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SERIOUSLY

This issue of IH is a little different. It takes on serious topics like the economy, the war with Iran, and other issues that affect all of us. I admire folks who appreciate honest discussion even when they don't agree with every point. That kind of thoughtful exchange feels harder to find these days.

It is much easier to repeat what we hear on TV than to slow down, pay attention, and think things through for ourselves. But more people are starting to do just that. The so called vocal minority is growing, asking questions, and speaking up. With any luck, they will be heard.

SPEAKING OF...

Benjamin Franklin once said, "We are all born ignorant, but one must work hard to remain stupid." For those of you who remember articles about my neighbor Boodro, the Ragin' Cajun, know he had a lot to say about stupid people. To mark the one year anniversary of his passing on April 15, 2025, I'm dedicating this issue's article on stupidity to him. He would have loved it.

He also would have been absolutely horrified by how much that population has grown since he left us. Or maybe not. Maybe he's up there somewhere, shaking his head, laughing, and thanking God he no longer has to try to avoid them in the mailroom.

And if there is a God, I'm convinced there's a third place in the afterlife. Not heaven. Not hell. Just a special holding area for stupid people - far, far away from Boodro. Oh crap, maybe it is earth.

KIDS ARE COOL

I can hang around with children and never get bored. The best ages are 8-12, that great age between naivete and cynicism. And I am in awe when I meet a mom who does a great job. I have been going to the same nail technician since her oldest daughter was

3 and she was pregnant with her second daughter. She later had a son. Their ages now are 16, 12 and 8. She is an amazing mom and just a wonderful human being.

After all these years, she has become like a second daughter to me. And yes, I love my "son-in-law" also. The three kids have such different personalities. The oldest is smart, practical and an achiever. The middle child is the creative, emotional, non-conformist. And the youngest is all boy. She told me that one day they all went to the beach to watch the sunrise and the middle child suggested they put their hands up and form the word "LOVE". See the picture on page 7.

SPEAKING OF COOL

I met **Trudy Reid** in Hillcrest 23 the other day. Turns out she is a singer and has been living in Hillcrest for 5 years. She has been singing professionally all her adult life. Originally from New York, she performs various genres of music, including Jazz, Pop, R&B and a little bit Country! She has a couple of singing events coming up in the next few weeks. **See page 2** for details.

I LOVE TO BE AROUND BRILLIANT PEOPLE, I WISH I WUZ ONE

One of my smarter friends introduced me to **The New Yorker** magazine. I will admit, some articles feel like mini novels, and I rarely get through more than a few per issue unless the topic really hooks me. But when it does, it is worth the effort. The range is impressive, from current events to books and movies, sharp cartoons, great crosswords, and memorable profiles like their piece on **Orson Welles**.

I feel the same pull when I read **Mo Melotti** or **Steve Schneider**. Mo is the son of **Herman Melotti**, former president of **Hillcrest 27** and the HLC. Herman was one of the best building presidents Hillcrest ever

had. Mo now lives in the Middle East and brings a rare, thoughtful perspective. His article in this issue is truly New Yorker worthy.

What I love most about **Steve Schneider** is that his writing can comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. We plan to feature more of his work, especially since he has a knack for reminding elected officials who they are supposed to be serving.

VOTE FOR YOUR BEST INTERESTS, NOT THE CANDIDATE'S

There was a time when Hollywood's local leadership genuinely made me proud. I believed we had it right. Lately, that confidence has been shaken. The tone has shifted from public service to something that feels far more self-serving, and I sincerely hope that changes.

That said, I'm encouraged by new voices stepping forward. **Cat Uden** is running for City Commissioner, District 1, as **Caryl Shuham** seeks a seat on the Broward County Commission, currently held by **Beam Furr**, very big shoes to fill, but I believe Caryl is a fit for them.

I've never understood why a sitting mayor wouldn't want someone like Cat as part of an advisory team. She brings experience, perspective, and credibility, exactly what good governance requires. I hope District 1 has reason to celebrate, and that other districts also get the chance to choose representatives who think independently rather than simply go along with the crowd. It's unsettling when too many commissioners move in lockstep. **I hope those I once admired for being thoughtful contrarians and trusted friends haven't joined the posse.**

And yes, **Peter Bober**, one of my all-time favorite mayors of Hollywood, is considering a return to City Hall. I told him it would be wise to take a hard, thorough look at how things currently operate at City Hall. Transparency matters.

In my view, it should be standard practice for city officials and senior staff to disclose their net worth when they take office and at regular intervals afterward. Not because wrongdoing is assumed, but because sunlight builds trust. I never imagined this would even be a conversation in Hollywood. But when development money is in play, safeguards are essential.



HISTORY'S LONG SHADOW OVER THE U.S./IRAN/ISRAEL CRISIS – *Mo Melotti*

The war now unfolding in the Middle East did not begin with a missile launch or a drone strike. It is the product of decades of decisions—American, Iranian, Israeli, and Arab—that built the architecture of confrontation we are living with today.

In August 1976, I arrived in Rasht, Iran, to work on a contract that was part of a U.S. government foreign military sale to the Imperial Iranian Navy. I changed contracts and moved to Esfahan, Iran, where I stayed through the revolution and helped evacuate Americans from Esfahan to Tehran in early 1979. What I witnessed then still shapes how I see the crisis now.

Washington's entanglement with Iran began in 1953, when the CIA helped overthrow Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and reinstall the Shah. His secret police, SAVAK, trained with American and Israeli help, became synonymous with torture and repression. When the Islamic Republic replaced the monarchy in 1979, it condemned SAVAK but quietly built its own successor, SAVAMA, inheriting much of the same infrastructure and many of the same methods. The machinery of coercion did not disappear; it simply changed hands.

The United States made similar bargains elsewhere. In the 1980s, it armed Afghan mujahideen against the Soviets, creating the environment in which Osama bin Laden built the networks that later turned against America. At the same time, Washington tilted toward Saddam Hussein during the Iran–Iraq War, providing intelligence and diplomatic cover even as Iraq used chemical weapons. These choices were driven by Cold War logic, but they left deep scars—especially in Tehran, where the memory of fighting alone against a U.S.-backed Iraq still shapes strategic thinking.

Israel's trajectory has its own long arc. For more than 25 years, Benjamin Netanyahu has argued that Iran is Israel's existential threat. He lobbied U.S. presidents to take a harder line, opposed the 2015 nuclear deal, and pushed for maximum pressure. Whether one agrees with him or not, his persistence helped lock Washington and Jerusalem into a shared posture of confrontation.

None of this excuses the Islamic Republic's behavior. For 45 years, Iran's rulers have brutalized their own citizens—executing dissidents, crushing protests, and policing daily life through a vast security apparatus. Abroad, Iran has built a network of proxies (Hezbollah, Iraqi militias, Hamas, the Houthis) that have attacked U.S. and Israeli targets and destabilized the region. Tehran calls this "forward defense." Its neighbors call it terrorism, and it is. So, I laugh out loud when Iran today characterizes itself as a victim of Israeli and American aggression. Iran is not without its own sins and blood on its hands in the region, even if indirectly. Its fingerprints are in Lebanon, Gaza, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

Iran's willingness to absorb punishment is not accidental. It was forged in the Iran–Iraq War, a conflict that killed hundreds of thousands of Iranians and convinced the regime that survival requires endurance, not compromise. That mindset still guides Tehran today. It is why Iran can lose a Supreme Leader, generals, nuclear scientists, and oil revenue yet continue to escalate through proxies and missiles.

The United States and Israel, for their part, are fighting a technologically sophisticated but strategically exhausting war. They intercept cheap Iranian drones with expensive missiles. They strike Iranian assets across the region but cannot eliminate Iran's dispersed, lowcost production lines. This is the essence of asymmetric warfare, and Iran has mastered it.

Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese military strategist, general, and philosopher, would recognize the pattern. "Attack the enemy's strategy," he wrote, not just his forces. Iran's strategy is to stretch its adversaries across multiple fronts, raise the cost of every response, and wait for political fatigue to set in. Israel and the United States have superior firepower, but firepower alone cannot defeat a strategy built on patience, proxies, and the willingness to suffer.

The danger now is that each side believes time is on its side. Iran thinks the U.S. is tired of Middle Eastern wars. Israel believes it

cannot afford restraint. Washington wants to deter Iran without being dragged into a regional conflict. All three may be wrong. But two things are sure: Israel cannot wage such a war alone and survive, and the U.S. probably does not have the political will to become embroiled in yet another Middle Eastern regional conflict it has twice proved it does not know how to win.

What is certain is that this crisis did not emerge from a vacuum. It is the culmination of choices, some made in fear, some in arrogance, some in the name of stability, that have produced anything but desired outcomes. Understanding that history is not merely an academic exercise. It is the first step toward breaking a cycle that has lasted far too long.



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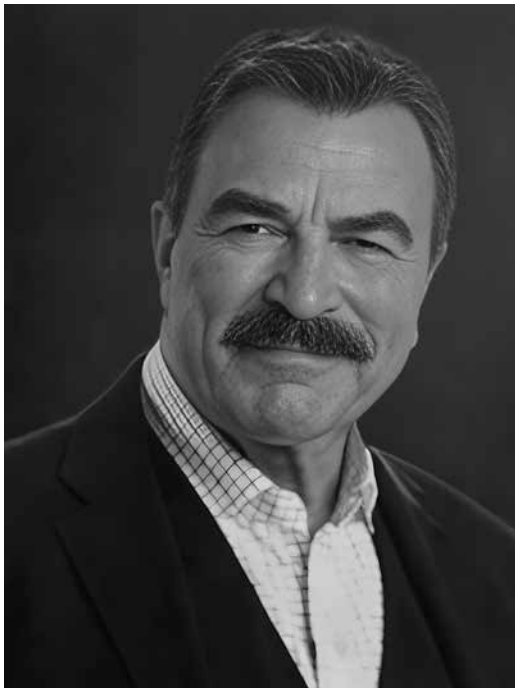
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WHY THE U.S. DOLLAR'S GLOBAL DOMINANCE IS BUILT TO LAST

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Why the U.S. Dollar's Global Dominance Is Built to Last

This July, fireworks will once again light up the sky across the country, marking a milestone moment as America celebrates its 250th birthday. But there's another American milestone worth noting; one that speaks to the extraordinary growth since our nation's humble beginnings in 1776: the U.S. dollar's rise to the center of the global financial system. What began as 13 colonies and roughly 2.5 million people has grown into a nation of more than 340 million and the world's largest economy, with the U.S. dollar emerging as the dominant global reserve currency.

As this milestone approaches, the U.S. dollar's central role in the global financial system is drawing renewed attention and scrutiny. Given the greenback's outsized influence on global finance, questions about its future can understandably create uncertainty for investors. However, history suggests that moments of scrutiny are not new and that the dollar's rise has been shaped by enduring structural strengths rather than short-term trends.

What's Fueling Dollar Skepticism

Before outlining the factors that support the U.S. dollar, it's important to acknowledge the concerns driving skepticism. The dollar's safe-haven status depends on credibility. If confidence in the Federal Reserve's ability to control inflation or in the federal government's capacity to service its debt were to weaken, trust in dollar-denominated assets could deteriorate, potentially leading to a shift in global central bank reserves. A sustained decline in foreign demand for U.S. Treasuries would further erode the dollar's liquidity advantage and could disrupt capital markets. At the same time, several longer-term trends have added to uncertainty around the dollar's future.

The rise of crypto assets and strong gains in gold prices this decade have amplified speculation about long-term alternatives to the greenback. Periods of dollar weakness against major currencies in recent years have reinforced concerns, raising questions about the dollar's standing in global markets.

Geopolitics has also emerged as a growing headwind. While globalization has been the dominant trend in the post-Cold War era, the world is becoming more fragmented. Some countries, such as China and Russia, are reducing exposure to U.S. dollar-denominated assets, a theme that has been exacerbated by trade tensions and the expanded use of sanctions against non-aligned countries. These factors have contributed to slow and incremental "de-dollarization," even as the dollar remains the dominant reserve and transactional currency globally.

Finally, the U.S. fiscal trajectory remains a concern for dollar skeptics. Rising debt levels and persistently high deficit spending continue to raise concerns about long-term fiscal sustainability.

The dollar is not immune to these challenges, and fear-driven headlines can cast a shadow over reality, particularly those predicting a "collapse" of the dollar. This isn't the first time. Dollar skepticism was prevalent during previous periods of dollar weakness, including the stagflationary 1970s, the mid-1980s, and the early 2000s, leading into the Great Financial Crisis.

Why King Dollar's Reign Endures

Unmatched Scale and Liquidity: The U.S. dollar is supported by the largest and most liquid financial system in the world. With roughly \$30 trillion in Treasuries outstanding, the U.S. Treasury market is the largest securities market on Earth¹.

Demand also remains strong. Net foreign purchases of U.S. Treasuries exceeded \$550 billion in 2025, while net foreign purchases of all long-term U.S. securities climbed above \$1.2 trillion.² Those purchases require foreign buyers to acquire dollars, reinforcing global demand. This is why the dollar shines when crises hit: it can absorb global pressure when stress rises. The U.S. Treasury market has the size, liquidity, and safety to meet demand from central banks globally.

Private Sector Strength: The U.S. is home to many of the largest and most innovative companies on the planet, fueling massive capital flows into U.S. equity markets, which represent nearly two-thirds of global market capitalization according to MSCI World Index—far more than any other country.

The U.S. is also the world's largest economy, accounting for roughly a quarter of global GDP³, a staggering figure considering the U.S. has only 4% of the world's population. China's economy is the second largest, but the gap remains wide, particularly when adjusted for population.

U.S. households hold more than \$200 trillion in total assets and roughly \$180 trillion in net wealth after subtracting debt,⁴ while corporate profits total more than \$4 trillion annually,⁵ providing a deep and resilient tax base. Private sector strength supports the government's ability to service its debt and reinforces confidence in the dollar's long-term sustainability.

The Dollar's Network Effect: The dollar also acts as the plumbing system for global trade and finance. The global commodities market is predominantly priced and settled in U.S. dollars, and the U.S. is the world's largest producer of oil and natural gas. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the dollar remains the dominant trade invoicing currency globally,⁶ and it is involved in roughly 90% of global foreign-exchange transactions.⁷

Dollar Dominates Central Bank Reserves: The U.S. dollar is the dominant reserve currency on central bank balance sheets, accounting for 57% of global reserves, far ahead of all other currencies.⁸

While the dollar's share of global reserves has gradually declined, most of the shift reflects central banks diversifying into smaller emerging-market currencies. Even with further diversification, the dollar would likely remain the dominant currency given the magnitude of its current share relative to the rest of the world.

Key Alternatives Have Major Flaws: The euro and yuan are most often cited as challengers to the dollar. However, the euro remains fragmented across multiple countries and lacks unified fiscal authority and a deep supply of safe bonds. China's capital controls, the yuan's limited convertibility, and weak legal protections prevent the yuan from functioning as a credible reserve currency.

Continued on Pg. 5

Continued from Pg. 4

Most European nations, Japan, and China face more severe demographic and fiscal challenges than the U.S., alongside weaker long-term growth prospects. Demand for U.S. Treasuries remains strong despite ongoing fiscal concerns.

Why Gold and Crypto Aren't Viable Replacements: Central banks continue to value the structural advantages backing the dollar, including institutional transparency, a strong legal framework, and highly liquid capital markets and banking systems. Alternatives like crypto lack the stability, liquidity, and market depth required to challenge the dollar. Crypto assets are highly volatile, while central banks prioritize stable prices. Notably, no major central bank currently holds crypto.

Gold has seen increased central bank demand as a hedge against geopolitical uncertainty and sanctions exposure. However, the metal cannot function as a reserve currency because it lacks the transactional infrastructure, liquidity, and integration into global payment systems, all of which highlight the key strengths of the U.S. dollar.

The Dollars and "Sense" of It All

Currency fluctuations can have an outsized influence on the global economy, affecting everything from foreign trade and investment returns to the cost of global travel. The U.S. Dollar Index has experienced a 12% drawdown since the start of 2025, but currencies follow normal cyclical patterns, much like the economy and stock market.

While the dollar has shown cyclical weakness in recent years, its structural advantages remain intact. The U.S. Dollar Index—which measures the dollar against a weighted basket of major currencies including the euro, yen, pound and Canadian dollar—has fluctuated in a broad range for decades. Even after the recent pullback, the dollar sits comfortably above its long-term average.

Periods of dollar weakness have often coincided with international equity outperformance, underscoring the importance of global diversification. When foreign currencies strengthen, U.S. investors can see improved dollar-denominated returns on international holdings—and this cycle has been no different. International indices have outperformed U.S. stocks since the beginning of 2025 during the latest stretch of dollar weakness.

Dollar weakness isn't necessarily a bad thing. In addition to supporting international equity returns, a softer dollar can benefit U.S. manufacturers and exporters. More than 40% of revenues from companies in the S&P 500 are generated overseas, and U.S. firms may gain a relative advantage over products priced in more expensive foreign currencies, providing a potential tailwind for corporate earnings growth. Conversely, international travel becomes more expensive for Americans when the dollar weakens, while travel to the U.S. becomes more affordable for foreign tourists—helping boost the U.S. economy.

Exchange rates naturally fluctuate over time based on differences in interest rates, economic strength, and market sentiment across countries. The dollar has recently stabilized as investors seek safety following the onset of the Iran conflict, but past cycles suggest that periods of weakness can persist. For long-term investors, this reinforces the importance of diversification and patience across market cycles.

Standing Strong

The U.S. continues to offer the world's largest and most liquid capital markets, a robust banking system, strong institutions, and a stable regulatory environment. While the global system may gradually evolve toward a more multi-currency framework, the dollar would likely remain the anchor of global finance. Although the dollar has weakened compared to other major currencies in recent years, short-term fluctuations in exchange rates are not the same as the dollar losing its reserve status.

If you are feeling the pressure from currency and market volatility, TreeceFi is here to act as your relief valve to help navigate uncertainty and keep your financial plan on a steady path. Connect with us at info@davidtreece.com.

Reprinted from Cetera® Investment Management LLC commentary, King Dollar Still Reigns: Why the U.S. Dollar's Global Dominance Is Built to Last

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Today's Poker Game. I'll Take Iran and Raise You Cuba. Historically Speaking, What Do We Win? – by Mo Melotti (forward by Steve Schneider)

While waging war against Iran, President Donald J. Trump announced he can “take” Cuba. And maybe he can. The United States certainly spends billions of dollars a year on military and intelligence might. But since the end of World War 2, what has that gotten us? A buddy who has lived in Iran before, during and after the 1979 revolution shares some insights. He also worked for years before his retirement as a contractor on two U.S. military defense-related contracts in Saudi Arabia.

With reference to my earlier article (**“Iran Attacks Gulf Island Nation of Bahrain; Water Desalination Plant, Oil Refinery, U.S. Fifth Fleet Base Struck; Bahrain Woman Killed”, March 11**), it was a personal account within the context of Sun Tzu's Art of War principle that requires one to know oneself and to know his adversary. By extension, this article focuses on the U.S. and its inability to wage wars and win post-World War 2.

Here is a comparative overview of major U.S. post-1945 wars, by War/conflict, Stated U.S. objective (simplified), Military outcome, and Political/strategic result.

Korean War:

Defend South Korea; later “rollback” North Korean/Chinese communism
Stalemate; armistice, no peace treaty
Divided peninsula; limited war, ambiguous “victory”

Vietnam War:

Prevent communist takeover of South Vietnam
U.S. withdrawal; North Vietnamese victory
Unified communist Vietnam; major U.S. strategic setback

Iraq War (2003–) Remove Saddam; eliminate WMD;
democratize Iraq; Rapid regime change; long insurgency
Civil war; regional instability; empowered Iran

Afghanistan (2001–2021)

Destroy alQaeda; remove Taliban; build stable state
Taliban ousted, then returns to power; U.S. exit; Taliban rule restored

Iran (current)

Contain revolutionary Iran; maintain Gulf order
No direct war; proxy and shadow conflicts
Durable Iranian influence via proxies and networks

Sun Tzu's Principle as a Lens

Sun Tzu's core maxim: “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”

It is not about battlefield tactics alone. It is about:

- Clarity of self — knowledge: capabilities, limits, political will, and societal tolerance for cost.
- Clarity of enemy — knowledge: their identity, motivations, social fabric, and time horizon.
- Alignment of means and ends: choosing wars whose political objectives are achievable with available means and within domestic constraints.

Viewed through this lens, U.S. wars since 1950 show a recurring pattern: impressive military capacity paired with incomplete understanding of adversaries, local societies, and America's own political limits.

Korea: the first limited war

The Korean War (1950–1953) began as a UNbacked defense of South Korea but evolved into an attempt to roll back communism north of the 38th parallel. Chinese intervention turned a seeming victory into a grinding stalemate, ending in an armistice rather than a decisive peace.

- Know yourself (partial): The U.S. understood its conventional superiority but underestimated domestic and allied tolerance for escalation (e.g., MacArthur's push toward China and nuclear hints).

- Know your enemy (weak): Washington misread both Chinese red lines and North Korean resilience, assuming limited intervention risks.
- Result: A limited, inconclusive war that set the template for later conflicts: military success at the tactical level, strategic ambiguity at the political level.

Korea showed that a superpower could be checked by a poorer, determined adversary backed by another major power, an early warning about the limits of U.S. force in politically complex theaters.

Vietnam: misreading nationalism and endurance

In Vietnam, the U.S. framed the conflict as a front in the global struggle against communism, seeking to preserve a noncommunist South Vietnam. The war ended with U.S. withdrawal (1973) and the fall of Saigon (1975).

- Misreading the enemy: U.S. strategy often treated Hanoi as a Soviet or Chinese proxy rather than a nationalist movement with deep local legitimacy and a high tolerance for casualties.
- Misreading self: Leaders overestimated U.S. domestic willingness to sustain a long, inconclusive war and underestimated the political impact of casualties and media coverage.
- Means–ends gap: Massive firepower and body counts could not translate into a stable, legitimate South Vietnamese state.
- In Sun Tzu's terms, the U.S. knew its own material strength but not its political limits, and it knew the enemy's order of battle better than its social and ideological foundations.

Iran's revolution and the Iran–Iraq War: a strategic blind spot

The 1979 Islamic Revolution

The 1979 Iranian Revolution toppled the U.S.-backed Shah and replaced a key regional ally with an Islamic Republic explicitly opposed to American influence.

- Intelligence and diplomatic failures: Declassified analyses show that U.S. policymakers underestimated the depth of opposition to the Shah and the mobilizing power of religious leadership.
- Misreading identity: The revolution fused Shi'a religious authority, anti-imperial nationalism, and populist grievances, elements that U.S. frameworks (Cold War, modernization theory) struggled to interpret.
- From Sun Tzu's perspective, the U.S. neither fully knew its “enemy” (a new revolutionary regime with a distinct ideological and religious basis) nor itself (its dependence on the Shah and vulnerability to anti-American sentiment).

The Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988) and U.S. involvement

Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980 triggered an eight-year war of attrition. The U.S., while officially neutral, tilted toward Iraq with intelligence, economic support, and tolerance of third-party arms transfers, aiming to prevent an outright Iranian victory and maintain Gulf stability.

- Underestimating Iranian resilience: Despite isolation, Iran mobilized large numbers of volunteers and absorbed enormous casualties, sustaining the war far longer than many external observers expected.
- Strategic blowback: Efforts to “balance” Iran indirectly strengthened Saddam Hussein, whose later invasion of Kuwait (1990) drew the U.S. into the Gulf War and set the stage for the 2003 invasion.
- Here, the U.S. tried to shape the regional balance without fully grasping the long-term consequences, again, a partial knowledge of the enemy and of its own propensity for mission creep.

(Ed. Note: According to Wikipedia: Mission creep is the gradual or incremental expansion of an intervention, project or mission, beyond its original scope, focus or goals, a ratchet effect spawned by initial success. Mission creep is usually considered undesirable due to how each success breeds more ambitious interventions until a final failure happens, stopping the intervention entirely.)

Continued from Pg. 10

Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan: tactical victories, strategic failures Iraq War (2003–)

The 2003 invasion rapidly toppled Saddam Hussein, but the postwar phase descended into insurgency, sectarian violence, and state fragmentation.

- Know yourself (overconfidence): U.S. planners assumed a short occupation, underestimated the complexity of statebuilding, and disbanded Iraqi institutions (e.g., the army), creating a security vacuum.
- Know your enemy (mis-defined): The “enemy” was treated as a defeated regime plus isolated terrorists, not a fluid mix of Ba’athist remnants, sectarian militias, jihadist networks, and regional actors (including Iran).
- Strategic outcome: A weakened Iraqi state, rise of groups like ISIS, and a dramatic expansion of Iranian influence in Baghdad — almost the opposite of the war’s stated strategic aims.

Afghanistan (2001–2021)

The initial U.S. objective — destroy alQaeda and remove the Taliban — was quickly achieved, but the mission expanded into longterm statebuilding and counterinsurgency. The Taliban ultimately returned to power after the U.S. withdrawal in 2021.

- Misreading time horizons: The Taliban and their supporters could wait out foreign forces; U.S. domestic patience was finite.
- Institutional misfit: Attempts to build a centralized, Western style state clashed with Afghanistan’s local power structures, corruption patterns, and rural insurgent networks.
- Sun Tzu’s verdict: The U.S. knew its technological edge but not its political endurance; it knew Taliban capabilities but not the depth of their social embedding and sanctuary networks.
- Professor Amin Saikal’s summary is blunt: since World War II, the U.S. has “lost just about every war that it has fought in a developing country,” especially in asymmetric conflicts where political and social dynamics outweighed conventional military superiority (University of Western Australia).

Patterns across these wars: failures of self knowledge and enemy knowledge

Across Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran-related crises, several recurring themes emerge:

- Overestimation of military power as a political tool: The U.S. often assumes that superior firepower and technology can compensate for weak local legitimacy or fragmented political orders.
- Underestimation of nationalism, religion, and identity: Adversaries are frequently framed as ideological proxies (communists, terrorists, “rogue states”) rather than as actors rooted in local histories, grievances, and identities.
- Domestic political limits: Democracies have finite tolerance for casualties and long wars; adversaries often have higher tolerance for loss and longer time horizons.
- Mission creep and shifting objectives: Limited goals (e.g., punish, deter) expand into regime change and statebuilding without matching resources or public consent.

In Sun Tzu’s terms, the U.S. repeatedly knows the enemy’s order of battle but not their will, culture, and strategic patience, and knows its own arsenal better than its political and societal constraints.

The current U.S.–Israel–Iran regional war context

The present regional confrontation centered on Israel, Iran, and a network of Iranian-aligned groups (Hezbollah in Lebanon, militias in Iraq and Syria, the Houthis in Yemen, among others), is shaped by this history.

Knowing the Enemy: Iran and its Network

- Strategic culture: Post1979 Iran sees itself as a revolutionary, besieged state, using asymmetric tools like missiles, drones, ad proxies to offset conventional inferiority and to deter direct attack.
- Distributed deterrence: Rather than confronting the U.S. or Israel headon, Iran relies on partners and proxies, making “victory” hard to define and responsibility diffuse.
- Long time horizon: Iranian leaders often frame their struggle in civilizational and religious terms, accepting incremental gains and setbacks over decades.

Treating Iran simply as a “terror sponsor” or a single decisioncenter underestimates the complexity of its institutions (IRGC, clerical establishment, elected bodies) and the autonomy of its partners.

Knowing yourself: the U.S. and Israel

- U.S. constraints: War fatigue after Iraq and Afghanistan, polarized domestic politics, and economic priorities limit appetite for another largescale Middle Eastern war.
- Israeli doctrine: Israel emphasizes deterrence, rapid escalation dominance, and preventing existential threats (e.g., nuclear weapons, encirclement by hostile forces), but it also faces demographic, diplomatic, and legitimacy challenges.
- Alliance dynamics: U.S. support for Israel is strong but not unconditional; both states must calibrate actions to avoid drawing the U.S. into a direct, openended war with Iran.

If Sun Tzu’s maxim is applied rigorously, a key question becomes: Do U.S. and Israeli decisionmakers truly “know” Iran (its internal politics, red lines, and tolerance for pain), and do they fully “know” their own publics’ willingness to bear the costs of escalation? Perhaps we need to pay attention to lessons learned from past “unwinnable” wars and apply them to the current crisis, because bringing the historical cases together suggests several cautionary lessons for the current regional war:

1. Define achievable political ends.

Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan show that unclear or maximalist goals (regime change, deep social engineering) invite stalemate or failure. In the Gulf and Levant, objectives like “destroying” Iran’s influence outright may be as unrealistic as “destroying communism” was in Vietnam.

2. Account for asymmetric and proxy warfare.

Just as insurgents in Vietnam or Afghanistan exploited local terrain and social networks, Iran’s partners operate in fragmented states and dense urban environments where conventional superiority is blunted.

3. Respect domestic limits.

U.S. and Israeli leaders must reckon with public opinion, economic costs, and alliance politics. Adversaries who believe they can outlast Western political cycles may be more willing to absorb shortterm losses.

4. Invest in understanding, not just deterrence.

Sun Tzu’s “know your enemy” implies the deep study of Iranian strategic culture, intraelite debates, and societal pressures — not only their missile ranges. Misreading the 1979 Revolution and the Iran–Iraq War’s legacy already produced longterm strategic surprises.

5. Avoid openended commitments.

The pattern from Vietnam to Afghanistan suggests that entering a conflict without a realistic exit strategy is a path to “wars that cannot be won” in any meaningful political sense.

My Premise

The U.S. has a history of fighting wars it cannot win. I believe this statement captures a real pattern in limited, asymmetric, and politically complex conflicts since 1950. The record in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and in managing revolutionary Iran does not show an inability to win battles; it shows difficulty translating military success into sustainable political outcomes.

Through Sun Tzu’s lens, the core problem is less raw power than misalignment of knowledge: incomplete understanding of both self and enemy. In the current U.S.–Israel–Iran regional war, the central strategic challenge is to avoid repeating that pattern by setting limited, realistic aims and grounding policy in a sober, historically informed understanding of all three actors, rather than in assumptions that superior force alone can shape the region’s political future.

Logical conclusion? The current conflict, fought “as is,” cannot and will not be “won.” Historical precedent does not guarantee such an outcome, because there are at least two variables: the U.S. and Israel on the one hand and the nuclear option on the other. Then winning becomes potential loss for all... not least our humanity.

Cuba next?

What's Happening In The Real Estate Market in Hillcrest and Parkview?



Cindy Abraham



Brian Gaiefsky

The 2025 market started out flat, showings have picked up and we are seeing our listings sell. The momentum is still leaning toward buyers. Slower sales and more listings mean they have more choices and more negotiating power. Inventory keeps climbing and selling times are longer, but Keller Williams A Team Florida continues to be the leader in Hillcrest sales.

Sellers who align with the market (realistic pricing, good presentation) can still do well, but patience may be necessary. Hillcrest has the perfect location, but price and condition are still major considerations for buyers. One of A Team Florida's key advantages is knowing exactly what matters most to today's buyers, so we can guide our sellers on how to make every showing count. Another is that we have been selling Hillcrest since 2005, and we know the buyer agents who shop here regularly. With our in depth knowledge of Hillcrest, we make the process from contract to close smooth and stress-free.

Looking to buy or sell? Let's talk. Or send us an email or text:

Chat – 954-964-2559 - Email – Info@ATeamFlorida.com

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REAL ESTATE REALITY CHECK: WHAT'S HELPING (OR HURTING) SALES RIGHT NOW

– by *Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams A Team Florida*



Are there buyers out there? Absolutely. But make no mistake, they know they are in the driver's seat.

It's still hard to believe that **2023 was one of the strongest sales years on record**, and by late 2024 the market took a sharp downturn that just hasn't let up. For the first time in years, we're seeing 3/2/1 townhomes priced below \$550,000 and one-bedroom condos listed under \$100,000. That alone tells you how dramatically things have shifted.

Today's buyers are cautious, informed, and paying close attention to the fine print especially **maintenance fees**. Not surprisingly, the buildings struggling the most are often the ones with the highest monthly costs. Sometimes that's because boards chose to roll the cost of major repairs (often tied to reserve requirements, SIRS reports or mandatory safety inspections) into the monthly maintenance fee rather than passing assessments. Other times, it comes down to questionable decisions around vendors, staffing, or large-scale projects.

Another major red flag? **Too many listings in one building**. When more than 5% of unit owners are trying to sell at the same time, buyers notice, and they draw their own conclusions about leadership, financial health, and overall management.

First impressions matter. A lot. And not just for single-family homes. For condos, curb appeal starts with the **parking lot, landscaping, and lobby**. These are silent deal-makers or deal-breakers.

You truly can't beat **Hillcrest/Parkview** for location or natural beauty. The grounds are lovely, and most buildings do an excellent job maintaining their landscaping. That said, I strongly encourage board members to **drive around the buildings** and take notes. The buildings with the most striking entrances are almost always the ones where **unit owners had a strong voice in the process**.

Lobbies, for the most part, are attractive and impeccably clean, and that matters. Just as important is the **front desk staff**. Their professionalism, friendliness, and appearance tell a story buyers pick up on instantly.

Postings are another overlooked detail. Every building has them, but some do it far better than others. **Building 25** stands out for its polished, helpful, and informative notices. Vice President **Lori Limardo** does an outstanding job, and longtime resident, and Canadian snowbird, **Louise Lamontagne** is responsible for one of the most beautiful entrances in Hillcrest. Makes you wonder... who in *your* building has the initials **LL**?

A word of caution: **be very mindful of what's posted in common areas**. Pest control notices don't belong near the elevators. Building business should stay in mailrooms or laundry areas where residents will still see it. One alarming or poorly worded notice in a lobby can turn off a potential buyer instantly. I guarantee it.

In this market, buyers are not just buying units, they are buying **the building, the leadership, and the lifestyle**. The details matter more than ever.

MARCH 2026 MARKET REPORT FOR HILLCREST AND PARKVIEW AT HILLCREST

– by *Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams A Team Florida*



Inventory hasn't shifted much. There are 89 condos currently on the market, along with 21 homes and townhomes. Pending sales are also holding steady: eight condos, one townhome, and two single-family homes.

What *has* changed? Closings. In March, only eight condos closed, nothing else. That tells us plenty.

Pricing Is Everything

Days on Market are brutally high if a property isn't priced correctly. Unless your unit is fully updated, has a great view, and a reasonable maintenance fee, the market is unforgiving. When you look at the pending and closed sales below, pay attention to the Days on Market. Anything longer than 90 days lowered their price at least once and in some cases, over 10 times.

If you've had no showings in the first week or two, that's not bad luck, it's feedback. The market is telling you your price is too high. And every month you sit unsold, it costs you real money. A hard truth: if you bought in 2022 or 2023, you are very unlikely to get back what you paid. Denial only makes the loss larger.

One of the smartest things Brian and I ever did was start our Referral Partner List back in 2007 at a real estate convention. Today, we work with 92 agents across the U.S. and Canada, plus 70+ local buyer agents who actively look for our listings. Why? Because they know we do all the heavy lifting. We include all the paperwork that the buyer agent is responsible for in our listings. Their job is simple: bring the buyer and we do the rest. That kind of exposure makes a difference, especially in this market.

When it comes to the Rental market, overpricing hurts more than you think. There are 24 active rental listings in Hillcrest right now, and the same rule applies: overpricing kills profit. Each month your rental sits empty costs you 1/12 of your annual gross income. This issue is the first time in a long time that some of the final rent prices are lower than the list price.

Current Hillcrest rental ranges:

- 1/1/1 from \$1,650
- 2/2 from \$2,000
- 3/2/1 townhome from \$3,300
- 3/2/1 single-family home from \$4,200
- Highest rental: 5/3 at \$6,300 per month

Smart sellers (and buyers) will zig when others zag. The market always rewards those who act with clarity when others are frozen by fear. You need to hire agents who tell you what you need to know about the current market, not what you want to hear. **Call Brian Gaiefsky and Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams A Team Florida!**

PENDING AND CLOSED SALES DURING MARCH 2026

(R-Rental building, C- Corner unit, T – Townhome, S – Single Family)

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
S	1612 Trailhead Terr	2,220	3/2/1	855,000	Pending	129
S	1575 Pongam Terr.	1,742	3/2/0	735,000	Pending	414
T	3936 Mahogany Lane	1,768	3/2/1	699,000	Pending	112
C-22	4350 Hillcrest Drive 1001-03	2,675	3/3/0	415,000	Pending	38
R-19	901 Hillcrest Drive 311	1,150	2/2	249,500	Pending	113
R-20	919 Hillcrest Drive 304	1,100	2/2	239,000	Pending	67
2	5100 Washington St. 207	992	2/2	229,000	Pending	23
C-26	4001 Hillcrest Drive 402-04	2,200	3/2/1	214,900	Pending	179
R-24	4200 Hillcrest Drive 406	844	1/1/1	179,000	Pending	11
R-19	901 Hillcrest Drive 311	830	1/1/1	150,000	Pending	18
8	1101 Hillcrest Court 307	672	1/1/0	84,999	Pending	161
	4330 Hillcrest 810	1284	2/2	219,000	210,000	53
25	3800 Hillcrest Drive 907	1,714	3/2	389,000	385,000	474
27	3850 Washington St. 317	1,344	2/2	295,000	276,000	485
21	4400 Hillcrest Drive 314	1,132	2/2	199,000	195,000	243
21	4400 Hillcrest Drive 107	844	1/1/1	195,000	179,500	254
25	3800 Hillcrest Drive 316	844	1/1/1	159,000	154,000	15
9	1001 Hillcrest Court 302	899	2/2	169,000	150,000	178
23	4330 Hillcrest Drive 616	1,216	2/2	135,000	120,000	14
7	1201 Hillcrest Court	690	1/1/0	105,000	92,000	164



HILLCREST/PARKVIEW MARCH 2026 RENTALS

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	RENT	DOM
24	4200 Hillcrest Drive 206	844	1/1/1	1,700	Pending	54
19	901 Hillcrest Drive 503	830	1/1/1	1,650	Pending	7
T	5035 Eucalyptus Dr	2,033	3/2/1	4,100	4,000	188
T-F	1023 Eucalyptus Dr	1760	3/2/1	4,300	3,850	82
16	950 Hillcrest Dr 401	992	2/2	2,000	1,800	129
24	4200 Hillcrest Dr 1004	844	1/1/1	1,790	1,790	21
9-F	1001 Hillcrest Court	744	1/1/1	1,525	1,525	8
20	919 Hillcrest Dr. 301	1,150	2/2	1,995	1,995	34
18(S)	4650 Washington 110	992	2/2	1,795	1,795	147
16	950 Hillcrest Dr 106	700	1/1/0	1,550	1,550	117



April Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham

Lately I have come across several recipes that are named "Marry Me...". I could have sworn I printed the ONE POT MARRY ME CHICKEN PASTA in a previous issue but now I can't find it so I am printing it in this issue.

We happen to LOVE sun-dried tomatoes, spinach and cream; they seem to be the constant in every recipe. So here are three that I have made at different times and loved all of them. Again, high fiber, whole grain pastas are the way to go for not only flavor but nutritional value.

And no, I do not want anyone to marry me; however, I am very old-fashioned, so if I get pregnant, that is another story... (and oh, what a story that would make!)

ONE POT MARRY ME CHICKEN PASTA

1/2 cup sliced oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, reserve 2 TBS oil
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cubed
Salt and black pepper
4 teaspoons Italian seasoning – divided use
2 tablespoons salted butter
2 tsp chopped garlic
6 oz. penne or elbows
12 oz. water
1/2 cup heavy cream
2 ounces cream cheese
2 cups chopped baby spinach
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
2 TBS fresh chopped basil



In a large pot set over medium-high heat, cook the oil from the sun-dried tomato jar with the chicken and 2 teaspoons of Italian seasoning. Cook for 5 minutes until the chicken is cooked through. Scoop the chicken out of the pot, set aside.

Add the butter, garlic, and 2 teaspoons of Italian seasoning. Cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the pasta and 1 cup of water. Cook, stirring often, until the pasta is al dente, about 8 minutes. Stir in the milk, cream cheese, and parmesan. Mix until creamy.

Slide the chicken into the pasta, add the spinach, and sun-dried tomatoes, and gently mix. Remove from the heat and stir in the basil. Serve the pasta immediately with fresh parmesan and basil.

MARRY ME TORTELLINI for TWO

2 TBS sundried tomato oil
3/4 cup cherry tomatoes
1/4 cup chopped shallots
3 TBS chopped sun-dried tomatoes,
1 TBS chopped garlic
1 TBS Italian seasoning, 1/2 tsp S & P
3/4 cup lower-sodium vegetable broth

1/4 cup pasta water
8 oz. cheese-filled tortellini - if you have a 20 oz. package just double the rest of the ingredients
2 cups baby spinach
1/2 cup peas
1/4 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, divided
1 TBS fresh chopped oregano
1 TBS small basil leaves



Heat sun-dried tomato oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add cherry tomatoes and shallots; cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes have mostly blistered and the liquid has released and started to evaporate, about 5 minutes.

Add sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, Italian seasoning, 1/2 tsp salt and 1/2 tsp pepper; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Add vegetable broth and water; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to a lively simmer; add tortellini. Cook, stirring frequently, for 4 minutes.

Add baby spinach; cook until wilted, about 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in peas, cream and half the-Reggiano until incorporated. Sprinkle with 1 TBS basil leaves and the remaining Parmigiano-Reggiano. Garnish with pepper.

MARRY ME SPAGHETTI CASSEROLE (Aldi sells a pound of shredded Rotisserie Chicken for \$7.19)

4 TBS salted butter
1 TBS sun dried tomato oil
1/3 cup finely diced onion
Heaping TBS minced garlic
1 cup sun dried tomatoes (squeezed dry and chopped)
1 TBS tomato paste
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 cup chicken broth (low sodium)
2 cups heavy cream
Zest of 1 small lemon
1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley/oregano/basil



Continued from Pg. 12

1 pound spaghetti (I use a 1/2 lb.)
2 cups shredded mozzarella divided
½ cup grated Parmesan for topping

Preheat the oven to 375°F. **Lightly grease a 9×13 inch baking dish.** Cook the spaghetti until just shy of al dente. Reserve ½ cup pasta water, then drain.

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt the butter with the sun dried tomato oil. Add the diced onion and cook until softened, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for 30 seconds.

Add the sun dried tomatoes, tomato paste, and Dijon mustard. Cook for 1 minute. Pour in the white wine and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes until slightly reduced.

Stir in the chicken broth and heavy cream. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 5 to 7 minutes until slightly thickened but still loose. The sauce should look thinner than you think it should. Stir in the lemon zest, red pepper flakes, 1 cup Parmesan, and herbs.

Add the drained spaghetti directly into the sauce and toss gently to coat. If needed, add a splash of reserved pasta water to keep it loose. Stir in 1 cup shredded mozzarella.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle the remaining 1 cup mozzarella and ½ cup Parmesan evenly over the top.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until bubbly and lightly golden on top. Broil for 1 minute for a golden top. Let rest for 10 to 15 minutes before serving so the sauce settles but stays creamy underneath.

APRIL 2026 IH KITCHEN TIPS – by Cindy Abraham

MY FREEZER IS MY FRIEND

I love to cook and I think the prep stage is my favorite, kind of like knitting, the redundancy of the movements are soothing. And, of course, I get to have a knife in my hand...

But sometimes I don't want to spend a lot of time "prepping". So, I bought an extra freezer that I keep on the balcony because if there is a good deal, I buy in bulk. I will bring home a 5-lb. bag of potatoes, make mashed potatoes and freeze portions in large muffin trays. I pop out the frozen "potato pops" and vacuum seal them in portions. When I want mashed potatoes, I defrost in the microwave, throw them in a pan with melted butter and voila – good to go.

I prefer fresh mushrooms and spinach but buy frozen and not canned. Canned veggies are full of salt. They are great to have on hand in a pinch but only use half the amount in a recipe that calls for fresh chopped spinach. And if you prefer fresh mushrooms when cooking, you can always sauté them ahead of time and freeze a cup or two just in case.

I also love Lupini Keto orzo rice, so I make the whole bag and then freeze it (al dente) in 3 one-cup containers. Those of you who have had my Lebanese Italian Chicken Soup – that is the rice I use. HEALTHY!

For "ingredient" items, I use the small two-ounce plastic containers with lids, for things like:

Diced prosciutto
Chopped jalapeno (doesn't stay firm when thawed, but works for cooking)
Lemon, orange, lime and apple juice
Lemon, orange and lime zest
Anchovies in oil

Because some of my favorite people are snowbirds, I freeze mangos in 6 lb. portions so I can make them chutney in the off-season. I also vacuum seal frozen cubes of Mango juice so I can make mango tequila or rum when they are here.

I was surprised when I finally realized that frozen bread thaws beautifully (especially in BOGO situations). I have a vacuum sealing machine (best

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investment ever) so I can divide anything I buy in bulk. Any types of meat and poultry holds up wonderfully. I do have to freeze them first so that the vacuum sealer doesn't suck out the liquid. I put the meats/poultry on a plate sprayed with Pam. As soon as they are frozen, I put them in the vacuum bags and seal them.

When we were eating beef, I would buy a 7 or 8 pound Beef Tenderloin during the holidays, cut it into 1 or 2-pound portions, freeze and vacuum seal. I am not kidding when I say we cooked and ate the last one two years later. My sister turned me on to the machine because of all the fish they catch in Lake Michigan. The only time anything goes "bad" is if the vacuum seal loosens and air gets in.

The only seafood I don't freeze is stone crabs. For some reason the meat sticks to the shell once they have been frozen and thawed. And anything dairy-related or fibrous vegetables do not freeze well like onions and celery. The exception to dairy is ice cream of course.

Pre-prepping saves time and buying in bulk saves money - a win-win.

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AND THEN THERE ARE STUPID PEOPLE

We spend a lot of time trying to understand complex personalities. Sociopaths. Psychopaths. Narcissists. We read articles. We analyze motives. We look for patterns, warning signs, and diagnostic criteria. We tell ourselves that if we can just understand these people, we can protect ourselves from them.

And then there are stupid people.

Stupid people do not require a diagnosis. They do not need a childhood backstory or a deep psychological explanation. They operate on a simpler system. Cause and effect rarely meet. Logic slides right off them like rain on waxed pavement.

Unlike manipulators, stupid people are not strategic. They are not plotting. They are not clever. They are simply committed to bad decisions with remarkable confidence. They will explain those decisions at great length, usually loudly, and often with charts that somehow make things worse.

Stupid people love meetings. They love rules they do not understand and will enforce inconsistently. They are deeply offended by questions, allergic to accountability, and strangely proud of their ignorance. When presented with facts, they do not argue the facts. They argue you.

The most dangerous thing about stupid people is not malice. It is persistence. They will keep doing the same thing, the same wrong way, over and over, while insisting it is everyone else who is the problem. You cannot reason with stupid people because reasoning implies a shared destination. You are trying to arrive at solutions. They are trying to arrive at lunch.

So yes, learn about sociopaths, psychopaths, and narcissists. Knowledge is power. But never underestimate the sheer destructive force of someone who is just very, very stupid and absolutely convinced they are in charge.

And Then There Are Stupid People (Encore Edition)

As Boodro always said, "You can educate the ignorant, you can medicate crazy, but you can't fix stupid."

Science has yet to dispute this.

Ignorance is hopeful. It means someone doesn't know something yet. Crazy, at least, comes with treatment plans, professionals, and occasionally progress charts.

Stupid, however, arrives fully formed and refuses upgrades.

Stupid people don't lack information. They actively repel it. Facts bounce off. **Expertise irritates them. Experience threatens their authority. If you present evidence, they will counter with confidence.** Loud confidence. Often misplaced confidence.

Stupid people love titles, procedures, and the illusion of control. They will misread instructions, ignore advice, and then blame the outcome on anyone within range. If something works, it was their idea. If it fails, it was unforeseeable. Repeated failures are called "policy."

The real problem is that stupid people are rarely alone. They cluster. They validate one another. They promote each other. And once in charge, they confuse motion with progress and meetings with leadership.

So yes, read the psychology articles. Learn the warning signs. Protect yourself from manipulators and narcissists.

But keep Boodro's wisdom close. Because while ignorance can be educated and madness can be treated, stupid will look you dead in the eye, smile confidently, and schedule another meeting to do it all again.

DO HILLCREST CONDO RESIDENTS HAVE TO PAY A FEE TO USE THE TENNIS/PICKLEBALL COURTS?

The short answer is YES.

While the Parkview homes and town homes were being built, all residents of the Hillcrest Condominium buildings were allowed to use the tennis and pickleball courts at no cost. However, in the PUD documents, we did find the clause that says once the construction is completed and Pulte turns the governance over to the HOA, a fee may be charged for use of the courts and to reserve the small Clubhouse for private events.

You can find it under the 2.1 Hillcrest PUD; Declaration of Restrictive Covenants – see below in bold. The first part exempts condo owners from paying for repairs, upkeep, etc. however, the next paragraph does specify that condo owners will pay a fee for amenities that need to be reserved. Parkview at Hillcrest residents are also charged to reserve the clubhouse for private functions although they do not need a membership to use the courts since their maintenance fees are used to maintain them.

The Amenities shall be accessible to those residing in the Hillcrest PUD, including Parkview at Hillcrest. However, in no event shall current and future owners of residential units in the Hillcrest PUD (other than those in Parkview at Hillcrest) have any responsibilities or obligations to fund the construction, maintenance, repair or operation of the Amenities, either directly or indirectly, including monetarily contributing to a special taxing district, the Association, a CDD or other funding mechanism.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Association may charge residents in the Hillcrest PUD (other than those in Parkview at Hillcrest) usage fees for the tennis and bocce ball courts, or deposits associated with use of the clubhouse facilities for special events (i.e., private parties), provided that residents in Parkview at Hillcrest may be charged deposits for private parties.

The fee to use the tennis and pickleball courts is \$200 per year for an individual and \$400 per year per family or unit. The fee to reserve the small Clubhouse at 4500 Hillcrest Drive is \$600.00 plus a refundable security deposit of \$1,000. The large clubhouse can only be reserved by Parkview at Hillcrest residents.

REMINDER: The large clubhouse at 4600 Hillcrest Drive with the pool and gym are only available to Parkview at Hillcrest residents.

SOCIOPATH OR PSYCHOPATH?

You have probably heard people casually label someone a psychopath or a sociopath. The words get thrown around a lot, especially when someone behaves cruelly, selfishly, or without remorse. But what do they really mean?

In medicine and psychology, doctors do not formally diagnose people as psychopaths or sociopaths. Instead, they use the clinical term antisocial personality disorder. Within that category, experts recognize different patterns of behavior that people often describe using those two labels.

Psychopaths and sociopaths tend to share a troubling set of traits. They have a weak or nonexistent sense of right and wrong and struggle to understand or share the feelings of others. Empathy does not come naturally to them. Still, there are important differences.

One of the biggest distinctions is conscience. According to psychologists, a psychopath essentially lacks one. There is no inner voice warning them that something is wrong. If a psychopath lies or steals, there is no guilt afterward. They may convincingly imitate normal emotional reactions, but this is usually learned behavior designed to avoid suspicion.

A sociopath, on the other hand, may have a conscience, but it is faint. They often know their behavior is wrong and may even feel a flicker of guilt or remorse. That feeling, however, rarely stops them from acting in their own self-interest.

Both types lack empathy, but psychopaths generally show even less regard for others. People are seen not as individuals with feelings, but as tools to be used, manipulated, or discarded when no longer useful.

Despite how movies and television portray them, people with antisocial personality disorder are not always violent. While some can be dangerous, most are not killers or criminals. Instead, they rely on manipulation, deceit, and reckless behavior to get what they want. Some are cold and calculating. Others are surprisingly successful, climbing corporate ladders or gaining positions of authority while leaving emotional damage in their wake.

If you start recognizing these traits in a family member, coworker, or acquaintance, it can be unsettling. Still, it is important to remember that being selfish, dishonest, or mean does not automatically mean someone has a personality disorder. Most of us assume others share our moral framework. We believe lying, stealing, and exploiting people are clearly wrong. It can be shocking to discover that some people simply do not operate by those rules.

In some cases, the behavior may reflect a narcissistic sociopath, someone who combines antisocial traits with narcissism. Narcissistic personality disorder is a mental condition marked by an inflated sense of self-importance, a deep need for admiration, troubled relationships, and a striking lack of empathy.

People with narcissistic personality disorder often display a grandiose view of themselves and live in a fantasy world that reinforces their sense of superiority. They crave constant praise, feel entitled to special treatment, and exploit others without guilt or shame. It is also common for them to demean, intimidate, bully, or belittle those around them.

Understanding these patterns does not excuse harmful behavior, but it can help explain why certain people leave such lasting damage in both personal and professional relationships.

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SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN TIMES OF WAR

- by Aruna Ladva Brahma Kumaris, London, England

Submitted and Revised by BK Etta Stevens - Miami/Hollywood



"When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a woman, I put away childish things."

What does war represent? Power, control, and madness. Remember, if there were no profit in war, we would rarely see it. Wars create opportunities for power, control, and, of course, money.

Perhaps this is the moment for humanity to "put away childish things." Wars often resemble playground conflicts magnified a thousand times over — people unable or unwilling to talk, reason, or communicate. Just like children in a playground, disagreement turns into bullying and eventually violence.

However, the purpose of this reflection is not simply to add another voice to the gloom and doom of war. Instead, the question is: what can a spiritual person do in such times?

First, we begin with compassion.

There is little value in becoming angry with these "children." When we cultivate compassion in our hearts, the first heart that cools is our own. Activating the energy of compassion keeps the intellect clean and clear. It allows us to help ourselves and others, especially during moments of crisis when the world feels confused and unsettled.

Spiritual detachment is not indifference. It is the ability to care deeply while remaining internally stable. When we are emotionally balanced, we respond with wisdom rather than reacting with fear or anger.

This leads to a deeper question: What is my purpose for being here?

When that purpose is clear in my mind, I know exactly where to place my energy. Instead of feeding attention to what is being destroyed, I become conscious of what I am creating.

Even a single negative or wasteful thought does not help the situation. To think about destruction is one thing, but to repeatedly talk about it and circulate it again and again can drain our own inner power. Bad news travels quickly. That is why it becomes important to consciously redirect the mind towards spiritual practice.

Practice before the moment comes when there is no time left to practice.

Meditation and deep prayerful reflection can be powerful tools during such times. They help us shift the mind away from images of death and destruction and instead activate a higher vibration of love and compassion. Rather than feeling helpless and banging our heads against the wall, we transform the emotional energy of anger or despair into something constructive.

We consciously choose to hold the higher vibration of peace. In times of crisis, protecting the climate of our consciousness becomes

our responsibility. If we allow fear, anger, and outrage to fill our minds, we simply add more turbulence to the world. A calm mind becomes a quiet contribution to peace. Each peaceful thought acts like a calming wave within the chaos of the world.

Spiritual strength must be built now. It rarely appears suddenly in moments of crisis. Just as muscles grow stronger through regular exercise, the mind becomes stable through daily spiritual practice.

Spiritual practice could look like:

Sending peaceful vibrations to all — those who suffer and those who cause suffering • Taking time to sit quietly in silence • Stepping away from gadgets and reconnecting with nature • Reducing news intake — much of it is toxic and not always accurate • Volunteering and creating a higher purpose in life • Aiming to add value to a person, community, or project • Making a conscious effort to bring more meaning into daily life

Be like a lighthouse.

In stormy seas, a lighthouse does not chase the waves. It simply stands steady and shines its light. In troubled times, spiritual people can become like lighthouses — calm, stable, and quietly guiding others through their silent presence.

It is important to have a sense of purpose, even in our free time. This is not a time to live only for us, but to ask: How can I be of help to others?

During times of conflict, the media often shows destruction, yet it rarely shows the thousands of quiet acts of kindness happening simultaneously across the world — doctors working tirelessly, volunteers offering support, neighbors helping neighbors, strangers helping strangers. These acts remind us that goodness in humanity is still alive.

From a spiritual perspective, humanity is still learning. Just as children pass through stages of growth, civilization too is evolving. Wars remind us how much we still need to grow in wisdom, compassion, and cooperation. The "children" still have to grow up. The world may sometimes appear chaotic, but every individual who chooses compassion, clarity, and service quietly shifts the direction of humanity. Peace in the world does not begin in governments or battlefields. It begins in the consciousness of individuals.

It's Time ... to make ourselves free with the power of compassion and begin being true to ourselves, and love who we are, and that finding our purpose in life and what it can mean for ourselves. Learning meditation and practicing it daily will help you understand yourself better and learn to discern what is real from what is not. To understand exactly what it is you are searching for in your life, and how to become the best ME you can BE!

Learning meditation and practicing it daily will help you understand yourself better and learn to discern what is real from what is not. To understand exactly what it is you are searching for in your life, and how to become the best ME you can BE!

I am conducting a FREE ZOOM meditation class on Tuesday mornings, so that we can all learn to live more positively, with an open heart and awareness, in our mind and soul, by putting the love of the self first, especially in these troubling times. It begins promptly at 10:30AM and continues until approximately 11:30AM.

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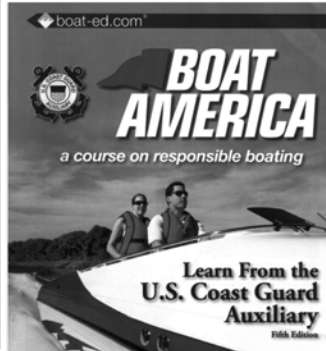
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For questions, please contact Neil Kuritzky, Flotilla Commander

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