

## Customers can prepare for afterlife at Costco

Wholesale store sells coffins

BY ELLA NAYOR  
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Dying isn't quite what it used to be. The days of seeing a funeral director in a dark, pin stripe suit showing a grief-stricken family around a showroom of caskets and embellished urns are seemingly passé.

Now folks can peruse stores like global wholesale retailer Costco and online sites such as EBay to buy a coffin.

And right here in Southwest Florida lies the opportunity to buy your own casket — just in case.

At Costco in Naples customers can scope out the casket of their choice at a kiosk dedicated just to coffins. The Fort Myers' stores offer information about how to buy direct on line, said assistant store manager Kristin McCluskey.

To date no one has inquired about caskets at Costco in Fort Myers, according to McCluskey.

But not so in the Naples location. There, membership and marketing associate Cindy Cordero fields questions and information requests on a frequent basis.

And buying caskets for some is apparently not much different than buying any other kind of commodity or supply.

SEE CASKETS, A8 ▶



SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY  
Coffins from discount retailer Costco can be shipped to 26 states in the country including Florida.



## PYTHONS ON THE LOOSE

Largest of Florida's pet pests invade Everglades

BY ROGER WILLIAMS  
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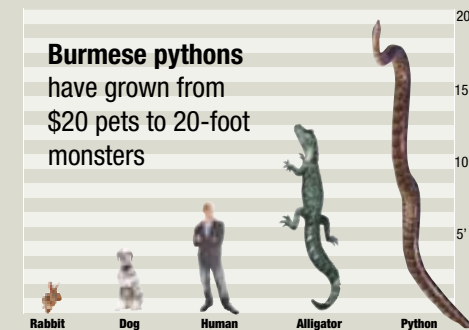
**S**uppose you could buy a legal firework as long as your hand, and grow it to be a two-story force of nature before igniting it?

Well you can't, so forget it. But what you can do is buy a python.

Burmese pythons are particularly popular for about \$40 wholesale or just under \$100 in a pet store, at about the size of a ruler. You feed a little one mice, and then rats, and then as it continues to grow in size and appetite, you offer up chickens and rabbits, the experts say.

You watch your snakeling graduate in about three years to a length of 10 or 12 feet, or longer. Ultimately it can reach 20 feet, and the heavyweights tip the scales at about 300 pounds, and live to about 25 years. Their defecatory production is renowned.

And while you're raising your young python, plan on accommodating its living needs, which make a teenager's look mild. At first, you can put it in a



cage. Then you can put it in a very big cage. And finally, you'd just better give it an entire room, or the guest wing of your home. And if you get tired of feeding it four or five big rabbits at a time, go ahead and provide a small pig (or maybe an unruly child or, well, you get the picture).

Here's the problem, which some say isn't as much of a problem as stories like this suggest: Right now just southeast of Lee County — in and on the edges of the 1.5 million acre Everglades National Park — Burmese pythons are

■ **Inside:** Burmese python battles an alligator and guess who wins ... **A9**

SEE PYTHONS, A8 ▶

Burmese pythons can tip a scale at 300 pounds.

## Gone forever? Infant abduction case still unsolved

BY EVAN WILLIAMS  
Florida Weekly Correspondent

Eight months after the disappearance of the infant Bryan dos Santos-Gomes on Dec. 1, the basic details of his story, built by a flurry of media reports in the weeks following his abduction, remain unchanged.

The story is more than simple: the kid-

napping tale, the two theories suggesting why it happened, the complications of the parents' status as illegal immigrants smuggled into the country, the involvement of Fort Myers Police Chaplain and Reverend Israel Suarez, and the questioning of "person of interest" Valter Coelho (a Lehigh Acres resident suspected of being involved in human smuggling operations).

Coelho was not found to be closely connected to this case — he has since been deported to Brazil.

There was the America's Most Wanted episodes — host John Walsh asking people to 'put politics aside when it comes to finding baby Bryan' — the \$21,000 dollar

SEE UNSOLVED, A14 ▶



**Textured, no text**  
Artist Susan Merritt's new paintings. **C1** ▶



**Cuisine**  
Jayne's Victorian Garden earns FWs first 5-star rating. **C19** ▶



**Design Center**  
Interior design mecca down the road in Estero. **B1** ▶



**Go in' to the dogs**  
Area pet business rescues abused canines. **A25** ▶

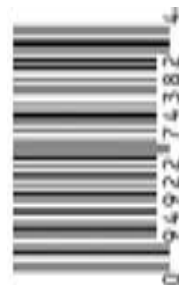


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