



**MESSAGE From Lois Turetzky, Ed.D Unit Leader**



**IN THIS ISSUE:**



**Unit  
Leader's  
Message**  
Lois Turetzky, Ed.D

**Should Standardized Tests be Administered to Assess Student Achievement during Covid; that is the Question?**

Schools during the 2020-2021 pandemic years have faced numerous challenges. In addition to all of the physical plant and health issues that principals, teachers and auxiliary staff had to address when schools were in session, most importantly was student learning, achievement and accountability.

School closings, digital and remote learning and the inequities in the educational system have had a significant impact on student learning and achievement. In this environment, this has become particularly evident. We should then ask: how can we fairly assess student growth during this difficult period? Should schools conduct standardized tests? If so, can they securely be administered remotely? Should students' promotion and teachers' ratings be tied to student achievement? Should there be consequences for lack of student achievement? That is the question. In the spring of 2020 when the pandemic was out of control, schools were closed and students and many teachers were just learning how to teach remotely, the then Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos cancelled all federally required assessments. Teacher unions, parents and various other organizations this year are calling for testing flexibility, waivers as well as test cancellations. Who is right? On March 19, 2021, The National Education Association wrote an open letter to the United States Department of Education stating "We call for Standardized tests to be

cancelled during the pandemic". The letter begins:

American students are still navigating the most difficult year of learning in modern history. Between losing loved ones to COVID-19, being forced out of classrooms, adapting to distance learning, and missing out on a year of regular social interactions, they have had their worlds turned upside down. ...We demand all departments of education think beyond the bubble and stop high-stakes testing this year.

In Montana, the Montana Office of Public Instruction requested a waiver from the US Department of Education to cancel standardized testing. It was denied. Ian Rosenblum, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs responded as follows:

The Department believes that, consistent with the {Elementary and Secondary Act}, states should do the best they can to maximize the number of students who are assessed with comparable, reliable, and valid statewide summative assessments.

Montana responded saying that they will not require students to take the assessments in person and will administer a shortened version of the test and grant medical exemptions for those students that need it. The department granted them a waiver stating that they will not lose federal funding if their participation rate falls below 95%.

The Biden administration is requiring all schools to administer standardized tests for the 2020-2021 school year with some level of flexibility.

*Testing, continued on page 2*

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Flexibility in this context means, the administration is not mandating an accountability stipulation, the timing of the assessment (some systems may test this fall) and not requiring testing in a place that is not medically safe. They want to know how the pandemic has impacted learning. Although they will not have the 2020 data, they will compare it to the 2019 scores. Harvard's professor Andrew Ho in an EdCast titled: Student Testing, Accountability, and Covid, agrees that standardized testing should be administered this spring. He states that: "we still don't know enough about what's happening with students' learning –or in their –lives- to draw conclusions about learning loss during COVID." Testing would provide some important insights. If comparisons are made between the 2019 data and 2021, you can determine learning loss and know what you have to make up. Ho believes that standardized tests for this year should be thought of in terms of a census. When one assesses student growth and achievement, one looks at multiple measures not just reading and math scores. You must also consider how this pandemic has affected social and emotional growth and its impact on learning as a whole.

There are many factors that must be considered when requiring and reporting testing data under pandemic circumstances. You may be able to make a fair comparison of achievement when students have continually been in school, in the same system and have had previous standardized testing scores. Many students have dropped out, moved and have not had access to remote learning. Ho suggests that you report test data in categories: those that you have test scores for, those who you have not tested previously.

With all this being said, testing should be used to determine what support and resources students need so that school systems can more effectively plan for the for the up-coming school year. What do you think?

Anderson, J. (2021, March 11). Harvard EDCast: Student Testing, Accountability and Covid.  
<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/21/03/harvard-edcast-student-testing-accountability-and-covid>

Kuhfeld, Megan, Soland, J, Tarasawa, B. How is Covid 19 affecting student learning. (2020, December 3).  
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/12/03/how-is-covid-19-affecting-student-learning/>

National Education Association. (2021, March 19). Cancel the Test: Sign the Open Letter.  
<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-snea/cancelthetests-sign-open-letter>

Sakariassen. Alex. (2021, April 7). Feds deny Montana's standardized testing waiver request.  
<https://montanafreepress.org/2021/04/07/feds-deny-montanas-standardized-testing-waiver-request/>

## Eulogy for Jim Mehlman

We were friends and colleagues from the late 60's when Jim had been recently appointed as a Principal and I as an Assistant Principal. We first met on the picket line in 1968 during the "Ocean Hill" strike, and immediately became union and education fellow activists and friends. I was impressed with his being an original founder of the CSA and later of AFSA (Remember SASOC?). It was clear that he was a true "trade unionist" who saw management as the adversary (not the "enemy"), and would always be fighting for the underdog. He saw no conflict with being a professional educator and a unionist.

We continued into the 1970's as we attended central CSA meetings; he representing Elementary School Principals and I representing Elementary and Middle School Assistant Principals. We became allies on many issues from legislation, school funding, contract negotiations, professional development, school curriculums, member benefits, welfare funds etc.

This relationship continued and grew when I became the President of the CSA. Jim was a part of our staff serving as our Convention Chair (always playing the Star Spangled Banner) and our Librarian. He was a trusted advisor.

This personal and professional friendship continued into our retirements. Jim was active in the RSSA and when it developed units in Long Island and South Florida, Jim continued to serve his colleagues by being the Treasurer. He continued to fight for the rights and benefits of all retirees and seniors as today's CSA Retiree Chapters were formed. He always questioned why things cannot be improved. He was also a charter member of the National Alliance for Retired Americans (AFL-CIO) and a board member of the Florida chapter.

This friendship also involved our families, both in New York and in Florida. The four of us (Jim, Ruth, Sylvia and me) saw each other at our homes, at the opera, at concerts etc. This friendship continued with Edi. We attended each other's children's weddings, celebrated anniversaries and births. Sylvia and I send our deepest condolences to Edi, and to Jim's children Susan and Ben and their families.

Jim was not only an advocate, but he was always the teacher, the mentor, the speaker, the advisor and the confidant. With Jim's passing, we have lost a friend, an advisor, a golf and tennis partner, and a big brother. Every Friday night, regardless of where we were, we would toast the last week with "a scotch." I'll be thinking about Jim this Friday.

Yes, he'll be missed.

**Donald Singer**

**CSA LIAISON &  
OUTREACH COORDINATOR  
TO FLORIDA RETIREES**

**Norm Sherman**, Coordinator  
Council of Supervisors & Administrators  
Phone number: 561-638-6439  
Email: [nshermzie@aol.com](mailto:nshermzie@aol.com)

**6 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions**

It has been 13 months since the pandemic essentially closed down all stores and activities, and people quarantined themselves in their homes. Over the past several months, we have begun to return to normalcy. Stores are now open and various activities are back in operation, although many on a limited basis.

Despite the pandemic, our members continued to ask many important questions about their benefits. In this article, I have listed the most frequently asked questions along with my answers.

1. Q. What is IRMAA? (Most popular question)

**A. IRMAA (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount) is a surcharge added on to your Medicare Part B & D premiums if and only if your income exceeds certain thresholds. The amount of the surcharge depends on your Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI). This year, if it is less than \$88,000.01 filing your tax return as an individual or \$176,000.01 filing your tax return as a married couple, then you just pay the standard amount (The amount is \$148.50) and no surcharge or IRMAA. If your MAGI is greater than \$88,000.01 (individual) or \$170,000 (jointly) then you pay an IRMAA surcharge for both Medicare Part B & D, the amounts depending on how much is your MAGI. Fortunately, IRMAA is reimbursable although you have to apply for it.**

2. Q. Can I apply for IRMAA reimbursement for years prior to 2021?

**A. Yes, you can apply for 2017-19 IRMAA if you have not already done so. Just download the IRMAA application from the CSA Welfare website ([www.csawf.org](http://www.csawf.org)), check off the year you are applying for, and submit it with the proper documents (for example, the SSA letter you received in November 2018, which indicated your 2019 Part B premium and your SSA-1099 letter that you received in January 2020, which indicated the total amount you paid for Part B in 2019) to the CSA Welfare Fund, 40 Rector St., 12<sup>th</sup> floor, New York, NY 10006. Remember: You must complete a separate application for each year you are applying.**

3. Q. I am a retired member on Medicare on the GHI Enhanced Plan D. Am I entitled to drug co-pay reimbursements?

**A. It depends. The GHI Enhanced Medicare Plan D, which most Medicare members are on, has a 3 tier system. When the year begins in January, you start in Tier 1. In that Tier, you pay 25% of the drug cost. There is no drug co-pay reimbursement in this Tier. Once your total drug cost (out-of-pocket expense plus what the plan pays) reaches \$4,130, the next drug cost will put you in Tier 2. In that tier, you pay 25% of the generic drug cost and 25% of the brand name drug cost. Like Tier 1, there is no drug co-pay reimbursement in this Tier. Once your total out of pocket drug cost (known as TrOOP) for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 reaches \$6,550, you enter Tier 3 on your next drug expense. In Tier 3 you pay only 5% of the drug cost. The drug cost in this Tier is REIMBURSABLE up to \$5,000, and there is no deductible.**

4. Q. Must I do anything to enroll in Medicare?

**A. Three months before you go on Medicare, you will receive a Medicare card. Mail a copy of the card to the CSA Retiree Welfare**

*Continued on page 5*

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Marilyn Funes, Ph.D.— Membership Coordinator

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

We are now in the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic, and life is starting to look more normal for us. Our schools are opening; people are outside walking and socializing; restaurants and bars are open once again. Soon we will be holding face to face meetings and not just “zooming” around although this has been of immense help and value this past year.

Now we look forward to jumpstarting our lives, to planning our next vacations, to planning our events for the next CSA of Southeast Florida Retiree Program Year (October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022). At the end of this Newsletter you will see some of the events our Event Planning Committee has already put together for you. With this newsletter we have also included a membership renewal form. We are collecting dues for 2021-2022. It is really important for everyone to completely fill out this form since so many of you have had or made changes in your lives this year. You can also find this form located on our new website ([www.csasouthflorida.com](http://www.csasouthflorida.com)) Thanks to our new Assistant Unit Leader and webmaster Mark Jacoby who did such a great job of creating the website.

We are ending our membership year with a total of 361 members. Like the state of Florida, our numbers are increasing. Florida will gain one more congressional representative in the next election just as New York is losing one. I guess you can't beat our weather.

Finally we want to say a special and loving good-bye to Jim Mehlman who left us this past April. As my husband Carlo said, Jim had a sharp wit and didn't suffer fools easily. One may have disagreed with him, but one always respected him. Jim was bright, sharp as a tack, and knowledgeable. He was from the first and to the end a trade unionist. I'm sorry he missed President Biden's address to Congress where Biden proclaimed himself to be a trade unionist. Jim would have like that. So Good-bye Jim. You will be sorely missed.

Marilyn Funes



## A Tribute to Jim Mehlman

By Lois Turetzky

I first met Jim Mehlman when I became an executive board member of the CSARC of Southeast Florida. I became the Assistant Unit Leader and when Rose Bennet the then Unit Leader passed, I assumed the role of Unit Leader.

Jim served as my mentor. He was involved in the Florida Unit from its inception. He had maintained the unit's records and passed them on to me explaining what had to be done.

He served as the Treasurer up to the fall of 2020 when he turned the reins over to Elizabeth Moss. He was a great asset to me and the unit in general.

He represented our Unit at the Central CSA Retiree Executive Board and was an advocate for us. He was a wonderful gentleman and will be greatly missed.

## Eulogy for Jim Mehlman

By Norman Sherman

Jim was a very unique and special person who was respected by all who knew him. I first met Jim at CSA headquarters in 1995 when I became the High School Director and he became the CSA Librarian. Right from the start our relationship blossomed into a strong friendship as he was always there for me whenever I needed any help.

Jim was one of the strongest advocates of CSA, and unionism in general, that I ever met. He always strived to improve the rights and benefits of the members.

Jim was a proud, dedicated, driven, and kind man whose many contributions to CSA Central and the Florida Southeast Unit were truly noteworthy and a testament to his diligence.

I am particularly honored to have been his friend and colleague. He will be sorely missed.



CSA Retiree Chapter of Southeast Florida regrets to announce the loss of the following members/spouses/significant others since our last Newsletter.

Karl Graulich  
Seymour Greenstein  
Joseph (Jim) Mehlman

Our Heartfelt condolences are extended to their loved ones.

*Norm Sherman, cont from page 3*

**Fund.** The Fund will inform the Office of Labor Relations and your secondary medical insurer (most members keep GHI as the secondary insurer) of your change in status.

5. Q. I had to pay over \$1,300 to have a multi-focal lens placed in my eye after cataract surgery. Is this covered by Medicare?

**A.** Unfortunately, not fully. The CSA Retiree Fund will reimburse \$500 per eye for multi-focal lenses.

6. Q. I am a Medicare-eligible member with Emblem Health as my secondary medical coverage. I went for the first time this year to a doctor and received a \$140 bill. Is this co-pay reimbursable?

**A.** First, the amount you owed was not a co-pay; it was part of your Medicare/GHI deductible. In 2021, the Medicare deductible is \$203 and GHI deductible is \$50. Deductibles are not reimbursable. It is important you keep track of doctor bills so that their total amount does not go over the deductible amounts.

Have a great, healthy and safe summer.

Norm Sherman

CSARC Florida Liaison & Outreach  
Coordinator

Phone: 561-638-6439

Email: [nshermzie@aol.com](mailto:nshermzie@aol.com)



## Dream City

Wearing a French kerchief  
Sitting in a café  
Sip an aperitif  
On the Champs Elysée's  
In my dreams I can see  
Eiffel tower lit bright  
Her strength and her beauty  
Sparkling against the night

I stroll the Paris street  
I am a model, slim  
Beautiful and petite  
From working in the gym  
Dreaming of French amour  
I'm summoned by her song  
Legrand and Aznavour  
Jazz playing all night long

In my Paris mirage  
City of scents and sights  
Crave baguettes and fromage  
Duck L 'Orange and French wine  
I'll just dream of Paris  
But not go travel there  
I've read Georges Simenon  
It's Maigret's streets I share  
I dream of Paris old  
Not Paris that I'd find  
my dream of that Paris  
Lives only in my mind  
by Lenore Kay

In this year of quarantine, I thought I  
Would take you on a mental vacation to  
the Paris of my dreams, Lenore

## **Possible Changes to Medical Coverage by Bob Jeanette**

There are a number of factual errors in the talking points being circulated in response to the letter to the editor of the Chief-Leader, the newspaper directed towards NYC unions, from the Director of COMRO, the alliance of all NYC union retirees.

The City, in cooperation with the Municipal Labor Committee, is in the RFP process to see if we can implement a new type of Medicare Advantage plan which will both provide more services to the retirees and save the City considerable costs for retiree health care.

The first thing to realize is that NYC is, to my knowledge, the only municipality in the country that provides free basic health care to all retirees and their dependents. The City reimburses Part B and Part B IRMAA in full.

Over the past 8 years there have been two health care savings agreements which have had very little impact on retirees. All impact to date has been absorbed by active employees, including higher copays, incentive to use providers affiliated with Emblem Health, and higher deductible/copays for urgent care providers and emergency rooms. The RFP for a Medicare Advantage plan is part of that cost savings effort.

The plan being considered is not a traditional Medicare Advantage plan, such as HIP VIP. The proposed plan is a "passive PPO" Medicare Advantage plan which will basically work just like things are now – any doctor who accepts Medicare can be seen and the plan will cover what Part A and Part B do not. In addition, the new style plans provide a number of additional services, such as Silver Sneakers, and have a priority of improving health rather than just paying for health care.

As presently envisioned, the new plan would be offered as an alternative to the current Senior Care plan.

I am a member of the MLC Health Benefits Committee, which ensures we are at the table and can have an impact on the discussions as well as have an inside track to implementation and educational materials. In addition, Mark Cannizzaro is now the treasurer of the MLC so CSA and its retirees are well represented and a part of the discussion.

*Continued next column*

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If cost savings are not achieved, the ultimate result will be, among other things, paying a part of health care costs, either as a payroll deduction for active members or a substantial pension deduction far greater than what is now taken for prescriptions, possible elimination of IRMAA for dependents, then elimination of IRMAA for members, then elimination of Part B for dependents, then elimination of Part B for members. While no decrease in benefits or reimbursements are even being discussed at this time.

When and if this is implemented, we will provide a number of educational sessions and actively assist members in switching to the new coverage if desired.

### **IRMAA**

For those members who have not completed their IRMAA form for 2019, you need three papers:

The New York City Office of Labor Relations Form (cover sheet) for 2019. Check the 2019 box. The form is on our unit website: [www.csasoutheastflorida.com](http://www.csasoutheastflorida.com)

The November 2018 letter from the Social Security Administration telling you what your Social Security will be for 2019.  
Your 2019 Social Security 1099 Tax Form

Complete the cover sheet and attach the other two papers. Send it to:

**Dr. Doug Hathaway  
CSA Welfare Fund  
40 Rector Street,  
12th Floor  
New York New York 10006**

**If you have any questions contact:  
Norman Sherman  
Tel: 561-638-6438 or Cell: 561-699-4235**

**The forms for the year 2020 will be on the  
CSA website soon**





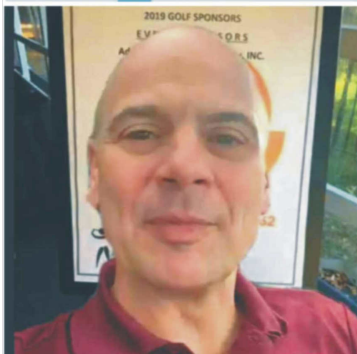
# C.S.A. Florida Retirees

## HEALTH & WELFARE ZOOM MEETING

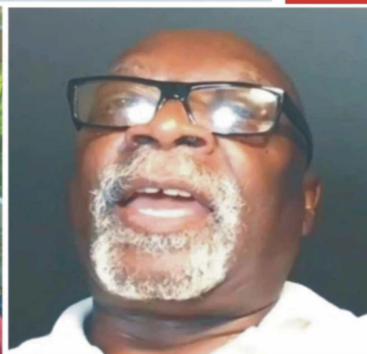
### Speakers

**Mark Cannizzaro**    **Ernest Logan**  
**Don Singer**        **Mark Brodsky**  
**Gayle Lockett**     **Doug Hathaway**  
**Lois Turetzky**     **Norm Sherman**

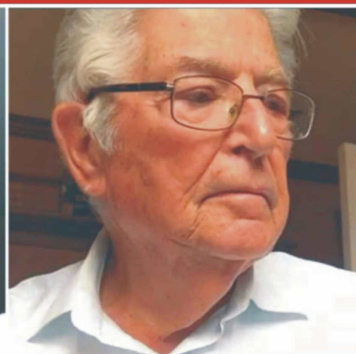
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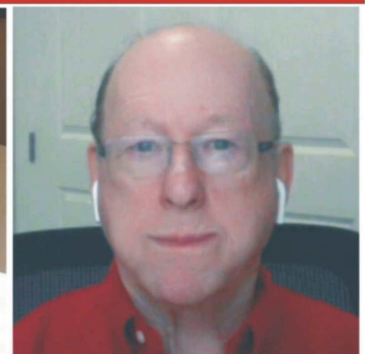
**Mark Cannizzaro**  
CSA President



**Ernest Logan,**  
President Emeritus



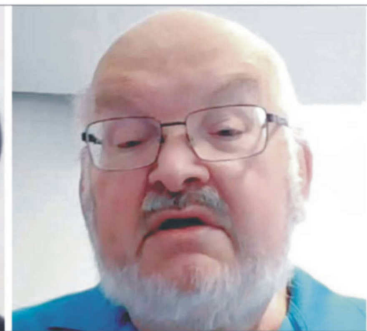
**Donald Singer**  
President Emeritus



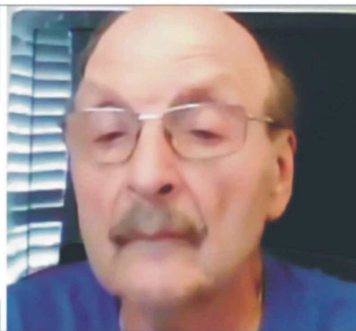
**Mark Brodsky**  
Director, CSARC



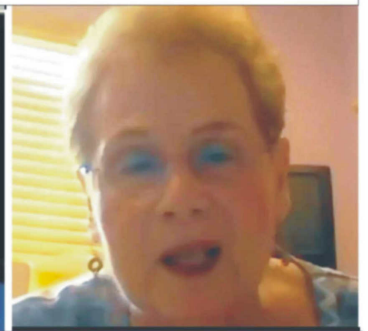
**Gayle Lockett**  
CSARC Chair



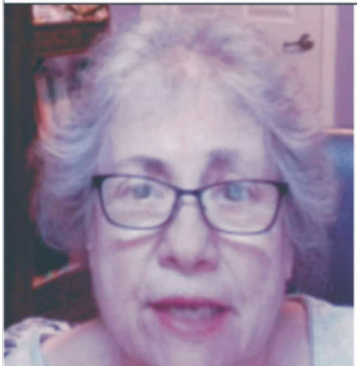
**Doug Hathaway**  
Admin. Welfare Fund



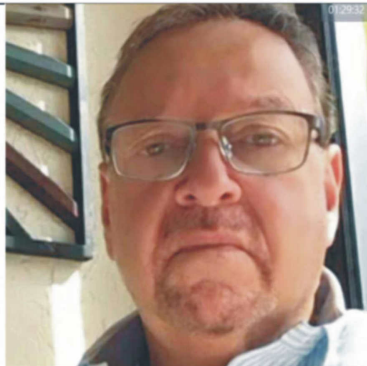
**Norm Sherman, Liaison**  
& Outreach Coordinator



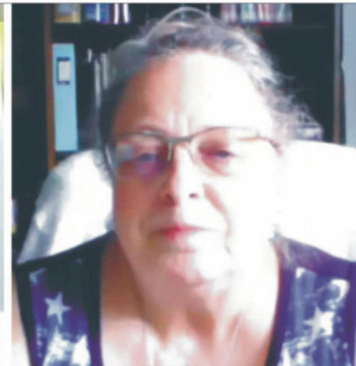
**Lois Turetzky,**  
Unit Leader



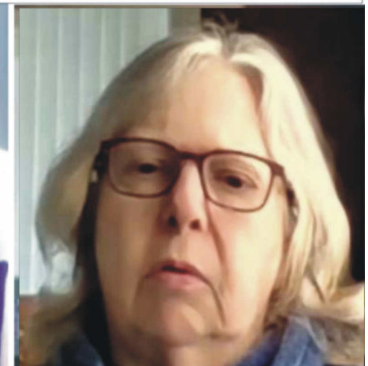
**Sharon Shlakman**  
Secretary



**Mark Jacoby**  
Asst. Unit Leader



**Lenore Kay,**  
Newsletter Editor



**Marilyn Funes,**  
Membership Coor.

# CSARC of Southeast Florida Dates to Remember 2021-2022

**We have reserved some of these dates at the South County Civic Center for in-person meetings and events, if possible. We would also like to plan a holiday get together in December. We will let you know when a date is set.**

**Medicare Workshop:** Wednesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
South County Civic Center,  
16700 Jog Road, Delray Beach, Florida

**Health and Welfare Meeting:** Monday, January 10, 2022  
South County Civic Center,  
16700 Jog Road, Delray Beach, Florida

**Luncheon:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022  
Indian Springs Country Club  
11501 El Clair Ranch Rd.  
Boynton Beach, FL 33437

**Health Fair:** Friday, March 4, 2022  
South County Civic Center, 16700 Jog Road  
Delray Beach, Florida



Please e-mail any letters, comments, or articles of information you would like to share with the Retiree Chapter of Southeast Florida. Write to me at Lenore Kay, 8440 Lake Cypress Road, Lake Worth, FL 33467. Email to [lenore8nj@yahoo.com](mailto:lenore8nj@yahoo.com)

Thank you,

Lenore Kay, Marilyn &  
Carlo Funes Editors



## CSA RETIREE CHAPTER OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

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Norman Sherman

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*In Memoriam*