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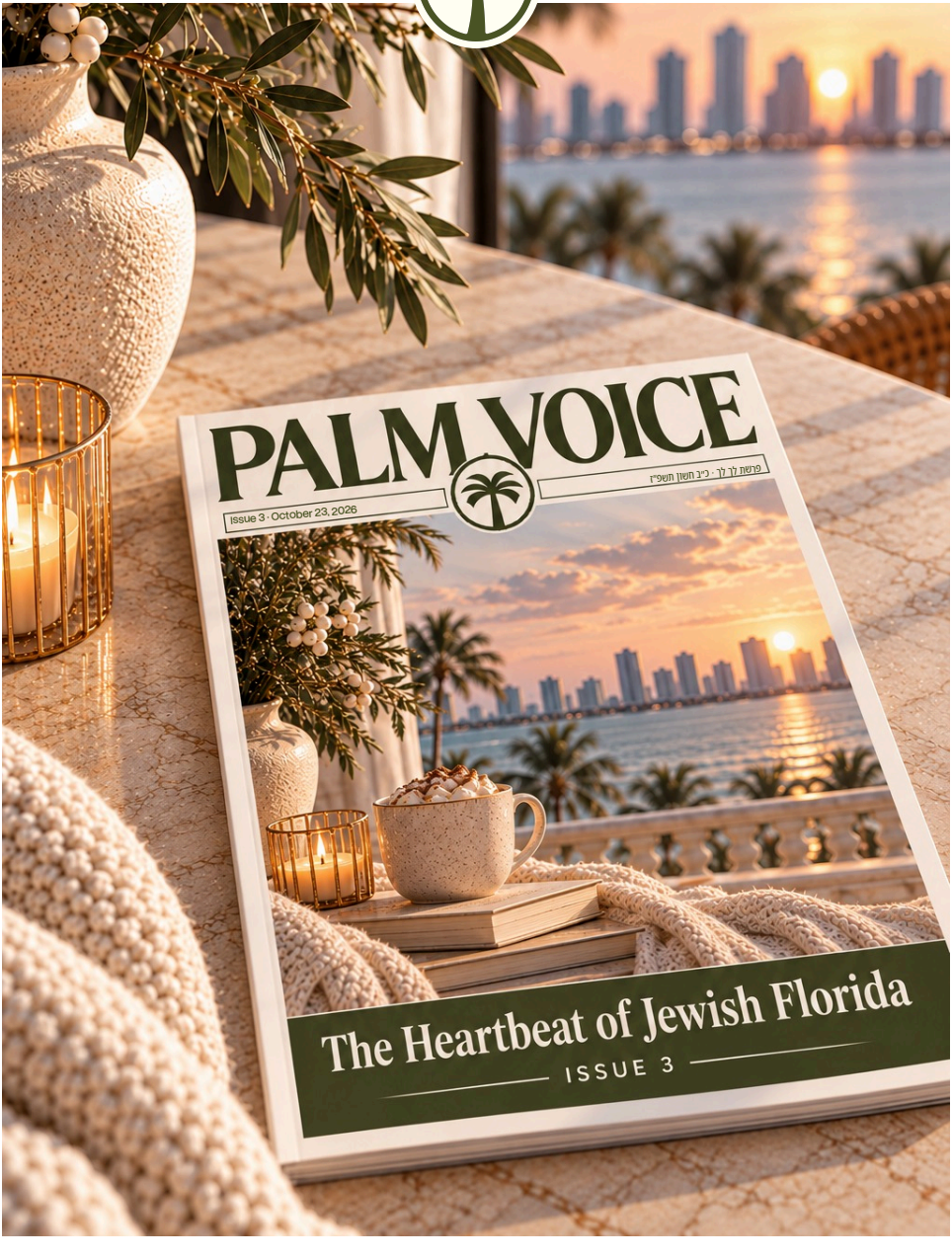
PALM VOICE

Issue 3 · October 23, 2026

פרשת לך לך · י״ב חשון תשפ״ז



VOTE! It's Your Privilege

It's been many years ago, but this incident is still fresh in my mind. Every time election day rolls around again, I recall it vividly.

It was Election Day, November 7, 2000, and being a staunch Republican and Bush supporter, I decided to take my children along to show them the voting process, the secret ballot, and turn them into knowledgeable citizens at a young age.

When I arrived, an elderly woman leaning on a walker stopped me, and in her heavily accented English said, "Could you please go vote for me? It is difficult for me to walk."

Together we approached the election official who was posted at the entrance and explained that it was difficult for the elderly woman to walk across the school gym all the way from the registration table to the polling booth, to read the names of the three candidates and pull the heavy lever.

After some conversation and several signatures, I was given the go ahead. I first took my kids behind the curtain, into the booth, and showed them how I entered my vote. I then walked back to the elderly woman and asked her which candidate she wanted me to pull the lever for.

She looked at me strangely. Then slowly and deliberately she said, "listen to me. You're still young. You don't know what it was like to live in a country where you didn't count and where you were treated as subhuman. You should never know my nightmares. In my rosiest dreams I would've never imagined that one day I'll have the right to vote, to have a say, for my voice to count. I'll actually be begged to vote!" she winked at me.

"I came today even if it's hard for me to shlep all the way here. I came because it's a privilege I don't take lightly. The opportunity is a gift I treasure. Whom to vote for? I don't know. I don't know the candidates. I vote and ask Hashem that whatever the outcome, that candidate should be good for the Jewish people and should continue ensuring that future generations can vote, regardless of race or religion." She waited for me to nod and acknowledge her message as she nudged me in the direction of the polling booth.

As we approach another Election Day, the takeaway is clear. We have a civic duty to vote. It is a privilege to vote. While voting, our thoughts should be of gratitude that we live in a *medina shel chesed*, our prayers should be that the elected official be one who will be right for us as Torah yidden, and for our future generations down the road!

That is our vote.

What is yours?

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The Week

Parshas Lech Lecha · 13 Cheshvan 5787 · October 24, 2026

הדלקת הנרות

Aventura	6:27 PM	Okeechobee	6:28 PM
Boca Raton	6:27 PM	Orlando	6:29 PM
Hollywood	6:27 PM	Tampa	6:34 PM
Miami Beach	6:27 PM	West Palm Beach	6:26 PM

Zmanim

City	עלות	נץ החמה	קרי״ש	חצות	שקיעה	ר״ת	מוצש״ק
Aventura	6:12 AM	7:24 AM	10:14 AM	1:04 PM	6:44 PM	7:56 PM	7:34 PM
Boca Raton	6:12 AM	7:24 AM	10:14 AM	1:04 PM	6:44 PM	7:56 PM	7:34 PM
Hollywood	6:12 AM	7:24 AM	10:14 AM	1:04 PM	6:44 PM	7:56 PM	7:34 PM
Miami Beach	6:12 AM	7:24 AM	10:14 AM	1:04 PM	6:44 PM	7:56 PM	7:34 PM
Okeechobee	6:16 AM	7:28 AM	10:17 AM	1:07 PM	6:46 PM	7:58 PM	7:36 PM
Orlando	6:19 AM	7:31 AM	10:20 AM	1:09 PM	6:46 PM	7:58 PM	7:36 PM
Tampa	6:23 AM	7:35 AM	10:24 AM	1:13 PM	6:51 PM	8:03 PM	7:41 PM
West Palm Beach	6:12 AM	7:24 AM	10:14 AM	1:04 PM	6:43 PM	7:55 PM	7:33 PM

Weather

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
83°/ 74°	82°/ 75°	83°/ 76°	82°/ 76°

Miami Beach — Chance Rain Showers



Before It's Too Late: Unclaimed Florida Lottery Millions

Spring Hill, Florida — A major Florida Lottery ticket worth $10.75 million sold in September remains completely unclaimed.

Nearly one month has passed since one lucky Florida Lottery ticketholder won the grand prize of $10.75 million after purchasing their ticket at a Publix supermarket in Spring Hill, Florida.

Although the jackpot winner still has plenty of time to claim their multi-million dollar windfall, the clock is ticking before it eventually expires. By law, Florida Lottery winners have exactly 180 days from the official drawing date to step forward and secure their rewards.

More Unclaimed Drawings

It isn't just the mega-millions jackpot waiting to be collected. According to Florida Lotto records, more than 15 Fantasy 5 prizes won between September and October also have yet to be claimed. Dozens of additional ticket prizes are still sitting in limbo, waiting for the winners of the daily Fantasy 5 draw games to check their numbers.

• • •

Another Alligator Incident

Winter Garden, FL — "Miyad Kol Chayah Edreshenu" (Breishis 9:5). In an unfortunate incident, a 71-year-old Florida man was killed by a nearly 12-foot alligator while out fishing. Steven Hamilton of Winter Garden was standing near the shoreline of Lake Apopka at Dr. Bradford Memorial Park, 15 miles (24 kilometers) northwest of Orlando, when the reptile struck around 5 p.m.

The presence of other active alligators in the water complicated rescue efforts, and Hamilton's body was recovered approximately two hours later. Wildlife officials later trapped and removed the reptile believed to be responsible.

Dr. Bradford Memorial Park provides direct water access to Lake Apopka, an area well-known for hosting one of the largest American alligator populations in Central Florida, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Hamilton's tragic passing marks the second fatal alligator encounter in Florida this year. Winter Garden Police Captain Michael Mason urged the public to always remain vigilant.



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The menorah



Chabad of Coral Springs



The shopping cart

Shocking Shabbos Vandalism

Coral Springs, FL — A man from California was arrested over the weekend for vandalizing a menorah outside a synagogue in Coral Springs with a shopping cart, causing an estimated $5,000 in damage.

Coral Springs Police said 44-year-old Matthew John Ryan used a Walmart shopping cart with a dog inside during the incident. He rammed it into the menorah and knocked it completely over, shattering the structure on Shabbos morning.

Officers found Ryan about half a mile away, still pushing the cart with the dog inside. Officers drew a taser and ordered him to get to the ground.

Rabbi Moshe Yaras from Chabad of Coral Springs said that the tall aluminum menorah has stood in front of the property for around a decade. Rabbi Yaras said hundreds of mispalelim showed up for Shabbos morning tefillos at the synagogue on North University Drive. A few of the mispalelim were walking to the Shul when they noticed what Ryan was doing and tried stopping him.



Election 2026

Casting Your Vote

Palm Beach, FL — In South Florida, early voting for the 2026 midterm elections officially began on Monday, October 19, 2026.

According to local election guidelines, voters can cast their ballots at any designated early voting location within their specific county of residence.

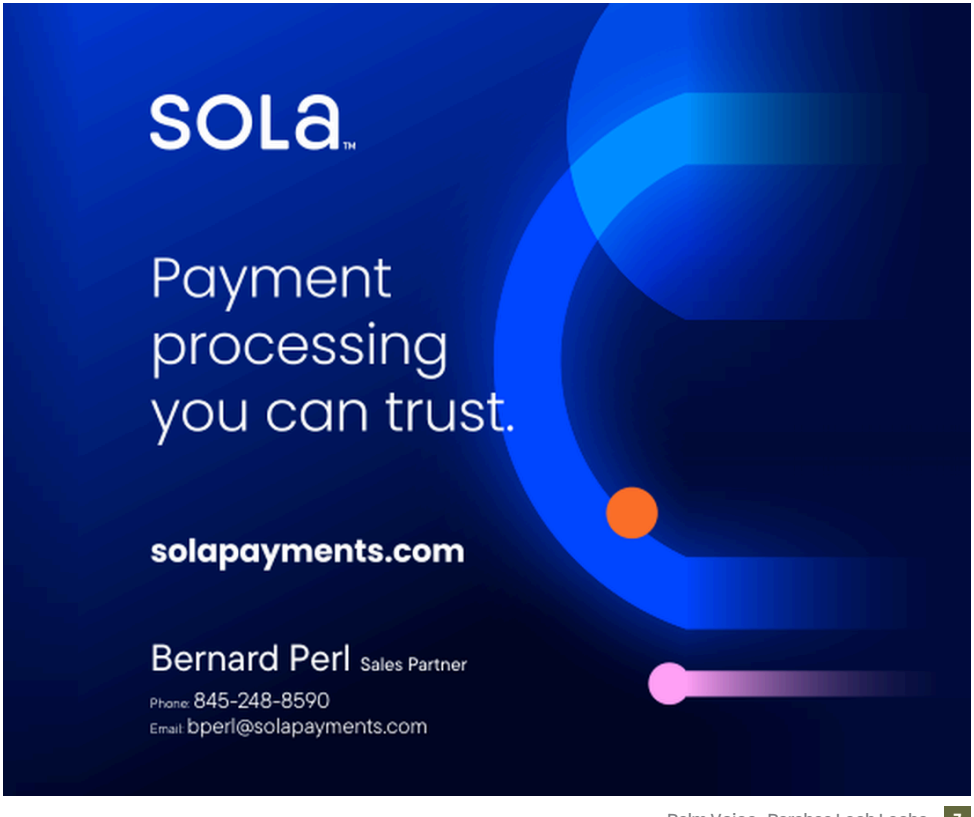
Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, 2026, remains the primary date in the electoral process when polling stations are open for all registered citizens. However, registered voters can skip the Election Day lines on Tuesday, November 3 by casting their ballots early at designated local voting centers.

Please consult official resources to confirm specific early voting hours, dates, and locations for your county.

There are many other options for how to cast your vote:

Optional Early Voting Appointment System

The early voting appointment system allows voters to book a designated time to check in at any early voting site. This optional digital tool assists voters in planning, bypassing long lines, and voting efficiently at their preferred time and place. Book at VotePalmBeach.gov.



A Word of Wisdom

A Blaze and a Blessing

In Parshas Lech Lecha, we encounter a pivotal moment in Avraham Avinu's journey. The Torah states that after Lot separated from him, Hashem commanded Avram to lift his eyes and look in every direction. *And Hashem said to Avram, after Lot had parted from him, 'Lift up your eyes now and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward. For all the land that you see, to you will I give it, and to your descendants forever.'*

This raises a question: Why did Hashem wait until this specific moment, after the painful departure of Lot, to share this blessing with Avram?

The Burning Palace

The *Midrash* (*Bereishis Rabba* 39) compares Avraham Avinu to a traveler who sees a magnificent palace engulfed in flames. The traveler cries out in bewilderment: "Could it be that this palace has no leader? Is there no one who cares? Why is the owner letting it burn to the ground?"

Similarly, Avraham recognized the Creator through the world's precision and harmony, and couldn't bear to watch the *resha'im* of his time destroying it with their *aveiros*—tearing down the fabric of creation, the same that happened in *dor hamabul and dor haflaga*. Avraham's heart burned with pain; he couldn't understand why Hashem allowed His beautiful world to be ruined.

In response to Avraham's anguish, Hashem "peeked" out from behind the flames and declared, "I am the Master of this palace. I see the fire, and I am still here."

The Midrash intentionally uses the word *meitzitz,* peeked. To understand its significance, we look to the *pasuk* in *Shir HaShirim* (2:9). *Mashgiach min hachalonos, metzitz min hacharakim*, He looks through the windows, He peeks through the cracks. While looking through a window offers a wide, unrestricted view, peeking through a narrow crack restricts the field of vision, forcing absolute focus on a single subject. Hashem "peeking" at Avraham signifies the ultimate level of *hashgacha pratis,* directing His undivided, loving attention entirely on him amidst a destructive fire.

The Purpose of the Separation

This beautifully clarifies the timing. The separation from Lot was a time of personal heartbreak for Avraham. He had to distance himself from a nephew he raised and protected, whose household was in spiritual decline. The fraying of his family was a raw, personal "palace on fire" for Avraham Avinu.

Yet, during this dark hour, Avraham merited the highest level of *hashgacha pratis*. He received Hashem's blessing immediately after enduring the painful rift with Lot, which brought him closer to Hashem.

This teaches us a timeless, comforting lesson. When we go through hard times and our personal world is engulfed in a blaze, it is easy to feel forgotten. In reality though, the workings of *hashgacha pratis* tell us the exact opposite. It is specifically when the fire rages that Hashem narrows His gaze, peeking through the cracks of His Hiddenness, to embrace us with a closeness we could never merit to experience in times of ease, preparing us for the ultimate blessings ahead.

(Adapted from the upcoming new sefer "Zeved Toiv")



Hotcakesstudio@gmail.com

What's Also at Stake This November: Taxes, Surpluses, and Local Farms

Besides the many government offices to be decided by Florida voters in the current 2026 election cycle, voters will also consider several proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot. As Election Day approaches, the public debate has intensified over three significant measures placed on the ballot by the State Legislature. Each proposal requires at least a 60% supermajority vote to become part of the Florida Constitution.

Amendment 3: Slashing Homestead Property Taxes

The amendment drawing the most headlines is Amendment 3, a measure designed to significantly lower property taxes for Florida homeowners. Currently, the maximum homestead exemption sits at $51,411, which does not fully apply to school district tax assessments. Amendment 3 proposes a tiered expansion of this exemption exclusively for non-school property taxes, boosting the exemption limit to $150,000 in 2027 and up to $250,000 by 2028. While proponents champion this as massive, much-needed relief for homeowners against rising costs, municipal groups warn that the substantial dip in local tax revenues could heavily impact county budgets that fund crucial public safety and infrastructure services.

Amendment 1: Expanding the Rainy-Day Fund

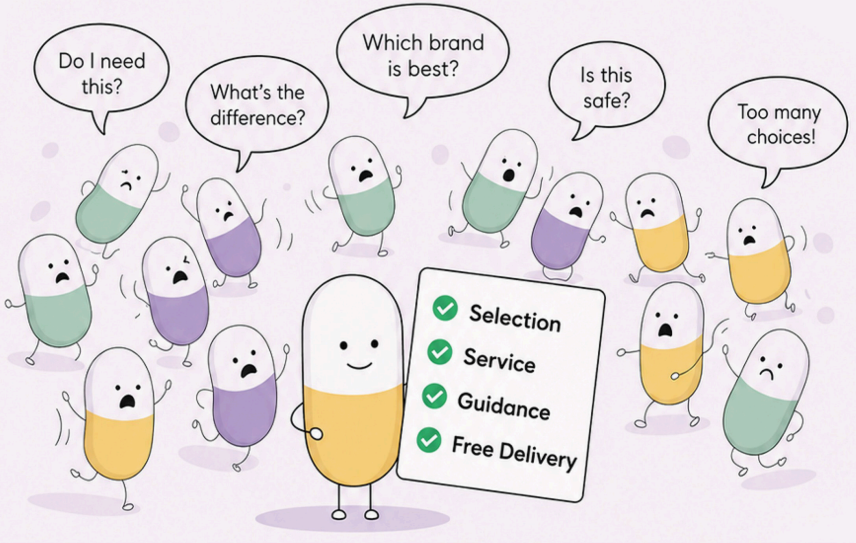
Voters will also weigh in on Amendment 1, which targets the state's budget stabilization fund. Florida's current constitutional limits restrict this emergency rainy-day fund to between 5% and 10% of the previous year's general revenue collections, creating a cap of roughly $5 billion. Amendment 1 proposes raising this cap significantly to 25%, while requiring the Legislature to deposit $750 million annually into the fund until the limit is reached. The Republican Party of Florida has endorsed the measure as a critical protective shield for economic downturns and storms. However, Governor Ron DeSantis has publicly opposed it, calling the move foolish and arguing that historic budget surpluses should instead be directed toward direct tax cuts or local infrastructure relief.

Amendment 2: Property Tax Exemptions for Farmers

A third measure, Amendment 2, seeks to ease operational overhead costs for the state's agricultural industry. The proposal would entirely exempt essential farming equipment—such as tractors, harvesting machinery, and other tangible personal property used for farming or agritourism—from local property taxes, provided the gear is maintained on land owned or leased by farmers. Supporters emphasize that the tax break is vital to level the playing field for local farms competing against cheap foreign imports. Conversely, critics express concern over a projected $31 million annual reduction in county revenues, pointing out that an un-capped exemption disproportionately benefits corporate industrial agricultural operations over small family farms.

As voters prepare to cast their ballots, understanding the long-term structural impacts of these amendments remains critical for our community's future.

Too Many Bottles.
Not Enough Answers.



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A Series · Part 2

The Sunshine State's Jewish Awakening: A History of Vision, Resilience, and Growth

By R. Reich, Boca Raton, FL

The Dawn of Modern Florida: An American Territory

As we recounted last week, *hashgacha pratis* guarded the tiny handful of Jewish residents who remained in Florida by the time the Spanish crown reclaimed the territory in 1783.

Recognizing that the developing, rugged land desperately needed dedicated settlers to survive, authorities allowed those few early families—like David Moses in St. Augustine—to stay.

Humble Beginnings

The beginning of the true dawn of modern Jewish Florida began in 1821, when the region officially became an American territory. At this monumental juncture, the entire state was home to a tiny community of between 30 and 40 *yidden*, living almost exclusively in the northern part of the territory.

Among these early pioneers was Samuel Myers, a lawyer who settled his family in Pensacola in 1821. Just one year later, in 1822, the family welcomed a new baby girl. Her arrival marked a historic milestone as the very first documented Jewish child born on Florida soil.

From these humble beginnings, the seeds were planted for the booming communities that now anchor the Sunshine State.

A Vision for Florida: Moses Elias Levy

As the territory opened up under American rule, it attracted men of great stature and grand visions.

Chief among them was the remarkable Moses Elias Levy. Born in Morocco in 1782 to an influential Jewish merchant who served in the sultan's court, Levy was a man of extraordinary talents. He was fluent in five languages, a highly successful merchant, a social activist, and a vocal supporter of universal education.

But Levy's true passion lay in helping his people. In 1818, he began working on an ambitious, historic project. His vision was to establish a safe haven—a Jewish settlement that would give oppressed families fleeing the hardships of Europe an agrarian community where they could freely practice their religion, live a life of shared values, and preserve their sacred heritage without fear.

With this noble goal in mind, Levy purchased over 50,000 acres of land in 1820 in Alachua County (located in Northern Florida), an investment that eventually grew to a massive 100,000 acres. On this vast expanse, he constructed three main properties: a sugarcane plantation on the Matanzas River, the Hope Hill plantation in present-day Astor, and a settlement beautifully named Pilgrimage, located just a few miles from Micanopy.

Follow the history of how Florida became a US State in next week's issue of The Palm Voice.

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Your Voice – Letters to the Editor

We welcome your feedback, thoughts and suggestions. Please email your letters to editor@thepalmvoice.com

Dear Editor,

I am writing to congratulate you on the launch of your new publication. It is an exciting and welcome addition to South Florida, and your first issue is a remarkable achievement.

The quality of the writing, the thoughtful choice of subjects, and the elegant design all speak volumes.

What I find most impressive, is the way your magazine brings our Yiddishe communities together. With this, you are creating a shared space where readers can connect, and opportunities can arise. It is a truly valuable contribution to the growing Jewish presence here in Florida.

Thank you for creating something that is both intelligent and enjoyable to read. I have no doubt it will find a loyal and appreciative audience.

I wish you continued success with this exciting venture and look forward to many more issues to come.

R.R., Surfside, FL

Mazel Tov

Engagement

Moishy Goldberg (ben R' Dovid) - Georgetown, NY to

Batsheva Gansburg (bas R' Yossi) - Coconut Creek, FL

Hachnosos Sefer Torah

Mazal tov to the Zada Family and Ft. Lauderdale Sephardic community on the new Torah Dedication!



Classifieds & Announcements

Bais Avrohom Yitzchok — Century Village
2518 N. Haverhill Rd, West Palm Beach, Florida
Zmanim for Parshas Lech Lecha
Shacharis, 1st minyan: Brachos 7:00 · Hodu 7:10
Shacharis, 2nd minyan: Brachos 8:00 · Hodu 8:15
Shacharis, 3rd minyan: 9:15
Mincha: 1st minyan 2:00 PM · 2nd minyan 7:25 PM, followed by Mishnayos
Maariv: 8:00 PM · 2nd minyan 9:30 PM

Painter Wanted
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PalmQ

Air Your Questions. Share Suggestions.

Questions, qualms, quandaries. They make up so much of our lives. What about solutions, suggestions, smarts, or helpful hacks? There must be an equal supply, don't you think?

Welcome to PalmQ, where you can air your questions and share suggestions!

To ask or respond to a question, please email editor@thepalmvoice.com.

Q. Help, my 5-year-old grandson scribbled with a green expo marker all over my beautiful white tablecloth. Will it ever come out????
Chavy K.

Q. With gas prices so high does it still pay to drive down to our Florida home? Any advice for a good route?
S. G.


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