OCTOBER

CASA COASTER

This publication of the Social & Welcoming Committee does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Directors nor managing agent of Casa Costa.

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What's News

Neighborhood

- ★ A "bar with really good food" won a five-way burger battle among nearby eateries. **A7**
- ★ Residents called a sculpture "satanic" at a city meeting. **A8**

Casa Costa

- ★ The board is reviewing proposals to repair the building's façade and paint it. **A1**
- ★ The dogs are set to celebrate Halloween early with a costume parade on the promenade. **A4**

INSIDE

MISTER B'S NEIGHBORHOOD
Brian is ready to serve Medicare alphabet soup and popcorn; mother and daughter threaten death by chocolate. **A6**

LETTERS
Real talk on navigating the building straight from a delivery guy. **A10**

September snafus and strides

Staffers called off garage pressure washing for a day after someone broke the plumbing with trash; engineers fixed the north tower elevators after nearly a month; city workers ripped out trees by the pond and along Boynton Beach Blvd.

DANILO CAJINA; J.T. HARRINGTON; STEPHANIE FINZ







Becoming serious policewomen

Graduation perks included a ride-along and fried chicken

By Roberta Mann

A few years ago, Elaine Hirsch and I decided to take the law into our own hands. We took a nine-week course called the Community Police Academy with Boynton Beach Department, which culminated with a cop ride-along in the mean streets.



Donuts not included

Each class was three hours' long on Wednesday nights, held at the police headquarters, which is a seven-minute drive away. Each week was a different topic, taught by the specialists that movies and shows are named after: Special Weapons and Tactics, Crime Scene Unit, K-9.

Please turn to page A4

Board readies for overdue paint job

Casa Costa's exterior walls haven't been painted since the property was first built well over a decade ago. Gustavo Alvarez, principal engineer at ABPlus, the firm hired by the board to manage exterior repairs and painting, says the job is quite involved.

"Paint isn't just a color. It's the first line of defense against weather elements," Mr. Alvarez said. "We've inspected the façade with drones and prior to painting, we need to repair stucco,

Please turn to page A4

OPINION

From Paris to palms

By Mohamed Kaada

Many people have been asking how these folks with funny accents wound up opening restaurants downstairs, so here's our story.

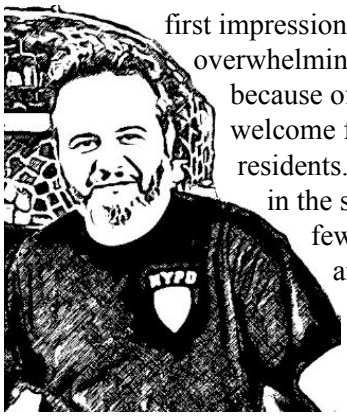
I'm a serial entrepreneur for all things food. Before coming to Florida, I operated in France where I opened a total of 24 restaurants. I still own franchises there, but a challenge in France is the 49 percent tax rate – it's particularly tough for a restaurant.

I moved to Lake Worth Beach in 2017 and opened a hand-tossed pizza restaurant called NYPD Pizza. During the pandemic, our sales plummeted 60 percent, and I watched other restaurants go out of business completely. Eager to keep my staff working even though many customers were nervous to dine in person, I came up with Simple Virtual Kitchen, a delivery-only model for which we could use our existing cooks and kitchen equipment to fry chicken wings. It didn't take long for this side of the business to surpass our pizza sales.

I sold the restaurant to focus on growing the virtual kitchen idea, eventually partnering with over 40 brick-and-mortar restaurants and expanding the menu to other delivery-friendly foods like fried rice, cold hoagies and of course pizza. Last year, our chicken wing sauce was so popular that Walmart and Amazon started carrying it.

Through the network of virtual kitchen customers, I met the group leasing the commercial spaces at Casa Costa. I didn't know much about Boynton Beach before this opportunity. Most surprising to me was the exceptional support we received from both Casa Costa residents and the Boynton city hall.

It's an incredible opportunity to build a business adjacent to a condominium with hundreds of residents and guests. My



first impressions were overwhelmingly positive because of the warm welcome from residents. It's tough in the summer with fewer people around, but I'm grateful for everyone's support.

My wife and I were working such long hours and our dog Alpha was feeling neglected. We moved into an apartment in the south tower so our jobs were (much) closer to home.

One of the most significant challenges we face is parking. We're collaborating with the city to improve signage and make it easier for people to find nearby parking. While our location might not be immediately visible from the road, we knew about this challenge from the start, and we are determined to overcome it.

In addition to Italian food, the French bakery and a Mediterranean bistro, we're developing an on-demand app called Hey! JAG. This idea came from the virtual kitchen business that relies on delivery apps. Popular apps like Uber Eats and Doordash are very expensive for restaurants, especially when we have customers right upstairs. We're building Hey! JAG as a low-cost alternative to benefit both restaurateurs and drivers. Eventually we want to add grocery delivery and ride sharing, and then expand across the country and overseas.

So far, I have no regrets. We've been open to feedback and constantly strive to improve. Casa Costa residents and other customers have been instrumental in this journey by suggesting ways to enhance our offerings. We're committed to continuous improvement, and we work hard to improve the surrounding area.

We know that we're not the first restaurants to give it a go here, but we have extensive experience in the restaurant industry. I know the importance of delivering top-quality products and exceptional customer service. What sets us apart is our view of Casa Costa residents as an extension of our family, providing us with incredible strength. Our team is determined to achieve what has never been accomplished before.

Mr. Kaada's favorite pizza is honey goat cheese, black olives and sour cream.

LETTER TO THE PUBLISHER

Delivery guy's review is in

We hear too many complaints and not enough compliments. Recently I had a visit from Ethan Allen Furniture. I know that making a delivery to a high rise like ours has many ways to go wrong: reserving the elevator, getting the certificate of insurance, delivery guy checking in and navigating around the building. Well, it worked beautifully.

According to the Ethan Allen guy:

1. Alex was warm and welcoming and knew exactly who the guy was, where he was going and directed him.

2. He walks into many high rises where there's nobody to help or direct. Our security is great. At many buildings there's either nobody at the desk or people just wave you in without asking who you are or where you're going.

3. He found driving to the circle, checking in, parking in the garage, getting upstairs, was all very easy. Alex had explained everything clearly.

On a personal note, it's good to have our two pools and hot tub back. Thank you for all of your efforts. It's good to live at Casa Costa.

Marna Atkin

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Are you drinking water all wrong?

PART ONE OF TWO



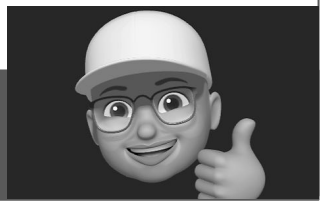
ADAPTED FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

It's all about salt. The human body is upwards of ¾ water. Most of it is absorbed by our cells; the rest lubricates muscles and tissues and generates saliva. The Mayo Clinic recommends eight to 12 cups of water daily, but that advice doesn't consider water you absorb by eating certain fruits and vegetables like watermelon and cucumbers, or lifestyle factors like physical activity.

The more we sweat, the more water – and salt – we lose. Salt helps maintain fluid balance through osmosis, which regulates the amount of water in the cells. Without sodium, cells could shrivel from dehydration.

Salt in our bodies is important because it contains electrolytes – minerals like sodium, potassium, and chloride – that carry an electrical charge, keeping hydration at a healthy level. Electrolyte-enhanced drinks are valuable because they replenish salt lost through sweat, but before you add salt to your water, keep in mind that most of us get enough through our diet. But if you're healthy and without heart problems, a sprinkling of salt in water won't harm you and may keep you hydrated. The type of salt doesn't matter.

I read the fitness news so you don't need to.
Join Bobby Hall's aquatics class Mon-Wed-Fri at 9am in the pool.



My police ride-along didn't disappoint

Continued from page A1

There were non-Hollywood sessions too, covering recruiting and traffic. In the end, our class of 20 or so graduated – complete with a dinner catered by Bud's Chicken & Seafood. I framed the certificate they gave me and hung it next to my real estate license.

The whole reason I went to class was to get a ride-along in a police car. Elaine and I arrived at the police station on a Sunday morning, eager for our assignments. Mine ended up very exciting.

Our first call was a dead body at One Boynton. This incident was my first indication that while I was allowed to ride shotgun, I was not actually deputized: the officer left me in the car for half an hour while he went upstairs. Our next call was to the Homing Inn, which I knew was an epicenter for drug busts. My officer confirmed this as we pulled up.

Before long, a second squad car joined us in the parking lot (not Elaine's) and my officer loaded a guy, handcuffed, in the back seat of our car, engine still running, and then he went back inside.

My guest in the back seat asked if I could crank up the air conditioner. Despite nine weeks of training, I froze.

I had to rely on my instincts. It was a bit balmy, so I turned up the A/C.

My ride-along lasted two hours. Elaine reported to me that her mid-Sunday police work also consisted of a lot of waiting alone in the front seat, but she was proud to serve. She was not proud that she'd left her cell phone at home. We only got to use the police siren once, responding to a fire alarm at a medical building on Woolbright Rd. At the scene, the officer made sure everyone in the burning building was safely out.

I waited in the car. CC

Class 44 of the Community Police Academy begins accepting applications in late October for next year's class, which runs on Wednesday evenings from Jan. 11 to March 6, 2024. Taught by police officers, it aims to educate participants about police practices and the legal system in order to enhance community support of officers. The class is free and participants must be 18 or older, but not necessarily Boynton Beach residents. Apply by emailing Officer Denise Schrecengost at schrecengostd@bbfl.us.

Halloween dog parade coming early



MARNIA ATKIN





Judges compare notes during last year's competition with dozens of dogs. This year's parade and costume contest is being held on the promenade in front of Café Prélude on Sun., Oct. 8 at 9 a.m., with freshly baked treats for all.

Restoration, paint job coming

Continued from page A1

concrete and waterproofing."

Mr. Alvarez's firm solicited bids from six contractors, which he and the board narrowed based on price and track record. At a Sept. 28 meeting with the finance committee, Jake Harrington, board president, laid out options to pay for the work. "The association has saved money, knowing that this work was coming," Mr. Harrington said. "But the job is now more expensive and involved than the experts predicted."

The board detailed the planned capital projects and the funding gap, recommending special assessments and noting that new laws are forcing the issue. "Florida lawmakers are taking budgets out of our hands and giving them to engineers to ensure that we maintain safe buildings," he said.

At a Sept. 6 meeting, the board met separately with two finalist contractors – Davie, Fla.-based Paradigm Construction Group and Valcourt Building Services from Bradenton, Fla. – to dig into the scope of work and similar projects the firms had tackled. Three years ago, the board hired Restore Construction Group to waterproof the fifth-floor pool deck and repair concrete beams in the parking garage. Since that project dragged on and cost more than planned, the board says it seeks to avoid a similar experience and pressed contractors on staffing levels, timelines and workplace safety.

At the Sept. 28 meeting, Art Rome, association treasurer, calculated a budget increase of 11.4 percent and said several big ticket items in addition to the façade – new elevators, fire sensor replacements, hallway paint and carpet – were stressing our reserves, creating a shortfall averaging $15,000 per unit. Mr. Harrington said that the association could vote to take out a loan so owners could select to pay their shares over time.

Mr. Alvarez of ABPlus told the *Casa Coaster* that after the repairs, estimated to last 16 months, much of the heavy lifting is done. "Just paint the building every seven years," he said. "As Ben Franklin said, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." CC

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What about Brian? Our new Medicare specialist



Mister B's Neighborhood

Saving for retirement was always a priority for me. I followed the advice of my financial advisor and my wife and I took the necessary steps to secure our future. I was lucky enough to retire early, so I didn't pay much attention to Social Security or Medicare until recently. Only a few years away, I am beginning to think about when is the best time to take Social Security and more importantly, what do I need to do to secure medical coverage once I turn 65 and my health insurance from my last employer ends.

I was pleasantly surprised when I met one of Casa Costa's newer residents, Brian Goldman. He is a financial advisor and a retirement specialist. Brian is also hosting a seminar with popcorn and refreshments in the club room before we show *What About Bob?* on Oct. 19 at 5:30 p.m.

So, what about Brian? He lives in Pittsburgh with his wife Lauren and his two children, Miles, 8, and Zev, 6. When the boys are not in school in Pittsburgh, Brian calls Casa Costa home. His parents and in-laws are all lawyers of various sorts. His mom works for the Department of Health and Human Services, but Brian took a while before specializing in healthcare.

His journey since college is fascinating. At University of Pittsburgh, he became interested in media and public relations. He describes himself as a forgettable athlete but a gym rat and a huge sports fan. He announced the school's football games and was a sports writer for the student newspaper. So, it seemed like a natural fit that he pursued a career covering and promoting sports.

In 2006, he got involved with the Orange Bowl as a media specialist during Bowl Week. This is a week when the staff balloons from two dozen to hundreds, mostly in media relations: hosting reporters, scheduling interviews with players and coaches, holding the microphone on the sidelines. The game itself was an instant classic that went to three overtimes and was the final meeting between the two winningest coaches in history, Joe Paterno of Penn State and Florida State's Bobby Bowden.

He still works with the Orange Bowl during Bowl Week. Now it's a family affair as he brings his children to help pass out stat sheets. They look forward to being part of the Orange Bowl Family every January.



Brian says "the hardest job I've ever had" is one I didn't know existed. It's called Internal Public Address Announcer in the booth at football games. The job is sitting in front of three guys with binoculars yelling at him, so that he feeds exact play-by-play statistics into the earpieces of the television and radio announcers covering the game. When a commentator calls a 5-yard gain, he's just guessing, and it's up to Brian to wait for the referee to place the ball on the field and measure the exact yardage. It's Brian's number that makes it into the stat sheets, and sometimes you can hear the announcer clarify moments later.

Brian still does this work every Saturday during the season for the Pittsburgh Panthers, and more recently on Sundays for the Steelers. When he hesitated to take the NFL job, his wife said: "You can't say no to the Steelers."

Brian's relationship with South Florida began with the Florida Panthers Hockey Club, where he ran the press box and created online videos. The work was rewarding, the Florida winters were perfect, but the salary made it difficult to raise a family.

When a fraternity brother of his told him, "If you can sell ice hockey in Florida, you can sell insurance," Brian jumped in, first as a recruiter for Prudential, and eventually to owning his own financial group called Gold Standard. Of course his logo is black and gold (like the Steelers' helmets) and has a bridge like Pittsburgh is famous for.

Listening to Brian's tales of Orange Bowls was very interesting to hear, but I really wanted to know about Medicare and my retirement. I thought I knew what I was going to do when I become eligible, but listening to him changed my plans.

He talked about the alphabet soup of Medicare and Advantage plans, and how as we get older, with the insane price tags of hospitals and other medical expenses, "the most important asset you have is health insurance." He said that while most people have a doctor and a money advisor, "no one has a Medicare guy."

Brian calls out two distinctions that give him an advantage, beyond his obvious charm. One is his age. At 40, he'll "be here for the rest of your life." Another is that he has gone through the process of getting licensed in all the states where snowbirds live part-time. "Anyone who's a snowbird should get a supplement," referred to as Plan G.

He works with over 200 insurance companies which each pay him an equal commission, making his expertise free for us. This was a lot of information in a short period of time, but my new plan is to call Brian when it's time to plan.

As we were talking in Café Prélude,

Please turn to page A7

Butcher wins summer burger battle

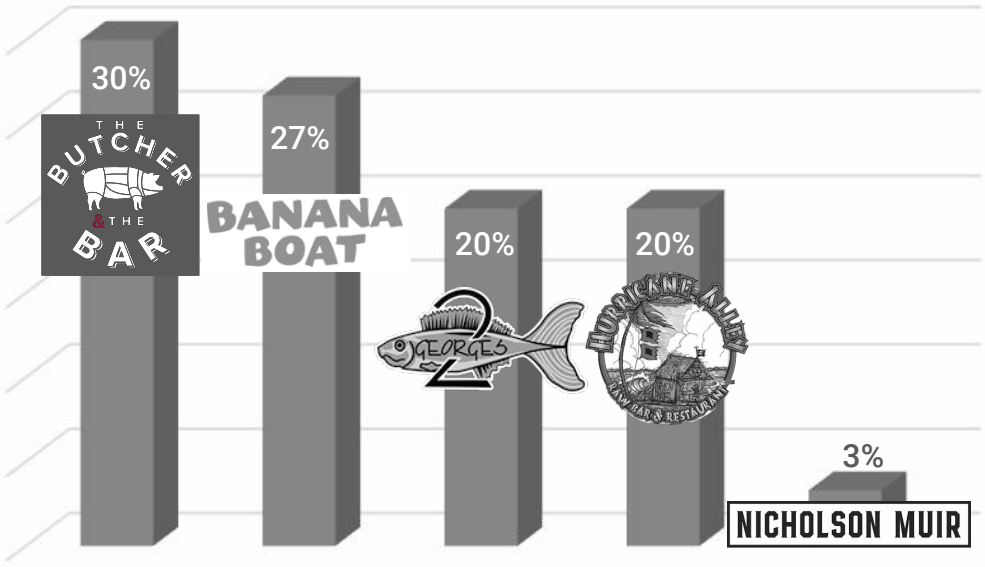
A five-ounce cheeseburger with griddled onions, dill pickles and special sauce earned top honors among *Casa Coaster* readers. The Butcher & The Bar, which opened its doors at 500 Ocean three years ago, sells the burger for $17.

The relative newcomer beat out classic Boynton Beach restaurants including nearby Hurricane Alley, as well as a rival butchershop across the street: Nicholson Muir, which may have suffered in the polls because they were closed for renovations until Sept. 6.

"We're not a restaurant. We're a bar with really good food."

The owners of The Butcher & The Bar say they only use Florida products in a 100 percent scratch kitchen.

"We dry age, cure and smoke our meats and make everything in-house including our sausages, mayo, ketchup and pickled goods," said Eric Anderson, one of the owners. He continued: "We're not a restaurant. We're a bar with really good food." He said his goal with drinks is to offer premium cocktails but not to be pretentious about it. The menu changes daily but often includes burgers.



What about Brian?

Continued from page A6

Roberta Mann walked in. Of course, Roberta knew Brian since recognizing his Pitt shirt at the pool last year. He has since helped her and her daughter-in-law – along with several other residents here. As he told me, programs change constantly, so when it comes to your plan, "like it or not, always review it."

The window to make changes each year is Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, so it will be great to hear his expertise on movie night. As a member of the Casa Costa community, he is a great resource as we navigate the system.

Roberta told me: "I have been dealing with Medicare and the supplements for many years and I didn't know what I was doing. Brian was patient with my husband and me, saved us some money, and now we have the right plan for us."

* * *

If you are looking for a place to satisfy your sweet tooth or find the perfect gift, consider a visit to Scheurer's Chocolate a few steps away in Ocean Plaza. Scheurer's is a woman-owned, family-run business that has made hand-dipped treats for over 40 years. They use the highest quality ingredients and expertise to offer unique and delicious products.

Joe Scheurer is from a family of German chocolate makers going back generations. He and his wife Leslie made chocolates in their kitchen for farmers markets before opening the store in 1980. The current owner, Laura Hinzman, runs the shop with her mother, Marilyn Palaich, selling hand-dipped chocolate truffles, creams, fruits, turtles, crunchies, chewies, candied chocolate seashells and mocha beans. I asked mom where they get their chocolate. She said: "If I told you, I would have to kill you."



Scheurer's Chocolates has something for everyone with the flavor and quality of passed-down recipes. To sweeten the deal, mention you live at Casa Costa for a five percent discount. *CC*

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Local events

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DOG COSTUME CONTEST
Sun., Oct. 8 | 9 a.m.
Casa Costa Promenade
Prizes for some, treats for all

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MOVIE NIGHT IV
Thurs., Oct. 19
Seminar | 5:30 p.m.
What About Bob? | 7 p.m.
Pool deck | Free

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TRIVIA NIGHT
Thurs., Oct. 26 | 6 p.m.
QURE Barbershop | Free

PIRATE FEST
Sat.-Sun., Oct 28-29 | 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Ocean Ave. | Free
Stunt shows, cannons, live mermaids

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THANKSGIVING KICKOFF
Sun., Nov. 19 | 6 p.m.
Banquet hall | $20 (early bird)

'Hideous' sculpture debated

After the Boynton Beach arts advisory board voted 3-2 to install a 12-ft. elf sculpture in front of local PBS station offices, some residents complained the artwork is "demonic" at a city commissioner meeting.

"Did we throw the beach and the water away to become Lucifer's playground?" Jackie Dobbins asked. "There's so much satanic stuff in the city it makes my stomach crawl."

The award-winning artist behind the sculpture, Patti Warashina, 83, lives in Seattle and has parodied Donald Trump in her work, irking opponents of her art and politics.

At an Aug. 15 meeting, city commissioners decided they could override advisors on controversial art, suggesting that they might stick to coastal themes and local artists. Real estate developers pay a fee from construction budgets to pay for the Art in Public Places program. CC



THE COASTAL STAR

HARDLY "HARMONY": The former arts commission chairwoman said city officials "allowed themselves to be swayed by squeaky wheels and small-mindedness."