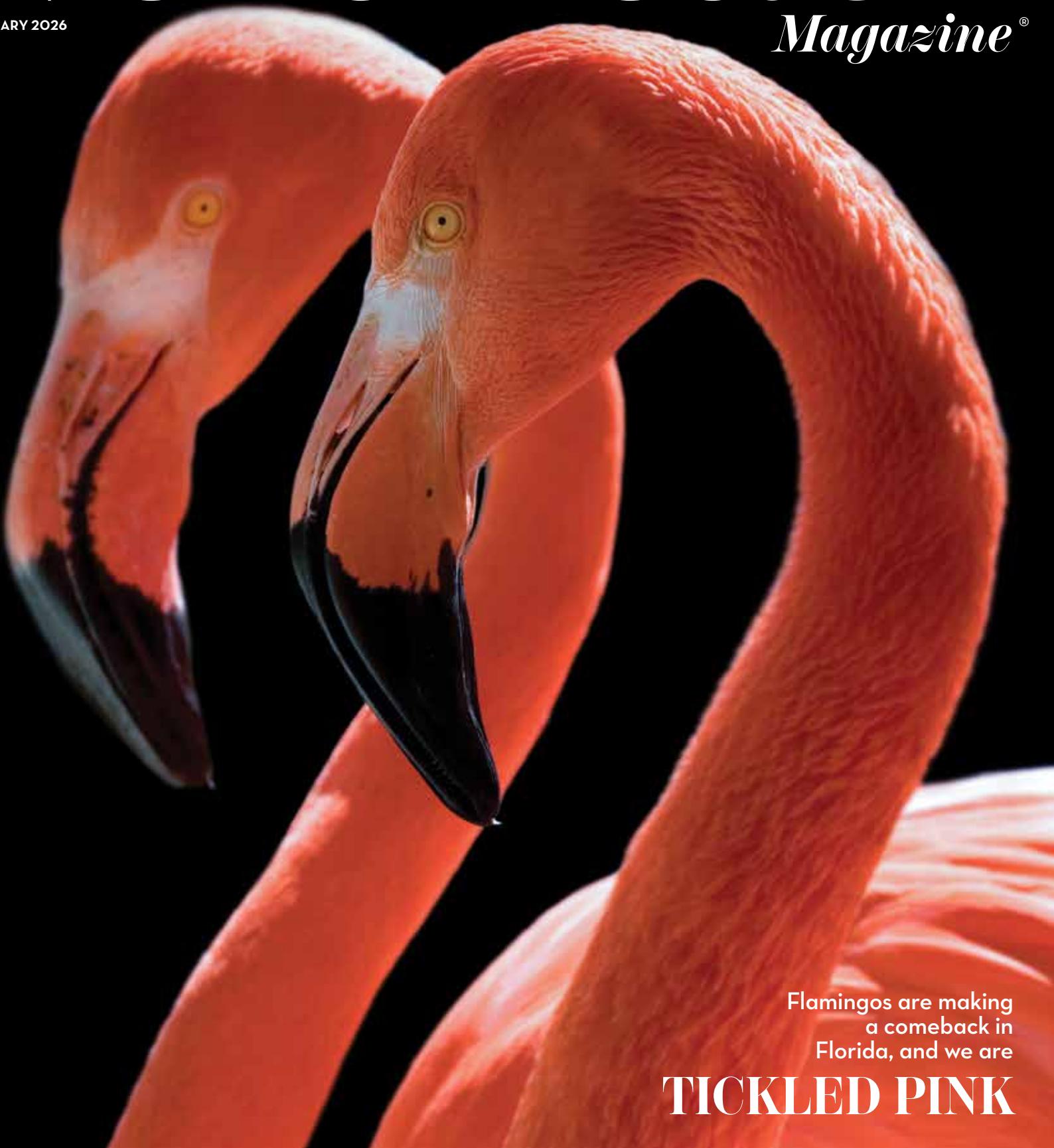


THE FIRST ⚡ THE ONLY

Vero Beach

Magazine®

JANUARY 2026



Flamingos are making
a comeback in
Florida, and we are

TICKLED PINK



SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Giving Dry a Try

FOR SOME, DRY JANUARY MAY OPEN THE DOOR TO A NEW LIFE



BY JEFFREY R. PICKERING

Dry January is here—time to hear the various versions of this annual paean to sobriety.

There's the do-it-yourselfer: "No thanks. I'm doing Dry January." Straight and to the point. He's going to make it.

Then there is the spousal supporter: "I'd love to, but my husband is doing Dry January and said that it would help him

if I did it too." Supportive, albeit somewhat reluctant. She'll make it, but I'm not so sure about him.

And then there is always this guy: "Ugh. Dry January," followed by a head shake or a palm to the face.

There's a story behind this last reply, definitely. A part of me wants to hear it, maybe if it involves a funny escapade. I'm

sure I could relate and laugh along.

Another part of me, however, senses something more serious—a problem. Maybe this is the first step toward a long-term solution. I can relate to that, too.

When you live in a coastal resort town with the Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway as the barrier island's main



AA and Al-Anon programs help the person in recovery as well as their friends and family members.

drag, the customary fixture of booze in the blender can be both a blessing and a curse. I mean, who doesn't love a frozen concoction every now and then? Except, of course, for the family member, friend, or colleague whose drinking has become unmanageable. Dry January can provide an opportunity to reflect on whether drinking alcohol is having that effect on you or someone you care about.

One of the most well-known programs to help people struggling with alcohol is Alcoholics Anonymous. The program was cofounded 90 years ago by Bill Wilson and Bob Smith to address their shared struggles with alcoholism. Al-Anon was

established in 1951 to help friends and family members of alcoholics. It follows AA's Twelve Steps and supports loved ones through recovery, whether the alcoholic is addressing his or her own problem with drinking or not. Over the years, each program's Twelve Steps have been practiced by millions of men and women around the world to learn how to overcome these struggles.

Indian River County Alcoholics Anonymous (indianriveraa.com) and Al-Anon of the Treasure Coast (al-anontreasurecoast.org) hold dozens of meetings each week in Vero Beach and the surrounding area. Meeting

Save the Date
Diamonds in the Rough
Celebration

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

OAK HARBOR

4755 S Harbor Dr., Vero Beach, FL 32967

Details and tickets online at: camphavencelebration.com

Cocktails & Silent Auction 5:30-7pm - Dinner & Program 7pm-9pm

days, times, and locations can be found online and in each organization's "Where and When" publication.

One of Vero Beach's busiest locations for AA meetings is the Newport Club, located at 2536 16th Ave. I learned about the organization and its important contributions to our community in 2022 when Indian River Community Foundation awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Community Enrichment Fund. The money was used to replace the facil-

address substance misuse and behavioral health to promote long-term wellness.

Currently under the leadership of CEO Carrie Lester, Thrive has served the community for more than 35 years. Its programs have contributed to declining rates of binge drinking among adults and youth in Indian River County and play a role in preventing unnecessary hospitalizations resulting from accidents and overdoses. Most important, Thrive changes lives.



A growing selection of zero-proof drinks are available in place of alcohol.

ity's roof and air-conditioning system, providing comfort to many doing the hard work of recovery. It was a modest but meaningful way for us to improve a place in our community that helps so many.

Beyond AA and Al-Anon, there are several local charitable organizations that offer help to those who have a problem with alcohol. Thrive (thrive-irc.org), formerly Substance Awareness Center of Indian River County, is one that offers prevention, education, and recovery services to

"It changed my life," says Thrive counselor Holly Hughes.

Hughes met Thrive while incarcerated. Before her release, Thrive helped connect her to safe housing, treatment, and job-readiness supports. Eventually, Hughes went on to obtain a master's degree in addiction studies and join Thrive's team, helping others struggling with a drinking problem or an addiction.

Talk to people like Hughes or Lester, who has publicly shared her gratitude for her

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Self-help programs are widely available in Vero Beach.

own sobriety, and you'll notice they don't appear to be "finished" with their recovery. They are humble, readily admitting their powerlessness. They maintain a growth mindset, staying active in their recovery. They are servant leaders, offering their strength and kindness to others who may be struggling. They practice serenity, accepting what they cannot change, showing courage to change what they can, and displaying the wisdom to know the difference.

While self-help programs like AA and Al-Anon are known worldwide, and established local charities like Thrive have a strong reputation

throughout Indian River County, other recovery support organizations keep a low profile while still making a meaningful impact. Dynamic Life Recovery Community is a 30-bed facility in Vero Beach consisting of five apartment buildings, a café, and an administrative office. A recent \$42,500 grant from the Community Foundation helped replace air-conditioning units to help the relatively new charity provide a safe, supportive environment for men to continue their sobriety journey. It is actively exploring creating a similar program for women, which would fill a gap in services locally.

Best selling author of 16 books including Presumed Innocent & Presumed Guilty and Co-Executive Producer of Apple TV+'s most-watched drama

Laura (Riding) Jackson FOUNDATION **Presents**

SCOTT TUROW

at our 3rd Annual Speaker & Fundraiser Event

JANUARY 13, 2026

THE EMERSON CENTER

VERO BEACH

HAPPY HOUR

Serve time with Scott! Limited to 25 guests

INCLUDES RECEPTION, SIGNED BOOK, & TICKETS TO MAIN EVENT

5:00pm - 6:00pm

\$250

MAIN EVENT: WE PUT SCOTT IN THE WITNESS BOX

and QUESTION HIM RELENTLESSLY!

OUR HOST & AUDIENCE JOINTLY ACT AS LEAD INVESTIGATORS

6:30pm - 8:00pm

\$60

BOOK SIGNING 8PM Bring your own or buy one on site

Tickets & More Info

admin@lrjf.org www.lrfj.org/scottturowevent

Last year I was reminded of the potential impact of Dry January after hearing from a friend who was approaching her five-year anniversary of sobriety. Drinking was never really a problem until she started developing an unhealthy relationship with alcohol following a parent's death. It was her way to numb the pain. When it stopped working, she hit rock bottom and entered a treatment program. While there, she learned how to practice self-care, overcome fears, and move past the insecurities that were holding her back from spiritual and personal growth. Learning how to live life on

life's terms, without relying on alcohol, saved her marriage and her relationship with her children. Choosing sobriety saved her life.

So, if you are thinking about giving Dry January a try, you have my encouragement. Whether it is for health reasons alone or to take a closer look at the relationship you have with booze, there is no shame in an act of self-reflection and self-care. For some, this New Year's ritual may be no big deal, and that's great. For others, however, Dry January may be just what you need to discover the unexpected gift of a life of sobriety—one day at a time. ☺



A grant given by the Community Foundation to Dynamic Life Recovery in July provided new air-conditioning units for the facility.

Family First — Always.

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family's tomorrow,
today.

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