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- MONDAY - SOCIETY
- TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY - BUSINESS
- THURSDAY - HEALTHY LIVING
- FRIDAY/SATURDAY - WEEKEND

Boca Raton News

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The wind blows. Now where did I put ...?

Experts: Protecting legal documents, medical records should be high priority

By **COREY SIGGINS**
STAFF WRITER

For South Floridians, hurricanes top the list of emergencies potentially occurring during any given year.

Stocking up with plywood, bottled water and other supplies are routine events.

But where do legal documents fit into the preparation equation?

Local experts agree that important papers include: home, automobile and life insurance policies, wills and trusts, medical records and birth certificates, passports, social security information, living wills, and similar documents.

Boca Raton attorney **Jason Brodie** pointed out that such papers should be securely kept under lock and key.

"I would suggest putting legal documents in a safety deposit box at your bank," Brodie said. "If you want to have them a little closer to you, buy a small safe for your house where they can be stored."

Besides the original versions of each document, copies are usually made and kept with the insurance agent or lawyer who initially

drafted the papers.

Copies of documentation about home ownership, including property titles, can be found at the county courthouse.

One recommendation from Brodie is to give additional copies to friends and relatives living out-of-state for safekeeping.

"This is just in case you didn't have access to your insurance agent or attorney after a hurricane," he said. "Make sure you can trust them with your information and that you can easily retrieve it."

If one has the ability to do so, Brodie even advises making audio recordings of certain documents for extra backup.

When asked about the possibility of both a document and its copy being lost, Boca attorney **Larry Corman** replied that most insurance and law offices are able to create documents again using computerized forms.

"With our office, every single will and trust is stored on a computer system in Buffalo, New York



MARK ROWE/PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

See **Prepare** on Page 8

Labels before the calorie cart, says ACSH

By **JOHN JOHNSTON**
CO-EDITOR

Interest (CSPI) and other food activists "have demanded that restaurants list the