



INSIDE HILLCREST

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MARCH INSIDE HILLCREST

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FOOD HISTORY IS WILD

Just then I think I have heard it all, I read about something called City Chicken which is basically fake chicken made with pork and/or veal. After reading about it (and you can too on page 13), absolutely yes, **I would try it** - with suspicion and mild judgement but I'd try it.

Breaded, fried pork (or pork and veal) on a stick that somehow tastes like chicken is purported to be exactly the kind of weird, Depression-era, grandma-approved comfort food that people loved. The name is absurd, the backstory is fascinating, and the technique clearly works otherwise entire regions wouldn't still be defending it a century later.

So, if anyone out there has made City Chicken, please send me a copy of your grandma's (or great grandma's) recipe to info@HillcrestLC.com.

SPEAKING OF HISTORY

From time to time, we reprint The History of Hillcrest, one of our most requested articles. With so many new neighbors joining our community and longtime residents asking to see it again, it felt like the perfect moment to bring it back. Turn to page 10 to rediscover the story of Hillcrest.

MAKING HISTORY

Steve Schneider has taken his interview/writing skills to new heights. In this issue, he delivers a powerful firsthand account from Iran, drawn from an in-depth interview with **Mo Melotti**, son of Hillcrest's own **Herman Melotti**.

Herman, the long-time **president of Hillcrest 27** and the **HLC**, was one of the very best among us, an endless source of knowledge who always made time to share it. He never missed an HLC meeting. Since his passing in 2023, his presence and leadership are still deeply missed.

HILLCREST/PARKVIEW REAL ESTATE

Although the State of the Market report, which is a record of the number of listings, pending and closed sales for our condos, townhomes and single family homes is in this

issue, the Real Estate page is not. We will include that page in the next issue.

As you will see, things picked up in February as far as properties going under contract, so we should have a nice sales report next month. In the meantime, it is important that you know how many listings there are in your building. A high number is usually a sign of poor leadership in the recent past, or a lack of confidence in a new board. If a building's maintenance fees are higher than their neighbors, that is also a tough sell.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS VS MONTHLY MAINTENANCE FEES

Monthly maintenance fees are intended to cover the routine operating expenses of a building. These include utilities, insurance, staffing, contracts, and ongoing maintenance. Special assessments are imposed when existing reserve funds are insufficient to address major, non-routine expenses or unforeseen capital projects.

Well managed buildings plan ahead. A portion of monthly maintenance fees is allocated to reserve accounts dedicated to predictable long term needs such as roof replacement, exterior painting, paving, and major mechanical systems. When reserves are properly funded and clearly allocated, large financial shocks are minimized. Problems tend to arise in buildings with pooled or poorly managed reserves, particularly when there is a lack of financial expertise, transparency, or long range planning at the board level.

One advantage of using a special assessment rather than permanently increasing monthly maintenance fees is flexibility. A special assessment is a defined obligation tied to a specific project and timeframe. If a unit owner is unable to carry that obligation long term, the assessment is typically paid in full at the time of sale. By contrast, significantly increasing monthly maintenance fees can negatively affect

marketability, as buyers qualify based on ongoing monthly expenses.

High recurring fees can make units difficult to sell regardless of the underlying value of the property.

There are buildings where maintenance fees are substantially higher than comparable properties. In such cases, units may remain on the market longer or fail to close, even when offers are received. Buyers often compare not only price, but governance, financial management, and overall leadership before proceeding.

There are also situations where essential building services are outsourced without sufficient due diligence, oversight, or professional qualifications. Poor vendor selection and lack of accountability can drive costs up while service quality declines, further burdening unit owners without delivering value.

The larger issue is governance. Buildings function best when unit owners with relevant business, financial, legal, and operational experience actively participate. Owners have both the right and the responsibility to attend board meetings, ask informed questions, and volunteer for by-law mandated committees.

True leadership welcomes informed participation.

- True leaders value unit owner engagement and collaboration.
- True leaders encourage constructive input and shared problem solving.
- True leaders are willing to ask for help when expertise is available.
- True leaders foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and improvement.
- True leaders focus on shared goals and long term outcomes rather than personal control.

Committees play a critical role in a building's success and stability.

- Committees promote teamwork and forward progress.
- Committees strengthen communication and trust between the board and unit owners.
- Committees provide both constructive feedback and practical, actionable solutions. A board that resists participation from qualified unit owners weakens the very structure it is charged with protecting. Strong buildings are built on sound finances, clear planning, and inclusive leadership.



IRAN ATTACKS GULF ISLAND NATION OF BAHRAIN; WATER DESALINATION PLANT, OIL REFINERY, U.S. 5TH FLEET BASE STRUCK; BAHRAIN WOMAN KILLED

“WAR USUALLY IS ONE OR ANOTHER FLAVOR OF MADNESS. AND IT’S IN CLEAR EVIDENCE SO FAR,” U.S. EXPAT WRITES FROM BAHRAIN – *by Steve Schneider*

I met Mo Melotti through his late dad Herman Melotti, Hillcrest 27, who was a long-time prominent leader in the Hillcrest condo community where I live. Mo has lived most of his adult life in the Middle East, working for years before his retirement as a contractor on two U.S. military defense-related contracts in Saudi Arabia. He currently shares homes with his wife Nadia in Bahrain and Egypt and Saudi Arabia. So, based on his life experiences, and knowledge of the Middle East, I asked him to write about the Israel-U.S. war against Iran.

He has agreed to do that. First, though, an introduction Mo wrote. It tells us about his life as a U.S. expat living in a newsworthy and noteworthy part of the world.

MY STORY – *by Mo Melotti*

I was 23 years old in 1976, when I left the United States to relocate to Iran and work as an instructor in the Imperial Iranian Navy Academy in Rasht, Iran, about 40 kilometers south of the Caspian Sea. Up to that point in my life, my travels outside of the city I was born in (Cumberland in Western Maryland), were confined to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I completed my Bachelor’s degree in Economics and English Literature at the University of Pittsburgh and Blacksburg, Virginia, where I completed my Master’s degree in English Literature and Language while teaching part time in the English Department at Virginia Tech.



Iranian university students 1975.

I also spent time in Miami, Florida, where I used to visit my uncle Domenic Melotti, and party in between times. I eventually left Blacksburg for Miami, to play tennis, be with my Puerto Rican girlfriend, and figure out what to do next in life. Before leaving Blacksburg in June 1976, I went to a donut shop one Sunday morning and picked up a Washington Post. The Sunday Post back then was like six inches thick; by Thursday of that week, I finally got to the classified ads, saw a short ad for a job in Iran, and applied. Though contacted to drive up to Washington, D.C. to interview, I passed it up and drove on to Miami and what I thought would be the rest of my life... or at least the next chapter of my life. However, a couple of weeks after arriving in Miami, I was contacted by phone and asked if I was still interested in going to Iran to work.

The contract was part of a U.S. government foreign military sale that only had 10 months to run. Ten months? Why not? I said “Yes” and flew to Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas to undergo two weeks of intensive training. I started what would become my long overseas career in the Middle East in Iran. And I was a babe in the woods. Fifty years later and a resident of Bahrain in the Arabian Gulf (most readers know it as “Persian”), I am less looking for the end of ten months and more looking toward the rest of my life in a part of the world I have lived in longer than in my own country and have grown to love. But then war came again, Iran at the center.

For the purposes of this article and staying current, I’ll start with Iran, skip the in-between (Libya, Turkey, North Cyprus, Bahrain Chapter 1, Saudi Arabia), and end with where I am today in Bahrain and how Iran stubbornly remains in my life. Even as I sit in my home writing this on a Tuesday night coming into mid-March, blasts echoing through Manama, the capital city, I stay reminded that Iran remains entwined with my life. As Mickey, an old friend and colleague in Esfahan used to say, at the height of the Islamic revolution and when we were enduring curfews, nightly blackouts, and gunfire and explosions night after night, “I’m tired.”

Well, I’m tired. I’m not 23 anymore; I’m 73. And I wish it would stop. But I’ve fast-forwarded. Let’s go back 50 years.

Leaving your home country at a young age is both exciting and hard work. You are forced immediately to go on a learning curve that literally involves going back to school. What you thought you knew is out the window and what you have to learn and adapt to becomes a new reality. No training I had in Texas prepared me anywhere near well enough for this new adventure.

Of all that I’d read through two academic degrees, I’d never heard of let alone read Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, a seminal work that should be mandatory reading on any high school reading list, with a refresher read annually... maybe throughout the rest of one’s life. Had I read it before going to Iran, I may have had a better leg up on what I was about to experience.

One of the core principles of *The Art of War* is to “know yourself and your enemy.” “Enemy” can come in various shades and flavors, including competitor or adversary, a very different culture... but most definitely it denotes “the other side.”

Sun Tzu placed self before enemy, so let’s start there.

No young person knows himself/herself very well at all. That knowledge is and becomes the sum total of experiences in one’s life, and this knowledge accumulates toward an ever-redefining self-awareness. So, at 23 and degreed, I thought I knew a lot, maybe even enough to know that what I didn’t know wasn’t worth knowing. Along with that comes the personal feeling of invincibility, immortality, being unbreakable. A historic revolution will show you how little you know and understand...and can cure you of feeling unbreakable.

I won’t drone on with a lot of details, so here are the Cliff Notes. While in Rasht, I thrived professionally, pursued a major love in my life (tennis), and I married an Iranian.

Continued on Pg. 3

Continued from Pg. 2

Not your standard Muslim Iranian but a Bahai, a woman of a hated and shunned religious sect that has been at various times in Iranian history outlawed, persecuted, and purged. Go me! The marriage didn't last; we were both out of our depths, but that's when I first understood that in any Islamic culture you don't just marry the girl; you marry the family and all of their expectations. I wasn't up to it; I did not know myself before heading into that, and I certainly didn't know what I was up against. I knew myself a little better afterwards. But the learning curve was to continue for many more years.

The contract in Rasht ended in May 1978 (yes, at that point beyond ten months), my New Zealand fiancé (who I met in Rasht) and I got new positions with the Shah's show-piece university for budding geniuses in Esfahan, and we flew to New Zealand to get married.

After a summer of travel, largely through New Zealand and the United States, we returned to Tehran the evening of September 7, 1978, the eve of the Jaleh Square Massacre in Tehran and the declaration of nation-wide martial law. We had booked into the Caspian Hotel the night of the seventh, quite near and just west of Jaleh Square: only a 15-minute walk from the hotel.

The Jaleh Square Massacre, also known as "Black Friday," occurred on September 8, 1978, in Tehran and marked a decisive turning point in the Iranian Revolution.

Imperial Army troops opened fire on thousands of protesters defying martial law, killing dozens and wounding hundreds, which accelerated the collapse of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime.

Key Facts About the Jaleh Square Massacre

- Date: September 8, 1978 (17 Shahrivar 1357 in the Iranian calendar)
- Location: Jaleh Square (now Shohada Square), Tehran, Iran
- Event Name: "Black Friday" (Persian: Jom'e-ye Siyāh)
- Casualties: • 64 protesters killed in Jaleh Square
- 30 government security forces killed (according to some accounts)
- 24 additional protesters killed elsewhere in Tehran
- 205 wounded overall. Wikipedia



Background and Causes

- Political repression: The Shah's regime was widely criticized for authoritarian rule, censorship, and suppression of dissent.
- Economic grievances: High inflation, unemployment, and inequality fueled public anger.
- Martial law declaration: On September 7, 1978, the government banned public gatherings. Protesters defied this order the next day by assembling in Jaleh Square. Mehr News Agency.

- What Happened on September 8
- Protesters gathered peacefully in Jaleh Square despite martial law.
- The Imperial Iranian Army surrounded the square and ordered dispersal.
- When demonstrators refused, soldiers opened fire with live ammunition into the crowd.
- The massacre shocked the nation, with images and reports spreading rapidly, undermining the Shah's legitimacy. Mehr News Agency.
- Impact on the Iranian Revolution
- Turning point: The massacre destroyed hopes of reconciliation between the Shah and opposition forces.
- Radicalization: Many moderates abandoned reformist positions and joined revolutionary movements.
- Acceleration of regime collapse: The brutality of Black Friday intensified protests nationwide, leading to the Shah's exile in January 1979 and the eventual establishment of the Islamic Republic. Mehr News Agency.

Historical Significance

- Seen as the moment the Shah "lost Iran"—his regime could no longer claim legitimacy.
- Remembered as one of the bloodiest days of the Iranian Revolution.
- Jaleh Square was later renamed Shohada Square ("Martyrs' Square") to honor those killed.

Upon learning that martial law had been declared, I called the American who recruited me for the job in Esfahan and asked if we should still come. He assured me that all was well. We checked out of the Caspian and traveled overland to Esfahan. Parts of the new university campus just outside Esfahan were still under construction, which included the residential housing area on campus. We were forced to secure housing in the city in the interim, which we did, near the Armenian district in Esfahan. We were never going to live on campus, as events local and country-wide were rapidly unfolding. Construction on campus came to a halt; an end of some sort was becoming clear.



Between September and November 1978, the situation deteriorated. Most universities in the country had closed, and I was going to campus daily, wondering if the gates would be open or closed.

Toward the end of November, the university closed down. The university leadership was Shah-appointed. The president fled the country; the Vice Chancellor remained — our wives worked together at the campus school for faculty member children. He got his wife and son out of Iran to Germany, while my wife remained. In fact, he remained. The last time we spoke was on our last day at the university together. We shared a car home to the city. I asked him what his plans were and he answered, "The Shah appointed me; only the Shah can ask me to step down." We never spoke again; he was arrested and executed the next day.

Continued from Pg. 3

My choices were two: leave (flight evacuations from Esfahan airport were under way) or stay, in which case I needed a new job. We chose to remain.

A friend and former colleague from the Rasht contract had relocated to Esfahan ahead of us, taking a job as a manager in Employer Support Services with Bell Helicopter International. At that point, employees were leaving in droves, and he had a position to fill: Recreation Coordinator. I was offered the position, and in early December 1978, I flew up to Tehran to process in at the BHI corporate office. I had a new job and a reason to remain in Iran.

But I got stuck in Tehran. Iran Air pilot and ground crew strikes brought operations to pretty much of a halt. Another two BHI employees were staying in the same hotel as I, and we had to get back to Esfahan. We located a private driver who agreed to drive us back for \$300. I made my second overland trip between Tehran and Esfahan. While driving, the driver lost gears and for the last part of the trip we drove in first gear. But we got to Esfahan. I wondered for several days if the driver managed to get back to Tehran ok.

Back in Esfahan, I started hitting tennis balls for a living, stocking the BHI bar, and showing movies in the evenings to BHI employees awaiting evacuation. My job was to keep people upbeat and cheerful.

Eventually, the civil unrest became dangerous. Government services shut down, and the electricity went off every night at 7 pm like clockwork. Our landlady asked us to leave. She feared what might happen to her if it were learned she rented to an American.

BHI eventually solved the problem for us, as the company mandated a forced evacuation from the city to a Bell compound about 20 kilometers north of Esfahan. At that point my friend and boss had injured himself and was medevac'd out of the country. I became the new head of BHI Employee Support Services. That would have been sometime in January 1979. The Shah would leave Iran on January 16; Khomeini returned February 1. In the interim there was an attempt at setting up a government, with Shahpour Bakhtiar as head, who was perceived to be the Shah's puppet and didn't last long. I was asked to remain as part of a BHI skeleton contract; the hope was that life would eventually return to normal and BHI would continue operations.

During those two weeks in the latter half of January 1979, things began unraveling even faster. Esfahan airport had been closed down, and all evacuations were rescheduled overland to Tehran. I was part of a six-man logistics team that helped coordinate these overland evacuations. I was useful, as I was the last employee in management who spoke Farsi. I was on the last overland convoy.

That final trip overland between Esfahan and Tehran was difficult. There were several checkpoints we had to go through with young teenage boys boarding our busses with automatic weapons slung over their shoulders. The law at that point was whoever was holding a gun. I remember a long stop in Qom, a holy city, and near Khomeini's birthplace. I think we were held up for several hours while the then-Revolutionary Guard kept us at gunpoint, trying to decide what to do with us. We were finally allowed to move on.

FEBRUARY 2026 MARKET REPORT FOR HILLCREST AND PARKVIEW AT HILLCREST

- by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams A Team Florida



We are holding steady at 89 active condo listings and 20 homes/townhomes listed. However, things did pick up during the month of February. Nine condos and one townhome went under contract although only 5 condos closed.

As for rentals, there are 10 active condo listings and 13 active homes/townhomes. Three condos went under contract, and 3 closed; a 2/2 for \$2200 per month and two 1/1/1 units rented for \$1440 and \$1575. One furnished townhome went under contract in 20 days that was listed at \$5,200.

When looking at pending sales, keep in mind that those that have been on the market more than 6 months have probably been lowered

several times. When pricing your property, don't look at the active listings, look at the closed sales.

Hillcrest remains the "Hidden Jewel in Hollywood." It is well constructed, perfectly located, and the vast majority of its 24 condo buildings and Parkview HOAs are well run by proven, business-savvy board members who are strong financial stewards, proactive with preventive maintenance, and experienced in managing large projects.

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 FEBRUARY 2026

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

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
T	1436 Silk Oak	1906	3/2/1	725,000	700,000	127
21	4400 Hillcrest #303	1132	2/2	219,900	pending	280
C-23	4330 Hillcrest #519	1284	2/2	187,000	pending	192
8	1101 Hillcrest #103	899	2/2	169,000	pending	382
9	1001 Hillcrest #302	899	2/2	169,000	pending	136
25	3800 Hillcrest #316	844	1/1/1	159,000	pending	17
4	1000 Hillcrest #207	744	1/1/1	155,000	pending	127
23	4330 Hillcrest #616	1216	2/2	135,000	pending	17
27	3850 Washington #1114	844	1/1/1	120,000	pending	461
26	4001 Hillcrest #509	844	1/1/1	115,000	pending	293
26	4001 Hillcrest #912	1296	2/2	220,000	200,000	200
11	4900 Washington #203	961	2/2	199,990	184,000	192
9	1001 Hillcrest #108	744	1/1/1	139,000	135,000	105
26	4001 Hillcrest #403	844	1/1/1	137,000	130,000	143

Continued on Pg. 5



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4302 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood, FL 33021

Continued from Pg. 4

HILLCREST/PARKVIEW FEBRUARY 2026 RENTALS

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	RENT	DOM
T	4735 Eucalyptus Dr	1769	3/2/1	3,900	3,900	144
T	1030 Eucalyptus Dr	1421	3/2/1	3,500	3,500	95
T	5180 Eucalyptus Dr	1421	3/2/1	3,500	3,500	41
19	901 Hillcrest Dr	1150	2/2	2,000	2,000	188
1	F-5200 Washington St	775	1/1/1	1,850	1,850	189
17	F-4700 Washington St	770	1/1/1	1,675	1,675	12
16	950 Hillcrest Dr	770	1/1/1	1,650	1,650	56



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STATE OF THE COUNTY - County Commissioner Beam Furr - District 6



Greetings Hillcrest Residents,

2026 continues to move along at a breakneck pace. While events on the national and international level may be divisive and even frightening, I am proud of Broward County's continued unity as we join together to make immense progress on the issues that matter most to Broward County residents,

including all my friends in Hillcrest. As we work to make our home the best place to live, work, and play, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners hosted our annual Board Retreat last month, which brought together all nine County Commissioners along with County Administration as well as each department and division head in the County hierarchy. This conversation was an intensive look at our priorities for the next year, as we move to shape our budget and address the needs of the community. All conversations regarding budget and priorities are clouded by uncertain next steps that the state legislature will take on the elimination of non-school property taxes. The elimination of property taxes would significantly reduce Broward County's general fund, as well as the general fund of all municipalities in the state of Florida. This would lead to reduced spending, on human services, infrastructure, arts, and much more. Every Hillcrest resident should have this on their radar. Despite this uncertainty, I was glad to have the opportunity to present to my fellow commissioners and take steps forward on crucial issues.

Party On The J

Another edition of the beloved West Hollywood event Party on the J event occurred this month. Coined the Party on the J, this event is also known as the International Music, Food & Art Festival. It is a true collaboration of small, locally owned businesses, residents and community organizations

celebrating the diversity of commerce and culture throughout the city, including Central West Hollywood. This event is put together by Hollywood Commissioner Idelma Quintana, who also serves as my Chief of Staff and your city commissioner representing Hillcrest! It was a great turnout, and the number of food vendors, artists, businesses, and musicians that participated was a real testament to the incredible talent in this part of Hollywood. It was wonderful to see so many residents and visitors having a joyous time in gorgeous Broward County weather! Congratulations to Commissioner Quintana and all the organizers of this event.

Arts 50

I know how much residents in Hillcrest love our local arts! Congratulations to the Broward County Cultural Division on celebrating 50 years of arts and culture in Broward County! This month marked the "Arts 50" kickoff for the Cultural Division, which will feature a year of incredible programming that displays the immense talent and creativity in Broward County! At this point in our country's history, our local arts scene is more important than ever. Arts 50 is an opportunity for us all to come together and acknowledge our shared joy for the arts and culture of our home. Thank you to Cultural Division Director Phillip Dunlap and his staff for all the hard work they do. You can view a comprehensive list of upcoming art and culture events in Broward County by going to artscalendar.com.

Contact Us

My District office staff is available to you from 10 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday. The office in the Hollywood Library has reopened for service, and my staff is also working from my office in Fort Lauderdale and from other locations within our District 6. The Fort Lauderdale office is open for your convenience Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. If you would like to schedule an appointment, call 954-357-7006/7790, or email me at bfurr@broward.org.

High Cholesterol: The Silent Risk Condensed from an article by Kimberly Goad, AARP

High cholesterol is sneaky. Like high blood pressure, it usually has no symptoms, which is why nearly 40% of U.S. adults don't know they have it. Left untreated, it can quietly raise your risk of heart attack, stroke, chest pain, and peripheral artery disease.

How do you catch something you can't feel? **Know your numbers.**

According to preventive cardiologists at places like Johns Hopkins Medicine, routine blood work is the most reliable way to spot high cholesterol early. Numbers matter but doctors also look at your overall cardiovascular risk, not just a single test result.

Your annual lipid panel measures:

- HDL ("good" cholesterol): Helps remove excess cholesterol. Aim for 60+ mg/dL
- LDL ("bad" cholesterol): Causes plaque buildup in arteries. Aim for under 100 mg/dL
- Triglycerides: A common blood fat. Aim for under 150 mg/dL
- Total cholesterol: A snapshot of all cholesterol in your blood

What cholesterol really is (and why you need it). Cholesterol isn't the villain it's made out to be. Your body needs it to:

- Build cells
- Produce hormones
- Make vitamin D
- Help digest fats

Problems start when too much LDL circulates in your blood. It sticks to artery walls, forming plaque that narrows and stiffens arteries (atherosclerosis), increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke—and not just in the heart, but throughout the body.

Experts at Cleveland Clinic warn that many people with inherited high cholesterol are never diagnosed, even though levels are elevated from birth. High cholesterol also raises the risk of strokes, mini-strokes, vascular dementia, and circulation problems in the legs. How to know if you are at risk:

- Poor diet, inactivity, smoking, or excess alcohol
- Aging (your liver clears LDL less efficiently)
- Conditions like diabetes or kidney disease
- Family history of high cholesterol or early heart disease

If that's not enough, medications may be added. While statins are still common, newer options now exist, and combination treatments are increasingly used. Prevention is powerful. When treating high cholesterol, doctors usually start with lifestyle changes:

- Heart-healthy eating
- Regular exercise
- Weight loss (even 5–10% helps)

A major study in The New England Journal of Medicine found that people at high genetic risk cut their heart disease risk nearly in half by maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The American Heart Association recommends:

- Limiting saturated fat
- Avoiding trans fats
- Getting 150 minutes of moderate exercise weekly
- Quitting smoking or vaping

Bottom line: Don't wait for symptoms because symptoms often mean damage is already done. A simple blood test, smart lifestyle choices, and early action can protect your heart for decades to come.

MAJOR ESCALATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST ADDS FRESH UNCERTAINTY FOR MARKETS - *by David Treece*



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The recent military escalation involving the U.S., Israel, and Iran is serious. Lives have been lost. Families and communities are directly impacted. Beyond markets and policy, there is a very real human cost unfolding in the region.

At the same time, geopolitical instability introduces economic uncertainty. Airspace disruptions, shipping shutdowns, retaliatory strikes, and shifting regional power dynamics have added another layer of risk to an already fragile global backdrop.

For investors, the core question is straightforward: How does this affect your portfolio? Let's be honest. Markets were already navigating challenges.

- Stock valuations have been elevated.
- AI enthusiasm was cooling as profit expectations were reassessed.
- Inflation progress has been uneven.
- The labor market has been gradually softening.

This conflict didn't arrive in a calm environment. It landed on top of existing uncertainty. Despite the severity of the headlines, a disorderly selloff is not the base case. Here's why:

- Roughly \$26 trillion remains parked in cash and money market assets. That liquidity can stabilize volatility rather than accelerate panic.
- Financial conditions are stable. There are no signs of credit stress or systemic strain.

- Corporate earnings and margins remain broadly supportive. Historically, true market breakdowns happen when leverage unwinds, credit freezes, or liquidity disappears. Those ingredients are not present right now.

Volatility? Yes. Systemic collapse? Highly unlikely.

The Real Wild Card: Oil

The economic transmission channel is energy. About one-fifth of global oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz. Any sustained disruption there could push prices higher. So far, shipping delays appear limited, and Iranian leadership has indicated no current plans to block navigation. OPEC+ has announced modest production increases, and the U.S. economy is far more energy resilient than in past cycles.

Oil typically reacts first to fear, then recalibrates to fundamentals. If prices spike briefly and settle, markets adjust. If prices remain elevated for months, inflation pressures could reaccelerate, consumer spending could soften, and central banks could face renewed policy constraints. That's what deserves monitoring.

What Smart Investors Do in Moments Like This

They don't panic. They don't trade headlines. They assess exposure. They review risk. They confirm their strategy still aligns with their goals and time horizon.

Disciplined diversification matters most during geopolitical stress. Markets have absorbed wars, crises, and policy shocks before. Long-term returns are driven by earnings, productivity, and innovation — not short-term news cycles. Emotional decisions are what damage portfolios.

If you're feeling uneasy about how your investments are positioned — or if you simply want a second opinion in light of current market concerns, that is a prudent step.

Reach out to Treece Financial Group for a portfolio review and consult: <https://www.treecefinancialgroup.com/contact>

MARTY KIAR BROWARD COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

Qualifying for the Limited-Income Senior Exemption – Does Your Social Security Count?



To qualify for the 2026 Limited-Income Senior Exemption, an applicant must be 65 years or older as of January 1, 2026 with a combined household adjusted gross income not exceeding \$38,686 for 2025. Many seniors believe they do not qualify for this exemption because their social security payments exceed this amount; however, applicants who file income taxes should look at their adjusted

gross income amount (line 11 on the IRS 1040 form) to see if they do qualify for this additional savings. If you are not required to file an income tax return based on your age and income, you would qualify for this exemption. To apply for the additional Limited-Income Senior Exemption, please visit our website at web.bcpa.net and click on "Exemptions & Classifications".

If you are already receiving the Senior Exemption and have not moved to a new home, your exemption will automatically renew for the 2026 tax year unless you notify our office that you no longer meet the income threshold.

BCPA's Tax Estimator - An Online Tool to Help You Plan for Your New Home

While the Property Appraiser's Office does not set or collect taxes, we know the importance of understanding what the property taxes will be on a new home. Before purchasing your new home, you can estimate what the property taxes will be using your purchase price and the current tax rates available. It is important to understand that this tool is simply an estimate and does not include any non-ad valorem fees associated with the property. The non-ad valorem fees are shown on the property's previous tax bill or TRIM Notice also available online.

If you currently own a home with Homestead Exemption, you can also estimate the taxes on a new home using any portability you may have on your current home.

Both the Tax Estimator and Portability Estimator are available online at web.bcpa.net under the "Online Tools" tab.

If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at martykiar@bcpa.net.

Take care,
Marty Kiar, JD, CFA

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANDATORY MANAGEMENT BILL IS FILED

- by Eric M. Glazer



HB 465 and SB 822 have been filed by House Rep Danny Nix and Fabian Basabe, together with Senator Joe Gruters and Ana Maria Rodriguez.

These bills cover condominiums, co-ops and HOAs and say:

An association with total annual revenues of \$750,000 or more must contract with a community association management firm. Each board member or officer of an association that contracts with a community association manager or a community association management firm has a duty to ensure that the community association manager or community association management firm is properly licensed before entering into a contract.

House Rep. Danny Nix, FL

House Rep. Fabian Basabe, FL

Senator Joe Gruters, FL

Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez, FL

HB 465 AND SB 822 CO-SPONSORS

The condo version goes a little further and adds:

An association operating a multi-unit condominium must contract with a community association management firm. The community association management firm must possess all applicable licenses required by part VIII of chapter 468. Each board member or officer of an association that contracts with a community association manager or a community association management firm has a duty to ensure that the community association manager or community association management firm is properly licensed before entering into a contract.

The strange part about this particular portion of the bill is that it seems to require a multi condominium to contract with a management firm only. Can it simply hire an in-house manager? It seems like the answer is NO.

My initial reaction to the bills was amazement and shock. What a financial boom for management companies! Since when can't Boards self-manage a community? How can this be?

Having had time to reflect on the matter, I'm not sure it's that big of a deal. I would assume that 99.9 percent of communities with budgets of \$750,000 or more already have professional management. The same goes for multi-condominiums

This bill really should only require a handful of communities who won't get on board with professional management to finally get on board. The question is..... will professional management necessarily do a better

job at managing these communities than a self-managed community would do?

I am on record numerous times as advocating for professional management in communities with large budgets or a large number of units or homes. There's no question that the numerous requirements over the past few years on associations in terms of budgets, reserves, websites and record keeping alone warrant the need for professional management. There is simply a lot more to know now than there was to know just a few years ago. Professional management is at least presumed to know what's required.

So, what do you guys think? Let me know. Tune in Sunday mornings at 11AM to my Condo Craze and HOAs Radio Show on 850 WFTL.

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Condominium & Planned Development

CTMH Condo & HOA Board Member Certification at Beverly Hills Condominium

Thinking about serving on your condo board? Already on one and want to be sure you're up to date? This in-person certification course is a great opportunity to learn, ask questions, and better understand how condominium and HOA boards work.

ALL HILLCRESTERS ARE INVITED

Date: March 26, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Location: 5300 Washington Street, Hollywood, FL 33021

This live, in-person class runs for a minimum of four (4) hours and satisfies the statutory education requirement for board members. It's open to **current board members, future board members, and anyone interested in learning more about condo and HOA governance.**

A minimum of 20 participants is required to hold the class. To receive a certificate of completion, attendees must be present for the full session, as partial attendance does not qualify under state requirements.

We'll take short breaks throughout the day, including a 30-minute lunch break midway through the class. Please note that food and beverages will not be provided.

Questions? Feel free to contact the event organizer, **Catherine Evanoff**, 954 962 0121, for more information.

Please note: When you submit the registration form, your name and email address are not automatically collected. Be sure to include your contact information so we can confirm your registration.

REGISTER HERE: <https://forms.office.com/g/gi7CDY68Eg>

When Condo Associations Throw Out Ballots: What This Arbitration Case Teaches Boards and Owners - *by Eric M. Glazer*

We all know that Condominium elections must be fair, transparent, and inclusive. When associations improperly disqualify ballots, they risk having an entire election overturned. A 2019 Florida DBPR arbitration decision involving Lake Clarke Gardens Condominium Association is a textbook example of how **overly rigid or incorrect election practices can backfire**.

The dispute in plain terms

In this case, a unit owner and board candidate lost a board seat by three votes. The association had thrown out 22 ballots for various technical reasons. When those decisions were challenged, the arbitrator closely examined whether the association was actually allowed to disqualify those votes under Florida law.

Signature mismatches alone are not enough

The association rejected ballots because the signatures on the return envelopes did not “match” signatures on file. The arbitrator ruled that when voters submitted sworn affidavits confirming the ballots were theirs, the association had no legal basis to exclude those votes. In addition, Boards are not handwriting experts. Absent an affidavit from an owner who says that’s not their signature on the envelope, that vote must be counted.

Hand delivery is NOT illegal proxy voting

Several ballots were rejected because someone other than the unit owner physically delivered the sealed ballot to the association. The arbitrator flatly rejected this argument.

Florida rules expressly allow ballots to be mailed or hand delivered, and they do not restrict who does the delivering. Delivering a sealed

ballot for someone else is not proxy voting. The vote still belongs to the unit owner.

Using a different outer envelope does not invalidate a vote

Some owners did not receive the association’s return envelope and used their own. The arbitrator ruled these ballots were improperly rejected because the substitute envelopes still contained all required identifying information and showed no sign of fraud. If the voter’s intent is clear and the envelope meets rule requirements, the vote counts—even if the envelope is not the association’s original.

Failing to use an inner envelope does NOT void a ballot

The association discarded ballots because voters failed to place them inside a secrecy envelope. The arbitrator held that secrecy is a right that belongs to the voter, and that right can be waived. Importantly, waiving secrecy does not disenfranchise the voter.

The bottom line is that inner envelopes protect secrecy, not eligibility. Associations cannot throw out votes simply because secrecy was waived.

After correcting the improper exclusions, the arbitrator concluded that the election did not allow a full, fair, and free expression of the voters’ will. As a result, the arbitrator ordered that the candidate who originally lost be immediately seated on the board, replacing the sitting director.

This case is a reminder that condo elections are not about paperwork traps, they are about democracy within the community.

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THE HISTORY OF HILLCREST



In 2008, we invited Herb and Jason Tobin, son and grandson of Ben Tobin, the developer of the Hillcrest community, to a Hillcrest Leadership Meeting to talk about the history of our Hillcrest Community. Here is what we learned.

In 1945, Ben Tobin Acquired the Hollywood Beach Hotel. In that acquisition (10 acres on the ocean) he acquired the 100 acres Hollywood Beach Country Club in downtown Hollywood as well as the 300 acres of land which is today Hillcrest Condominiums. Twenty-five acres, now Washington Park, they sold to the school board. Ben acquired the property through the U.S. Navy which was used as an officer barracks and training facility during World War II. The original owners were Ed Rosenthal, who also owned the Del Coronado Hotel in San Diego and Edmund Kaufman, one of the brothers who owned Kay Jewelers. In the early 1960's, with the advent of jet travel, Ben Tobin and his son Herb became involved in a process of determining what the best use for the Hillcrest site was.

One idea for the area was a rock pit, which was a very lucrative business in those days. A cemetery was another option. But the Tobin family were always in the people business so the final decision was to build 50+ similar 3-story co-ops that would look like Buildings 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, called the E-buildings due to their shape.

In the early 60's jet travel cut the commute from New York to Florida from four hours to two. Puerto Rico became the preferred destination so many Florida hotels turned to the convention business. Hillcrest was meant to be a retirement community for people with modest incomes. A lady by the name of Barbara Gompers, who had lived in Building 21 until she sold her unit to move to an ALF as many have, was the registered Manager of the Hollywood Beach Hotel. She would travel to country Clubs up north and sell units to groups of members. Prices started at roughly \$6,700 to \$6,900 and hit a high of \$15,000 as demand increased. The Country Club was the center of the community for the new owners. Then as things progressed, it was necessary to build 5 stories to meet demands. The evolution of the buildings in Hillcrest was buyer-driven. The original sales offices were on the site where Building 15 now stands. 48th Ave. was the Main entrance. After Buildings 15, 16 17, and 18 were built, residents indicated they wanted taller buildings with lobbies and security. Building 21 was the first high-rise ever built on a golf course in Florida. Residents would sell their units and move to the new ones. It was common for someone to have owned a 3-story, move to a 5-story and end up in a high-rise. One bedroom units in building 21 were 994 SF including the balcony, 2 bedroom units were 1296 SF including the balcony and for the first time two rows of corners were called "deluxe" and totaled 1499 SF.

Buildings 1 through 21 were co-ops; this is what New Yorkers knew and were comfortable with buying. Building 22 was the first condo. It even had a name "Madrid" which is still on the sign out front. A new amenity was added to the now six lines of 1499 SF

saunas! The day they announced it the Surgeon General came out with a statement that saunas were bad for people with heart conditions...! Only three corner units ended up with saunas.

Buildings 22, 23 and 24 with the exact floor plan layouts had a steady influx of buyers. Building 25 was the first 12-story building and started out as a 252 unit building. At this time, so many people were buying more than one unit and combining them, it ended up with 235 including large 1634 SF corner units with double balconies. So when Building 26 was built, the first – and only- three-bedroom units were built totaling a whopping 2444 SF which included 2 balconies, one off the living room and one adjoining the master bedroom.

Many developers built and sold units with the promise of building a Country Club in the future. The Tobin motto was, "The Promises are on the Premises" so the Country Club was always a part of the community although it was a separate entity that sold memberships. At this time, Florida started instituting the toughest condo laws in the country due to developer mistakes. The Tobin family took heed and historically, our buildings that were well maintained from the beginning have withstood the test of time ... and Hurricane Wilma!

Twenty-four buildings comprise Hillcrest. Buildings 6, 7 and 8 were built first and faced the 18-hole golf course and are adjacent to the first pool recreation complex building. The number 13 was considered unlucky so there was never a Building 13 in the plan; and of course, no unit number thirteen in any of the buildings. The family held the land destined for Buildings 12 and 14 for a long time. Building 11 was the only building that did not have Golf Course access and 12 and 14 would have flanked Building 11. The Tobin family sold the land and another developer built Washington Palms.

Herb and Jason then started answering the questions that had been submitted by the members of the Leadership group.

Building 5 wanted to know about the galvanized piping in the building that was starting to corrode. Herb explained that many of the materials as well as the codes were different back in the sixties. Galvanized pipe is what was used; today we have PVC pipes, which were not available then. He added that they used aluminum wiring when building the Hillcrest Country Club because copper was hard to come by due to the Viet Nam war. Many things would have been done very differently today, but the technology at the time was not as advanced.

Another question was why the elevators in Building 23 seem to run more smoothly than the other buildings. When Building 23 was being built, Westinghouse and Otis were on strike. The Tobin's had to go to Canada to buy a package unit, and once the strikes were over, they went back to their original vendors according to plan. Ironically, the elevators in Building 23 turned out to have the longest life and Hillcrest 23 were the last to have to replace their elevators which they are doing this year. Herb pointed out that elevators remain one of the most important pieces of equipment that need on-going preventative maintenance for safety and liability.

Why were Buildings 15 and 16 built with only one parking space per unit and no guest parking at all? The demographic at the time were retirees and snowbirds with one car. In many cases, the wife did not drive at all. Also, the codes dictated one space per unit. Today, with the changing demographics, the code changed to 1.5 and sometimes 1.75 spaces per unit in the developments being built today.

Why were Buildings 19 & 20 built as rental apartments? What not many people know is that these were the last two Hillcrest buildings. When 26 and 27 were being built (both 12 story buildings), they were completely sold out pre-construction with over 200 extra paid deposits meant to roll over to 19 and 20!

Continued on Pg. 11

Continued from Pg. 10

However the market changed. During the Carter years, the prime rate rose to 22% and people got out of the market. So, these buildings were owned and managed as rental apartments by the Tobin Family. They sold all the units to an investor in 2002 that started selling the units to individuals, both investors and residents and both buildings are now condos. Each has a Board of Directors that still allows rentals. Herb Tobin stated that he feels he made two mistakes in the development of Hillcrest. One was not forming a Master Association and the second was that the Country Club should have been structured as an equity club with the owners having that amenity as a part of their unit ownership.

Again, the demographics were changing. The original owners were Country Club people; it was part of their lifestyle. However, in the 80's, the new owners moving in were not into it. Many were still working and did not have the time or the funds to join a Club. The Country Club Corporation of America bought it in the early 80's but soon gave it back due to falling membership. Nat Joseph and Sol Jaffe, who played gin rummy with Ben Tobin, were also partners. Nat Joseph was in the fastener business and Ben was fond of saying that anyone who dealt with "nuts and bolt" had to be crazy. Sol Jaffe lived in Building 26 and owned a dozen car dealerships. Charlie Shannon, the President of Building 26 at the time, also ran the Club. They bought Tobin out and later sold the Club to the Japanese for 9 million dollars. In its heyday, the Country Club offered golf, catering, dining and parties. It was not a Recreation Center. That is why the Playdium was built, to fill that need. The Playdium had pool tables, card rooms, saunas, arts & crafts and a library. Later on, the gym was added. Harry Cott, owner of Cott Beverages lived here in Hillcrest. He too moved several times and ended up in Building 21. His hobby was building models, which were displayed for years at the Playdium.

Hillcrest continued to change as more active, working people moved in. The Country Club changed hands several more times with continued lack of interest from the newer residents. Herb addressed other construction issues. Concrete balconies are no longer being built today but were the only option at the time. Cement Craft offered pre-cast concrete balconies formed with steel (untreated at that time). So today, 35 years later we have rebar's that have rusted and swollen over the years; especially if the owners used indoor/outdoor carpet on an open balcony that retained moisture when it rained. The solution today is to re-preserve or replace. Thanks to the 40-year safety inspection, buildings have addressed their structural and electrical issues successfully and to date, all Hillcrest buildings 40+ years old are prepared to pass the inspection.

Why was **Building 21** built with mostly convertible corners rather than the deluxe two-bedroom corners? Again, the buyers drove the changes. When the buyers wanted air-conditioned lobbies and 24/7 security, the high-rises – never a part of the original plan – came to pass. **Buildings 22 through 24** all have the deluxe 2-bedroom corners, while **Building 21** only has them in the units ending with numbers 19 and 20. Roman tubs started in **Building 23**. **Building 22** has a heat exchange unit but the rest of the high-rises have A/C towers on the roof. The sizes of the corners increased in **Buildings 25, 26, and 27** when the market was booming. 21 through 24 have 1499 sq. ft. corners while 25 through 27 have 1634 sq ft corners that include double balconies. **Building 25** does not have a sister building but has the largest number of units. **Building 26** was built with the only 3 bedroom units. When the market changed, building 12-story buildings ceased. The last two buildings, **Buildings 19 and 20** have six stories and eight stories respectively.

Some of the original owners in **Building 25** remember when they had golf course views across the street before 26 and 27 were built. Why? Buildings 26 and 27 were always part of the master plan but the fourth tee was in that area until it the Executive Golf Course was reconfigured according to the master plan. Hillcrest was one of the first communities where the utilities were underground; cable, power, sewer, etc.

A member asked about the area between Hillcrest Drive and Pembroke Road on the west side of Park. This property was always

owned by the City of Hollywood but the Tobin's, as well as some of the Leadership members, remembered that it was originally a City Dump and an incinerator then a landfill. Now it is a collection center and fueling center for City vehicles. The land abutting **Building 25** is also owned by the city and Hillcresters definitely need to stay informed about future plans. The lesson to be learned here is that Hillcrest has always been subject to drastic changes based on the market of the day. Today is no different. We lost the Golf Course, which was sad, even to those of us who don't play.

We have all in one way or another gotten enjoyment out of living in a golf community. The first plan, back in 2009, was to build a 13-story twin condo on the land where the original Country Club sat and town homes across the street. We decided we wanted upscale homes and town homes rather than another high rise building that would be marketed to renters. When the covenant was lifted on the 18-hole golf course, the current plan went into effect with 645 homes/townhomes. Hillcrest is zoned for 3,000 units and we have 2,355 condos so 645 was the limit of the number of residences that could be built.

Usable park space with walking trails, lakes, tennis courts and a community center were all part of the plan. From Baby Boomers to Millennials, beautiful surroundings that lend themselves to exercise and activity are desirable assets. We have a group of new neighbors who complement the eclectic mix of retirees, young professionals and couples starting families as well as our well-to-do snowbirds.



Part of what has happened over the past few years that has nothing to do with the Parkview project is the addition of a Charter School called Championship Academy on the site that used to be the Playdium. Dr. Frank Gaines is the new principal and he is determined to make Championship Academy an A rated school. In future issues of Inside Hillcrest, we hope to have a page written by the Academy students to keep us updated on how things are going in their world since they are part of our neighborhood.



In one issue we interviewed three Parkview families and introduce them to you in Inside Hillcrest. We look forward to having a Parkview page included in Inside Hillcrest also. Our Hillcrest family has grown over the years and our main goal is the same, to have a beautiful, safe, and happy place to live. As Mario Puzo said, "The strength of a family like the strength of an army, lies in its loyalty to each other."

Welcome to Hillcrest – the Hidden Jewel in Hollywood!
TO BE CONTINUED...

March Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham

It has been a while since I found a new recipe that we tried and liked enough to save for another time. This one is interesting. I don't cook gnocchi often, but at \$2.99 a pound at Publix, I figured why not? I buy the shelf stable kind. Also, shrimp is on sale quite often, so I always stock up. We love juliened sun dried tomatoes in oil and Aldi has them at a great price. Of course, whenever I see a recipe and already have all the ingredients, it is a no-brainer. And thanks to my dear friend, Barbara Miller, who brings me back the best olive oil from Italy and exotic spices. In this recipe, I put "Italian Seasonings" but if you can find Aglio, Olio e Peperoncino spices on Amazon or Trader Joes, go for it!

Just a reminder: you can freeze lemon juice (I use an ice cube tray) and lemon zest (I use small plastic cups with lids) so you always have it on hand.

All three of these are fast and easy and can be made from start to finish in less than 45 minutes. The trick is gathering/prepping all the ingredients up front (about 15 minutes) and then it is smooth sailing.

SHRIMP SCAMPI GNOCCHI

4 TBS EVOO plus 1 TBS
2 TBS butter
1 lb. gnocchi
4 tsp minced garlic
½ cup white wine, broth or clam juice
Salt and pepper
2 TBS Italian spices
1 lb. large peeled, deveined shrimp (tail off or on)
1/3 cup sun dried tomatoes (drained)
1 TBS lemon zest
2 TBS lemon juice
½ cup chopped parsley



Heat 2 TBS of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add gnocchi in an even layer to the pan and use a wooden spoon to break up any stuck together. Brown one side, toss and add the other 2 TBS oil. It takes about 8-10 minutes to get them lightly browned and crispy. Move them to a bowl.

Add the remaining TBS oil and the butter and when it is melted add the garlic. Stir. After about 30 seconds, add the wine. Salt and pepper to taste. Reduce to simmer until reduced by half.

Add the shrimp and when they are just turning pink, return the gnocchi to the pan and sprinkle the Italian spices over the mixture. Toss and then add the sundried tomatoes and lemon zest. Toss again and add the parsley. Toss well. If it looks dry, add a little more wine/juice/broth. Remove from heat and stir in the lemon juice.

Top with a splash of olive oil or sun dried tomato oil and serve.

I liked the fact that in the above recipe, the gnocchi is crispy. And if I am making roasted potatoes, I like them very crispy also. And there is a trick to that:

THE SECRET TO PERFECTLY CRISPY ROASTED POTATOES

If you want potatoes that are golden and crunchy on the outside and light and fluffy on the inside, here is the one simple trick that makes all

the difference: boil them before roasting.

Start by boiling baby potatoes, fingerlings, or russets just until they are barely fork-tender. This softens the interior and removes excess starch, which helps them crisp faster in the oven. As soon as they come out of the water, cool them quickly and dry them thoroughly. **Moisture is the enemy of crispiness.**

Once dry, toss the potatoes with olive oil, salt, and black pepper. Spread them out in a single layer on a roasting pan so hot air can circulate. Crowding the pan causes steaming, which leads to soggy potatoes instead of crisp ones. Roast in a hot oven until the exterior turns deeply golden and crunchy.

There is also a science trick that takes crispiness up a notch. Adding ½ tsp baking soda to the salted boiling water increases alkalinity, which breaks down the potato surface. That rougher exterior turns extra crispy once roasted.

Want maximum crunch? Try smashing or shaking the potatoes in a covered bowl after boiling and cooling. Smashing them flat creates lots of edges and crevices that brown beautifully. If smashing feels messy, shake the bowl vigorously to rough up the surfaces before roasting. In short, boil first for a fluffy interior, rough up the surface for extra crunch, and always roast in a single layer. Follow those steps and every batch of roasted potatoes will be crisp, golden, and irresistible.

BAKED FETA PASTA for two

1 pt. small cherry or grape tomatoes
¼ cup roughly chopped shallots
1 TBS thinly sliced garlic
1 tsp chopped fresh oregano
Salt and pepper
1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
Olive oil
4 oz. block Feta cheese
3 oz. rotini pasta
Thinly sliced fresh basil for garnish



Cook pasta al dente and reserve 1/2 cup pasta water.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss together tomatoes, shallots, garlic, oregano, seasonings and 2 TBS oil in a baking dish. Place feta in the center and drizzle with 1 TBS oil. Bake until tomatoes blister and sauce bubbles, about 20 minutes.

Remove baking dish from oven. Mash feta and stir together with the tomatoes and their juices. Stir in pasta and add pasta water until desired consistency is reached. Garnish with basil.

20-MINUTE, THREE INGREDIENT, THREE STEP, EASY ON THE WALLET, LOBSTER RAVIOLI

I feel like I need to leave you with an easy, fast recipe for one of my favorite dinners. LOBSTER RAVIOLI. Believe it or not, Aldi's lobster ravioli at a great price is better than the more expensive brands because the first ingredient on the package is actually...LOBSTER!

Continued on Pg. 13

Continued from Pg. 12



All you need is a storebought jar of Alfredo sauce and you are in business. Take the time to go to Sedanos on 441 and buy their frozen lobster head meat. Go all the way to the back left side of the store and you can find it in the freezer. It is about \$10 per pound, but it is pure lobster meat and works great in recipes.

Cut off a chunk and defrost it. Add it to the pan when you warm up the Alfredo sauce, toss in the cooked ravioli and it is over the top delicious!!!

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1. The 'Lick' Strategy: Licking releases endorphins in dogs. A simple lick mat with a bit of plain Greek yogurt or wet food can act as a natural pacifier during high-stress moments like thunderstorms or visitors.

2. Controlled 'Sniff-aris': Instead of a fast-paced walk, let your dog lead with their nose for 5 minutes. Mental enrichment through scent is more tiring (and calming) than a mile-long run.

3. The 'Safe Space' Buffer: Ensure your pet has a designated 'no-touch' zone. When they are in their bed or crate, they are 'off-duty.' This predictability reduces the anxiety of the unknown. Need a hand with specialized care, recovery, or senior pet needs? Your neighbor Rho at Pawsitively Happy Paws is here to help. Scan the code in my ad **below**!"

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INTRODUCING CITY CHICKEN



Ever heard the term "Mystery Meat". Apologies to the Midwesterners out there but this may be the weirdest food thing I have ever heard of.

However, if you grew up in Cleveland or Pittsburgh, you're probably shrugging right now like, "What? Everyone knows city chicken." If you're from the Great

Lakes region, you've at least heard whispers of it—usually involving a grandma, a frying pan, and zero explanation. And if you're from literally anywhere else, you're probably doing what I did: rereading the name and thinking, Wait... how is this chicken if there's no chicken?

Because here's the plot twist: city **chicken contains absolutely no poultry. None. Zero.**

And yet... it somehow tastes like chicken. So what on earth is it?

What City Chicken Actually Is (Brace Yourself)

City chicken is cubes of pork, veal, or both, threaded onto skewers, breaded, and baked or fried until golden and tender. The meat is often shaped to look like chicken drumsticks, which feels like an inside joke that went way too far. It looks like chicken. It tastes like chicken. It is not chicken.

Apparently, this culinary illusion dates back to the early 1900s, when Midwestern cookbooks and newspapers were full of "mock" recipes - mock chicken, mock duck, mock anything-that-was-too-expensive. Apparently, honesty in naming was optional.

Why Not Just Use Chicken? Believe it or not, chicken was a luxury item. Families raised chickens for eggs, not dinner. Eating one was a special

occasion, like Thanksgiving-level commitment. Meanwhile, pork and veal were cheaper and easier to get, especially if you were working with scraps.

During the Great Depression, things got even more practical. There was surplus livestock, government food programs, and a whole lot of "make it work with what you've got." Enter city chicken: a clever, thrifty way to get the flavor and comfort of chicken without actually using chicken. Frankly, it's kind of brilliant. And also completely unhinged.

City chicken grew out of Polish and Ukrainian immigrant communities in the Great Lakes region, especially Cleveland and Pittsburgh. It later popped up in places like Detroit and Buffalo, spreading quietly like a breaded secret. In some households, city chicken showed up with brown gravy. In others, it landed next to Italian Sunday sauce. And if you had a Polish or Ukrainian grandmother, you might not even know it as city chicken, just "the meat on sticks." Fun fact: despite its roots, you won't actually find this dish in Poland or Ukraine. This is a fully American invention—born of thrift, immigration, and a bold willingness to name things creatively.

Does Anyone Still Eat This? Apparently so. These days, most recipes skip veal (too pricey) and stick with pork. You'll still find city chicken in old-school restaurants and family kitchens, especially in communities with Eastern European roots. And once you get past the name (which honestly takes some effort), it fits right in with other comfort food classics. Crispy, savory, nostalgic, and surprisingly delicious.

So yes. City chicken is not chicken. It makes no sense. And yet... I kind of want to try it. Send me a recipe please.

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THE WALK FOR PEACE

*Revised and submitted by BK Etta Stevens, Hollywood/Miami Brahma Kumaris,
28 Monks walked from Texas to Washington, D. C., promoting Peace and Harmony.*



The Walk for Peace is a long-distance pilgrimage in the United States initiated by Buddhist monks from the Hường Đạo Vipassana Bhavana Center in Fort Worth, Texas, to Washington, D.C., promoting peace, compassion, and nonviolence.

The walk began on October 26, 2025, and spanned approximately 2,300 miles (3,700 km). They arrived in D.C. on February 10, 2026, after 108 days. The monks are accompanied by a dog named Aloka, who has become a symbolic figure throughout the journey. Inspired by the teachings of Gautama Buddha, the Walk for Peace aims to raise “awareness of peace, loving kindness, and compassion across America and the world.”

The walk began in Fort Worth, Texas, following a route through the southeastern United States, passing through states including Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Their path then goes north through the Carolinas and Virginia before concluding in Washington, D.C. The monks maintain a walking pace of more than 20 miles a day. They usually start their walk between 6:30-7:00 AM.

The monks engage with the public through quiet presence and peaceful interaction. They have been handing out “peace bracelets” to those they encounter, a Buddhist symbol of protection and blessings. The walk has been positively received in various communities, with local news outlets and social media users highlighting the unique sight of the group traveling on foot in traditional robes.

The crowd listening to the monks talking at the Lincoln Memorial on the last day of the walk, was February 11, 2026.

A key figure in the Walk for Peace is Aloka, a stray dog from India, who joined a prior peace walk in India and later became part of the U.S. pilgrimage. He is often seen walking ahead of the group or resting alongside them and has developed a significant following on social media.

From the Brahma Kumaris perspective, my organization of meditators worldwide, we spend a lifetime searching for peace. This frantic search lays the groundwork for exhaustion. Walk for Peace offers something quietly radical: collective permission to pause, slow down, reflect, and remember that peace is not only the absence of violence but also the value of compassion, restraint, and mindful living. In an era of burnout, climate anxiety, and moral fatigue, this pause enhances and develops the soul and highlights values of honesty, contentment, and love.

It is about contemplation and awareness. The monks invite people to reflect on how to live, relate, and contribute to others. Acts of generosity, meditation, service, and ethical reflection—are practices that translate across cultures, religions and traditions. It legitimizes rest without guilt: not withdrawal from the world but about engaging in it wisely.

The monks’ Walk of Peace makes the strength of silence visible. In a world where responses must be spoken instantly and loudly, the ‘presence’ of silence becomes a disciplined choice. This is not passivity; it is moral clarity. It is the refusal to mirror or absorb violence, verbal or otherwise, of the negative and sorrowful situations we seek to transform. The monks walking for peace are not walking toward a finish line. They are walking to remind us that how we move through the world matters as much as what we achieve.

Walk for Peace is not just a march; it is a silent call to awaken the humanity within us.

Walking this path means choosing compassion over hatred.

It is a voice where violence comes to a halt and empathy begins to speak.

Every step reminds us that we are all human, sharing the same pain and the same dreams.

This journey is not a political demand; it is a moral stand.

Here, restraint is chosen over force, and forgiveness over revenge.



Walk for Peace teaches us to walk together despite our differences.

It is not an act of fear, but a practice of courage.

A message of peace spoken through silence.

May peace be our path, our identity, and our future.’ (Matthew Earl, London.)

Peace is not something we acquire; it is our original blueprint. It is who we are when the noise stops.

Continued on Pg.17

Continued from Pg.16



We forget we are souls, beings of light in physical bodies. We disconnect from our own original nature and feel sorrow. Returning to the point, recognizing peace is already yours. In choosing what we honor, we choose who we are becoming. The monks bring this invitation into public view so all can see the possibility that awakening belongs not only in monasteries but also in civic life.

Message from the Monks: 'May our walk awaken in you the strength to recognize a profound truth: peace has always been with you, living in the depths of your being, and nothing outside you—no hardship, no change, no chaos—can touch its purity unless you let it. This is our shared journey for peace, and we walk it together. We hope we've inspired you to protect what is most precious within you, to remember it, and to walk with us in the understanding that peace isn't something we achieve—it's something we remember, honor, and refuse to abandon. May you and all beings be well, happy, and at peace.' It's Time ... to



make ourselves free with the power of discrimination and begin being true to ourselves, and love who we are and what we can become.

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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7 Big Tax Changes for the 2026 Tax Season (For your 2025 tax return, due April 15, 2026)



These new rules could lower your taxes, especially if you're retired or close to retirement.

1. Bigger standard deduction

The standard deduction gets an extra 5% boost for 2025.

- Married couples filing jointly can deduct about \$1,500 more.
- If you're 65 or older or blind, you also get an extra deduction (up to \$4,000 for single filers).

2. New deduction for 65+ taxpayers

If you're 65 or older, you may deduct:

- Up to \$6,000 (single)
- Up to \$12,000 (married, both 65+)

This phases out if income is over \$75,000 single / \$150,000 joint and disappears at \$175,000 / \$250,000. Available 2025–2028, whether you itemize or not.

3. Much higher SALT deduction

If you itemize, the deduction for state and local taxes jumps from \$10,000 to \$40,000 in 2025.

- Phases down for incomes over \$500,000
- Drops back to \$10,000 in 2030

4. New deduction for car loan interest

If you bought a new (not used) vehicle in 2025 that was assembled in the U.S.:

- Deduct up to \$10,000 in loan interest
- Phases out starting at \$100,000 income (\$200,000 joint)

Available 2025–2028, even if you don't itemize.

5. Bigger 401(k) catch-up (ages 60–63)

If you're 60–63, you can contribute extra:

- Total contribution up to \$34,750 in 2025
- Helps reduce taxes if contributions go into a traditional (not Roth) account.

6. New deduction for tipped workers

If you earn tips in a traditionally tipped job:

- Deduct up to \$25,000 in cash tips
- Phases out above \$150,000 income (\$300,000 joint)

Available 2025–2028, even with the standard deduction.

7. New deduction for overtime pay

Workers can deduct overtime income:

- Up to \$12,500 (single)
- Up to \$25,000 (married filing jointly)

Phases out at higher incomes and ends after 2028.

Bottom line: Whether you're retired, still working, or boosting savings before retirement, these changes could significantly lower your tax bill; however many benefits depend on income limits and expire after 2028.

*** MANIPULATION ***

Ed Note: When I read a great article, I want to share it – like this one. Now if only I could find one how to handle stupid people who are stupid at the top of their lungs. I promise to get back to you on that one. Meanwhile, this is the condensed version.

The One Phrase That Makes Manipulators Uncomfortable (and no, it does not contain an F-bomb)

I read about a surprisingly effective way to stop a manipulator in their tracks. No arguing. No explaining. No emotional gymnastics. Just this: "That's interesting. Tell me more." I am going to have to practice that. Apparently to the writer, this phrase works because it sounds polite. Harmless, even. But to a manipulator, apparently, it's kryptonite.

The writer goes on to explain that because manipulators thrive on emotional reactions, confusion, and urgency. This phrase removes all three and quietly flips the power dynamic. When you say, "that's interesting," you're acknowledging what was said without agreeing, disagreeing, or taking the bait. Translation: "I heard you, and I'm not rattled."

When you add "tell me more" or "What makes you say that?" or "How did you come to that conclusion?" with no sarcasm in your voice, you replace chaos with curiosity.

Important note: avoid "why." "Why" feels like an accusation and invites defensiveness. Stick with calm, open-ended what questions and let them do the talking.

If you're dealing with gaslighting, guilt-tripping, or subtle coercion, here's how to use this phrase like a pro. Gaslighting is when someone tries to make you doubt your own memory or reality.

- **They say:** "I never said that. You're remembering it wrong."
- **You say:** "That's interesting. Tell me more about how you remember it."

Then calmly add: "That's not how I remember it," or "Let's ask someone else who was there."

It works because you are not defending yourself in real time. You're asking them to get specific. Gaslighting collapses when it has to stand on details instead of fog.

If someone is guilt-tripping you... Ah yes, the emotional invoice.

- **They say:** "After everything I've done for you, this is how you repay me?"
- **You say:** "That's interesting. What makes you say that?" Follow with: "I appreciate what you've done, and this is still my decision," or "I can care about you and still choose differently."

This one works because the spotlight shifts from your supposed guilt to their reasoning. Emotional leverage weakens when it has to explain itself.

If someone is subtly coercing you...this is manipulation that ties agreement to loyalty or love.

- **They say:** "If you really cared, you'd agree with me."
- **You say:** "That's interesting. What makes you think that?" Then: "Caring doesn't require agreement," or "I can care and still see it differently."

You detach your values from their command. You are not defending your character, you are questioning their logic. That creates space, and manipulators hate space.

Bottom line: Manipulators feed on emotional reactions. The moment you slow things down and get curious, their leverage starts to wobble. Calm questions protect your clarity, your boundaries, and your sanity. In tough conversations, **composure beats confrontation every time.**

And nothing rattles a manipulator more than realizing...they're the one being calmly observed.

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