

# BOCA BEACON

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PILES AND PILES TO GO BEFORE WE SLEEP ...

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## Inside:

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## Read this before voting in our general election

BY SHEILA EVANS

Hurricane Ian has not been able to stop our democratic processes, but it has blown them around somewhat. Since a number of polling places have been damaged or destroyed, registered voters in Lee and Charlotte counties, as well as a few other places affected by the storm, have some new and temporary guidelines and voting locations.

As we have reported before, our polling place this year will be the Crowninshield Community House. It is the building facing the parking lot at the end of Banyan Street (east side). Providing they are registered Lee County electors, all Boca Grande residents and those working on the Island, will be able to vote at that location that day.

Early voting is underway and vote-by-mail ballots have appeared in many people's mailboxes. Unfortunately, many people in Lee and Charlotte counties are not where their mail boxes once were. They have been forced to relocate because of the hurricane. To allow people to vote under these unusual circumstances, the Governor has issued an Emergency Executive Order allowing supervisors of election in affected counties to take special steps to facilitate voting.

In Lee County this means there are 12 early voting sites that will replace

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## Company is coming on Saturday: Welcome to our disaster area!

BY MARCY SHORTUSE

We've got power and internet outages, a cell phone tower lodged in our bakery, piles of debris clogging our side streets and more piles along the main road, beach accesses that are closed and a plethora of workers and trucks roaming all over the island ... and the bridge is set to open to the public on Saturday. Welcome to paradise!

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## Feeling frustrated and confused about your insurance? Knowing the basics before hiring contractors is vital

BY MARCY SHORTUSE

There are so many questions that deserve solid answers when it comes to insurance claims regarding Hurricane Ian. If you have never had to file a claim before, it can be a daunting process, and while some are paid out smooth as butter, most are not. There are many glitches that can occur, so remembering a few easy steps can help a lot.

While we are already weeks out from when Hurricane Ian hit, contacting your insurance agent as soon as possible is imperative. Make sure

they have your best contact number, and that you brush up on all of the coverage you have. Keep records of every time you speak with someone regarding your claim, date and time, whether it's your adjuster, your agent or a contractor. If you need immediate temporary lodging, make that your priority. Take photographs, video and document every bit of personal property that was damaged. Try to include the date of purchase, any receipts you have and replacement value. Do not make any repairs prior to an insurance inspection and an agreement

from your insurance agent or adjuster that they will be covered (unless, of course, you don't mind paying them out of pocket). Finally, always do your best to remediate any further damage to your home by sealing broken windows, tarping your roof and/or contacting a mold specialist to dry out your home. These are things that can be done prior to an initial conversation with your insurance people if you cannot reach them.

One of the biggest questions is about private adjusters. These are

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## South Beach is coming back! If all goes well it could be soon, too

BY MARCY SHORTUSE

Art DeStefano and Marco Meola, owners of South Beach Bar & Grille, have announced they will be coming back bigger and better than ever, maybe even in the next couple of months.

Of course, they won't be at their original location on Gulf Boulevard, which quite literally exploded and burned to the ground during Hurricane Ian. Their goal is to rebuild there, but for now they are trying to work a deal with a downtown property owner to use a building that is just about ready to go.

"We are close to making a deal to opening another restaurant on the island," DeStefano said. "We just wanted everyone to know we are alive, we are well, we are not a thing of the past ... we are not dead."

Meola and DeStefano sat together on a call with the Beacon to discuss the future of the popular restaurant. They said their plan is to have Chef Myriam Carvalho and Chef Osmar Orozimbo come back to serve their phenomenal food and to have many of the popular servers and staff back at the new location as well.

At right, the restaurant in ruins after the natural gas explosion at South Beach Bar & Grille during Hurricane Ian. Photo by Dusty Hopkins



DeStefano and Meola said they would keep us in the loop as far as their progress at the new location and hoped it would be sooner than later that they would open.

They didn't seem too fazed by the series of events that took place at the restaurant during the hurricane, taking it in stride that the nature of a beautiful Gulfside location comes with its ups and downs.

"You're a target when you're located on the beach in Southwest Florida," DeStefano said. "We always realized that. During this whole process we have realized once again that we all are a benefit for each other on this island. We won't let this beat us."

It's nice to get a piece of good news amidst the current state of the island and we will keep you up to date with any news we hear about the new location for South Beach.

