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85/77° See 9A

Miami Herald

THE VIRUS CRISIS



A woman rides her tricycle near the entrance to Morningside Park on April 1. The park is closed but people were exercising in the neighborhood as the coronavirus pandemic has closed gyms and all but essential businesses.

'Parks don't kill': Stuck at home, residents want green spaces to reopen

BY LINDA ROBERTSON
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Nothing has kept Robert "The Raven" Kraft from running eight miles every single day for 45 years. Not hurricanes, not lightning, not food poisoning, not pneumonia, and now, despite the official closure of his beloved beach trail, not even the new coronavirus. Kraft has been forced to suspend his dihard group runs from the Fifth Street

lifeguard station. The public is barred from the beach indefinitely to prevent the spread of the virus. But "The Raven" is not your average beachgoer. He is a Miami Beach institution. After hearing a plea from his loyal followers, city leaders allowed him to keep his streak going, on

the sand for the sake of his aching back, as long as he runs alone. "I'm going solo, and the lifeguards and police know I have permission to be out there where I belong," said Kraft, 69. "I want to give people hope by showing them here is one steadfast thing that hasn't changed

in our upside-down world." While the great outdoors is greater than ever as an escape from a disease that thrives on human contact, the complications of social distancing have made going outside as fraught as being stuck inside a crowded place.

Green sanctuaries and trusted routes still provide a mental and physical release, and neighborhoods have come alive with walk-

SEE OUTDOORS, 21A

Florida's test backlog is bigger than stated and could be huge

■ The backlog of COVID-19 tests in Florida is under-reported by the health department, a practice that can create a false sense of security and make it difficult to know when to relax policies on social distancing, experts say.

BY NICHOLAS NEHAMAS AND DANIEL CHANG
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Florida is significantly under-reporting the state's COVID-19 testing backlog, a blind spot in the data that could obscure the pandemic's size and hamper efforts to decide when it's safe to end restrictions such as social distancing—even as Gov. Ron DeSantis touts the state's transparency when it comes to the novel coronavirus. On its public website, the Florida Department of Health says about 1,400 people statewide are waiting for their test results. But that's an undercount, the department acknowledged in response to questions from the Miami Herald. And it's likely a massive one.

That's because the state only reports the number of Floridians waiting to hear back from state labs, not private ones—and those private labs are completing more than 90% of Florida's tests. The state website doesn't say that its figures exclude the vast majority of pending tests for the novel coronavirus. Two small, private South Florida healthcare

providers told the Herald this week that they are awaiting COVID-19 test results for almost 800 patients. That number alone would increase the state's official count of backlogged tests by more than 50%.

Not having the results from the backlog of testing means state officials can't get a real-time picture of how deeply the disease has penetrated the population and when people might have hope of resuming their lives and getting back to work, said Arthur Caplan, professor of bioethics at New York University Langone Medical Center.

"The key to ending the quarantining and social isolation is accurate information about where testing is, how fast we can expect tests to clear, and ultimately how fast we can expect to have a lot of testing," Caplan said. "If the backlog gets enormous, then the public needs to know."

In addition, by not acknowledging delays, the state might escape public pressure to resolve the backlog quickly. And there are other costs. People who are sick can still spread the disease without knowing it. Researchers and offi-

SEE TESTING, 2A

'There was blood.' Fear of virus fuels fights at Krome

■ Concern that newcomers would bring the new coronavirus with them — while ICE refuses to test detainees — sparked two fights this week at the Krome detention center.

BY MONIQUE O. MADAN
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Immigration detainees at the Krome detention center in Miami-Dade are so terrified of catching the novel coronavirus from new inmates that fist-fights erupted among migrants in detention and staff twice this week, leaving guards and detainees bloodied and inmates with black eyes in solitary confinement. "There were fist fights. There was blood," one detainee

told the Miami Herald. "It was so vicious that the lieutenant was yelling and crying over the radio."

The fear that the influx of newcomers would bring COVID-19 with them — while U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement refuses to test detainees for the illness — sparked two fights Tuesday night, when current inmates refused to let incoming inmates through the front doors of their crowded dormitories. The Miami Herald spoke to two high-level security officials, 15 immigration lawyers and 58 detainees at Krome, who confirmed the "chaotic disturbances" in two separate detention units. "Officers were rushed by

SEE KROME, 22A

High-rise dwellers adapt after their fun things were taken away

■ Several condo complexes and apartment buildings in South Florida shut their amenities to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus. But some property managers are finding ways to keep residents entertained.

BY REBECCA SAN JUAN, ANDRES VIGLUCCI AND KENE RODRIGUEZ
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Among the biggest perks of living in an apartment or condo building are the sweet amenities — pools, recreational areas, gyms, outdoor barbecue pits, kiddie playgrounds, tennis courts. But since Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez ordered all amenities in residential buildings closed on March 30 over concerns of the spread of



MARIA GALLI

Residents at Pier 19 Residences were treated to free pizza last week.

FROM PAGE 1A

AMENITIES

the novel coronavirus, apartments and condos have started to feel too small, no matter the size. Even Jack Nicholson succumbed to cabin fever in "The Shining," and he had an entire hotel at his disposal.

To help ease self-isolation fever during the COVID-19 pandemic, Miami condo managers and government agencies are finding ways to keep tenants entertained and off each other's nerves: Instagram happy hours, live follow-at-home Zumba classes, virtual museum tours.

Some condo dwellers are more immune to cabin fever than others. As an account executive for Leno, Neha Kapoor has long worked from home. She isn't feeling as stir crazy as some of her neighbors at the Brickell Place condominium tower, where all the amenities — pool, gym, valet parking — are closed and only two people are allowed to ride in the elevator at the same time.

But Kapoor still needs to socialize like anyone else, so she partakes in weekly virtual happy hours Thursday afternoons with the other nine people from her sales team.

"You hear people's dogs in the background and all kinds of things going on," she said. "It's a way of knowing other people are out there, because almost everyone in my building is hunkered down inside their apartments."

As part of their happy hours, Kapoor said everyone had to come up with their own "quarantine drink." Her contribution: The Cobri Bryant 19.

"It's named after my favorite basketball player," she said. "Co for corona, bri for Brickell and 19 for CO-

VID-19. It's just Roku gin and water."

That spirit of fun creativity is the key to fostering community while respecting stay-at-home orders. The Miami Downtown Development Agency kicked off events designed to keep residents at home.

"The top priority for us is to keep residents safe,"



Crespi

said Christina Crespi, executive director of the Miami DDA.

The organization is hosting free events tar-

getted to residents in the Arts & Entertainment District, Brickell and the Central Business District but open to anyone who registers on its website, Crespi said. Those include a Friday happy hour from 6-7 p.m. on its Instagram page. More than 500 viewers tuned in last week for a live event with DJ Fly Guy.

Also in the works: virtual art-gallery tours, a book club and children's programming and science experiments.

"We want to target all demographics in downtown," Crespi said. "We want to provide any experience that someone would have walking around."

At Pier 19 Residences on the Miami River, residents are encouraged to hone their Zen with live at-home Zumba and meditation classes. All they have to do is link to classes from the building's weekly newsletter, said developer Lisette Calderon, founder of Neology Life.

Last week, Calderon also launched a weekly quarantine-and-chill, delivering a large pizza for each unit



Neology Life

Neology Life, the development and property management firm behind Pier 19 Residences, ordered a large pizza from Power Pizza, pictured above, for each resident.

from Power Pizza. In future weeks, she plans to order from other food and beverage providers, to spread the love to local firms.

Pier 19 will also host live music performances from a pool in the coming days.

"We're hiring one of our residents to perform," Calderon said.

At the 200 condos managed by KW Property

Management and Consulting, residents also get a weekly newsletter with links to exercise courses from Orange Theory, virtual tours of national parks — think Grand Canyon and the Great Smoky Mountains — and family activities. In one game, kids are encouraged to write a letter to their favorite Disney character.

Easy access and simplicity are crucial to encouraging older residents to participate, said Katalina

Cruz, KW's managing director of operations. "We've received good feedback. Some of these ideas may stick," Cruz said.

But for some tower-bound families, virtual escapes aren't enough. Some Miami real estate agents say they're fielding calls from condo owners looking to switch to single-family homes. And some apartment renters are looking to pay to use the swimming pools at vacant homes listed for rent or sale.

"We are getting those phone calls from people who are totally in condos, they can't use any of the amenities and they're home with the kids," said Carole Smith, vice president with Compass Realty. Smith said she has one listing for a house with a pool and the asking rent is \$15,000 a month — too much cash to plunk down just to give the kids some swim time.

That's not all: Smith also



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The Miami Downtown Development Agency kicked off events designed to keep residents at home.

got a call from someone whose grandson is a competitive junior tennis player but has nowhere to practice because courts are also shut down everywhere.

"They're looking for someone who will rent them their tennis court," Smith said. "I have one listing that has a tennis court and will put out a feeler to her. They're will-

ing to pay. I don't know that she would charge or just let them use it out of the goodness of her heart.

"I guess for a budding player, 90 days without practice is not good. They are certainly going to be six feet apart."

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