being added; for now, it shares space with the major distribution area. There’s also a small laundry room where kitchen linens and uniforms are laundered, keeping everything in house.

The agency also works with FEMA and Florida’s CERT (the emergency response team coordinators), as well as community groups to provide meals for emergency workers and people in shelters during disaster relief efforts.

Hurricane Harvey, a Category 4 storm that devastated parts of Texas and Louisiana in 2017, wiping out resources for food, spurred a new program for Florida, Vatske said.

The state funds FSF and other organizations, which have high-production meal-distribution plans ready whenever a storm approaches. Other funding comes from federal agencies, as well as a number of local partners such as Publix, the Quantum Foundation and other private groups.

Volunteers and donations are still needed from the community, she said, more than ever to help people outside the government programs.

Vatske said FSF is grateful for all donations. “Absolutely. We have general programs and supplies to fund.”

For information about the programs or volunteer opportunities, go to feedingsouthflorida.org.

Chef James Strine has taken the helm at Taru, the new moniker for the restaurant at the Sundy House.

It is billed as “New Florida Cuisine,” and puts a twist on Florida influences from the Caribbean ( jerk ribs with tamarind barbecue sauce); Cuba’s croquettes (turkey and stuffing croquettes with cranberry mayonnaise), or a Florida bouillabaisse (local fish, clams, shrimp, grits). He also dips into Asian influences, with Dynamite rice (furikake, crab, pork belly) and rice noodles and clams, with wine, garlic, bone marrow and Thai basil. Taru also gives a nod to a hot trend by offering poutine (fries covered with burreta and foie gras).

Though Strine is a master at meats — he’s noted for charcuterie and his butchering skills — he knows vegetarian plates as well (cauliflower steak and waffles). Strine comes from a string of noteworthy kitchens, including Cafe Boulud, Buccan and Grato, as well as his most recent gig at The Trophy Room in Wellington.

The restaurant is still open for its acclaimed Sunday brunch in the garden — a romantic setting on any occasion.

Taru at the Sundy House, 106 S. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach. Phone 561-272-5678; www.sundyhouse.com. Open for dinner Monday-Saturday; brunch Saturday (a la carte) and Sunday ( prix fixe buffet).
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Local artist donates 50% of his proceeds to needy in pandemic

By Jan Engoren  Contributing Writer

In a time when artists’ voices have been silenced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one artist has found a way to not only make his voice heard, but also make an impact on those around him.

Lifelong black-and-white photographer Brian Cattelle, 38, a Maine native now based in Lake Worth, has created the 50/50 COVID artwork project, which is designed to donate 50% of the proceeds from his art to local individuals and charities. Each night from his home studio, he creates a video showcasing his latest works and talks about the different projects he’s involved with. If somebody buys the art, he donates half of the sale price to a charity of their choosing.

Cattelle said he donated $150 to St. Jude’s Hospital and $150 to Healing Hearts on one day alone and has met his short-term goal of donating $1,200. “During these COVID times, my ability to show my art in public was virtually eliminated and my ability to explore new projects that involve other people has been hindered, so I have to turn to the resources at hand,” Cattelle said. “I’m forced to have an added emphasis on diversity — in their programming and casting.

Most theaters think they have done a pretty good job at diversity, but agree there is still room for improvement. As Florida Atlantic University’s Matt Stabile puts it, “I’m proud of our work, but there’s a lot more for us to be doing. We’ve made mistakes in the past, I think, in terms of what we chose to program and what we didn’t.” Still, he can point to Motherland, When She Had Wings and The Glass Piano as examples of productions that featured performers of color, even though the playwrights did not specify racial characters.

The same goes for Palm Beach Dramaworks, which recently gave Ernest Thompson’s On Golden Pond a new look by making the central aged married couple bi-racial. “I’m not trying to be color-blind here,” notes PBD’s producing artistic director Bill Hayes. “There’s nothing in the play that making it a mixed marriage won’t work. I wanted to say, ‘This is a play about family and love and the complications that go along with them,’” a theme that he felt was relevant regardless of race.

And it will demonstrate that we have more in common than differences. Still, I called the playwright, because I wanted his blessing.

Diversity casting may be easier in new works or in the classics, but The Wick Theatre is proud of its efforts in mainstream musicals. “We are so color-blind here,” says executive managing producer Marilynth Wick. “We meet great people and if they’re talented, they get cast. If you’re talented, no matter what color you are — you can be purple — you’ll be on my stage. When we did Evita, we had like six cast members that were African-American in that show alone.”

Although the production had its difficulties, Wick is also proud of having cast Leslie Uggams in Mamma, which she believes is the first time a black performer ever played that title role. And when you factor in gender among the ways a production can be diverse, she also makes a point of mentioning another first her theater had with a Jerry Herman show — Lee Roy Reams as the meddlesome matchmaker in Hello, Dolly! Across town in Boca Raton, intimate Primal Forces feels that it is naturally drawn to plays with black呃en in diversity. “I like to do plays about how baby boomers have lost their ideals,” says artistic director Keith.

See DIVERSITY on AT11
Music

Teacher has second career as songbird

By Janis Fontaine
Contributing Writer

Rhea Francani isn’t a tough-talking Texan or a boot-scooting Okie but she loves country music like one. Born in Buffalo, NY, the youngest of three sisters in a close-knit Italian family that put on “full-blown concerts” in their living room, Francani, 28, of Boca Raton, just released the first single from her soon to be-released concept country album.

“We are a very musical and creative family,” Francani said. “We listened to Motown and R&B, Earth, Wind and Fire, Stevie Wonder, Whitney, Mariah. We dabbled in a lot of genres.”

That dabbling included a love of musical theater, and Francani breathed life into Belle in her high school production of Beauty and the Beast. Active in choir and jazz band, after high school, Francani writes with her sisters, Elisia, eight years older, and Adria, four years older, to New York City to pursue music. “We’ve always been very close,” Francani said. “Family is important.”

The high-achieving songbird graduated with honors from Wagner College on Staten Island with a degree in musical theater and all in love with teaching when she helped her sisters in their work. Francani decided to take her high school degree at Columbia University’s Teachers College specializing in music education, which surprised no one.

But as much as Francani loves the theater and teaching, when she sits down to create her own music, Francani feels at home in country music. She says she became a fan of country/pop group Lady Antebellum when the trio released its blockbuster crossover hit “Need You Now” in 2009, and she has followed Taylor Swift’s trajectory from country to pop to Folklore.

After Columbia, Francani went to Nashville, where she co-produced a self-penned 12-track debut album called, appropriately, Now or Never. Two singles from the album, “Dizzy” and “Shotgun Baby,” showed fans her grasp of two of country music’s staples: catchy hooks and upbeat, toe-tapping rhythms.

But the reality of working hand-to-mouth as a singer-songwriter in dog-eat-dog Music City when you have a passion for teaching — and a master’s degree from a prestigious conservatory — doesn’t make financial sense. So, Francani accepted a challenge from the Alexander D. Henderson University School, a public elementary and middle school on the FAU campus, to rejuvenate its music program performance.

Francani joined the middle school in 2016, starting with 65 students in her elective classes; she now has more than 100 in chorus, dance and musical theater.

Henderson has chosen to begin instruction this year virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. One advantage Henderson has, Francani says, is, “It’s great with technology.”

When she’s not teaching, Francani calls out some of country’s strongest contemporaries. Carrie Underwood for “class and intelligence”; Maren Morris, “who had time for me and was very kind” to Adria Ballerini for “her ‘it’ factor.”

Francani says that her second album will be quite different from her first. “The first one was super-raw. I was young and those were the songs I’d written. I’ve grown up a lot since then.”

Francani says “a lot happened to me in my life” since the first album. For one thing, Francani fell in love for the first time, and that love inspired the first single from her upcoming album. “I’ll Go,” a romantic pop-country road song, showcases her strong vocals with a simple but catchy hook. It’s the kind of tune that makes you roll the windows down, turn up the volume and sing along.

Francani says she plans to release a ballad next. And that’s one key to her success: Always keep ’em guessing.

Books

A call to action to defeat Parkinson’s

By Bill Williams
Art/Paper Books Writer

By 2040, the number of people battling Parkinson’s disease will have doubled to more than 13 million worldwide.

That grim prediction is contained in a absorbing new book, Ending Parkinson’s Disease: A Prescription for Action. The book was written by four of the nation’s top Parkinson’s disease researchers, including Dr. Michael Okun, a neurologist disease expert at the University of Florida.

I have a personal interest in the book because I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease a few years ago.

Currently, there is no cure for Parkinson’s, which can last for decades and is not fully understood. The book offers poignant stories about people who are coping with the illness, sometimes for decades.

Among the symptoms are slow movement, difficulty balancing, loss of smell and depression. There are recommended steps to slow its progress, such as exercise. The author is sounding the alarm that this pandemic is upon us. But we also know if we respond now to this challenge it presents, we can save many people from suffering," the authors say. Millions of dollars for research have been raised by various celebrities, including the actor Michael J. Fox.

The book is more than a history of a serious disease. The authors list steps, including reducing the use of pesticides, that can slow the disease in Parkinson’s. The book cites examples of illnesses that have been reduced by habit change. Lung cancer, for example, declined when people gave up cigarette smoking.

“It not only is Parkinson’s the fastest growing non-communicable condition on the planet, but it is also among the most disabling. Individuals with Parkinson’s suffer. And so do their caregivers,” the authors say.

The book is a wake-up call for families and colleagues to assist those battling this persistent illness, knowing there is no cure at this time. It can help with rides, meals, and other tasks.

This book is a valuable addition to the growing body of literature about a mysterious illness. Bill Williams is a freelance writer in West Hartford, Conn.
CATTELLE
Continued from page 9
what you want and don’t let fear hold you back.”
Cattelle captures photography as a teenager, in 2012 he won $30,000 as a grand prize in a nationwide photography contest sponsored by Abercrombie & Fitch. With a passion for photography, cattelle has a collection of cameras in a cabinet to “Capture the Unknown.”
He recalls when the fascination with photography took hold of him.
“I remember developing my first black-and-white photo in my high school darkroom — the ominous red glow of the light, the stink of chemicals, the trickling water in the background, and the anticipation as, moment by moment, my future materializes.”
“From then on I was hooked,” he writes on his website.
“Exploring my art helps me develop as an artist,” Cattelle says. “I have been shown at Art Palm Beach, Art Synergy, the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County, the Cornell Museum and The Hart Taff Museum.”
Daniel Ganciotti, owner of The Heart of Delray Gallery, where Cattelle exhibited his work in 2017, calls Cattelle “an amazing photographer.”
“The way he captures photo-realism along with graffiti art is impeccable,” said Ganciotti.
“His ability to travel through the most dangerous terrain to get the most prestigious shot.”
DIVERSITY
Continued from page 9
Garsson. “Y’know, the folks from the ‘60s and ‘70s, where are they now? Well, if that’s what I like to do, a huge percentage of those plays are racially themed. Jeannie (Croft, Primal’s resident director) and I realized that we don’t think about it, because we just naturally gravitate to these themes anyway.”
And even if such a play did not originally have a diverse cast, it probably would at Primal Forces. Consider Lanford Wilson’s post-Vietnam drama, Redwood Curtain. “The part of the disillusioned war vet was originally played by Jeff Daniels and we cast (African-American) Ethan Henry,” says Garsson.
“That gave it a whole different spin.”
Still, while these artistic directors agree that diversity productions are not an issue in the area, they say the problem is not a lack of worthy material.
“It’s not the lack of plays. We don’t have enough of a diversified community of artists, particularly in Palm Beach,” answers Hayes. “Even when I was in an acting class that’s like August Wilson’s Fences because I thought it was an important play to play right now, I had to do an informational search to be able to cast the show. And that’s the kind of effort you need to put into it. And not make it difficult for you to have to commit to the work and do what it takes to cast it.”
Dramaworks has been producing race-themed plays like Master Harold... and the Boys and A Raisin in the Sun. 2012, which Hayes conceded is coming late to the party.
A number of years ago, I realized that everything I was putting onstage was by an old white male. That was not intentional, Hayes insists. “It’s not that there aren’t great plays written by women, but I was more focused on the play and the theme of other things than that as an artistic director should have been focused on. I should have been focused on diversity long ago.”
Stabile, whose Theatre Lab produces new and nearly new plays, says there are plenty of scripts dealing in racial themes. The challenge comes for theaters that stick to “the classical American canon.”
“But the majority of productions that we see around town are based on titles that we think are going to draw an audience. It probably gets assumed that an audience will be resistant to this kind of (race-based) material. I think that sometimes is a discredit to our audience, not having enough faith in them.”
“I think there’s a problematic equation that people tend to do, that a play about this kind of stuff is a heavy play, something that’s going to be uncomfortable. I don’t always think that’s true,” says Stabile. “We did a play at our last festival of Jonathan Smith’s brilliant Woods, a hilarious comedy about African-Americans’ access to national parks. It works incredibly well, because you spend 95 minutes laughing or incredibly well, because you
“Looking at my photos through the 3-D image,” he says. “My photographs are not just a single image; but have so many more facets to them. I hope always to take my photos to the next phase.”
Theatre Lab’s Stable points to the company’s production of Motherland — a multi-cultural version of Mother Courage — as one of the best-selling shows of his first season as artistic director. Still, he emphasizes the importance of “getting our existing audience to understand that this was a show for them too.”
“Toward diversity when he says, “I think it’s my job as artistic director to find more opportunities for different ethnic groups, different age groups, and that’s something I’ve vowed to work harder on since I’ve been here.”
If You Go
To see more works by Brian Cattelle, go to his website, brianccattelle.com.
He interviewed alumni about their feelings of gratitude and conceptualized their ideas into a series of photographs, which has since been featured in the treatment center’s facility.
The following year he created his Gratitude Portrait Part II for Caroni Renaissance in Wernersville, Pa.
Cattelle also finds creative ways to communicate with the photographers, stretching the boundaries of the photo itself. In his project 90’s 3-D Mashup, he utilized techniques from the 1990s. He scanned VH’s tape, he traveled across (such as the 1996 film about heroin addicts, Travispottting) on a CRT TV, photographing the most notable scenes with a 35 mm film camera.
He then captured everyday scenes from his neighborhood — such as the firewoods on July 4 with “X-Acto knife and tape,” “mashed” the two scenes together, creating a classic 90s 3-D image.
“Photograph speaks to the false euphoria you get from doing drugs,’ he says.
“I’m always trying to innovate and find new ways to present and capture an image with their photography, and to do photography,” says Cattelle.
More recently, he experimented again, coming up with creative ways to view his work.
Cattelle put his Bare USA photographs into vintage Viewmasters, created specifically for last year’s Art Palm Beach. Each Viewmaster contains seven images and is encased in a custom-painted box.
He collected and assembled found objects — flyers, stickers, street debris — to create a backdrop for what he calls a “street art style photo.”
All these photographs are part of his 50/50 Projects. “I’m taking black-and-white photo to a new level and exploring new ways to present and create an image that has more facets to them.”
Primal Forces has on its season schedule a Civil War play, Ben Butler, about “an escaped slave who lands at a Northern fort, seeking asylum.”
Palm Beach Dramaworks plans to produce two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Nottage’s Intimate Apparel, a play of underdogs and motivations that’s set in 20th century New York. As Hayes says of Nottage, “I think she’s one of the great contemporary playwrights.”
Fresh off a reading at its New Play Festival, Theatre Lab is launching an artistic director to Andrew Rosenfeld and Satya Chavez’s Refuge, a bilingual, multi-cultural drama of life in the last years of the Cold War.
To attract a diverse audience, he plans on “connecting with outside organizations, so that people who haven’t, until now known about us or felt welcome here.”
And The Wick expects to present a variety of concerts, a review of pop songs from the ‘50s and ‘60s by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, tailored to a diverse cast.
Dramaworks’ Hayes sums up the generally held attitude toward diversity when he says, “I think it’s my job as artistic director to find more opportunities for different ethnic groups, different age groups, and that’s something I’ve vowed to work harder on since I’ve been here.”

Avery Sommers starred as Bessie Smith in a well-received production at the Arts Garage.
Photo by Alex Shapiro
hardship.” The Bessie Smith show (which starred area favorite Avery Sommers) could probably still be running,” Hayes says on one of his Facebook Live videos.
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“When Primal Forces was at Delray Beach’s Arts Garage, diversity programming was a requirement of several grants that the umbrella organization received. Nevertheless, having that mandate was hardly a
COVID-19 vaccine trial enrolling more volunteers

C OVID-19 vaccine development is in the works across the globe with one Phase 3 trial—the final step before U.S. government approval—in progress locally.

Massachusetts-based Moderna Inc.—in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health—aims to enroll 30,000 adults in Phase 3 of its testing with volunteers from all over the country.

In West Palm Beach, at the Palm Beach Research Center, a clinical trial began July 31 and has already enrolled and vaccinated hundreds of volunteers. It is still enrolling, said David Scott, president and CEO of the research center.

The study will continue for two years. The first visit takes 3-4 hours, with other quicker visits at days 28, 57, 209, 395 and 759, plus or minus a couple of days, he said. Participants will be paid up to $1,990.

Scott describes the vaccine: “Moderna uses a biodegradable lipid nanoparticle, which allows it to more effectively be absorbed by the body than any current vaccine technology. It carries a messenger RNA, which creates a protein that looks like COVID-19’s outer shell.

“It causes the body’s immune system to create proteins that look like COVID-19 (with spikes), but they are empty — they don’t have COVID-19. Since it looks like COVID-19, the body will be prepared; in the future it can recognize COVID-19 and eliminate it.

“While the trial is ongoing, if the data shows it’s effective, Dr. Fauci is confident the FDA may do an interim analysis and will be prepared; in the future it can be absorbed by the body than any new vaccine technology. We carry a messenger RNA, which creates a protein that looks like COVID-19’s outer shell.

Dr. Anthony Fauci is one of the government’s top advisers on the coronavirus pandemic.

This is a randomized, double-blind, trial, which means that volunteers are randomly assigned to either receive the vaccine or a placebo, and neither the vaccinated person nor the researcher knows which was given to each person until the end of the trial.

To volunteer, go to https://palmbeachresearch.com/2020/03/02/covid-19-vaccine-study/ or call 561-689-0686.

Researchers at Brain Matters Research are looking for participants age 50 and older with no memory loss to take part in the Alzheimer Prevention Trials web study, an online study that detects if people experience memory loss over time and need early intervention.

 Participants take no-cost tests online every three months to monitor memory changes. If changes are observed, volunteers may be invited to in-person evaluations to determine eligibility for additional Alzheimer’s studies.

To learn more and enroll, visit www.APTWebstudy.org.

Four researchers from Florida Atlantic University received the National Science Foundation Early Career Awards in August. The awards support early-career faculty members who have the potential to lead advances in specific areas and need additional funding.

The award winners are Waseem Asghar, Ph.D., associate professor; Rehaz Ghozani, Ph.D., associate professor; Feng-Hao Liu, Ph.D., assistant professor; and Marianne E. Porter, Ph.D., assistant professor of biological sciences in FAU’s Charles E. Schmidt College of Science.

Asghar received $500,000 over five years to develop a low-cost disposable point-of-care platform to detect current and emerging infectious diseases.

Ghozani, who is also a fellow in FAU’s Institute for Sensing and Embedded Network Systems Engineering, was given $524,191 over five years to develop a cognitive screening tool for the early detection of Alzheimer’s disease using wearables and a smartphone.

Liu got $500,000 over five years to develop new ways of coding to enhance cybersecurity.

Porter’s $625,943 over five years is for research to better understand how marine animals tune, or dynamically adjust their movements using their skin and skeletons.

In July, Boca Raton Regional Hospital received certification from the Joint Commission on Health Care as a comprehensive stroke center.

This signifies that the hospital’s Marcus Neuroscience Institute meets standards for providing care to all patients, including endovascular embolization and surgical clipping of brain aneurysms, TPA administration and mechanical endovascular thrombectomy, a procedure used to remove a blood clot from the brain during an ischemic stroke.

JFK Medical Center received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award in July, recognizing the hospital’s commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment.

Additionally, JFK Medical Center received the association’s Stroke Honor Roll Elite Plus recognition, indicating that the hospital meets quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patient’s arrival at the hospital and treatment.

JFK was also recognized by Healthgrades with a Five-Star Recipient Award for Treatment of Stroke for three consecutive years, 2018-2020.

The Palm Beach Health Network’s Delray Medical Center also earned the American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association’s Stroke and Heart Quality Achievement Award.

The hospital achieved high performance marks in the category of heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease for the state of Florida in the U.S. News & World Report’s 2020-2021 Best Hospitals rankings for adult clinical specialties.

Dr. Lloyd Zucker, who has more than two decades of practice in South County, was named medical director of neurosurgery for Delray Medical Center and Good Samaritan Medical Center.

An honor graduate of Johns Hopkins University, Zucker was invited as an undergraduate to do research at the National Institutes of Health.

A neurosurgical residency at the University of Connecticut-Hartford Hospital followed his medical training at Rutgers University/University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. His extended training was completed by a fellowship in complex spinal surgery at the University of South Florida/Tampa General Hospital.

FoundCare, a nonprofit health care center, has expanded its women’s health services to include OB/GYN care, well-woman exams, preventive care and screenings, bone density testing, breast and cervical cancer screening, sexual health services, birth control, Pap smear and HPV testing, pregnancy services, and prenatal and postpartum care.

With 35 years in the community, FoundCare Inc. has several locations throughout Palm Beach County, offering services that include pediatric and adult primary care, new women’s health services, chronic disease management, behavioral health services, dentistry, pharmacy, laboratory services and X-rays.

FoundCare’s mission is to fulfill unmet health care and social service needs of individuals and families in Palm Beach County. For more information, call 561-432-5849 or visit www.foundcare.org.

A new exhibit at the South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, “Real Bodies,” will run from Sept. 26 through April 11.

It will give visitors a tour of human bodies that have been preserved using a process known as polymer impregnation, where bodily fluids are replaced by liquid plastic, which is then hardened to create a solid, durable anatomic specimen that will last indefinitely. The process leaves fine delicate tissue structures intact, down to the microscopic level, making the process invaluable for medical study.

The exhibit will feature a COVID-19 component, where visitors can learn more about the pandemic’s impact on the human body.

The South Florida Science Center and Aquarium is at 4801 Dreher Trail N., West Palm Beach. For more information, call 561-832-1988 or visit www.sfsicenter.org.

Send health news to Christine Davis at cdavis979@gmail.com.
Gratitude swept into Carol Ann Keller’s life in “full force” in 1993, when she felt she had absolutely nothing to be grateful for.

“Everything was a giant mess, mostly of my own making,” says Keller, a Lantana resident who works in the interior design field. “I had to make extreme life changes in order to change my own life. It was introduced to me that maybe a power greater than myself existed — whatever that looked like, whatever that would be called — and that was very humbling. And once humility started entering into my existence, the gratitude just came up, and I really learned … what gratitude looks like.”

She started with baby steps, acknowledging her good fortune at having a roof over her head and food in the refrigerator — basic but life-sustaining needs. Keller says as her gratitude practice grew, so did her sense of peace and well-being.

While skeptics may regard practicing gratitude as woo-woo, a phalanx of researchers says otherwise. Keller’s experiences mirror findings reported in “The Science of Gratitude,” a 2018 report from the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California in Berkeley, a locus for research into the psychology, sociology and neuroscience of well-being.

“In general, more-grateful people are happier, more satisfied with their lives, more likely to suffer from burnout. Additionally, some studies have found that gratitude practices, like keeping a gratitude journal or writing a letter of gratitude, can increase people’s happiness and overall positive mood,” writes author Summer Allen in the report, which documents more than two decades of research. (To read more, visit gsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf)

In one cited study, Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough define gratitude as having two components: “Recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome and recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome.” That external source can be a higher power, as it is for Keller, or someone whose actions have bestowed a kindness, or gift.

The important part, experts say, is to get outside of ourselves, acknowledging that navigating life does, indeed, take a village.

“Expressing thanks to others is as having two components: ‘Recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome and recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome.’ That external source can be a higher power, as it is for Keller, or someone whose actions have bestowed a kindness, or gift. The important part, experts say, is to get outside of ourselves, acknowledging that navigating life does, indeed, take a village.”

Carol Ann Keller for years has incorporated gratitude into her meditation sessions, but the practice can be as simple as jotting down thoughts on paper. Tim Stepien/The Coastal Star

Keller says gratitude is helping to sustain her through the fear and uncertainty of the pandemic. “When everything just kind of blew up, and nothing looked like it ever did before, I had to take myself down a notch to relieve that inner angst, because when I get anxious, it’s usually because I’m trying to control things that are out of my control,” she says. “And so, I go back to gratitude. Gratitude brings me back and I have so much to be grateful for in my life, I really do.”

Michelle Maros, co-founder of Peaceful Mind Peaceful Life in Boca Raton, a nonprofit organization offering mindfulness classes and workshops and other inspiration activities, believes gratitude is especially beneficial during times of crisis. “Finding things to be grateful for, no matter how small, can allow us to feel a sense of optimism, hope and peace,” she says. “During difficult times, our minds may convince us that everything is going wrong. Gratitude can help shift that mind set and allow us to remember that there is still so much light in the world, even when it feels dark.”

If you have room in your life to grow your gratitude, the good news is that you already have everything you need. Think about the people, pets, places and things for which you’re grateful. You decide on the where, when and how.

Others, like Keller, make it part of a meditation practice, “an inner journey” that starts and ends her day. “Gratitude keeps me out of the head-space of, oh, why does that person have that, and I don’t?” she says. “It really alleviates any of that because when I’ve been grateful for really small things, bigger things have come along. And I don’t know how that works. I don’t know why that works, but it’s worked.”

“My gratitude is increasing by leaps and bounds the older I get. I don’t know. Maybe I’m growing up at 66. Hopefully not,” she says, laughing. “But I’ll still be grateful.”

Joyce Reingold writes about health and healthy living. Send column ideas to joyce.reingold@yahoo.com.
Just as the response to the coronavirus varies in different cultural, social and political arenas, the same is true in local churches. The one thing they share is a desire to serve and help, and they are on the front lines when families are in crisis.

Here's what's happening at some churches.

At St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Delray Beach, Father Paul Kane reports that “our Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida has mandated closure of all churches at least until there is a 14-day, gradual decrease in COVID-19 cases in Palm Beach County. So far, our numbers are not heading in the right direction.”

Kane says the church has a reentry plan that gives details on the protocols it will follow when it is deemed safe to reopen for in-person worship. “In the meantime, Kane says that online giving, the backbone of the church’s community support, has increased. People who used to put cash in the collection plate have signed up to give online. The congregation’s needs have increased as well, but its members have stepped up to help.

Kane says the complexity of the pandemic, and the myriad issues driving the demand for church support, make everything harder to manage. “Consider,” he says, “we’re dealing with the health and well-being of our congregants, especially those living in nursing homes and crowded public housing facilities; the mental health of our entire community, especially those who live alone and those who suffer from addictions; the strain on our health care system; the economic impact, especially on small businesses and newly unemployed people; and the spiritual impact of not being able to gather in-person for worship.”

To help, Kane says, “Our clergy provide ongoing pastoral care by phone, and we have six ministries who have dedicated themselves to praying for those people on our parish prayer list. We have also initiated a Prayer by Phone ministry, with people on our parish prayer list. We have also initiated a Prayer by Phone ministry, with prayer partners available five days per week.”

Kane said the church hadn’t lost any members to COVID as of mid-August, but members have lost family, friends and co-workers to the virus. The prayer partners have been especially helpful to people who are grieving, he said.

Advent Lutheran Church reports in-person worship resumed at both its locations — Boca Raton and Lantana — under CDC and local guidelines. In Boca, attendance was increasing in August. One happy first: Andrew Hagen, lead pastor for Advent Life Ministries, says the church performed its first socially distanced baptism in the church since the crisis began.

Hagen says donations are up slightly over previous years.

At Unity of Delray Beach, the Rev. Laurie Durgan reports, “We’re keeping members and guests close via digital virtual means.” Programs to help keep people connected include:

- Sunday: Guest speakers and meditations, minister talks and children’s videos and music by musical director D. Shawn Berry and soloist Daniel Cochran.
- Tuesday: Prayer services
- Wednesday: Meditation services
- Thursday: The Morning Prosperity Class with Charlene Wilkinson and the Lunch Prosperity Class with Dymin Dyer (Zoom).

If you need prayer, listen to new prayers on the Dial-a-Prayer line at 561-910-2559, email a prayer request to unitychurch@unityschool.com or speak to a prayer chaplain at 561-276-5796. Info at www.unityofdelraybeach.org.

Hot news! In early August, Pastor D. Brian Horgan of St. Lucy Catholic Church in Highland Beach says divine intervention woke him in the middle of the night to alert him to an electrical fire in the rectory, “right outside my bedroom door.”

The parish priest likes to play the radio to fall asleep at night, and the radio, plus the breathing device he uses for his sleep apnea, prevented him from hearing the smoke alarm. Instead, he says, “God woke him.

Horgan tried to use a fire extinguisher he keeps on hand to fight the flames, but the fire was too big. He called the Fire Department, which quickly traveled the quarter-mile to the church to take care of the blaze.

“The place is mess,” Horgan said, and his clothes all smell like smoke, but he’s grateful.

“I was very lucky,” Horgan said. “I used to joke about divine intervention. I don’t anymore.”

— Janis Fontaine
The Jewish High Holy Days — Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement — both take place in late September. In Judaism, these are the most sacred days of the year, and services featuring special prayers, fasts, and significant foods are performed daily. And 24 hours of fasting are planned. Congregations gather together with great joy to celebrate the creation of the universe during Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 18-20). Then the devout come together again a week later for Yom Kippur (Sept. 27-28), the holiest day of the year. Having spent time evaluating their lives, repeating their wrongs, praying and fasting, the congregation dresses in white for solemn — but not sad — services at the synagogue.

This year, because of COVD-19, communal worship — services at the synagogue. Having spent time evaluating their lives, repeating their wrongs, praying and fasting, the congregation dresses in white for solemn — but not sad — services at the synagogue.

As the leader of Beth Ami in Boca Raton, I want to offer any type of spiritual connection. It’s been tough for some people to adapt,” Rabbi Joe Fishof of Temple Beth Ami in Boca Raton®, explains. “Many are afraid, and we don’t want to subject them to a situation that makes them uncomfortable.”

So, this year, a limited number of members will come to services, but most will watch them on Zoom, Fishof says. Many synagogues depend on the sale of holy days for these two important holidays for financial support throughout the year, but most have received special donations from members. “We reminded them, ‘Don’t let the shul suffer,’” Fishof says, “and people were generous.”

Tickets for services are lower in cost this year, from $50 to $120, but these are suggested donations and no one is ever turned away because he can’t pay. Leaders of Temple Beth El in Boca Raton suggest that with so many in the congregation suffering as a result of COVID, members who have purchased High Holy Days tickets in the past should consider making a donation in the amount they would have spent.

At Beth Ami, two 90-minute services are planned. Guests will be limited to 50. Cleaning is planned between services. Fishof is keeping most of his sermon under wraps, but he plans to comfort and encourage people whose routines have been disrupted. “With so many people suffering, we shouldn’t make an effort to be more compassionate,” he said. “I also want to remind them to be grateful for what they have. I want to tell them to have hope, to pray and stay in faith.”

To Fishof, Yom Kippur is about “chesed hohan meshaf,” a spiritual accounting of the soul. Self-improvement, perfecting one’s character and forgiving closer relationships with God and our fellow men are the essence of Yom Kippur.

“About introspection,” Fishof said. “Look inside yourself and ask, How can I be a better person, more compassionate, more understanding this year?”

Local services

- Temple Beth Ami — 1401 NW Fourth Ave., Boca Raton. www.hachocha.org
- Temple Beth Ami will hold both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services by reservation only and by following CDC guidelines. Masks will be required. Bring your own hand sanitizer. Temperatures will be taken at the door. Two 90-minute services are planned: 9 to 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., with cleaning planned in between. Call for tickets: 561-391-8900.
- Temple Beth El — Schaefer Family Campus, 333 SW Fourth Ave., Boca Raton. www.theboca.org
- Temple Beth El’s services will be celebrated online. The synagogue invites everyone to watch services live-streaming on the website, Facebook page or YouTube channel. For members, there are additional benefits, like a special High Holy Day gift bag for pickup and the ability to borrow a High Holy Day machzor (prayer book). For more, call 561-391-8900.
- Boca Beach Chabad — 120 NE First Ave., Boca Raton. 561-394-9770 or www.ChabadBocaBeaches.com Rabbi Ruvi New said the synagogue plans to host its services at Mizner Park Cultural Arts Center, 201 Plaza Real, Boca Raton, instead of its facility. He said Mizner Park has enough room to accommodate everyone even with social distancing. Ages 12 and older programs require tickets. Services are as follows:
  - Rosh Hashanah evening: 7:05 p.m. Sept. 18
  - First-day Rosh Hashanah: 9 a.m. Sept. 19
  - Mincha: First-day Rosh Hashanah: 7:05 p.m. Sept. 19
  - Second-day Rosh Hashanah: 9 a.m. Sept. 20
  - Shofar sounding: 11:30 a.m. Sept. 20
  - Mincha: 6 p.m. Sept. 20, followed by tashlich and second shofar blowing at the Intracoastal at the northwest corner (Wildflower) of east Palm Beach Park Road and Fifth Avenue, Boca Raton, at 6:45 p.m.
  - Kol Nidre: 7 p.m. Sept. 27. Reservations required. Seats are $120.
  - Yom Kippur morning: 9 a.m. Sept. 28
  - Yizkor memorial: Noon Sept. 28. Reservations required. Seats are $72.
  - Mincha: 5:15 p.m. Sept. 28
  - Neillah closing service: 6:15 p.m. Sept. 28

Three special children’s programs are planned at the synagogue: first-day Rosh Hashanah at 10:30 a.m. Sept. 19; second-day: 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sept. 20; and Yom Kippur: 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 28.

Raisin your paw, or hand, if you are feeling a little stir-crazy. Got a dose of cabin fever due to the worldwide pandemic that seems to hover over Florida? The silver lining for many stuck at home since mid-March is having a safe companion who never disagrees on which Netflix show to binge watch next. Yep, I’m referring to our dogs and cats, who have sacrificed oodles of me-alone-at-home nap time to cuddle and console us during our many moods. Paws up for pets, for sure. At this stage of the coronavirus, opportunities are growing for us with pets to engage in safe activities and to take short getaways to pet-welcoming places. If you are ready to sport your mask, bring plenty of gloves and hand sanitizer, the Visit Florida team may have a fit for you.

Visit Florida represents more than 13,000 tourism industry businesses throughout the Sunshine State. Recognizing that pet adoptions have surged by more than 300% since April, this group is promoting “fur-babymoon” adventures for people and their well-mannered pets. From the Panhandle down to the Florida Keys, opportunities exist for you and your pet to safely paddleboard, take beach strolls, hike, sail, rent pet-friendly Airbnbs and dine outdoors.

One of the most fetching options includes free stays for people at the Costa d’Este Beach Resort & Spa in Vero Beach. The catch? Their accompanied dogs must pay daily rates from $184 a night. “We put a playful spin on a traditional hotel package from a dog’s perspective,” explains Jessica Milton, regional director of public relations for Benchmark Global Hospitality. “This is a small hotel with 94 rooms, so you won’t be walking into a massive resort. The hotel has plenty of safe things to do outside and definitely will pamper your dog with a beachside dog massage, water bowls and toys your dog can take home, use of a plush doggie bed in the room and even a doggie menu that includes Muttballs.”

Lisa Radosta, DVM, a veterinarian who operates the Florida Veterinary Behavior Service in West Palm Beach, recently spent a month living in a pet-friendly hotel while her family’s new house was being completed. Their old home sold quickly, so the entire family, including Maverick, a Labrador retriever, and a cat named Chewie were hotel dwellers.

“We chose the hotel based on the fact that they took pets and that we would have enough room (a suite) for us and both pets,” she says. “Factors to consider when traveling with your pets these days definitely include the ability to have space for the pets, a place to safely walk pets and pet-friendly restaurants and attractions nearby.”

Equally important is knowing your pet’s temperament and adaptability to being in new places with new sights, sounds and smells. When they arrived, their normally easygoing Maverick had issues with the hotel elevator. But having a veterinary behaviorist for a pet parent helped as Radosta steadily built up Maverick’s exposure to elevator rides. “My husband and I are pretty fit, so we took the four flights of stairs up and down as much as possible to give Maverick a break from the elevator,” she says. “We learned that he needed treats before he got on the elevator and tolerated the ride much better if I asked him to lie down. He rides the elevator just fine now.”

“Going out with your dog is really fun — for you! Is it fun for your dog?” she says. “If not, some time to get your dog used to going to the beach or getting on the kayak before you expect him to spend significant amounts of time in that activity.”

For well-socialized pets, however, such trips are viewed as added adventures spent with their favorite humans. Never before has the unconditional love unleashed on us by our pets felt so good.

If You Go
Taking COVID-19 precautions into account, numerous pet-welcoming places and activities are available in the Sunshine State. To learn more, go to www.VisitFlorida.com.

To learn more about Dr. Lisa Radosta’s practice, visit www.fivetbehavior.com. Radosta is the co-author of From Fearful to Fear Free. The book spotlights the national Fear Free program created by veterinarians to reduce fear, anxiety and stress in pets at home, in the car, at veterinary clinics and during outdoor activities.

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Boca girl, grandmother create book to stay close during pandemic

By Janis Fontaine

Patricia Maguire of Ocean Ridge and her granddaughter Daniella Maguire of Boca Raton have always been exceptionally close, so the social distancing protocols of the coronavirus had them both craving more of a connection than FaceTime and phone calls could offer.

At the same time, Dani, 9, was empathizing with her mother, Viviana, who is Pati’s oldest daughter. She was struggling to virtual-school Dani while caring for Dani’s brothers, Mikey, 1, and Noah, 3. When Viviana’s birthday came around, Dani wanted to make her a special gift and enlisted Pati, whom she calls “Noni,” to help.

Dani wanted to write a story that portrayed her mom as the heroine and she wanted Pati, an accomplished artist, to illustrate it. “I wanted my mom to know how much I appreciate her,” Dani said.

Dani is very creative, and I’d been wanting to get her involved in a game or a project to stay in touch,” Pati recalled, and so she jumped on board.

Dani had learned to write essays in the fourth grade at Addison Mizner Elementary. “I wanted to be the author,” Dani said, but neither realized how big the project would become or how much work it would take.

In the end, the duo created Fiona the Fox and the Magic Crystal, an 18-page book with 14 color illustrations. Pati learned to use a medium called gouache, an opaque watercolor-like paint thickened with a binding agent.

Many discussions took place over the phone. Dani would write a few pages, and send the story to Noni, who would type it up. They would discuss how to best illustrate each of the scenes. Later they met a few times outdoors—at the beach or the pool, practicing social distancing—to work on the project.

“I kept it a surprise from my mom,” Dani said, so they had to be secretive. Afterward Dani apologized to her mom for “being mean and shutting her out.” But such is art!

Dani loves most animals (“I don’t like reptiles”) and knew they would be central to the story.

Pati and Dani’s book, Fiona the Fox and the Magic Crystal, is available for purchase at www.amazon.com. See Pati Maguire’s paintings, including several inspired by COVID-19, at www.patimaguire.com or at her Facebook page at patimaguir epaintings.
S Ocean Blvd, Delray Beach. Program takes place outdoors; limited to 5 families per class. Geared for families with children ages 3-6. Every Th through 10/29. 9:30-10:15 am. $15/class child; $10/class accompanying adult. RSVP: 274-7263, sandowayhouse.org


OCTOBER 18-24

Monday - 10/19 - Story Chasers Zoom Book Club presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. Grade 1-3. 3rd M 3:30-4:15 pm. Free. 266-0194, delraylibrary.org

Friday - 10/23 - Teen Zoom Read Day 2020 presented by Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 5 rockstar Young Adult authors speak about equity, inclusivity, their books. Age 12+. 8:30 am-2 pm. Free. 266-0194, delraylibrary.org

Halloween at the YMCA at DeVos Circle S, Boca Raton. 6-9 pm. $15/adult, $5/child member; $20/child non-member. 395-6622, ymcaspbc.org/programs/events/halloween-y

Saturday - 10/24 - Halloween at the YMCA at Peter Blum Family YMCA, 9600 S Military Tr, Boynton Beach. 6:30-9 pm. $15/adult, $15/child member; $20/child non-member. 395-6622, ymcaspbc.org/programs/events/halloween-y

OCTOBER 25-31


10/27 - Virtual GEMS Club: Haunted Chemists presented by South Florida Science Center and Aquarium, 4801 Derber Tr N, West Palm Beach. Empower young girls to explore STEM fields. Girls grades 3-8. High school girls can volunteer to be mentors. 5:30-6:30 pm. $10/class. Register: 370-7710, sfsciencecenter.org/gems

Hurricane Isaias passed Florida as a tropical storm. It provided a morning of rough seas, then an afternoon of beautiful surf and spectacular dismounts. Thousands of surfers hit the beaches along Florida coasts, including these off Ocean Ridge and Briny Breezes. By the following day, the surf was back to its normal summertime flatness. Photos by Jerry Lower/The Coastal Star

Lifeguard honored
Lantana — July 27

Lifeguard Tanner Thielemann received the Lantana Police Department’s Life-saving Award from Chief Sean Scheller at Town Hall. Thielemann, a 34-year-old South Palm Beach resident, rescued an 18-year-old man from a riptide about 60 yards offshore on May 23. Mary Thrwachter/The Coastal Star

Winning Wahoo
Junco Beach — July 11

The crew of the Hypoluxo-based Southern Comfort IV holds the 53.1-pound wahoo caught July 11 to win the Big Dog/Fat Cat KDW Shootout. From left are mate Josh Joyner, Capt. Bill Cox and mate Ashley Mann. Winning angler Mark Boydston reeled in the wahoo, which hit a trolled bonito strip with these combination in 250 feet off Sloan’s Curve. It was the heaviest fish of the 233-boat tournament. Photo provided by Southern Comfort Charters
Leveraging the Citizen Scientist community to Help Solve Biomedical Challenges

9/5 - Free Museum Admission at Boca Raton Museum of Art, 510 Palm Beach Pike. Sun 11 am to 7 pm Free, through 9/10. 371-2500; bocaart.org

SEPTEMBER 6-12

Monday - 9/7 - Labor Day
Tuesday - 9/8 - Great Directors
Documentary Series: Hitchcock/Truffaut presented by Boca Raton Public Library. 400 W Atlantic Ave. Doors open; 6:30 pm show starts. $30. 586-524-9800; murderonthebeach.com

Wednesday - 9/9 - Project 4-0-6: Free Museum Admission in Boca Raton.

Thursday - 9/10 - 9:00-10:00 am - Online Free Discussion Group at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 1 pm. Free. Zoom link on website: 279-6150, delraylibrary.org

Saturday - 9/12 - Writers Workshop: Craft Night at Boca Raton Public Library, 500 Plaza Real. 10 am-noon. $25.

SEPTEMBER 13-19

SUNDAY - 9/13 - The Sunday Sleuths Book Discussion Group at Arts Garage, 250 NE 2nd Ave. 2nd and 4th Sun. 7-8 pm. Free. 450-3279, artsgarage.org

Monday - 9/14 - Robert Durst: The Life and Crimes of a Serial Killer at Arts Garage, 250 NE 2nd Ave. 2nd and 4th Mon. 7-8 pm. Free. 450-3279, artsgarage.org

Tuesday - 9/15 - Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave. 2 pm. Admission included w/purchase of the book (applicable to all formats). $26.00 or $5 creditable towards Anna's book or future event. Registration: 495-0233 x237; morikami.org

Wednesday - 9/16 - Highland Beach Flag Day at Gulfstream Park, 1701 S Ocean Blvd. $5. 2-6 pm. With live music and children’s activities. Email book
spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

September 16-20 - Great Directors Documentary Series: The Folly and the Glory presented by Boca Raton Public Library. 400 W Atlantic Ave. Doors open; 6:30 pm show starts. $39-$59. 844-672-0233; morikami.org

Friday - 9/18 - Book Lovers Meeting at the Boca Raton Public Library. 500 Plaza Real. 10 am. Free. Email bookspanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

Saturday - 9/19 - Writers Workshops: Craft Night at Boca Raton Public Library, 500 Plaza Real. 10 am-noon. $25.

Monday - 9/21 - Celebrating Jewish History and Culture: A Talk about the 42nd Day of Knesset Seder with author Bari Weiss at Arts Garage, 250 NE 2nd Ave. 10 am. Free. Email bookspanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

Tuesday - 9/22 - Great Directors Documentary Series: Murder on the Beach Bookstore, 104 W Atlantic Ave. 3 pm: Intermediate. 1:30-3:00 pm; Beginner 12:00-1:30 pm. $55/member; $60/non-member. Registration: 495-0233 x237; morikami.org

Wednesday - 9/23 - Ikebana: Flower Arrangement/Sogetsu Class at Morikami Museum and Gardens, 7775 North Federal Highway, Delray Beach. Instructor Elaine Viets. 10 am-noon. $25. 495-0233 x237; morikami.org

Thursday - 9/24 - Book Lovers Meeting at the Boca Raton Public Library. 500 Plaza Real. 10 am. Free. Email book
spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link


Saturday - 9/26 - In Jacob’s Shoes: 10th Anniversary Fall Beachfront Reading Series at Delray Beach. 4 pm. Free. In person or live stream. Email book
spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

October 1-7 - Fourth Thursday at Briny Breezes Town Hall, 4802 N Ocean Blvd. 7-9 pm. $5 donation. Email book
spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

September 19-21 - Online Free Discussion Group at Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W Atlantic Ave. 1 pm. Zoom link on website: 279-6150, delraylibrary.org

October 2-9 - Free Museum Admission in Boca Raton.

October 12-17 - 11th Annual USA Columbus Day Open at Delray Beach Tennis Center, 201 Atlantic Ave; Delray Beach Swim & Tennis Center, 2350 Jaeger Dr; Delray Beach Tennis Center, 201 SW 5th Ave. 9 am-12:30 pm; Intermediate 1:30-3:00 pm; Beginner 3:30-5:30 pm. $50/member; $55/non-member. Registration: 495-0233 x237; morikami.org

October 14-16 - The Classic Sci-Fi Film Festival at Arts Garage. 250 NE 2nd Ave. 9:30 am-7:30 pm daily. $25 single or $40 double. Note: Please check with municipality for information regarding streaming/archiving of meetings.

October 15-25 - 10% Off on any purchase of new or used books. At the Boca Raton Public Library, 400 W Atlantic Ave. 2 pm. 450-3279, artsgarage.org

October 16-27 - Behold the Rope by Imbolo Mbue at Virtual Book Discussion presented by the Community Book Club of Palm Beach County. 495-0233 x237; morikami.org

October 16-27 - Fall Craft Sale at Boca Raton Garden Club’s Garden and Osthoff, 428 NE 2nd St. 10 am-4 pm. Rain or shine. $5 parking fee. Email book
spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

October 17-19 - Fall Craft Sale at Boca Raton Garden Club’s Garden and Osthoff, 428 NE 2nd St. 10 am-4 pm. Rain or shine. $5 parking fee. Email book
spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

October 18-24 - Sunday - 10/18 - The Sunday Sleuths Book Discussion Group at Arts Garage. 250 NE 2nd Ave. 1 pm. Free. Email book
spanisriverbookclub@yahoo.com for Zoom link

October 23-31 - 10% Off on any purchase of new or used books. At the Boca Raton Public Library, 400 W Atlantic Ave. 2 pm. 450-3279, artsgarage.org

October 21-28 - 10% Off on any purchase of new or used books. At the Boca Raton Public Library, 400 W Atlantic Ave. 2 pm. 450-3279, artsgarage.org

Notes on events are correct as of 8/20. Please check with organizations for details.
Prestigious Beachfront Home
5000 OLD OCEAN BLVD | OCEAN RIDGE
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- Located Directly Across from Atlantic Ocean
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- Impact Windows
- Air Conditioned 2 Car Garage

Enchanting Waterfront Retreat
45 CURLEW ROAD | MANALAPAN
- 5 Bedroom, 3.1 Bathroom Pool Home
- Waterfront 25’ Dock
- Lot Faces Nature Preserve - Ultimate Privacy
- Renovated Dive-In Gourmet Kitchen
- Stainless Steel Appliances and Dual Wine Fridges
- First Floor Oversized Master Bedroom Suite
- Membership to the Exclusive La Coquille Club

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