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2025 HURRICANE ISSUE

NOT IF, BUT WHEN

Experts and community leaders warn residents to take hurricane threats seriously

BY MARY WOZNIAK
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Three messages stand out when talking to area hurricane experts about the 2025 season:

1. Prepare.
2. Make a plan.
3. It only takes one.

For 2025, hurricane forecasts are once again calling for an above-average season. The Colorado State University team is predicting 17 named storms.

Of those, researchers forecast nine to become hurricanes and four to reach major hurricane strength.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the other major source of hurricane predictions for the nation, predicts 13 to 19 named storms, six to 10 hurricanes and three to five major hurricanes.

SEE STORM SEASON, A8 ►

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No power, no problem

A sampling of South Florida's top chefs offer advice on how to eat like kings during hurricanes

BY ROGER WILLIAMS
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One compelling fact remains prominent in the lives of every human, every American, and every Floridian, bar none: We have to eat.

Which often takes heat.

Keeping that in mind and with hurricane season bearing down on the citizens of the Sunshine State like an off-the-tracks freight train, Florida Weekly decided to ask some folks who know eating as well as anyone: What do you feed people if the power goes out — not for a mere 45 minutes or four or five hours, but for four or five days?

These are the simple, practical responses of some of the region's finest, most experienced chefs, east and west. They've devoted their lives not only to the fact that people have to eat, but to a heightened notion: When people eat well, however that may be defined in a time of limited options, they become better people. When they eat, they think more clearly. They're more hopeful. They're more energetic and capable.

Unfortunately for them, perhaps, these chefs speak from a great deal more experience than they wish they had. They've been victimized by storms with

SEE FOOD, A10 ►



ALISSA DRAGUN PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY PHOTO

One of the many dishes served by Chef Theodore Lena at Sara's Kitchen in Palm Beach Gardens, who offered advice for post-storm meals.

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LOVE BEYOND THE GRAVE



TheatreZone
breathes new
life into a
timeless,
classic love
story with
“Ghost: The
Musical”

BY LARRY ELL

Florida Weekly Correspondent

Cinematic love stories that stand the test of time can be as powerful as they are rare.

One such film that struck a global chord was “Ghost,” a hauntingly beautiful story that transcended the bonds of mortality. Released in 1990, the film starring Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore and Whoopi Goldberg

was the highest-grossing picture of the year and remains a touching example of storytelling and on-screen chemistry.

The allure of that film continues to resonate on the stage as, of all things, a musical. TheaterZone in Naples will showcase “Ghost: The Musical,” a thrilling production that promises to grab Southwest Florida audiences by the heart.

This musical adaptation recreates the bittersweet story of a young couple, Molly,

SEE GHOST, B8 ►

2025 HURRICANE ISSUE

Turn power outages into page turners

When the Wi-Fi's out and the wind dies down following hurricanes, let the real games begin

BY CARLIE ADMIRE

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Living in Florida is like playing a real-life version of “The Game of Life” — you load up the car, wrangle the kids and spin the wheel on sunshine and sandy dreams.

But just like the game, sometimes you land on a surprise card... and it says, “Tropical storm incoming.”

Everyone talks about unplugging from screens and reconnecting with family.

This version is ideally from a swanky resort with a sunset view (and maybe endless “happy hours”) and not a humid living room with melted popsicle stains on the carpet.

Once the storm passes and the winds settle, the routine is the same: step outside, survey the damage and stare at the powerless fridge like it owes us answers. “Now what?” becomes the official post-hurricane motto.

While waiting for the sweet hum of air conditioning and the television to light

up, the calm after the chaos is the perfect storm for old-school fun. Roll the dice, deal the cards and travel to imaginative adventures from Gatsby's glamorous soirees to a voyage aboard the Pequod with Captain Ahab, or survive cabin fever with the Torrance family through the eerie halls of The Overlook Hotel.

Books to weather the storm

“Rom-coms are just the books to help you escape,” said Annette Stillson, owner of Annette's Beach Book Nook on Fort

Myers Beach. “Emily Henry and Christina Lauren are two wonderful authors.”

Emily Henry, a bestselling author known for redefining modern romance, made waves with her breakout debut “Beach Read” in 2020 after penning several young adult novels. Her latest release, “Great Big Beautiful Life,” plunges into the scandalous and storytelling, where two writers uncover the layered truths of a media-drenched heiress in

SEE BOOKS, B6 ►

GHOST

From page 1

a sculptor and pottery maker, and Sam, who is in finance on Wall Street. When Sam is tragically murdered, he becomes trapped as a ghost between this world and the next. With the help of Oda Mae Brown, a phony storefront psychic who is shocked to learn she really can communicate with the beyond, Sam fights to expose his murderer and save the woman he loves.

“The writers created a musical that ran on Broadway in 2012, and it was wonderfully done,” said Director Mark Danni. “When it was on Broadway, it was a huge spectacle, but they luckily realized that the story did not have to be that huge. There’s really not that many characters and there was all of us midsize theaters out there in the regional world, so they very kindly created a 10-person version of the musical, which is absolutely gorgeous.”

As one might expect, with such a tight cast, the success of the production rides on the abilities of the actors and actresses. So it is most fortunate that TheatreZone’s collection of talent has been described by Danni as world class.

Anthony Nuccio stars as Sam Wheat, the finance guy-turned-ghost on a mission from the beyond. A nationally recognized rock musical theatre performer, Nuccio became well-known by millions throughout the U.S. as Drew, the lead character in the 10th anniversary, 10-month national tour of “Rock of Ages.” “Ghost” features pop-rock music, Nuccio’s forte as a singer.

“Sam is a great lesson for people, especially in the high-intensity Wall Street culture,” Nuccio said. “It’s about spirituality and the perseverance of love. To live in the moment and appreciate the people around you, because you never know when it will be too late.”

Kara Konken plays opposite Nuccio as Molly Jensen, the grieving sculptor trying to piece her life back together. Based in Naples, Konken is making her 17th appearance on TheatreZone’s stage with her role in “Ghost: The Musical,” having previously performed in productions of “Gypsy,” “9 to 5,” “Into the Woods,” and “Aida.”

Konken prepped for her role with a six-week pottery class and says she is moved by Molly’s transition from joy to grief, and her rediscovery of her true self.

“Because the world keeps turning and I guess it always will,” Konken said. “I can choose to turn around or I can choose to just stand still. Either way, nothing stops another day.”



NICK SHIRGHIO / COURTESY PHOTO
ABOVE: Kara Konken and Anthony Nuccio star as Molly and Sam in TheatreZone’s “Ghost: The Musical.” RIGHT: Jasmine Vizena portrays Oda Mae and Kara Konken as Molly in TheatreZone’s “Ghost: The Musical.”

Jasmine Vizena has the challenging task of recreating Goldberg’s poignant, yet comedic, performance of psychic Oda Mae Brown. Vizena is a well-known Naples performer who has recently returned from Los Angeles, where she honed her performance craft. She trained at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy and boasts credits including “Chicago,” “Footloose,” “Guys and Dolls,” “The Importance of Being Ernest,” and “Annie.”

Vizena will bring comedic timing to a quirky character who she says, “Is a con woman with a heart of gold whose real psychic abilities emerge in the story.”

While focusing on the qualities of their individual characters, there’s an even greater depth they will all need to incorporate. Part of the attraction of the original film was the chemistry Swayze, Moore and Goldberg shared. Their intertwined relationship touched viewers and created a connection with the audience.



Danni is confident his cast has the chops to bring that aura to the TheatreZone stage.

“Yeah, they are a pretty incredible talent,” Danni said. “This is the great thing about professional actors, this is what they do, this is their craft. I know most of these actors, and they’re great at building relationships, and most of the time, when I do shows, my audiences can’t get over that this cast met each other about a week ago and we had nine rehearsals to put it together.”

In addition to the stars on the stage, the other main driver of this production will be the music. Composed by Grammy Award-winning musician Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics, the score features a

broad range of selections from beautiful pop ballads to energetic rock numbers. Orchestrated for violin, viola and cello with a mix of guitars and drums, the conductor has the means to effectively weave the diverse styles into a story, along with the original movie’s iconic theme song that so many people are familiar with.

“The orchestration is absolutely gorgeous and it’s such a beautiful story that it’s great to be able to tell it on the stage with songs,” Danni said. “One of the great things that the creators of the musical did was making sure they got the rights and they licensed ‘Unchained Melody’ by the Righteous Brothers, because that was so important. It was the music that was Sam and Molly’s song, and it appears at different times to remind her of his presence.”

With many of the original scenes taking place in the heart of New York City, creating that atmosphere in an intimate space will rely on the use of projections. Cleverly incorporated into the production by the set design team, the projections transport the audience to the urban locations.

“We can create times where you’re in their apartment, in the subway, or in the office on Wall Street, all sort of just by using furniture and projections,” Danni said. “It’s a beautiful concept for the set that turns into all those places, so I think it’s really cool in an intimate space for this type of story. I think audiences are gonna love it.”

Throughout the musical, themes of love, grief and redemption are woven together to create a narrative that is both haunting and beautiful. “Ghost: The Musical” is a show not to be missed. With its captivating storyline, memorable music and outstanding performances, it’s a production that will leave you spellbound and eager for more. If you’re a fan of romantic thrillers, musicals or just great storytelling, then this show is a must-see.

In addition to Danni, “Ghost: The Musical” features choreography by TheatreZone’s Associate Artistic Director Karen Molnar Danni and musical direction by Charles Fornara. ■

In the KNOW

Ghost: The Musical



- **When:** June 5 through 15, 2025
- **Where:** TheatreZone’s G&L Theatre, 13275 Livingston Road, between Pine Ridge and Vanderbilt Beach roads, on the campus of the Community School of Naples
- **Tickets:** \$50, \$65 and \$85
- **More info:** Theatre.Zone or call the box office at 888-966-3352

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