

Fort Lauderdale City News

EARL RYNERSON ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY FOR MAYOR

By Steve Kelley

For months now, there have been rumors circulating around City Hall and political blogs that a local business leader was investigating the possibility of running for Mayor of Ft. Lauderdale. Now, it is official. "I made this decision carefully, only after months of discussion with local neighborhood leaders, elected officials and many friends," Rynerson notes.



When asked what made him decide to run for public office, Rynerson said, "Up until last fall, I had no intention of running for public office, but to remain President of my company, (CLAD Tile & Stone in Ft. Lauderdale). Then I heard Mayor Naugle make many divisive comments about several communities, especially the gay and lesbian community here. Not once, but many times, over the course of many months. I feel it is unacceptable for any elected leader to behave or speak in that manner;

especially here in Ft. Lauderdale which should pride itself on its diversity."

"The makeup of Ft. Lauderdale's citizens has changed dramatically in the 18 years since Naugle has been at the helm. Those provincial attitudes have tarnished the image of Ft. Lauderdale, not only among its residents but with tourists, new residents and new businesses contemplating visiting or moving here. Our economy has suffered because of the attitudes he exhibits," Rynerson said.

"Fort Lauderdale is a city unmatched, anywhere in the world. We have the waterways of Venice, Italy, the diversity of New York, the weather of the Caribbean, the beaches of Hawaii, and the yachts of Monte Carlo."

No other city can claim all the great attributes that we have. The Mayor should be out in front, publicly and actively promoting our great attributes to the world, not taking

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VICTORY!

COUNTY COMMISSION VOTES 8-0 TO HELP SAVE CORAL RIDGE COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES AND AMERICAN GOLF COURSES

By Steve Kelley

On June 24, 2008 the Broward County Commission voted 8 to 0 to amend the County's Land Use Plan with strong new rules to help protect the county's last 61 golf courses and remaining greenspace. This was a final vote.

This was a significant victory for those of us who want to save our last golf courses and other green space in the city.

Our County Commissioner, Ken Keechl, showed great leadership in both writing these new stringent rules regarding golf course development and in getting them approved.



Recent citizen lobbying efforts also had a great effect on the commission's 9 members; elected officials who are supposed to be working for us. They received hundreds, if not more than a 1,000 emails, phone calls, letters and other contacts from Coral Ridge residents and throughout the city.

In the end, five County Commissioners were ready to support the measure. Previous opponents like County Mayor Lois Wexler and Commissioner Josephus Eggelation sensed which way the vote was going and bravely "saw the light" and joined in.

Commissioner John Rodstrom abstained for yet another conflict of interest. (Oddly, he's up for re-election to be our leader.)

It must be noted that our Mayor and City Commissioners have done absolutely nothing to save the city's last two golf courses. Even though the golf courses are in Fort

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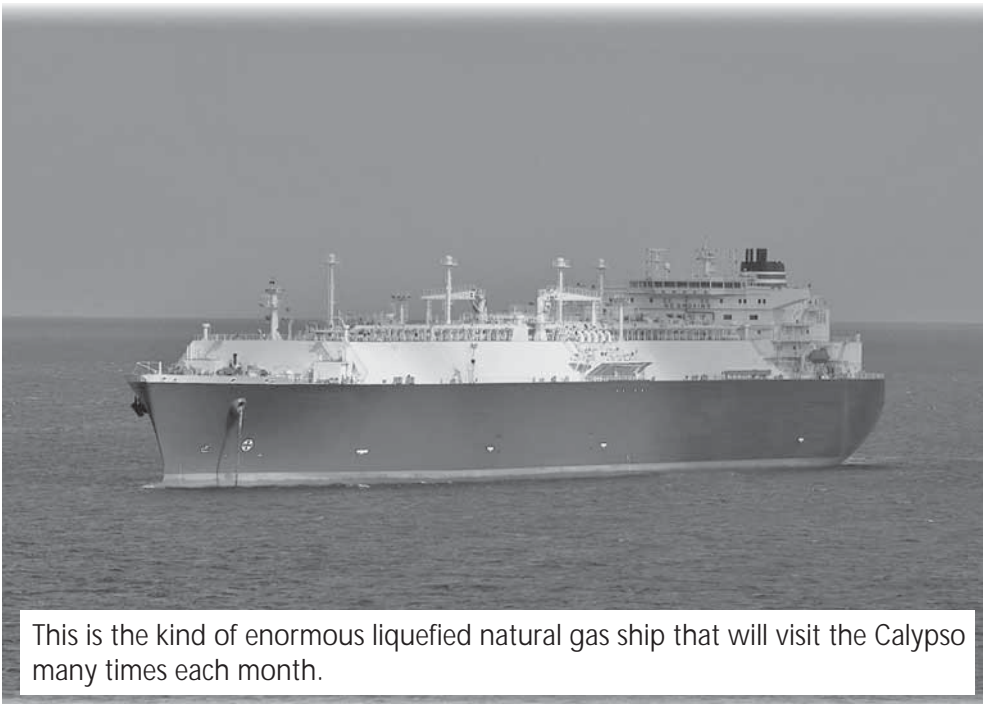
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HUGE LNG PORT COMING OFFSHORE?

Calypso Port will be mammoth - 15 stories high and the size of 3 football fields

By Steve Kelley

As most know by now, a multinational oil firm, Suez Energy, wants to build a giant deep water port for liquefied natural gas off our coast. The facility would be built 8-10 miles directly east of Fort Lauderdale. An environmentally controversial pipeline would run on the ocean floor and over three reefs to Port



This is the kind of enormous liquefied natural gas ship that will visit the Calypso many times each month.

Everglades. The project has been ten years in planning and has already been rejected by the Bahamas Government over serious safety and environmental concerns.

Is Calypso is too big and too risky to locate close to a densely populated coast? The project will be a deepwater port with at least two loading docks to receive tankers filled with liquified natural gas from Africa and elsewhere. The port will be 15 stories high and the size of three football fields. The chilled gas it receives by tankers is to be warmed and revaporized, then pumped through an underwater pipeline to Port Everglades. Each tanker which calls at the port is expected to carry the equivalent of 33 billion gallons of natural gas.

Suez has held various community hearings where residents were told about the project. Those attending were told about new job creation, availability of lots of natural gas, economic "impact," etc. Curiously, the Galt Ocean Mile meeting was moved at the last minute to Dania Beach making it difficult for people to attend; perhaps they were concerned too many complaining

residents would show up.

Judging from response after several of public hearings, condos, businesses and city commissions and over 90% of residents are vehemently against the project. Galt condo residents (20 buildings with 8,000 residents) are particularly furious at this proposed unsightly project as they feel it will degrade their view of the ocean for which they pay a pretty penny. They are also concerned that it is an significant environmental hazard and has the potential for a massive explosion which could badly damage coastal buildings and cause a huge loss of life. Cities and neighborhood up

and down the coast, like Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, are busy organizing against the Calypso project.

In their presentations, Suez officials have played down some important aspects of the Calypso project.

The Gulf Stream starts around three miles offshore and its width spans 50 or so miles to the Bahamas. This means that the facility would sit directly in a shipping lane where big freighters, doing 20 knots or more, would routinely speed by. Those freighters are often on autopilot with half their 6-8 person crew asleep.

Obviously, this is no problem for Suez. In recent years, residents have seen freighters literally run into Florida and end up on our beaches. If these big ships have trouble avoiding Florida - a whole state - will they always miss this facility floating in the ocean?

Suez says boating would be banned in a large area surrounding the port, but it dismisses these impacts as "minor." And who enforces this ban?

At one meeting, Suez asked what would happen if there was a ship collision, a hurricane or worse yet, a terrorist

attack takes place?

The answer from Suez was "various things can happen."

They have also not fully discussed the impact of hurricanes on the facility. Perhaps the Calypso facility will be hurricane proof; after all, we've been known to get a category 5 hurricane. But the huge oil rigs in the Gulf were damaged by Hurricane Katrina and one of the big oil rigs, also hurricane proof, ended up on the beach in Louisiana as seen in the news at the time. Remember oil refineries in a hurricane zone that were damaged by Katrina? Of course, the oil companies claimed damage to them was a good reason to immediately increase gasoline prices.

At the Dania meeting, residents asked Suez officials for guarantees that the deepwater port could handle various problems associated with its location and harsh ocean environment. Suez officials disregarded questions with the wave of a hand calling these concerns a "myth." Broward County Commissioner Ken Keechl, warned that Suez was hurting its credibility by not answering the questions and insulting the residents.

Many elected officials and local candidates for office have generally had no problem in voicing strong disapproval of the project.

The Fort Lauderdale City Commission voted 4-1 on May 20 in favor of a resolution opposing the project. Commissioner Teel sponsored the resolution and was joined by Commissioner Carlton Moore, who said he was outraged that Suez Energy had proposed such a massive and controversial project without even telling the commission or the general public very much about it.

However, Jack Seiler, candidate for Fort Lauderdale mayor and Wilton Manors resident, refused to take a stand on the project saying he would have to study "both sides." Political heavy-weight Judy Stern is running Seiler's mayoral campaign as she did District 2's Charlotte Rodstrom's campaign for city commission in 2006.

Oddly, Judy Stern is a paid lobbyist for Suez and has been going around town telling everybody how wonderful the project will be. Can Seiler look for a tidy campaign contribution from Suez/Stern?

No penalties for lying

Suez is now running full page ads in the local newspaper heavily emphasizing the safety of the project.

Suez also says the project will create 170 jobs while delivering lots of natural gas and the always nebulous "economic impact." Taxpayers hear this

kind of thing all the time with the Super Bowl, some convention/event or air show. I don't know who gets the monetary benefit of this so-called economic impact but I don't see it. Have you ever gotten any money from an "economic impact?"

Suez says they will bring an abundance of natural gas to south Florida implying prices for natural gas would go down. The fact is natural gas prices have been going up dramatically in lockstep with worldwide prices for oil.

We already have a huge "abundance" of gasoline coming out of Port Everglades yet prices are as high as anywhere else in the country.

No one has mentioned it, but is it possible that the Calypso project will attract other "development" next to it?

If Suez chooses to lie to the public there is no penalty. Newspaper ads, speeches, websites and statements are hollow. Who's going to challenge them in 4 years when one of their important promises turns out to be false?

For all the public meetings designed to win favor for the project, the opinion of locals and our county's 31 cities will probably be disregarded.

In the end, this will probably be decided by the governor or the state legislature. There's always a chance he'll listen. The governor's email address is: Charlie.Crist@MyFlorida.com.

Given Crist's monumental recent flip-flop on offshore drilling for oil to pander to presidential candidate McCain, he may well think that anything the oil companies want is OK with him.

And since the project is off shore it could well come under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Congress.

Last, the New York Times ran a story on May 30, 2008 analyzing the international natural gas market. It found that several of the huge liquefied natural gas ports recently built in the U.S. are sitting idle. It turns out that optimistic predictions of cheap natural gas were simply wrong; but these predictions were the reason the ports were built. Droughts in Spain and Australia have brought increased demand in those countries.

India and China and the developing world are consuming much more natural gas than predicted and worse, are willing to pay more for it than Americans are. Much of the world's natural gas is no longer coming here which makes one wonder why Suez wants to build yet another unused LNG terminal out in the ocean.

The full story is on the following page.

LNG PORT A GOOD BUSINESS?

Global Demand Squeezing Natural Gas Supply

By Clifford Krauss

CAMERON PARISH, La. — The cost of a gallon of gas gets all the headlines, but the natural gas that will heat many American homes next winter is going up in price as fast or faster.

That fact makes the scene in the languid, alligator-infested marshland here in coastal Louisiana all the more remarkable.

Only a month after Cheniere Energy inaugurated its \$1.4 billion liquefied natural gas terminal here, an empty supertanker sat in its berth with no place to go while workers painted empty storage tanks.

The nearly idle terminal is a monument to a stalled experiment, one that was supposed to import so much L.N.G. from around the world that homes would be heated and factories humming at bargain prices.

But now L.N.G. shipments to the United States are slowing to a trickle, and Cheniere and other companies have dropped plans to build more terminals.

A longstanding assumption of American energy policy has been that natural gas would be plentiful abroad, and therefore readily available for importation, as production falls off in North America, where many fields are tapped out.

But some experts are starting to question that idea, saying natural gas could be subject to the same explosion in overseas demand that has made oil so expensive.

As it is, the supertankers that were supposed to deliver cargoes of gas from Africa and the Middle East to the United States are taking them to places like Spain and Japan instead, pushing up gas prices and depleting the nation's stockpiles as the hurricane season approaches.

"A few years ago people looked at L.N.G. as a solution to North America's gas needs," said Nikos Tsafos, an analyst with PCF Energy, a consulting firm. "But today we see that there is less L.N.G. around than people expected, and there is more competition for that L.N.G. from markets that are willing to pay more than the United States."

Not long ago, Cheniere was a darling of Wall Street. It was widely praised for having the vision to plan four new liquefied gas terminals around the Gulf of Mexico to connect the country with supplies of natural gas from places like Nigeria and Egypt, gas once considered so worthless it was burned off.

Now the company's stock price has sunk from \$40 to just over \$5 since last fall.

"The question that people ask is if L.N.G. doesn't come to the United States for another year or two or three, what is going to happen to Cheniere," acknowledged Charif Souki, the chief executive officer of the company.



While natural gas prices in the United States have spiked to over \$11.80 per thousand cubic feet from \$7.50 at the beginning of the year, the price that gas producers can draw in many other countries in the world is several dollars higher. All they need are terminals in producing countries that can chill natural gas to minus 260 degrees Fahrenheit for shipping across oceans and terminals in consuming countries that can regasify cargoes.

Just about the only place where demand for L.N.G. seems not to be growing is the United States, an abrupt shift from expectations as little as one year ago.

The Sabine Pass terminal was part of an estimated \$7 billion construction of eight new L.N.G. receiving terminals being built around the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Coast over the last five years to guarantee plentiful domestic supplies. With imports about 40 percent of the level of a year ago, and national receiving terminal capacity poised to double this year, the excess construction of import capacity has alarmed industry executives.

However the executives predict that it is only a matter of time before the white elephants begin to look like a more robust breed. They say American gas suppliers will eventually be willing to pay the higher world prices on the spot market, especially if a gas shortage ensues after a punishing hurricane season or frigid winter.

They also predict future American consumption of natural gas is poised to increase because of hardening opposition to building new coal-fired electricity generating plants and delays in new nuclear plants. "Over time, we will need to start importing more gas," said Darcel L. Hulse, president of Sempra LNGE, a division of Sempra Energy, which is building receiving terminals in Mexico and Louisiana. "We will not have enough."

That was the thinking that spurred the L.N.G. expansion in the United States in the first place. At the beginning

of the decade, government officials and energy experts predicted a decline in domestic natural gas production as conventional fields on-shore and in the Gulf of Mexico declined. Companies like Cheniere, Sempra Energy and Exxon Mobil began snapping up coastal land and requesting regulatory approval for scores of terminals. Several other terminals were taken out of mothballs and expanded.

But recently domestic natural gas production has been stronger than expected and events abroad have drawn L.N.G. from the United States to countries that needed it more.

Last July an earthquake in Japan forced the closing of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant, which in turn has forced Japanese utilities to import huge amounts of L.N.G.

World L.N.G. supplies grew even more scarce because of a persistent drought in Spain that has crimped that country's hydroelectric capacity, forcing the Spanish to increase L.N.G. imports.

Prices in Asia and Europe have soared, as producers have sold more supply on the spot market where prices are higher than those in traditional long term contracts.

World demand for natural gas has grown about 2.6 percent a year over the last decade, but in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa it has averaged 7 percent over the same period, according to a recent UBS report. Growth in the developing world is expected to be supported in the years ahead by a construction boom in refineries and power and petrochemical plants.

Supplies of L.N.G. are going to grow in the next few years, but experts say they will not be enough to satisfy the growing demand. Liquefaction plant projects that prepare the gas for shipping in producing nations like Nigeria and Russia are being delayed and even shelved because of political turbulence, cost overruns and increasing domestic demand for gas in their own countries. Production in one major terminal in Indonesia is sliding because of a declining field, and production in another in Norway is facing mechanical difficulties.

With L.N.G. providing only about 3 percent of total American natural gas consumption in recent years, the fall in L.N.G. imports has made few headlines. But some experts say those responsible for importing gas are making a mistake by not buying more L.N.G. at current prices.

They warn that the failure to import more L.N.G. is leaving natural gas reserves precariously low should the country be hit by a harsh hurricane season or cold winter. They say low L.N.G.

imports have helped push American natural prices higher, just not high enough to match the prices of Europe and Asia whose ability to produce and store gas is far inferior to the United States.

Andrew D. Grams, head of North American power and gas trading at Deutsche Bank, said the United States may eventually pay dearly for not importing more L.N.G. now. He calculated that given the reduced L.N.G. imports and expected energy use through the summer, the country will have only 3.1 trillion cubic feet of gas in storage at the end of October — almost 1 trillion cubic feet below full storage.

"Under a normal scenario, that's just barely enough to get through winter," Mr. Grams said. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that we may not get enough L.N.G. supply in the United States unless our pricing structure becomes more competitive with the rest of the world."

Natural gas, unlike oil, is still a regional commodity and its price is only loosely connected to world oil benchmark prices. But L.N.G. has tied regional markets closer, and the arc of natural gas prices appears to be following close behind oil in recent months because of tightening L.N.G. supplies.

The same increases in the prices of steel and other materials and shortages in labor that are making to more expensive to explore for oil are making L.N.G. development more costly too. Meanwhile, countries that produce oil and gas like Libya and Algeria are replacing their oil-powered electricity plants with natural gas-burning plants. That way, they are able to export more oil, which costs less to ship than L.N.G.

"The value of gas to you is what people are willing to pay for the oil you are exporting," said Don Hertzmark, a consultant who has advised several oil companies on L.N.G. projects. "At that point, the gas is worth a lot of money."

Nevertheless hopes for L.N.G. still survive here. The secretary of energy, Samuel W. Bodman, and a Cajun zydeco band came last month to celebrate the opening of the Sabine Pass terminal, and a tanker delivered L.N.G. from Nigeria for testing purposes.

Workers are testing generators and painting and building five huge storage tanks, each capable of providing a full day's supply of gas for Louisiana. Tugboat crews are practicing for any future cargo arrivals.

"I know the L.N.G. will come and we'll make a profit on this," said Darron Granger, a Cheniere senior vice president. "I just can't say when."

Reprinted with permission from the New York Times.

BEACH OVERDEVELOPMENT - Is anyone listening?

by Mel Rubenstein

It is the politics of money today, forget about tomorrow! Welcome to Ft. Lauderdale! You would think, after building more than 104 high-rise condos and 14 high-rise, high-density hotels on a narrow strip of precious beach, that our politicians would say, enough



is enough! You would think that people who claim to represent the public interest by controlling run-away excessive development would say, enough is enough! You would think that our city commissioners, county commissioners and state representatives who all claimed, at election time, that they "love Ft. Lauderdale and want to give something back" would say, enough is enough!

You would think that our elected officials would have a vision, plan, and true desire to protect our environmentally sensitive beach from becoming an overcrowded, traffic congested, cemented canyon of very tall buildings which neglect human size development, small shops, parks, open spaces and access to the Intracoastal Waterway for future generations would say, enough is enough!

What will tomorrow bring? Now that A1A has become a concrete wall with little land left to build, developers will begin to move north, south and west to the Intracoastal. One day, residents will wake-up and find themselves in Manhattan South; the "new" (latest catch word) Ft. Lauderdale. Island's Inn (Fairwinds), Bahia Mar, El-AD Banyan St, Cortez Hotel, etc. all coming soon to your friendly neighborhood. It is interesting to note that one of the planned hotels at the Bahia Mar monstrous construction site is a building called Waldorf-Astoria. And you think I was kidding about Manhattanizing our beach! And did you know that part of that site belongs to you, city-owned property?

There are people in Ft. Lauderdale who really care about our future and are attempting to save our beach from

uncontrolled development of massive high-rise buildings. Many belong to the Central Beach Alliance (CBA), an association whose membership consists of 46 condos and about 400 individual residents. On May 22, 2008 the membership voted 221 to 12 in favor of ten goals designed to protect the ambience, architecture and uniqueness of our beach. The residents' goals are:

GOALS OF THE CENTRAL BEACH ALLIANCE OF FORT LAUDERDALE

1. The Beach Master Plan must be extended (north and south) the length of the City's boundaries.

2. Execute and construct the A1A Barrier Island Greenway to include: wider sidewalks, wider bicycle pathways, linking to downtown, and coordinating with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

3. Protect City-owned barrier island property by ensuring a city referendum to sell or change use of the land. This is to be approved by a super-majority of the voters of the city of Fort Lauderdale.

4. Amend ULDR Section 47-23.6 - Beach Shadow Restrictions so that shadows on the beach must be measured from 9am to 5pm on November 21 as opposed to the current date of March 21.

5. Regarding the NBRA district of the Central Beach: all future construction should be limited to 50 feet at the highest point. Owners of current property in the NBRA need to be afforded tax breaks and incentives, flexible building codes, parking flexibility, and the leniency regarding a change of use. The above is needed to provide property owners the economic feasibility and incentive to remain in business on the beach. In addition, Historic Preservation should be encouraged throughout the NBRA.

6. All future construction on remaining undeveloped property in the IOA (Intracoastal) District shall not exceed 70 feet at the highest point.

7. All future development of hotels on A1A must provide accessible, public restrooms and reasonably priced public parking not to exceed rates at City-owned public lots.

8. Where new buildings on the beach are presently permitted to be constructed 120 feet high or more, such developments shall be reduced in height by 20%.

9. The City should purchase unde-

veloped land on the barrier island for use as parks and public parking.

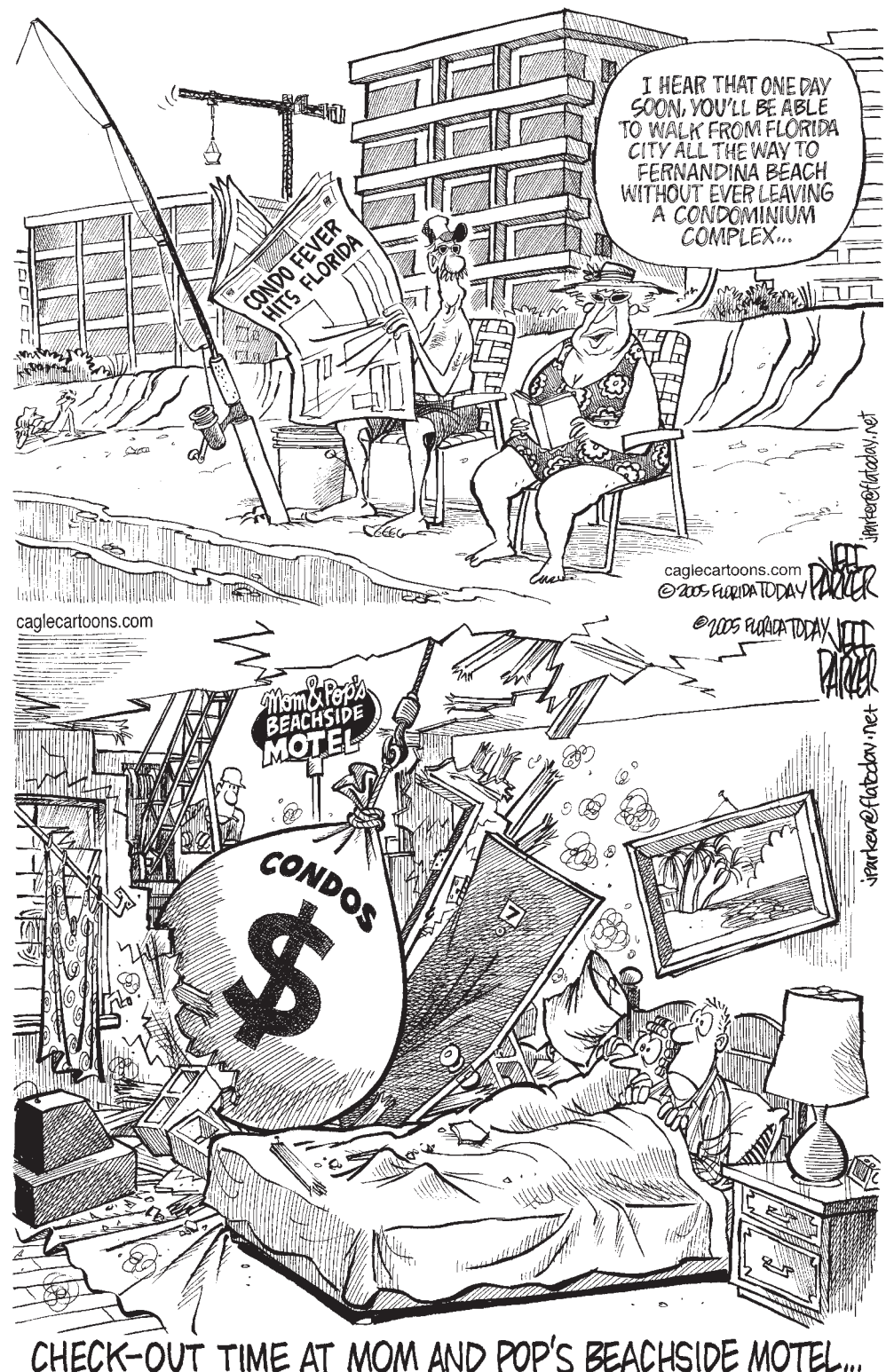
10. The City should mandate that all barrier island vacant buildings be demolished and that the land be sodded and landscaped to avoid the ever-increasing "scars" on the beach.

"The Ft Lauderdale Comprehensive Plan (Goals, Objectives and Policies) supports implementation of development regulations that will promote preservation of community characteristics on the Barrier Island, and protect the Island itself as a community/environmental resource from congestion and overdevelopment that could be dangerous to the

health and safety and welfare of our citizens and visitors." Quote from Memorandum No. 04-302, dated 2/25/04, Ft Lauderdale report to the City Commission (Mayor Naugle, Commissioners Moore, Teel, Trantalis, and Hutchinson).
Is anyone listening?

About the author:

Mel Rubenstein is a former President of CBA, former member of Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board, Board member of Birch Crest Condo Assoc. Mel Rubenstein. He can be reached at 954-523-0116.



Broward County's Fiscal Year '09 Budget Process

By Ken Keechl,
Broward County Commissioner
District 4

As I promised each of you during my campaign to be your Broward County Commissioner, I will never vote to raise your property taxes. My philosophy is simple. I recognize that this is your money, not mine. So when faced with a proposed expenditure, I ask myself the following question: Is this item truly necessary? If not, I have voted against the expenditure and I will continue to do so.

Since taking office in November 2006, and in furtherance of my campaign promise, I have led the charge on the County Commission to lower your property taxes. Last year, we were successful in reducing the County's FY '08 budget by almost \$100,000,000.00. It wasn't easy, but we instituted a hiring freeze; agreed to eliminate unneces-

sary expenditures; and re-evaluated the need for each and every program offered by the County.

This year I again intend to keep my promise to each of you.

The Broward County Commission has recently begun the FY '09 budget process. The tax rolls have not yet been certified by our Property Appraiser, Lori Parrish, but based on a significant decrease in property values, and after reviewing some preliminary data; I believe that the Broward County Commission will need to eliminate at least another \$100,000,000.00 from our FY '09 budget.

Make no mistake. This year will be harder than last year. Instead of last year's hiring freeze, this year some County employees will have to be laid off; others will have to work harder and more efficiently. Already

we have approved County Administration's plans to consolidate certain departments, divisions and sections within the Broward County government's vast bureaucracy. We will undoubtedly see a slight decrease in the number of hours that our parks and libraries will remain open. Unproductive bus routes will be consolidated or eliminated.

I am again asking Broward County Administration to review all previously approved capital expenditures. I am convinced that many of the projects currently within Broward's Capital budget are unnecessary and should be postponed, if not eliminated.

Lastly, in furtherance of our goal to lower property taxes in FY'09, the County Commission has also requested that BSO reduce its budget by approximately 10 percent or \$50,000,000.00. Since BSO spends approximately 50 cents of every \$1.00 that Broward County collects in property taxes, this request is proportionate and reasonable. Yet, because I am

not unmindful that the economy is in a possible recession, I recognize that crime may increase in the near term. As a result, I will not advocate, nor vote for, any reduction of police officers or fire fighters from BSO's FY '09 budget.

Nevertheless, there are plenty of expenditures in BSO's FY '09 budget that should be reduced. BSO's overtime and public relations expenditures are just two simple examples of areas that I have asked BSO to review. I am confident that Sheriff Lamberti will work with the Commission over the summer to reduce his budget, while simultaneously insuring that Broward's residents continue to be safe and protected.

In closing, I would like to once again thank you for the honor of being your County Commissioner. It is a job that I do not take lightly. Together we can, and will, make Broward County a better place for our families and loved ones. As usual, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at kkeechl@broward.org or 954 357-7004.

Remember, I work for you.



Symphony of the Americas Society Celebrated the Michael and Madelyn Savarick 20th Anniversary Celebration At the "Mary Porter Panama Nights Gala"

by Betty Young

The Symphony of the Americas Society celebrated the Michael and Madelyn Savarick 20th Anniversary of Maestro James Brooks-Bruzzese and the Symphony of the Americas at their "Mary Porter Panama Nights Gala held at the Marriott Harbor Beach. Carol Nugent chaired the Gala. The Symphony of the Americas Society and Maestro Bruzzese were Proud to have past recipient of the Gold Baton, Mary Porter, as their presenting sponsor. Maestro Bruzzese stated "We are honored that the continuing enrichment of Symphonic music will continue as Mary Porter graciously passes the Golden Baton to Madelyn Savarick.

Highlight of the Gala was the appearance of the Symphony of the Americas, a vital part of our community that is consistently rated by Florida's Division of Cultural Affairs as one of the top orchestras in the state.

Major sponsors, were Mary Porter, Madelyn Savarick, Florence Hutton, Stephen Keller, Rose Miniaci, Peter Duffy Furs, Holland America Line who donated a Panama Canal Cruise, American Airlines donated roundtrip Coach



Beth Holland, SOAS Pres. Mary Porter, Grand Benefactor Carol Nugent, Gala Chairman
(Photo by Wade Caldwell)

Class tickets for two to Panama, and the Intercontinental Hotel donated a 2-night stay and the Bern Hotels and Resorts Panama for a 1-night stay at the Gamboa Rainforest Hotel



Florence & Jack Hutton Miriam & Jack Handley
(photo BY Betty Young)



Dr. Peter Babinski Rose Miniaci
(Photo by Wade Caldwell)



Maestro James Brooks Bruzzese Madelyn Savarick Mary Porter Larry Rowe Renee LaBonte
(photo by Wade Caldwell)

The Symphony of the Americas Society is the support group for the acclaimed Symphony of the Americas, 'Broward's Symphony Orchestra.'

For information please call 954-545-0088.

Green Thursdays - A Summer Filled with Savings

By Kristin Jacobs
Broward County Commission –
District 2

Summer is here, and the temperature is not the only thing that is rising. It seems that every time we go to fill our vehicles, the price for gas has gone up, AGAIN!

In an effort to reduce our dependency on gas and save commuters money, Broward County Transit (BCT) is launching a new initiative for this summer - Green Thursdays.

The idea is to encourage commuters to take an alternative mode of transportation one day a week to work. People can take a bus, ride a bike, carpool or vanpool with co-workers or friends.

Don't know what bus routes will get you to where you want to go? Google can help! Google Transit, a guide that gives you bus routes,



schedules and directions, launched in Broward County in mid-June. It is very simple to use. Enter the address from which you want to depart and the address of your destination and the time and date you would like to travel. You will be given directions to your bus stop, the number bus you want to take and the approximate times it will be at your stop, as well as the estimated time you will arrive at your destination. It even includes the cost of the bus fare and compares it with how much you would be spending in gas!

If you prefer to carpool or vanpool and don't know where to begin, South Florida Commuter Services can help. By calling 1-800-234-RIDE (7433), you can be connected with carpoolers and vanpoolers in your area. South Florida Commuters Services will also assist in routing your travel needs outside of Broward County.

The savings are real. The fare for

BCT is \$1.25 one way, an all day pass is \$3.00, a 10 ride pass is \$10.00, and a 31 day pass is \$40.00. Compare this with \$180.00 a month that an average commuter spends filling up a 15 gallon gas tank. During these times, all of us can use extra money.

The Green Thursdays initiative begins June 26 and will go until September 25. I personally am going to ride my bike to my bus stop, and then take the bus to the Governmental Center. (All Broward County Transit buses are equipped with bicycle racks that can safely transport your bike to your destination.) If you any questions about public transit in Broward, please contact BCT at 954-357-8400, or call my office at 954-357-7002. Hope to see you Thursday on the bus!

Hurricane Preparedness- Have a plan and share your plan

South Floridians are well into the 2008 hurricane season. I hope that you are stocking up on supplies,

checking your equipment and making your hurricane plan. A very important component that several people forget is to SHARE your plan. Let family or friends know what your hurricane plan is so they can check on you in the aftermath of the storm. Be sure to establish an out of town contact.

In early June, the County sent out the Official Broward County Hurricane Preparedness Guide to all households. If you have not received one, please call my office at 954-357-7002 and we will send you one. The Guide provides all the information you need to be prepared.



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Solar PV for Your Home

By Nancea Cross

PV stands for photovoltaic. Photovoltaic panels convert sunlight into electricity. Photons, which are basically light particles from the sun, knock electrons free from the silicon cells. These electrons flow through circuit paths which is what creates the electricity.

There are 3 basic types of solar PV systems.

A Stand Alone System: is generally a small system that provides electricity for your home or your business. This system is not connected to the local utility. Often these systems are used where electricity is not available. Two examples of stand alone systems are: pumping water for irrigation or powering a small cabin in the woods. These systems may or may not have battery back ups.

A Grid Tie System: is a system that is connected to the local utility. You will generate electricity from your solar PV panels during the day. If you make more electricity than you need, you can sell it to your local utility. If you are not generating enough electricity for your needs, you can get more from your local utility. If the local utility goes down, your PV system will also be shut down. Starting in July '08 FPL will be "net metering", which means that they have to buy back electricity at the same price they sell it to you.

A Grid Tie System with Battery Backup: is the same as the grid tie system, except that you have batteries and more equipment. Your batteries can supply electricity for you at night and during the times when the local utility is down if they have enough power stored in them.

There are 2 basic ways to go about designing a solar PV system. Either you calculate what items you want to run from your solar system and have a system designed specifically for your needs or you buy a system that has been pre-designed. To take advantage of the Florida rebate, you need to install a system that is at least 2 kilowatts. The largest system you would want to build would be 5 kilowatts; again this is in order to take advantage of the Florida rebate.

Will a 2 to a 5 KW system handle all your energy needs? No, it won't, unless you are very conservative in your energy usage. You can start with a small system and expand on it later. A small system will lower your energy bill, it will reduce your carbon footprint, it will

increase the value of your home and it would provide emergency power if you have a battery backup.

What would a 2 to 5 KW system cost? Basically you can plan on spending about \$10 per watt for an installed system without batteries. A 2 KW (2000 watts) system would cost about \$20,000. The Florida Rebate is \$4 per watt. In this case it would be \$8,000. The Federal Tax Credit is 30%, but there is a \$2,000 cap on it. The net cost for a 2 KW system would be about \$10,000. The net cost for a 5 KW system would be about \$28,000.

How much energy would these systems produce? A 2 KW system would produce about 240 kilowatts per month which would equate to about \$30 at today's rates. The 5 kilowatt system would equate to about \$75 per month.

If you're looking at installing a solar PV system for purely economic reasons you must be patient. The system will pay for itself eventually. If you're purchasing solar solely for economic purposes, you should buy a solar water heater or solar pool heating. Those systems pay for themselves a lot quicker. When purchasing a solar PV system, you need to consider how your doing your part to help the planet and also that you are increasing the value of your home. Also you're gaining independence from the local utility and possibly also providing emergency power for yourself.

Your solar panels will most likely be installed on the roof of your house. Because you want the panels to be as efficient as possible, they should be positioned where they are facing south for maximum sun expo-

sure. Ideally the panels should be tilted to the south at between 10° and 26°. If you use efficient panels, they will require approximately 80 square feet of area per 1,000 watts or 1 KW. An inefficient panel, such as a thin film or laminated panel, will require about 150 square feet of roof area per 1,000 watts.

What about hurricanes? The systems that are installed in Broward County are rated for 141 mph winds. The panels will stay on your roof during a hurricane. The racks that the panels are mounted on are firmly secured to the beams or trusses in your roof. Unless the whole roof comes off, the panels are going to stay put. Often the shingles or tiles blow away around the panels and the panels stay put.

Before installing a solar system, you should do everything possible to make your home more energy efficient. Make sure your home is adequately sealed, that you're not allowing a lot of hot air to creep in. A new air conditioner can reduce your energy needs by up to 50%. Changing your light bulbs will reduce your energy needs by about 10%. Switching from an electric water heater to a solar hot water heater will reduce



your energy by 20 to 30%. Adding insulation can not only keep your house cooler, it can actually make your roof stronger.

Solar energy is definitely the direction we need to take for a sustainable future. There is plenty of sunlight available in south Florida.

Once you invest in it, it's free, clean and available on most days in your own neighborhood.

Why not put it to work for you?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

You can contact Nancy at 954-260-5253 by phone or online at Nansea2911@yahoo.com with any questions.



Candidates' Forum

Running for Re-Election to Continue the Fight for Change

By Congressman Ron Klein

It is an honor and a privilege to serve the people of South Florida in the United States Congress, and I want to share with you my reasons for running for re-election this year. I believe my fundamental responsibility as an elected representative is to fight for the interests of South Florida in Washington, and to do so in the most open and transparent manner possible.

Among my top priorities for the district are finding a bipartisan, common-sense new direction for the war in Iraq. U.S. taxpayers are spending a shocking \$339 million per day in Iraq, which is why I introduced H. Res. 1111 to make all future funding for reconstruction and fuel in Iraq a loan.

We must ensure that our veterans have access to the benefits they earned, so I developed a Veterans Priority Plan to make that happen. One point in my plan, an updated G.I. Bill, has since passed with bipartisan majorities in the U.S. House and Senate.

Another priority is to lower the skyrocketing cost of homeowners' insurance. I co-authored legislation (H.R. 3355) to do just that with a national catastrophe plan, and it passed the U.S. House with a bipartisan majority, a landmark victory for Florida homeowners.

It is also essential for us to end our nation's dependence on oil. I have actively worked to pass legislation that sparks American innovation and helps break our addiction to oil and move our nation toward clean energy.

Serving in the Florida House and Senate for over a decade prepared me extremely well to serve the people of South Florida in Congress. In Tallahassee, I worked with colleagues from both parties to find solutions for South Florida families, something I continue to do daily in Congress.

Life experience is also important, and I learned at an early age the value of a good education and a solid work ethic. My mother was a schoolteacher and my father often took me to work at his five-and-dime variety store, and because of the values I learned from them, I never hesitate to stand up for high quality education or recognize



a hard day's work by employers and employees.

I am running to continue the fight for change we began two years ago. We have made significant progress, and crafted bipartisan solutions for some of the issues that matter most to Florida's families. But there is still substantial work to be done, and I wake up every day ready to work hard on issues like changing course in the war in Iraq, bringing down the cost of homeowner's insurance, and breaking our dependence on foreign oil. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of South Florida. I look forward to continuing to fight for real solutions to the issues that matter most.

FACT BOX Congressman Ron Klein

Personal: Married to wife Dori; two children, Brian (22) and Lauren (19)

Party Affiliation: Democrat

www.ronkleinforcongress.com

Education:
B.A., the Ohio State University
J.D., Case Western Reserve University

Years Living in South Florida: 23

Public Service:
Florida House of Representatives, 1992-1996;
Florida State Senate, 1996-2006 (served as Senate Democratic Leader);
U.S. Congress, 2006-present

Contact: 561-995-9626
info@ronkleinforcongress.com

A change we can all hope for in Broward County!

by Bryan Caletka,
Candidate for Broward County
Commission, District 7

Change is in the air. How are we to get change if we don't offer new ideas? I offer you the residents of Broward County the much needed change that we are all hoping for this year. I am sure you have heard that old saying about politicians, "When he was first voted in he was great, but after a few years

he turned." I offer myself to Broward County as one of those new fresh ideas. I have proven over the last two and half years that I am not one of those politicians.

These are some of the changes that I bring to the table. First, I will be a FULL TIME County Commissioner. In addition to being a Councilman from Davie, I have a real job as a public high school teacher at Western High in Davie, Florida. If I am 5 minutes late to my class, I automatically get half of a day's pay deducted from my paycheck. Many people in this county must punch a time clock. Shouldn't we deserve the same of our elected County Commissioner's? Then why is it that the incumbent is absent from so many meetings? I believe you should, as I have NEVER missed a Davie Town Council Meeting. I actually show up to the job I won in Davie.

Second, lobbyists have turned this county into the corruption capital of the world. My opponent not only depends on these lobbyists, such as the infamous Judy Stern, but also hired a registered county lobbyist to be his campaign manager. Is this job for the people of Broward County, or those asking for county contracts? With Bryan Caletka you get a fair shake on issues, not just a rubber stamped decision coming from a county lobbyist.

Finally, with Bryan Caletka, when I say yes to my constituents you actually get a yes vote. I will not change my mind half way through the process. This is an important issue to the residents of the county. The incumbent flops his decisions based on the way the wind blows. Some examples are the airport expansion issue. He was in favor of the airport expansion. I guess his employer realized that if the Fort Lauderdale airport were expanded, the bonds would be in competition with the Miami Airport bonds that are outstanding. He changed his mind on this issue. An issue in Davie was the Transit Oriented Corridor. He had confirmed his support for this project, but on the day of the vote, he single handedly stopped this project from moving forward. The problem with that is that the Davie Tax base suffered immensely.

I look forward to answering your questions. Please call 954-873-2750 or email me at bryan@electbryancaletka.com.



Taking a Stand against Calypso

Well it is happening again. Once again business leaders decided to sellout the public in order to make a quick buck. The problem is that this time our public safety is at risk. There is a project that you may already have heard of Calypso. We need to mobilize now to defeat this project, and I hold firm in my position against this proposal.

The proponents of this project, which consists of foreign investors and lobbyists such as Judy Stern, say that this project is very safe since the pipe would remain within the shipping channels of the Fort Lauderdale Port. What happens when a shipping error occurs? Do you remember the Exxon Valdez? Mistakes happen, even if rare, and this places public safety in danger. Can you imagine making Broward County a focus for terrorists? That is exactly what would happen if this project proceeds as planned.

Another point is that there is not another project like this in the United States. At least if you had one other similar project, you would have a better understanding on their true levels of threat against the neighboring communities.

I am disappointed that my opponent has not been forthcoming with his opinion on this issue. It may be that his campaign manager, Judy Stern, happens to dual as the lobbyist for this monstrosity. I would like to add that when she was in front of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission, that she neglected to register herself as a lobbyist on this project. Oops, another one of her ethical lapses in judgement. I have a message for Judy Stern, don't lie to Commissioners because even if you lose it was the wrong thing to do. I believe it better to loose and tell the truth, than win because you were not telling the truth.

The other issue that I have against this project is that they are taking everything from out community, but they are returning nothing - unless you count the numerous campaign contributions that the Calypso business people have been handing out. It has been reported by the Sun Sentinel that Calypso has donated at least \$11,500 to local politicians.

This is clearly an opportunity for responsible leaders to actually lead. You can count on me to make the right decision and make the right decision the first time. If this comes to a vote on the County Commission, you know where I stand in advance.

Bryan Caletka, candidate for District 7 County Commission 954-873-2750.

More Candidates' Forum

Fort Lauderdale at a Crossroads

By Coleman Prewitt

Like so many others, March 27, 1911 was a warm and sunny South Florida day. However, unlike the others, this historic day saw the birth of a new city with a bright future--the City of Fort Lauderdale. Our early pioneers could hardly have guessed that in a short hundred years, their small riverside community would grow into a cosmopolitan urban city famous throughout the world. As this great milestone approaches, it gives us the opportunity as a community to come together, to honor our past, but most importantly, to plan our future. We must always remember that we are custodians of this great City, holding it in trust for future generations—our obligation being to pass our City on to future generations in a better condition than we received it. Only with careful planning and a clear committed vision can this be done. And together we can then help Fort Lauderdale achieve its full potential, bringing prosperity to all of her people.

Like birthdays and anniversaries so often do, our City's approaching centennial gives us the opportunity to look back from where we have come and to plan our future. As a large city, this process is complicated by the sheer number of participants. However it is important that we as a community work together and agree upon a common vision and goals for our City—for it is only by working together, with the participation of all people, that we can achieve the greatest prosperity.

We cannot continue to rely upon the successes of the past to bring about future prosperity. While our climate and geography will continue to be great assets, future success will only be ours with vision, planning and hard work. If we fail to plan, if we fail to act proactively, if we fail to work together on a shared vision for our future, we will never reach our full potential and Fort Lauderdale will never be the city it could be. The world of today is far more dynamic and competitive than the world of 1911. The rules have changed and if we are going to continue to prosper,

we must change and adapt to the new world and be ready to compete on an international level.

It was not so long ago that Fort Lauderdale was a city of vision. In the 1980's, our community came together with a plan and vision to be the best city of its size. As a result of these efforts, we now enjoy great institutions such as the Riverwalk, the Broward Center for the Performing Arts and the vital and dynamic urban core we see today. However, the vision and planning that brought us to this point, and the shared common goals that made this possible, are gone. We must recapture this energy and vision if we are to continue to prosper in the future. The people of Fort Lauderdale are anxious for new vision and new leadership willing to do the hard work to bring about that vision. We can do this again but we need new leaders of vision to bring our community together.

Today our City is at a crossroads. The turnover on the City Commission as a result of the earlier enactment of term limits gives us a once in a generation opportunity to remake the leadership, goals and vision of our community—to define the city we want to become. For this reason it is even more important that the citizens of Fort Lauderdale participate in the coming election and elect leaders with a vision for our future and the ability to build the consensus necessary to bring that vision to reality. I will be that leader. I have the vision, the energy and the courage to work hand-in-hand with our citizens to build and realize our new dream.

Coleman Prewitt is an attorney and longtime Fort Lauderdale resident running for the District 4 Fort Lauderdale Commission seat.

For more information call (954) 614-9942 or visit www.colemanprewitt.com.

"Washington Bound"

LTC(R) Allen West

My fellow South Floridians, it is my sincere honor to have the opportunity to introduce myself and share with you all. I am Lieutenant Colonel Allen B West (US Army, Retired) and am running for Florida's US Congressional District 22. This district runs from north Palm Beach County down to Broward out to Plantation. It was held by Congressman

Clay Shaw for 26 years, and he was defeated in 2006 by Ron Klein, whom I challenge.

I am originally from Atlanta Georgia and attended the University of Tennessee where I earned my BA in Political Science and my commission as US Army Second Lieutenant. I also possess two Masters degrees; one from Kansas State University and another from the US Army Command and General Staff College.



Twenty-two years later in 2004, and after becoming an Army Master Parachutist and several combat deployments, I retired with my wife and two daughters to Plantation Florida. I taught at Deerfield Beach HS for one year, and then volunteered as a civilian advisor to the Afghanistan National Army in Kandahar from June 2005-November 2007.

My Dad served in World War II, my Mom served 25 years as a civilian with the 6th US Marine Corps District Hqs in Atlanta, and my older Brother served as a Marine in Vietnam, wounded in Khe Sanh. My young nephew is currently a Paratrooper at Ft Bragg NC preparing for his second tour to Afghanistan.

My life has been defined by one simple word, "service", that which my parents instilled in me. It is that simple theme which has led me to seek running for public office here in South Florida, to serve all of you. They also taught me the principles of individual responsibility and accountability, and that education leads to opportunity in America. My message and vision is to restore courage, competence, and character, American leadership, to our US Congress.

I am a biker, riding a 2004 Honda VTX 1300C, avid distance runner, and PADI certified Master SCUBA diver. Over the next few months leading to the general election in November I shall be sharing my thoughts and insights with you all.

I humbly request you visit our website, www.allenwestforcongress.com, and learn more about our noble endeavor. I look forward to this monthly piece, "Washington Bound" and hope to personally meet many of the City News readers.

In Your Service, Allen

www.allenwestforcongress.com

Realistic Planning For Political Direct Mail A Must-Do

by Robin Rodriguez

Every politician knows that campaigns utilizing Direct Mail are extremely effective and have a major impact on the eligible voter base. However, with new postal rules and increased costs in effect, here are some tips that you should keep in mind while designing, messaging and delivering your direct mail into the hands of your constituents and contributors.

Smart mail piece design can send a BIG message for minimum costs. Jumbo postcards, now available in up to 6 x 11 size formats can cost the same postage amount as a 5 1/2 x 8 1/2 card or envelope mailing. Offset printing is about the same and you get a bigger area for your message and photos. Postcards are cost effective and easy to read.

Personalized mail pieces can create an interaction between you and your voter base. A self mailer with built in reply cards can be laser imaged with pre-populated information on each voter per household. In addition, your information is also included and clearly shows party, office and district. Personalized methods are an excellent way to show the grass roots efforts in order to get on the ballot and start to raise funds. "Color" variable data really stands out and digitally prints the entire piece with no need to offset print.

With advanced postal tracking methods, now your absentee ballots can be tracked by both outbound delivery and return of votes in absentee and vote-by-mail balloting programs. This will ensure the accuracy of your mail-based balloting methods, and provide an added layer of accountability to your absentee ballot process. Depending on your mailing list, there are also postage discounts available as well as ways to reduce in-home delivery times. Red tagged political mailing rates can be reduced by SCF delivery directly into the facility that will work the mail.

Whether you require local or national direct mail efforts, political or otherwise, be sure that the tactical production portion of your efforts is with a qualified partner who is able to produce and mail quickly along with the latest technology for all of your direct mail marketing programs.

Meter-Made Marketing is a full service direct mail production agency. We are experts in direct mail marketing programs. Call us toll-free 877-638-3762 and speak with Robin at extension 13. Good luck!



Candidates' Forum, 3

Viva la Difference!

The Office of the Broward County Supervisor of Elections is just that. The office of elections should be one that is of, and for, the people of Broward County. The office is not about one person, not should it ever be. It is fundamental bedrock to the Democratic process, and a service to the taxpayers of this County.



Recently Broward County experienced a situation where a Constitutional Officer was found guilty of federal corruption charges, and remanded to prison. His name was emblazoned on everything pertaining to that office, from employee identification to building entryways and even vehicles. It seems that the political traction to be gained through this method of name recognition comes at a huge cost to the taxpayer. As your next Supervisor of Elections, I can assure the voters that this office will be brought back to the good people of this county.

In relating the clear delineation of choice, I am also a business project manager, who will ensure that there is proper planning, execution, and closing of a project, i.e. a successful election.

For too long this office has seen well-intentioned people stumble time after time by not being sufficiently proactive. As a good business project manager, I will accomplish the stated project objectives, and troubleshoot to restore integrity to the process, and confidence to the voter.

Further, when recruiting and building an effective team, as a manager I will consider not only the technical skills of each person, but also the critical roles and chemistry between workers. The project team will be comprised of not cronies, but capable and credentialed persons. Together with the advisory team, we will lead to accomplish the mission of successful elections!

As for my particular brand of leadership, you can look to me to be a transformation leader, as one who will motivate a team to be effective and efficient. Communication will be the base for all goal achievement; consistently focusing the group on the final desired outcomes. I will be highly visible in the office, and the community, and use a chain of command from the street to the county seat, to get the job done. My intent is to focus on the big picture, while making sure, we prepare for contingencies, and all of the details associated with voting.

Mock elections and consistent testing will be paramount to a successful electoral future! We do not need to be unpacking boxes of machines in June and July!

There is a clear difference in the choice....."viva la difference" and remember to vote August 26, 2008.

RSVP to www.votereesey2008.com or call 954-594-3363

Taking our City Back from Crime

By Bobby DuBose
Candidate for Fort Lauderdale City Commission, District 3

Our city's crime has noticeable taken a rise in recent months. It just so happens that the crime statistics appear to contradict the spike that we in the community notice. I believe we need to get back out on the streets of our neighborhoods and take them back. We have had a series of crime walks that have been a great success, but we cannot stop there. We need to increase our community involvement and policing. I not too long ago read former commissioner Tim Smith's book Politics 101 and many of the cases, incidents, and problems he sites still continue today. So the question becomes...what do we do? I do believe certain measures must take place. We must aggressively focus on problem areas. It is not just the police department's issue, but all of us as residents. In our respective sections of the city we all know where the areas with the most problems are. I believe community leaders working together with the police must devise an aggressive substantive plan that has short term and long term goals. Our police department along with community leaders should identify problem areas and go to work. We should have heavy enforcement in the targeted area followed by a crime walk followed up by heavy patrolling. I believe these types of activities will show results in the targeted area.

With our economy slowing down we will see certain crimes increase in our respective communities. We must be ready to stand up for all that is great in this beautiful city. I was born and raised in Ft. Lauderdale. I believe this city with so much character, charm, diversity and history is worth fighting for. This city remains too many of us as that place where many moved to too get an awesome quality of life, that place we wanted to raise our children and most importantly that great place we just call home.

Taking a Stand: Advocates versus Lobbyists

By Chris Chiari, candidate for the Florida House of Representatives, District 91

I am against the proposed Calypso Deep Water Port, a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility less than 8 miles off the beach in Fort Lauderdale and Lauderdale by the Sea. Contrary to the claims that Suez Energy, the company behind the project, makes in multiple full page ads about the benefits of their project, there is legitimate reason to be concerned.

Calypso's lobbyists have brushed away these concerns as unimportant. Yet real questions remain about the supposed benefit to our community, the way that the company has informed the public, and the safety of the port.

Calypso is using the power of their marketing dollar to convince us that we are the ones that need their product. But if the drive to build LNG ports in America is based on demand, then I am sure that Suez and Calypso would be shocked that LNG facilities already built in the United States are sitting dormant.

In an article on May 29th titled "Global Demand Squeezing Natural Gas Supply," New York Times writer Clifford Krauss reveals that LNG facility development in America has far outpaced the market for actually delivering LNG to our shores. The United States has significant domestic reserves of natural gas, which keeps the price lower here than in Europe. This means that because of our supply of natural gas and the higher energy prices in Europe, the market will continue to divert supplies away from our country.

I stood with my neighbors from the Galt Ocean Mile in front of the Fort Lauderdale commission to correct the company's local lobbyist, Ms. Judy Stern. She asked the Fort Lauderdale commission why we were coming forward now to protest a project that is 10 years old.

Blending facts is the easiest way for lobbyists to get their way. The Calypso Deep water port project was only submitted in the fall of 2006, not 10 years ago.

The 10 year old project is not the deep water port, but a pipeline that was supposed to bring natural gas to Broward County from the Bahamas – the initial proposed site of the LNG port.

Our neighbors on the islands to the east were well aware of the dangers of LNG. Because of local advocacy efforts, no LNG plant will be built in the Bahamas in the foreseeable future. And only after the efforts in the islands failed did Calypso set their sights on our coast.

We are up against a company that has been reluctant to answer even the most basic questions. I believe the project will fail on the facts as soon as the company makes the commitment to share them. Instead of being transparent and honest, Calypso and their local team of lobbyists have moved meetings at the last minute and turned to full page advertisements to influence public opinion.

This is a non-partisan issue, and we are neighbors regardless of political affiliation. To be successful we need a united front against this project. The State Representative in District 91 has not taken a position for or against this project. Hopefully when she does, it will be on the side of advocates.

Tim Riley, an environmental attorney from California, did exactly what we are doing now. He organized the opposition to a similar project proposed off of their coast, and he succeeded.

We can do the same. We are citizens engaged against big business; we are neighbors concerned about our coast. Together we can beat back the interests of big business and commit to protecting the interest of our community.



Candidates: considering a run for public office in 2009?

In March, 2009, the mayor's seat and all four city commission will likely be open to challengers. Mayor Naugle along with Commissioners Hutchinson and Moore will be term limited out of office.

Call (954) 564-1308 and let's discuss how the Fort Lauderdale City News can help you get your message out.

Remember: The Fort Lauderdale City News goes to every voter in the city.

Now is the time to let the voters know who you are and what you can do for the city.

Candidates' Forum, 4

The Legislature May Have Stopped Tri-Rail in its Tracks

By Mark LaFontaine

Gas prices average upwards of \$4 per gallon. The streets are clogged, and not just during rush hour. Our quality of life is suffering from South Florida's poor transportation planning, and it's only going to get worse. And Tri-Rail's lack of dedicated funding is an annual topic of discussion in Tallahassee.

Let's face it: Florida has California-sized transportation problems. Building more roads isn't the answer – that's part of the problem. More roads leads to more traffic, not less.

In May, the IBM Commuter Pain Index, a survey of 4,000 drivers nationwide, ranked the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area number three when it comes to commuter difficulties. Sixty percent of area drivers said driving here has gotten worse over the past three years, and more than half reported increased driving stress – equaling such notoriously bad driving areas as Dallas and Los Angeles.

Commuters cited start-stop traffic as the worst issue here – at 42 percent, tied with Atlanta and second only to Los Angeles. Thirty-five percent said aggressive driving is a nuisance. And – no surprise – among the worst roads are I-95, Florida's Turnpike and US 1.

According to South Florida Commuter Services, a program of the Florida Department of Transportation, "The annual cost of traffic congestion in South Florida is between \$2 - \$3 billion, for an average of \$900 - \$1,700 per motorist per year. The average South Florida commuter spends 51 hours in traffic per year."

OK, those are the problems. What are the solutions? In 2003, the Legislature created the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), charged with creating and managing a regional transportation system. The RTA includes Broward County Transit, Tri-Rail, Palm Tran in Palm Beach County, and Miami-Dade Transit.

Tri-Rail is definitely the area's biggest mass transit success. The three-county rail system's ridership has been growing steadily over the years, and now has its highest daily ridership ever. That's no surprise, given the price of gas. But Tri-Rail's success comes ironically as the Legislature once again failed to pass a dedicated funding source for it.



Two plans were considered and both passed the House but failed in the Senate. Now it's up to the three counties that fund Tri-Rail to keep funding the system at slightly higher than current levels, but the counties are facing their own budget problems. If the counties bail then the only solution is cutbacks in Tri-Rail service, as much as a 60 percent cutback in weekday trains.

Last year Tri-Rail led the nation in commuter rail growth, and this year the system is doing even better – up 28 percent, according to the Miami Herald. It's time South Florida got serious about options to single-occupant vehicles and realized the economic, environmental and energy saving benefits of public transportation.

The American Public Transportation Association reports that every \$1 invested in public transportation projects generates approximately \$6 in local economic activity. That's significant in a region like South Florida, where our economy is fragile, property values are in a freefall, and we're always one natural disaster away from a tumbling tourism climate.

The benefits of public transportation – especially a system like Tri-Rail – are obvious. In these stressful economic times, however, stopping Tri-Rail in its tracks is the wrong thing to do. Once again, the Florida Legislature has dropped the ball on dealing with Florida's real problems.

Mark LaFontaine is an accountant who lives and works in Oakland Park. He is a candidate for the State Legislature from District 92, which covers parts of Fort Lauderdale, Wilton Manors, Oakland Park, Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach.

You can learn more about him at www.MarkLaFontaine.com.

Steve Rossi To Run For Mayor Of Fort Lauderdale

by Steve Kelley

Steve Rossi has indicated his intention to run for Mayor of Fort Lauderdale in the upcoming March 2009 elections. Rossi is a successful local attorney in Fort Lauderdale. He is a former FBI agent and prosecutor. While a prosecutor at the Broward State Attorney's office, Mr. Rossi handled both misdemeanor and felony cases as an Assistant State Attorney; moreover, he was twice recognized for prosecuting the most jury trials. He served as an FBI agent in both the New York and Miami field offices. He has been in private practice since 1991.



Mr. Rossi has various legal affiliations. He is the local legal counsel to the Broward Teachers Union (BTU). BTU has over 13,000 members. He is also affiliated with the Florida Education Association (FEA). He has been actively involved in volunteer work as an attorney with Broward Lawyers Care, representing abused women in restraining order cases. He is also a volunteer attorney with the Florida Bar Mentor Scope program where he provides legal assistance to other attorneys. Additionally, he is a former mock trial judge at Nova Southeastern University.

Rossi is a graduate of Barry University and the University of Miami School of Law.

Rossi is determined to make positive changes in the city of Fort Lauderdale. He firmly believes that the safety of the residents of Fort Lauderdale is of paramount importance. He will do his best to foster a strong police department for the protection and welfare of the city. His goal is to be a Mayor representing all people in the city.

He wishes to foster an environment of unity and economic prosperity for all the residents of this great city.

For more information about the campaign, call (954) 531-9270 or email to steve@attorneyrossi.com

Liquid Natural Gas – Calypso Deepwater Port

by Walter "SKIP" Campbell
Candidate for the Florida Senate
District - 25

Many of us live in South Florida specifically because of the great quality of life this region has to offer. During my time in public life it has been a pleasure to stand and fight to maintain our piece of paradise. As many of you maybe aware, the state of Florida is reviewing a plan to build a Liquid Natural Gas pipeline off of the beautiful beaches of Ft. Lauderdale. This is wrong in so many ways.



Ten years ago, I fought against a project to build a pipeline from the Grand Bahamas to Deerfield Beach. I still believe as I did back then, that projects like this that are very close to massive populations are just simply bad ideas.

LNG is natural gas in a liquid form. This is done by keeping it in an extreme cold temperature. The problem is not here, because in extreme cold temperatures it is not flammable. The major risks begin when LNG is heated up in preparation to be discharged into the pipeline, obviously at this time the fumes become highly flammable. One vessel transporting this highly flammable product has the ability to cause a devastating explosion. This process if by human error or sabotage is a risk we should not take.

Without getting too complicated and scientific, our economy in Florida heavily depends on tourism: our beautiful beaches, clean environment, and the overall quality of life here. Curiously enough, many of our residents were once tourist. Therefore, the good citizens of our state have a great interest in maintaining Florida's beautiful beaches, clean environment, and the overall good quality of life here.

On Friday June 13, I ask all of my fellow Floridians to write to Governor Charlie Crist in opposition to proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) deepwater ports off our coast.

The risk to the population of our cities, county, and state is too great!

TALES FROM THE GALT GULAG

Horror stories abound at the condo towers on Galt Ocean Mile

by Grayson Walker, Ph.D.

Gulag is an acronym for the former Soviet Union's penal system. Since then, it has come into common use to describe any repressive system. I named my column the "Tales From The Galt Gulag," because I write about the repression of condominium Owners on the Galt Ocean Mile. As publisher Steve Kelly wrote, "the Galt Ocean Mile is the biggest crime scene in Broward County."

Bloated Salaries

To paraphrase Mark Twain, everybody talks about the economy, but nobody does anything about it – except the Florida Legislature. Florida passed a tax relief law that was happily signed into law by Governor Crist. Local governments are complaining that services will be cut because of the tax cut and spending caps. Why is Fort Lauderdale refusing to cut the bloated salaries of our "public servants."

For example, the Fort Lauderdale City Attorney makes \$348,016, City Manager Gretsas makes \$315,210, and his "assistants," several of whom came with him from White Plains, New York, make almost \$250,000 a year.

According to the Sun Sentinel, "Other than top officials and people with "manager," "director" or "chief" next to their name, the Top 300 list is almost completely filled by police and fire officials, as in prior years. ... The lowest compensation of the Top 300 was Police Officer Gino Ferri's \$133,050."

Let me put these numbers into perspective. The President of the United States makes \$400,000, and the Vice President, Speaker of the House, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court each make \$208,100. Our Senators and Representatives each make \$162,100.

The Governor of Florida makes \$132,932, the Lieutenant Governor makes \$127,999. The Attorney General makes \$131,604. A Florida Supreme Court Justice makes \$161,000 and a Circuit Court Judge \$145,000. State Attorneys and Public Defenders make \$153,140.

Only the President of the United States makes more than Fort Lauderdale's attorney, city manager, or the assistants.

Is it possible that Mayor Naugle,

Commissioner Teel, and the others believe we can afford – or should pay these people more than a Circuit Court Judge, a Supreme Court Justice, a Senator, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or the Vice President of the United States? It appears that Naugle, Teel, and the others have no concept of scale. They spend our tax dollars as if they were monopoly money.

The Real Estate Bubble And Crash

The Florida real estate market began a dizzying spiral upward. One year, property values increased by a factor of four. Nobody could lose money on real estate. Speculators poured into the condominium market. The combination of speculation and population growth drove the market to unrealistically high levels. This economic phenomenon is called a bubble; the funny thing about bubbles is that they pop. When they pop, the market crashes.

A major hurricane struck South Florida, the bubble burst, and the market began crashing. There were massive waves of foreclosures. There were many who simply walked away from their condominiums, leaving the Condominium Association to declare bankruptcy.

I know this sounds like today, but this is what happened in 1925. The arrival of the September 1926 hurricane triggered the bursting of the bubble and the real estate market crash.

By the time the stock market crashed in 1929, Florida's economy was so bad that the great depression had little effect upon Florida.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." (George Santayana, *Life of Reason, Reason in Common Sense*, Scribner's, 1905, page 284)

It seems that Florida did not heed Santayana's warning, for the crash of 2005 was the duplicate of 1925. Will the pattern be repeated? Will we see a depression in 2009?

Bankruptcy Of Your Condominium Association

The real estate market peaked in late 2005, and has been falling since then. We have seen a loss of about fifteen-percent per year since the peak. It is likely that the bottom of the market will not be reached until 2010. There have been record levels of foreclosure and short sales, with record-breaking levels coming in the next two years. Medical technology means that people are living longer. This is wonderful. However,

living longer in a spendthrift condominium association means that octogenarians are outliving their money.

What is your Condominium Association doing in response to the burst bubble and the crash of 2005? What is your Condominium Association doing to prepare for the possibility of waves of foreclosures and the risk that your Association would have to declare bankruptcy? What would happen to your home if your Condominium Association declared bankruptcy? Where would you go if your Board spends your Association into bankruptcy? Remember the words of Santayana.

Budgets Of Your Condominium Association

Pay attention to your Board and Management, and their plans to spend your money. Your Association should be reducing expenses, renegotiating contracts, and postponing all but the most essential maintenance. This is a time to tighten your belt, not renovate your lobby. Is your Condominium Association Manager earning a six-figure salary? Is your Association paying huge retainers to big law firms, or are they being as careful with your money as you are? Is your Board spending your money on political events? Is your Board paying tribute to the CAI?

Your Board and Management should be coming up with creative ways to save money and reduce your maintenance assessments. If you do not see your costs dropping, your Board and Management are not doing their job, and should be replaced. Perhaps it is time for condominium spending caps that are based upon assessed value. Remember the words of the Condominium Owner's champion, Julio Robaina. "You may live in paradise now, but you're one election away from hell." (Representative Julio Robaina, February 2008) Please – do not put me in the position of having to say, "I told you so."

Help For Owners

Is a Condo Commando trampling upon your rights? Are you the victim of voting fraud? Are you the victim of financial fraud? What can you do about it? How can you protect your rights? Talk to your neighbors. Organize. Call Ombudsman Danille Carroll or State Representative Julio Robaina. Join the AARP and support their Owner's Bill Of Rights. Perhaps the single most important thing you can do is to join the Cyber Citizens For Justice.

There are four other people who

can help you. Inger Garcia can be reached at 954-524-0506, or at IngerGarcia.com. Jan Bergemann of the Cyber Citizens For Justice can be reached at 386-740-1503 or at Jan@ccfj.net. Condominium Ombudsman Danille R. Carroll can be reached at 954-202-3234 or at Danille.Carroll@dbpr.state.fl.us. Representative Julio Robaina can be reached at 305-442-6868 or at Julio.Robaina@myfloridahouse.gov.

The Southpoint Condominium Owners website is at <http://www.Southpoint-Condominium.org> and you can join the Southpoint Owners group by sending an email to SouthpointCondominium-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

About the Author

I own a condominium at Southpoint, in the Galt Gulag. I am a University Professor and teach American Government. Nothing prepared me for life in the Galt Gulag where my Constitutional Rights are ignored. I have been assaulted, battered, slandered, libeled, disparaged, stalked, had my car keyed, and had my life threatened because I believe in American democracy and the Constitution.

Do you have a story to tell? Write to me at AGWIII@comcast.net.



To the Editor:

Many Thanks for your GULAG and Condo Lawyer articles. You give voice to many who feel voiceless in their condos.

Age and illness make it impossible for a large number to participate in the combat of condo politics and absentee landlords do not help. Despair and frustration lead people to pay for what is requested just to buy peace of mind.

We made copies of Dr. Grayson's eye-opener interview, hoping to spark life into fellow residents. Many thanks to Ms. Garcia for her contributions.

Condo living makes many of us play condo lawyers. We need her advice.

Sincerely,

Dr. Herman Fabre

THE CONDO Lawyer

Committed to Justice for the Galt Condo Community



THE NEW CONDO LAWS

by Inger Garcia, Esquire

My name is Inger Garcia, Esq. I have been an attorney in private practice since 1991. Prior to, I worked as an Intern Assistant State Attorney for Janet Reno in Miami; interned for Judges; and interned for my Law School Trial Program Director. I have been involved in real estate and litigation for over 17 years.

The new Condominium laws are going into effect soon. A summary of some of the new laws follows.



In many cases, a Director on the Board does not vote and the Boards in the past used the vote as they wished. In the future, if a Director abstains from voting, it will be considered that he/she did not take any position.

Directors now have liability for monetary damages. The Director must act in good faith or they are liable for monetary damages. If that Director violated criminal law, derived a personal benefit, acted in bad faith with malicious purpose, they are liable.

There is now a civil penalty for destroying records. We all know how hard it is to get our records when we want them. Well, now if a person knowingly or intentionally defaces, destroys, or fails to create or maintain accounting records, they are held liable.

What about that problem where the association fails to provide your records within a reasonable location? Now the Association must provide all Condominium documents within 45 miles of the Condominium property and within 5 working days. The Condominiums have the option to make the documents available via the internet or on a computer screen and printed upon request.

Identity theft is now protected. Social security numbers, driver's licenses and credit card numbers and other personal identification is not available on the Condo records anymore.

The reserves of a Condominium, or at least a summary of it must be disclosed. This way the unit owners will know if reserves are funded to prevent special assessments or if a special assessment is looming. You will now know if there is money in the chauffer

or be able to anticipate that large special assessment that can cause you to lose your home.

Are you one of the Associations that have no clue of the true financial health of your condominium? Well, now you will know what the true financial picture and health is of your condominium. Associations cannot waive financial reporting requirements for more than three consecutive years.

Have you lost an election by a "ghost vote?" You know the elevator voting or unoccupied units. Now, votes allocated to the units owned by the Association may not be cast by proxy, ballot, or otherwise for any purpose.

Have you ever wanted an item on the agenda and not been able to convince the Board to add it? Now the Board must allow unit owners to add items to the agenda or call a special meeting by a petition of 20% of the unit owners within 60 days.

Have you ever received a notice of regular or special assessment and not understood what it is for? The Boards now have to notice the meeting with a clear statement that an assessment will be considered and the nature, estimated costs, and description of the purpose of the assessment.

Are you a convicted felon? This new law prohibits a convicted felon from serving on the Board until their rights are restored and at least 5 years has passed since the restoration. If you, as a Director, are charged with felony theft or embezzlement regarding your Association, you shall be removed from office creating a vacancy to be filled according to the law.

Are you a Condo with more than 10 units? If so, you can no longer opt out of the election process and must now abide by Florida Statute, Chapter 718.

As a Director or officer, if you are more than 90 days past due in your regular assessments, you shall be deemed to have abandoned your office, creating a vacancy that will be filled according to law.

Were you one of the many Condominiums that were hit with a high special assessment this year in amounts that almost caused a foreclosure? In an attempt to solve that in the future, Condo buildings shall now have required engineering reports and inspections in relation to the useful life and replacements costs on the common elements. This can however be opted out by membership vote.

Condominium owners, you are now protected from SLAPP suits. A SLAPP suit is defined as a Strategic Lawsuits against Public participation) suit. This is where the Association files a suit against you, the unit owner, to intimidate and silence you as a critic and burdens you with so much legal defense expense that you cannot fight. The Association Boards have attorneys file frivolous lawsuits against you the outspoken unit owner and you are forced to spend your own money to hire a lawyer to fight them. These lawsuits are later dropped leaving you stuck with your own fees and costs. This is now illegal. This is a major step to using the law to stop the intimidation and use of the legal system illegally.

I personally am involved in many suits for unit owners where this protection will finally put us on a more even playing field. Hurrah!

Have you ever wondered what financial interest your Board member has when they hire a contractor or vendor? Well now, you will know, as the Board members must now disclose any financial or ownership interest they have in any contracting party. Any this provision applies to maintenance and the CAM Management companies also.

Has your president or manager ever entered into an illegal contract or has the Board entered into a contract that you as unit owner know is bogus? Well now, you the unit owners can void a contract by a majority of the vote of the unit owners without a penalty. Before, it was a fait accompli Too late, too bad. Now, we finally have a way to fix it. Thank you Julio! Judges used to say, well it is done, and the body is dead, too late. It is not too late anymore.

The Division is finally empowered to act. The DBPR (Division of Business and professional Regulation) is empowered! The division can issue civil fines and/or remove any individual who willfully and knowingly violates the law, and can prevent them from coming back on for a period of time. There is also now subpoena power to secure records after a unit owner provides proof by certified mail return receipt requested. A subpoena will go a long way to give us the transparency we are looking for, finally.

There is also a change that requires the Condo Board to cooperate with investigations, and if they do not, there will be provisions to punish the non-cooperating Boards and Associations.

You know that Ombudsman's Of-

fice who in the past said it is not in our jurisdiction? Well they will now be empowered to assist with disputes, even when it does not fall into the definition of a dispute. What that means, is when there is a problem that is not "legally" a dispute as defined by the Administrative codes, you had been forced to hire a lawyer and litigate. Well, now the DBPR is stepping up and assisting to resolve these matters, pre-filing. That is a good thing.

As of October 1, 2008, a seven member Council shall exist for a 6-month term to make any other recommendations to the Condo laws and to review, evaluate and advise our lawmakers of any improvements we need. So keep your ears and eyes open and help us continue to make our lives better as Condo Dwellers.

There are many more and we will pick them up next month. So for now, goodbye to all.

Did you ever ask yourself if your Board actually has a clue as to what they are doing? Education, Education, Education. Education is now required. There will be training and educational programs for not only Board members but also for Unit owners! This will include web-based and live training and seminars. The Board will need to sign an oath they have the necessary education. www.Condominium-Solutions.com will be also providing this education soon. Condominium Solutions can be reached at 954-892-5599 or info@Condominium-Solutions.com.

If you have any comments or questions, I may be reached at: attorney@IngerGarcia.com, 954-894-9962, fax: 954 446-1635. I am also on a Radio Talk Show Tuesday through Friday at 5:00 p.m. on 1230 AM or internet at WWW.BeverlyKennedy.com.

Please call in with your comments at 800-696-6566.

Publisher's Note:

Inger Garcia has worked tirelessly for the Galt Community, often for free, for justice for condo owners. She literally helped write this new legislation so highly favorable to condo owners. Inger is running for our City Commission, District 1. The election will be held in March, 2009.

Fort Lauderdale City Manager's Salary is an "obscenity," Mayoral Candidate States

By Earl Rynerson, 954-445-0431

As someone interested in the financial health of Fort Lauderdale, I have looked at a number of cities across the country to compare the salary of our City Manager, George Gretsas, to the salaries of similar positions in those cities. I am astounded at the largesse that our Mayor and Commissioners have bestowed upon this individual and his "Assistants" over the last 4 years, to manage the departments of a relatively small city like ours!

After a day of searching, I could find no city employee, anywhere in the US, that earns what Fort Lauderdale City Manager George Gretsas earns: **\$315,000 annually in wages and benefits!** These benefits include a take-home car, generous housing allowance (\$2,000 per month?), expense account, travel expenses to other states and abroad, health care, pension in the neighborhood of \$150,000 per year and much, much, more.

George Gretsas earns more than any city employee in San Francisco (one of the most liberal cities in the country for salaries). San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom earns \$215,000 per year, \$100,000 less than George Gretsas, yet Newsom manages a city that is four times the size of Fort Lauderdale (745,000 residents versus 185,000 residents)

Reference: <http://www.sfgate.com/webdb/sfpay/index.shtml>

George Gretsas earns more than any city employee in Chicago. The highest paid city employee in Chicago earns \$309,000. The Mayor of Chicago (a city more than 15 times the size of Fort Lauderdale), earns \$216,000, \$100,000 less than George Gretsas.

Reference: <http://www.bettergov.org/Research/>

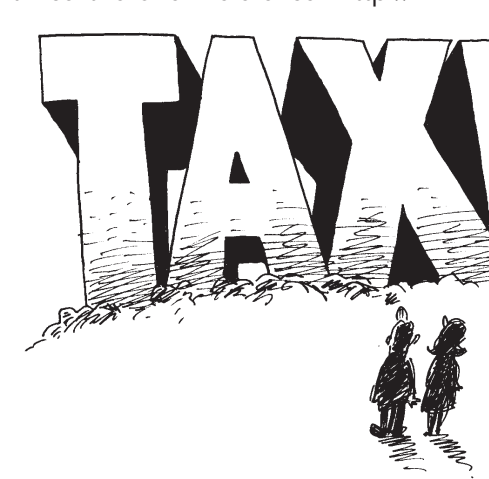
George Gretsas earns more than any city employee in New York. With a population of over 8 million, (45 times the size of Fort Lauderdale) no one earns anywhere close to the salary that George Gretsas earns. The salaries of the typical manager of city departments in New York is between \$100,000 to \$150,000.

Reference: http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/pdf/govpub/CIVIL_LIST_2007_Public.pdf

George Gretsas earns more than any city employee in Boston. In a city of 590,000 residents, the highest paid city employee earns \$227,000 (a police Cap-

tain). The Mayor's salary is \$175,000, and he manages a city that is over three times the size of Fort Lauderdale. Reference: http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/03/12/1948_city_workers_earn_over_100000/

George Gretsas earns more than any city employee in Miami. A city with a population of over 400,000, the highest paid person earns \$193,000, \$122,000 less than George Gretsas. The chief of Staff for the City Manager's office earns \$179,000, just over half of what George Gretsas earns in a city that is more than twice the size. Reference: <http://www.cva/ric/news.apx.-content-articles-RTD-2008-03-02-0129.html>



miamify.net/watchdog/datasleuth/db/employee_miami/

George Gretsas earns more than any city employee in Los Angeles. A city with a population of 3.8 million, none of the salaries in the mayor's office exceed \$150K. The highest earning city employee is the General Manager of the Los Angeles International Airport who earns \$305K, less than what George Gretsas earns. Reference: <http://lang.dailynews.com/socal/citypayroll/>

George Gretsas earns more than any city employee in Dallas. Mary Suhm, the City Manager for the City of Dallas (population 1.23 Million) earns a salary of \$252K, \$60,000 less than George Gretsas. Yet she manages a city that is more than six times the size of Fort Lauderdale.

Reference: <http://www.dallas.org/databases>

I then compared our City Manager's salary to cities that are about the same size as ours (around 185,000 residents):

Sheila Hill-Christian, Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Richmond, Virginia (population 192,000) earns \$170,000, almost half of the salary of George Gretsas. (And the residents there think she is overpaid)

Reference: <http://www.inrich.com/>

<http://www.cva/ric/news.apx.-content-articles-RTD-2008-03-02-0129.html>

Little Rock Arkansas Mayor, (with a population the same as Fort Lauderdale), Mark Stodola, is paid \$160,000 a year, again, half of what George Gretsas earns.

Reference: http://www.arktimes.com/blogs/arkansasblog/2008/02/more_pay_for_hays.aspx

What all this tells me is that our Ft. Lauderdale Mayor and Commissioners over the last 4 years have been "asleep at the wheel." It shows an unfortunate lack of fiduciary responsibility on the part of our Mayor and all City Commissioners who have supposedly served our city since Gretsas and his assistants (most of whom are paid more than \$200,000 annually as well) were hired. Each year we are paying out

well over \$1 million dollars in cumulative salaries to these people to basically "Manage the Department Managers." Fort Lauderdale Department Managers were each hired to manage their own departments; we don't need another layer of management over them. Layers of management only "gum up the operational effectiveness" of our city.

We as citizens have had to accept (for years) these inflated salaries of people that, in effect, reduce the effectiveness of our city. We have had to accept an "I'm not responsible" attitude from our Commissioners and Mayor who have allowed this situation to worsen for years. Yet even now, several of these elected officials will want your future vote.

We should be asking them all a very specific question: Where were you when these obscene salaries were approved?

Since we taxpayers pay for these salaries, aren't we entitled to an answer?

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"Graduation Coaches are Insane" and other Former School Board Member observations

Maybe It's Time

By Marty Rubinstein
Former Member of Broward County School Board

In a recent issue of the Sun Sentinel, an editorial promoted the idea of "Graduation Coaches" in order to improve the dismal graduation rates in Florida public high schools.

I have only one word for the idea of Graduation Coaches for public schools.

INSANITY.

After all, our schools are in trouble and graduation rates are dismal, so let's just add yet another layer of bureaucracy to the mix. Maybe we can take another five years of mediocre performance in order to 'discover' that we need yet another solution. First and foremost, the driving priority of any bureaucrat is to keep their job. All else comes second.

For more than 40 years we've been deluged with the commentary that public education in America is a disaster.

Our schools are failing.

Reading anywhere near grade level seems to be a special achievement these days.

European and Asian students are outperforming American students.

Year after year, program after program has produced nothing other than declining statistics. 40 plus years of "experts" in the field of education have given us essentially nothing but complaints along with billions of taxpayer dollars down the drain. We are more concerned with rewarding participation rather than achievement.

How do we address the real issues?

- Start with smaller schools, not just smaller classes. From this point forward, build schools for no more than 300 students. Smaller schools will provide an atmosphere of family between administration, teachers and yes, even students.
- Schools need to be part of a community, not just a place where parents can drop their children for 6 hours on weekdays.

- Hold administrators directly accountable for their school's performance, and yes,
- Provide performance incentives for teachers.

Can smaller schools be built in today's arena of affairs?

Absolutely.

With the mass exodus of residents from inner-cities to the suburbs in past years, there have been proposals for smart growth projects to revitalize old neighborhoods through mixed use reconstruction.

Along with commercial and residential construction, new schools can be added as part of the overall design and should become a requirement for such projects.

What a novel idea, as well as the absolute spirit of concurrency.

We also need to divide the school district itself into smaller portions, each of which would be accountable for "divisional" performance.

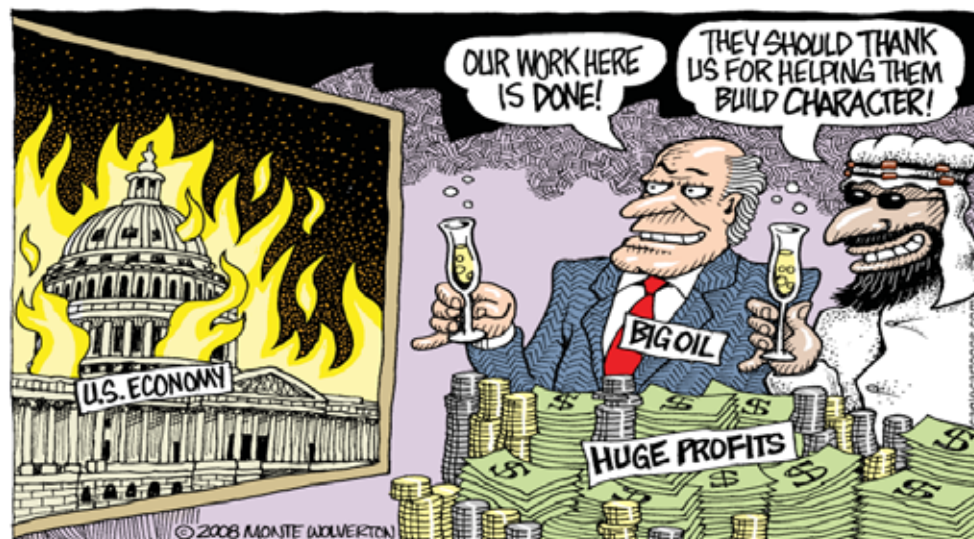
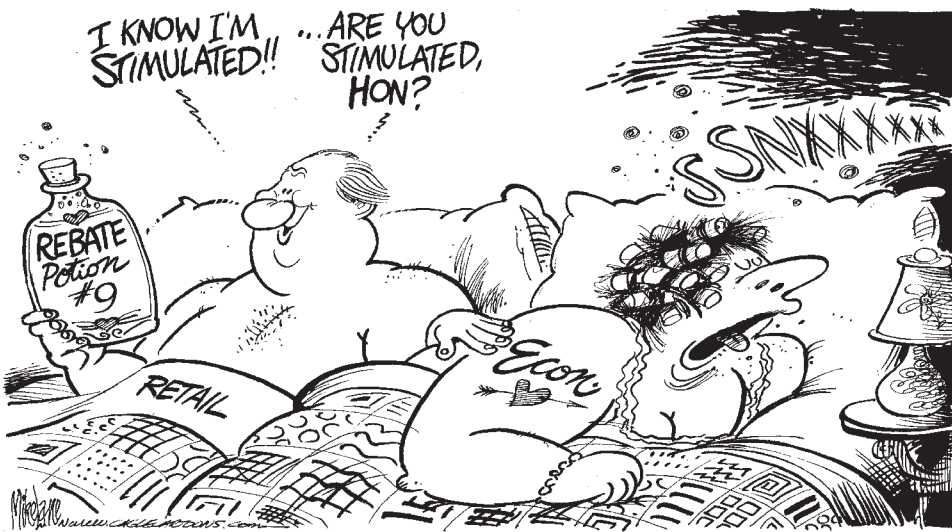
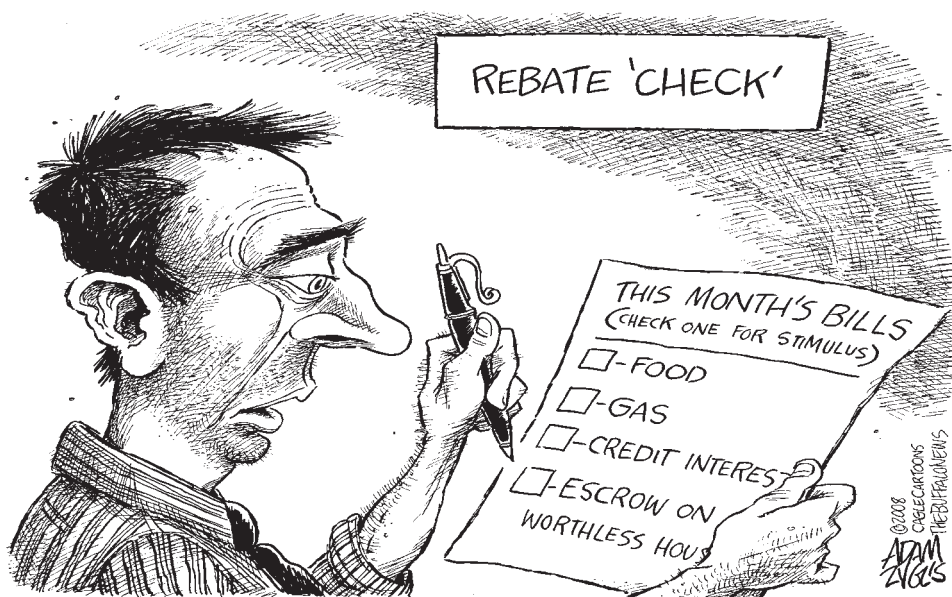
Large companies do this all the time to keep profitability high. Remember, the 'profit' of the school system is the success of its one and only product, graduates.

For the district as a whole, evaluate each and every current program for their ultimate effect on graduation rates, and scrap those that cannot justify their existence. For programs on the borderline, sunset them.

Focus instead, on teaching the basics. If the children cannot grasp the basics (ask any young cashier in any store if they can make change without the assistance of the cash register) then all else is a waste. In smaller schools with limited populations, the teachers and staff can provide their own "coaching" atmosphere.

No need to create another unproductive layer of bureaucracy.

Me? Like Will Rogers; "I'm not a member of any organized party. I'm a Democrat."



Sex on the Beach

This new feature, by Parvona Fernandez, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist and Sex Therapist will answer your questions about sex. No topic is taboo. Please feel free to email your questions about sex to Dr. Fernandez at southfloridasexpert@gmail.com.

Dear South Florida Sexpert,

I am a 30-year-old male, who works at a large consulting firm. I am attracted to one of my co-workers. There has been some flirting back and forth, but I am uncertain if I want to take it to the next level by asking her out on a date. I have always stayed away from mixing my personal life with my career, but I am really attracted to this woman. What do you think?

Sincerely,
Crushing on a Co-Worker



Dear Crushing,

You sound very conflicted. On the one hand, you are very attracted to this woman, but on the other you are fearful of the conflict this relationship might cause with your career. There are many pros and cons to dating a co-worker just like any dating situation. When faced with making a decision, I think it is best to analyze the risks and benefits.

I have heard from many of my South Floridian clients that they have difficulty meeting potential mates due to not wanting to go to a club scene or Internet date. Within your demographic, the work place seems like the most logical environment to meet someone.

The New York Times even reported that office romance is becoming a larger trend and much less taboo due to increased collegial interaction outside of the work place.

An advantage to sharing a work en-

vironment with a potential lover is that you can familiarize yourself with the co-worker before asking her out on a date. I think it would be best to know her as a friend before taking the next step.

This could help you better understand her personality and avoid potential drama. You do not want to walk into the office kitchen to find her boiling bunnies if the relationship ends.

Another issue from a legal perspective is sexual harassment. Consult your company's policies on sexual harassment and ensure that your relationship would not violate any of the conditions. Violating workplace rules would only add stress to your relationship and jeopardize your career. This could place a lot of undue stress on the relationship. In order for a new relationship to flourish, you must create a nurturing environment for it to grow.

Furthermore, be prepared to handle office gossip. Workplace relationships are always a "front page" topic amongst co-workers. As you know from celebrity marriages, tabloid gossip can be stressful for a relationship. If you are more of a private person, this could be a hard topic for you to face.

After weighing the risks and benefits, it is also important to check in with your feelings. How do you feel when you are with her? Do not let fear hold you back from confronting your feelings for your co-worker. You could think of a million reasons not to do something for fear of being hurt.

Sincerely,

Dr. Parvona Fernandez

About Dr. Parvona Fernandez

Parvona Fernandez, Psy.D. is a Licensed Psychologist and Sex Therapist. Her office is located in Downtown Fort Lauderdale, and she serves those who want to make the most out of their sex lives.

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A Book Review

Politics 101.

Tim Smith. Stephen M. Kelley Publications (paperback). 168 pp.



Reviewed by Fredric H. Karr. Member of the District of Columbia bar and retired federal government attorney.

"JUST DO IT!" With this exhortation, former Fort Lauderdale City Commissioner Tim Smith urges folks to get involved in local politics and make a difference in his book, Politics 101.

As for a reason for perusing this tome, perhaps the book's subtitle says it best: "I've been robbed, mugged, blackmailed and ignored, so I got elected and made a difference." Maybe another reason is that the cover touts Politics 101 as "required reading for the inspired citizen."

The background for Politics 101 is south Florida as it was 30 or even 15 years ago. This was before high-rises dotted the landscape.

Even though I didn't live here at the time, I remember it well, since my parents have been living here since September 1970, and I used to visit them frequently. There was a more laid-back, rural atmosphere which, very sadly, we'll never see again.

Narrated in the first person by Commissioner Smith, Politics 101 moves in a light, breezy fashion. However, the presence of an Index would have been helpful. In any nonfiction work, this is an almost indispensable tool.

Even though the overall tone is fanciful, the author at the same time pulls no punches. Very directly, he posits, "...it's time to unmask the flaws in our system, and the flawed people who cause them, so I'm taking off the gloves to give you a brass-knuckles view of the inside of grassroots politics."

Perhaps Commissioner Smith's main message is that "Hopefully, you are considering a run for public office...." On that note, the author quotes Plato who sagely uttered, "When smart people refuse to engage in politics they are punished by being governed by those who are dumber."

The author's humor doesn't stop there. Shortly thereafter, he scribes, "Soon I would come to understand the Latin root of the word politics. Pol (meaning many) and tics (meaning blood sucking insects).

Some of Commissioner Smith's ideas for reform bear mention. On the issue of term limitations for elected officials, he scribes in a somewhat pungent tone, "...politicians are like diapers. If you don't change them regularly, they begin to smell!"

Since voter turnout is very low, he further proposes, "that there ought to be some reward for voting. Or, in the converse, punishment for those who don't." Since voter participation in local elections is abysmal, maybe Commissioner Smith's suggestion is not so bad.

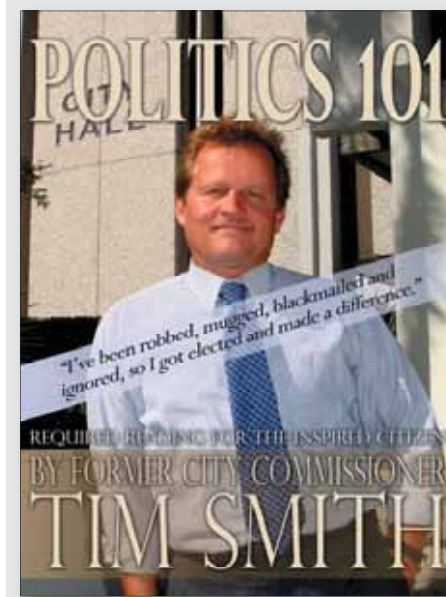
Being a public servant began to take its toll. Thus, "...burning the candle at both ends became my style." No, Mr. Smith isn't necessarily one wild and crazy guy. Rather, he explains the trials and tribulations of being a city commissioner.

After returning to private citizenry, he authors, "One of the things I noticed after being out of office for a few months, is that I had not read a single book for pleasure in years.... I only had time (or eyeball capacity) to scan the daily newspapers every day...."

We have something in common, Commissioner Smith. Except for summer, my seven years in college and law school were filled with dry, dusty tomes (and the occasional newspapers).

"God luck in your run for public office." These are the final words in the ultimate caption in Politics 101. And what a message and book they are.

Tim's book is \$17 and can be ordered by calling (954) 564-1308.



The American Family Holocaust

by Grayson Walker, Ph.D.

Bolshevik Invention

Vladimir Lenin said, "Destroy the family, and you destroy society." No-fault divorce was invented by the Bolsheviks in 1917. The Bolsheviks hated the family and needed a tool to destroy the bourgeois notions of the family. They wanted to create an allegiance to the government. No-fault divorce was this tool, and it worked. Within a few years, it was common for Russians to have been married and divorced several times before they were thirty. By 1920, it was common for twenty-year old men to have had several wives and for women of the same age to have had several abortions. Many women found marriage and childbearing a profitable occupation.

Unilateral Divorce

The term no-fault divorce is misleading. Rather than no-fault divorce, what we have is unilateral divorce. No-fault divorce means the dissolution of a marriage, upon petition to the court by either party, without the requirement of fault on either party.

It is important to realize that either party may request, and receive, the dissolution of the marriage, despite the objections of the other party. Marriage is a contract, and no-fault divorce allows either party to breach the contract without penalty. There is no legal defense against a petition for dissolution of a marriage under no-fault divorce.

The American Bar Association imported the Bolshevik system in 1965, and announced a project to create a uniform marriage and divorce law. In 1967, they received \$60,000 from the Ford Foundation and \$35,000 from the Federal government. The Bolshevik invention was adopted by California in 1969 and Florida in 1971.

Failed Social Experiment

The adoption of unilateral non-binding marriage is a failed social experiment. It is today's equivalent of Prohibition. Over 50% of all first marriages end in divorce. The statistics for subsequent marriages are even worse. More than half of the divorces involve children. This means the government will control the incomes, wealth, debts, and lives of these chil-

dren, mothers, and fathers, until the children are at least 18 years of age.

Since 1972, over one million American children every year have seen their parents divorce. The trend continues, and today, there are over 50 million non-custodial parents and over 60 million children of divorce.

In 2004, the Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, addressing the Michigan Bar Association, declared that marriage was no longer a viable institution in that state. She pointed out that over two-thirds of all litigation in Michigan was divorce related.

Custody in Florida

According to Gilbert's Law Dictionary, custody means that "one has control of a person or piece of property, or the custody a guardian has over the child under his or her care or the custody a person has of a car loaned to him." While some states are attempting to put a spin on the concept by referring to one parent as the "residential parent," the meaning is clear - custody or control of the children of the dissolved marriage.

If custody were decided on the basis of the toss of a fair coin, mothers and fathers would receive custody of their children about 50% of the time. In contested Florida divorce cases, the judge give custody of the children to the mother about 90% of the time. In contested Florida divorce cases that involve black or Latin parents, judges give custody of the children to the mother over 96% of the time.

Child Support

According to the Federal government, 79.6% of custodial mothers are given a child support award, while only 29.9% of custodial fathers receive such awards. Almost half of the non-custodial mothers totally default on child support payments, while only 26.9% of the noncustodial fathers defaulted.

The myth of the "Deadbeat Dad" is perpetuated for political gain, although research has thoroughly discredited this myth. Research consistently showed that over 75% of the non-payers have no income, are unemployed, are disabled, or are incarcerated. Ironically, it is non-custodial Mothers who have the worst child support payment record.

Academic and government research proved that child support vastly exceeds the cost of raising a child. Many states' child support are based upon the Bolshevik's model and not the actual cost of raising a child. Our adversarial legal system feeds upon the conflict that is inherent in divorce. The children pay for the conflict and the lawyers' profit.

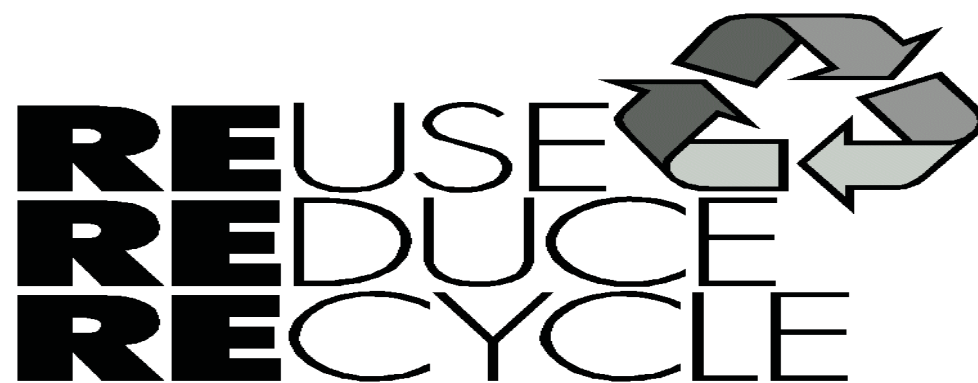
Children: The Victims Of Divorce

Federal Government reports show the toll on the children of divorce is immense. Children from fatherless homes account for 63% of child suicides, 71% of teenage pregnancies, 90% of all homeless and runaway children, 71% of all high school dropouts, 75% of all adolescent drug addicts, and 85% of all

youths in prisons.

Divorce is a \$600 million dollar per year business. There is much discussion about the protection of children and marriage, included a proposed marriage amendment to the Constitution. However, children and the institution of marriage cannot be protected until we end our failed social experiment with the Bolshevik's no-fault divorce. The unintended consequence of prohibition was the rise of organized crime.

The unintended consequence of unilateral divorce is the achievement of Lenin's goal, the destruction of the family.



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Coral Ridge Homeowners Battling Cardinal Gibbons Again Over excessively bright Stadium Lights

by James Colonel

Homeowners of the north Coral Ridge Homeowners' Association are once again battling Cardinal Gibbons over proposed stadium lights on the football field. The issue at stake is to allow the school to keep the huge illegal lights that have recently been installed with a permit that was "issued in error." Two of the four light poles are 95 feet high, and the other two poles are 65 feet high, where the legal height limit for poles in this "R1" community is only 35 feet. The issue was previously defeated by the city's board of adjustment, unanimously in 1982.

Other issues involved with the community's objection to night games, are not enough parking, traffic control, noise, increased crime, light spillage into homes, and of course, the presence of the unsightly poles that look way out of place in this community. Property values will surely be lowered. The school has not addressed any of these issues with the homeowners association or the city.



The entire homeowners association is trying to band together in solidarity on this issue, much like they did in the late 80's when street closures behind the coral ridge mall movie theaters were a major focus. If you are interested in supporting the homeowners or want more information, you can e-mail your contact information to nostadiumlights@aol.com or call 954-803-2540 and leave a message. Someone will return your call.

The next board of adjustment meeting, which will decide the issue, will be held on August 13th, 6:30 pm, 100 N. Andrews Ave, first floor, City Hall.

Any concerned citizens should e-mail Terry Burgess tburgess@fortlauderdale.gov or any of the board of adjustment members listed below.

Two things are very important. One is showing up at the meeting, even if the person is not going to speak, and the other is writing a letter to the members of the board of adjustment...even if the letter is only

a few sentences. It will make a difference.

Scott Strawbridge, Chair
scottstrawbridge@gmail.com

Don Larson - Vice chair
dflarson@bellsouth.net

Gerald Jordan (jerry)
gjordan@bellsouth.net

Diana Waterous centorino
dwaterous@aol.com

E. Birch Willey
818 SE 4th street, #203,
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301.

David Goldman
goldman.dave@gmail.com

Bruce Weihe
bweihe@sszrlaw.com

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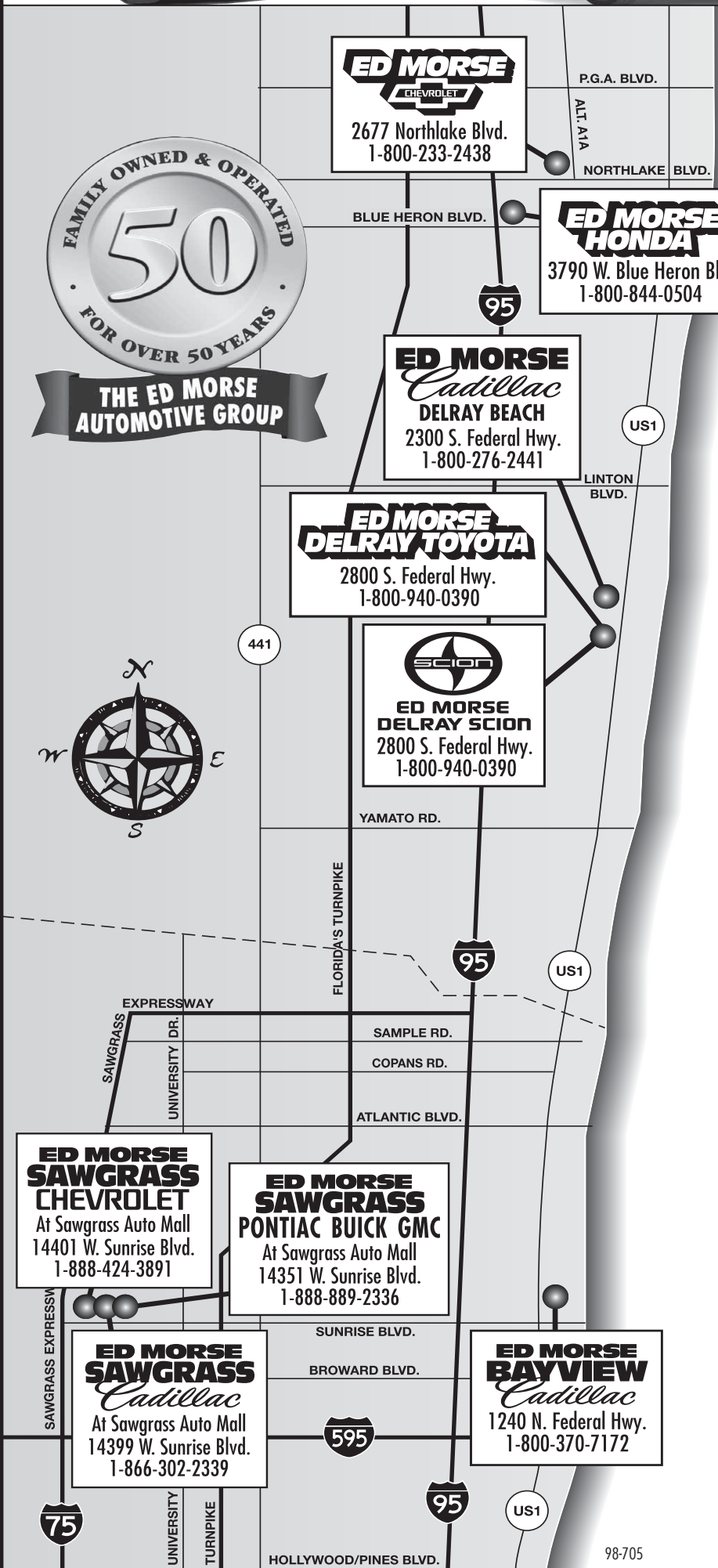
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COUNTY COMMISSION GOLF COURSE VOTE

Continued from page 1

Lauderdale, none of our so-called leaders could be bothered to speak at this important vote nor did they lobby their colleagues on the County Commission. Christine Teel, our District 1 City Commissioner has done nothing to help us. Indeed, she has indicated she favors development of the golf courses.

With no help from our elected officials, it was truly a citizen's effort that this time, resulted in victory. It was a classic case of "when they feel the heat, they'll see the light."

Teel's opponent, Inger Garcia in the upcoming March, 2009 election, had this to say about this historic vote, "It is disappointing that our own city commissioner wouldn't help us. When I am elected your next City Commissioner, I will enthusiastically support saving these golf courses and, with imagination and creativity, find a way to purchase them for betterment of the city and for future generations."

Jason Ullbrich, Coral Ridge Country Club Estates Board Member, used a huge stack of surveys to make his points. He had this to say after this vote, "As a 31 year resident, I feel any zoning changes should benefit Broward residents - not just a few speculators and Coral Ridge Country Club members."

Commissioner Keechl summed it up intelligently, "The only ones opposed to this new Land use Language were the speculators' lobbyists."



Bruce Qualee of Coral Ridge Country Club and vice president of the Lauderdale Greenspace Coalition noted, "We fought an uphill battle without any help from Mayor Naugle, City Commissioner Christine Teel or any of the other city commissioners. We challenge our city leaders to find a plan to buy the property."

John Washburn, president of the Lauderdale Greenspace Coalition observed, "Our county commissioners finally recognize that our valuable greenspace is irreplaceable."

Earl Rynerson, candidate for Mayor of Fort Lauderdale, was mystified and saddened as to why Mayor Naugle provided no leadership in preserving our green space. "It is simply the right thing to do - as Mayor, I will work to find a way to preserve, if not buy outright, these valuable golf courses."

Notably, City Commissioner Cindy Hutchinson and mayoral candidate, did nothing behind the scenes or showed up at the County Commission meetings. Mayoral candidate, Jack Seiler, did not bother to speak and was also nowhere to be seen.

Last, our city manager, George Gretsas, who makes a stunning \$315,000 per year, offered no help whatsoever. This was a big issue in his city and he provided no leadership for his fat salary.

Congratulations to Coral Ridge and all those throughout the city who took time out to make their case to our County Commission.

This a splendid victory for us all.

For more information call (954) 564-1308.

Continued from page 1

EARL RYNERSON ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY FOR MAYOR

potshots at groups here at home."

"We are now at a crossroads with the upcoming mayoral election. We have the opportunity to move the city forward toward a vision of a hip, young urban metropolis, proud of its diversity. We have the opportunity to polish up our image so that people around the world will make us the first choice for a vacation destination. Or, we can continue to have an image of a backwater enclave, stuck with closed-minded social attitudes from 50 years ago."

Asked for any final thoughts, Rynerson stated, "I am invested in Ft. Lauderdale. I live here, I own a business here. I want to polish up our image and insure our city reflects a more open-minded, tolerant attitude."

You can learn more about my campaign and help us move the city forward by going to www.earlformayor.com." (954) 445-0431.

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By Kevin Lane

KEVIN'S KORNER

Lisa Kitei Is New Executive Director For Broward Performing Arts Foundation

The Broward Performing Arts Foundation recently named Lisa Kitei as Executive Director. In this role, she will develop, plan and implement the fundraising strategy for the Broward Center for the Performing Arts.



Lisa Kitei

Kitei previously served as vice president, corporate communications for JM Family Enterprises where she was responsible for corporate giving and sponsorships, community affairs and events, as well as communications and public relations for JM Family and its subsidiary companies. Lisa spent 10 years with the Walt Disney Company in several key positions. She's active in numerous local organizations. This column offers heartiest congratulations to Lisa and the Broward Performing Arts Foundation!

Zola Keller Launches Trade-A-Gown Promotion With Goodwill Ambassadors

Last month, Zola Keller hosted a Champagne Soiree to kick-off for an innovative, three-month 'Trade-A-Gown' campaign to benefit Goodwill Ambassadors. As members and guests sipped champagne and nibbled on fabulous hors d'oeuvres,



Lynda O'Brien with Zola Keller

about a dozen members modeled the latest cocktail dresses by designer Rose Taft. "Anyone that brings a gown, suit or cocktail dress to Zola's thru September 18th, to donate to Goodwill Thrift Stores, will get a \$250.00 gift certificate that

can be used towards the purchase of new merchandise at her store," Lynda O'Brien explained. Shoppers at Goodwill's thrift stores should find some great buys on some slightly used gowns, suits and cocktail dresses. Those coupons, which have some restrictions, can be used anytime up to November 30, 2008. Zola Keller is at 818 East Las Olas. For information, call (954) 462-3222 or visit www.zolakeller.com. For information on Goodwill, call (954) 493-6313.

Magnum Opus Audio Opens on Las Olas

If you like top-of-the-line sound equipment, then you'll be blown away when you visit Magnum Opus Audio, recently opened at 1511 East Las Olas.

Owner Andrew Byer, a confirmed audiophile since the age of fifteen and a passionate, world renowned audio system's designer, has assembled systems that look more like works of art than traditional audio components. Whether it's a simple \$5,000 bedroom system or a million dollar, state-of-the-art masterpiece, the equipment Magnum Opus sells is the best of the best. "Our audio and video components have the look of objects d'art...you just might call it 'audio jewelry'... that will take your breath away with it's sonic performance," Byer enthused. Pictured is the Studio Electric T2, made in Salt Lake City, Utah and priced at \$15,000. a pair.



Studio Electric T2

For store hours, call (954) 873-7005 or visit www.magnumopusaudio.com.

Hugh's 'Gourmet To Go' Is Tasty (& Easy) Approach To Summer Entertaining...

Actually, Master Chef Hugh McCauley's 'Gourmet to Go' is the perfect answer to entertaining year 'round, but especially during the languid summer months. A division of Hugh's Culinary, a full service catering and event planning company that has been serving the tri-county area for close to three decades, this door-to-door service offers the host or hostess a variety of options. Wheth-

er choosing from an extensive variety of hot or cold menu items, or having Hugh's chef prepare special dishes, it couldn't be easier. Using the finest, best tasting, highest quality ingredients, Hugh's will deliver artfully prepared party platters or you can pick them up. The best part is, all you need to do is heat, serve and enjoy! Call (954) 563-4844 or visit www.hughgourmetto.go.com.



Master Chef Hugh McCauley

The Dark Knight - The IMAX Experience Opens on July 18th At The AutoNation® IMAX® Theater

Looking for something to do with the whole family... Fort Lauderdale's Museum of Discovery and Science, at 401 SW Second Street, has hundreds of interactive exhibits along with their featured traveling exhibit. You can hang out with bats, turtles and explore Florida's amazing Everglades. Meet alligators, get charmed by a 12-foot snake, pet a big green iguana, fly like an astronaut, and immerse yourself in a five-story, giant-screen adventure at the AutoNation® IMAX® Theater. And what great films...

The much anticipated Dark Knight: The IMAX Experience opens on July 18th. There's other films currently playing like the Grand Canyon Adventure in 3D that is set against the immense backdrop of the majestic Grand Canyon, the African Adventure 3D: Safari in the Okavango; Sea Monsters 3D: A Prehistoric Adventure with stunning photorealistic computer-generated animation; and Wild Ocean 3D.

For more information call 954.467. MODS (6637) or visit our web site at www.mods.org.

Wilton Wings Brings Delicious Wings Back To Wilton Manors

There's good news for loyal diners who bemoaned the day that popular Wilton Manor's landmark restaurant



Wings-n-Things closed last year. Restaurateur Paula Pace and her business partner Scott Kraft recently opened Wilton Wings in the same building where Vincent's Restaurant & Wine was located, at 1428 N.E. 4th Avenue (Flying L Boulevard). With the closing of that restaurant, Paula and Scott saw an opportunity to bring delicious wings back to the community. Not only does the new restaurant have "... the best wings to be found... especially the grilled version, but you can also order sandwiches, ribs, burgers, soups and salads, all made from scratch," Scott added. Nothing prepackaged here, always fresh and never frozen. Paula's husband Herbert Wheeler is the General Manager. Stop in and enjoy lunch or dinner 7 days a week or call for carry out at (954) 462-9696.

Broward Health's Senior Dancing Stars Finalist Compete on July 9th

What a neat concept... Last month, Broward Health held an exciting audition for Broward County seniors 65 years and over for their Senior Dancing Stars talent competition. Categories included Rumba, Tango, Pasodoble, Waltz, Quickstep or Jitterbug. There were singles and couples. Winners will be competing at Broward Health's July 9th Senior Dancing Stars event. For information of time and place, call (954) 786-6410.

North Broward Medical Center is located at 201 E. Sample Road, Deerfield Beach, FL. For more information, please call (954) 941-8300 or visit www.BrowardHealth.org.

About the Author:

Kevin Lane is a popular photographer and journalist covering society, fashion, entertainment, dining and South Florida Lifestyle. He's a Publicist with 'blue-chip' clients in the non-profit and for-profit sector and is a motivational speaker as well as a lecturer on historic and famous figures including Napoleon Bonaparte, Ancient Egyptian dynasties, Estee Lauder and famed tap dancer, Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson. He can be reached at klane@gate.net.

Kevin invites your comments and can be reached at (954) 467-2624.

Politics Et Cetera

"If you don't vote, you don't matter."

Our City Manager is out of Control

The resignation of Fort Lauderdale Police Chief Bruce Roberts last month was a travesty. A travesty inflicted upon our City by a City Manager who is out of control. However, the darkest detail to come out of all of this is a real evil that lurks in City Hall. The Chief stated in his letter of resignation in referring to the City Hall environment "a suffocating atmosphere demanding a personal allegiance pre-occupies decisions ..."



These are words that historians use to describe the tyrannical leader of Nazi Germany. The Citizens of Fort Lauderdale do not wish to have their City Government controlled by a tyrant. A tyrant who would remove all existing leadership that would pose a threat to his power and replace them with his loyal cronies. A tyrant who would promote low level personnel to top positions with high pay to insure personal loyalty. A tyrant who would enrich himself beyond reason while in power. All actions of the current City Manager during his term that define him as a tyrant.

The City Manager has removed or caused to resign many top management personnel with many years of service to the City. At the mid-management and lower levels the City has lost hundreds of employees to other jobs or retirement. This loss of good experienced City Employees hurts in many ways. The leadership void can not be properly filled quickly for the City to operate efficiently. Filling the positions with inexperienced cronies as is currently the case many times is a hoax. The recruitment and training of replacement personnel at any level is very costly. Employees that take early retirement can be the most costly to the City with the cost of their replacement now and the cost of their additional retirement years for years to come.

Why is this happening in Fort Lauderdale? Managers who question the City Manager's agenda are removed or forced to leave and replaced with people who will not question. The atmosphere that the City Manager has created for lower level City Employees cannot be tolerated by many and they are leaving. These actions are ones taken by a

person obsessed with total control and loyalty.

The City Manager is paid Three Hundred and Fifteen Thousand Dollars a year. That is \$100,000 more a year than the more experienced City Manager he replaced was paid. That is more than any other City Manager in the State of Florida. That is more than the Broward County Manager receives who oversees a Five Billion Dollar a year budget.

The City Manager's justification for his high salary is the high salaries he has given his subordinates. This practice of overpaying his cronies to justify his ludicrous salary is costing the Citizens of Fort Lauderdale millions of dollars each year. That is of course is of no concern when personal enrichment is the City Manager's main goal.

Why have the actions of the City Manager now after several years of tyrannical behavior have the scales tipped in favor of his removal? The answer is Bruce G. Roberts. Chief of Police Bruce Roberts earned the respect of the Citizens of this City through thirty-five years of public service to this City. Respect earned by thirty-five years of dedication to duty, to the Citizens and to his fellow Police Officers. Respect earned by Chief Roberts's unquestionable integrity and actions guided by a deep-rooted sense of what is ethically correct.

Chief Roberts served this City all of his adult life. He was a Patrol Officer chasing burglars through backyards in Fort Lauderdale neighborhoods when the City Manager and his little helpers were learning their ABC's in grade school and he was running a Metropolitan Police Department when they were still in their mediocre positions in their little town of fifty thousand people. Chief Roberts stands for everything wanted of a public official and the City Manager and his cronies are everything unwanted in a public official.

And, when Chief Roberts made the statements about the toxic environment the City Manager has created and sustained at City Hall and the mentality that City Employees must pledge their personal allegiance to the City Manager, not

the City or the Citizens they serve, it was more than a vaguely known employee speaking out who could be dismissed as unhappy. It was the voice of a long respected City Employee known well by hundreds of Citizens who by his actions had everything to lose except his integrity.

The exposure of the tyrannical behavior of the City Manager by a most respected individual demands that the time has come for the City Manager and his cronies to be fired. Respect and integrity must be restored to the Office of City Manager and to the City of Fort Lauderdale. City Employees must not work under tyrannical conditions.

If this City Commission refuses to do the right thing then the Citizens must seek out and support the candidates for the next City Commission term that will immediately replace the City Manager and end this tyranny. The future of this City must not be manipulated by a self serving tyrant. That is not the future seen by most Citizens.

The writer, a city employee, chooses to remain anonymous for fear of retribution.

Dear Queen Elizabeth,

A brilliant beginning, but after more than 200 years, my government managed to screw-up America. Today, our dollar is declining in purchasing power, we have become a debtor nation, we plant food for fuel instead of food to eat, we subsidize rich farmers and oil companies, we pollute our air and water, we go to war on false

pretenses, we bail out troubled financial institutions but not our middle class citizens, we lower taxes for the rich, we spend money we don't have on government programs which usually do not work, we do not use our natural resources properly and we cannot provide health care for our people.

What we do best is provide great salaries, pensions and health care to congressmen who manage to maneuver voting districts so they remain in office for life, we know



how not to protect our borders, we know everyone should have a gun and when we ordinary citizens cut back on electric and water usage, utility companies raise rates to make up the loss in profits. We do know how to give drivers' licenses to illegal immigrants but in Florida, drivers' licenses are really not that important. And do you believe in the 21st Century we are still arguing about evolution! And so Your Majesty, I plead with you to take back your American colonies. I'll even throw in \$24 if you do so. Give us another chance to return because I know you will do a better job than we have.

Mel Rubinstein
Ft. Lauderdale



Politics Et Cetera, Et Cetera

MOVING OAKLAND PARK FORWARD

**Niedwiecki, Candidate for
Oakland Park City Commission,
talks about the issues.**

Our city is at a crossroads. Falling home values, empty buildings, water restrictions, high insurance costs, rising gas prices, budget crunches, and many other serious issues face Oakland Park. These are hard problems that call for unity from our community and strong leadership.

That is why I decided to run for Oakland Park City Commission. When faced with these tough times, our city must have a strong voice for the residents and their concerns. I plan on being that voice if I am elected.

As a community activist, lawyer, and life-long educator, I want to make sure that we move Oakland Park forward, despite these tough challenges. After graduating from the 2006 class of the Oakland Park Local Government Academy, and having been an active participant in the community, I truly feel we can come together and make Oakland Park a better city for all of us.

We can do this by making sure we promote smart and responsible growth in our city. We need to focus on citywide re-development that improves the quality of life of all our residents. We can also do this by strengthening and revitalizing the downtown area, the heart of our city. By promot-

ing and supporting small and unique businesses that attract both residents and visitors to Oakland Park, we can make our entire city stronger.

We must also be careful to preserve and expand our valuable green spaces, like parks and golf courses. We need to protect these green spaces to conserve our underground water supply and prevent the encroachment of salt water. I will ensure that every development is evaluated by its impact on our quality of life, the environment and water conservation. We must keep the "park" in Oakland Park, for ourselves and for future generations.

We must also seek to strengthen individual communities while also creating a better sense of unity within the city. Oakland Park's strength is in its residents and we must make sure we continue to embrace the diversity and equality of all who call our great city home.

I truly believe that even with the tough times ahead, our city can thrive and get stronger. We have a chance in March 2009 to make sure that we elect leadership that will represent all of you and listen to your concerns. I ask for you to join me in making sure we move Oakland Park forward.

Together, with a fresh voice on the commission, we can truly make our city a hometown choice for all.

For more information on about Anthony Niedwiecki and his campaign, please visit www.Anthony09.com. Anthony welcomes your comments and can be reached at (954)319-5249 or by email at Anthony@anthony09.com.

We are Better Than Wedge Issues

by Waymon Hudson, (954) 240-7966

We all feel the pain of the recent economic crunch in our everyday lives. Rising gas prices, falling home values, sky high insurance costs, an increase in crime, and many other serious issues face South Florida residents. These are hard problems that call for unity from all of us.

Yet too often, politicians and political groups decide to ignore the real problems facing residents of Florida and instead focus on divisive wedge issues. We all know them when we see them- the issues that drive communities apart, focusing on our small differences rather than on all of the things we have in common.

We saw the dangers of wedge issues in Fort Lauderdale last summer. We saw the business of the entire city grind to a halt for months when Mayor Naugle decided to wage a culture war against the gay community.

One has to wonder how much city time was spent holding press conferences and doing interviews during the debacle last summer. How much of that energy could have been spent solving the budget crisis or working on ways to stop the surging crime in our city? How much of that time could have been spent trying to bring in much-needed visitors and tourists to our businesses rather than drive them away? How many problems could we have worked together to solve rather than focus on the non-existent issues that only sought to drive us all apart?

We see more wedge issues facing us as we move forward to the November election. We have the dangerous Amendment 2, the co-called "Marriage Protection Amendment", which seeks to reignite the unnecessary culture war in Florida. This dangerous wedge issues is being sold as "protecting marriage" when in fact it weakens families and their abilities to care for one another.

This dangerous wedge amendment seeks to strip seniors, domestic partners, and other unmarried couples of long standing rights and protections. It will take away the ability of couples to visit each other in the hospital, make important end of life decisions, weaken domestic violence laws, and strip away many other important protections.

All of this drives a wedge between residents and takes the focus off of the real issues facing our communities. How can we work together to solve the tough real problems facing us when we are busy fighting over who should care for one another? It is an unnecessary and dangerous distraction.

I know that many times I don't share the same political or cultural views of my neighbors. We may not go to the same church, vote for the same party, or have families that look exactly alike. Yet we all have the common ground of the difficulties facing us. We all come together to clean up after hurricanes, fix-up our neighborhood, or keep an eye out for any suspicious activities to keep our homes safe. We have so much more in common than we could ever have different.

We are better than the politics being offered us. We all want our community to be the best it can be- regardless of what our race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender expression is. We must come together, look past these wedge issues, and work to make South Florida a truly great place for all of its residents.

Waymon Hudson is the founder and President of Fight OUT Loud, a national non-profit organization dedicated to fighting discrimination, www.FightOUT-Loud.org. He can be reached at waymon@fightoutloud.org.



HUGE POLICE AND FIREMEN APPRECIATION EVENT COMING AUGUST 5 TO HOLIDAY PARK

Giant event to run from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

By Steve Kelley

On August 5, 2008, Holiday Park will be the scene of a city-wide National Night Against Crime event.



Organized by former City Commissioner Tim Smith, the event will honor the City's Police and Fire Departments and their hard work in protecting us 24/7 throughout the year. Smith also organized a similar event back in 2002.

There will be several awards ceremonies to publicly recognize our great police and firemen. Citizens will also

honor their favorite public safety officer with their own unique awards.

Many of Fort Lauderdale's 62 neighborhoods are combining their individual block parties into this one big event.

Attendees will see many exciting and thrilling exhibitions and demonstrations such as "Cops raid a crack house,"



"Fire Fighters free an accident victim from a wrecked car," and "Cops catch a bank robber."

Tim Smith adds, "There will be some big surprises - possibly even a hot air balloon. This will be one of the city's

biggest parties this year!"

There will be lots of good free food and fun!

Earl Rynerson, owner of Clad Stone and Tile at 1106 NE 4th Avenue, has graciously, and generously funded the entire event to ensure that this Night

and say 'thank you' to them."

For more information, call the Chairpersons - Tim Smith and Betty Shelley - 954-822-4727



Out Against Crime party will be best ever. Rynerson emphasizes he is a strong supporter of the Police and Fire Departments here. Earl notes, "It is vitally important that the community show our appreciation of their endless contribution to the safety of our city."

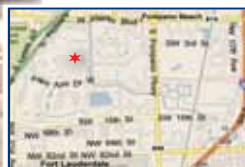
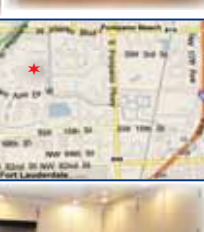
"I want our Police and Fire Departments to know that we appreciate them. I encourage all city residents to stop by



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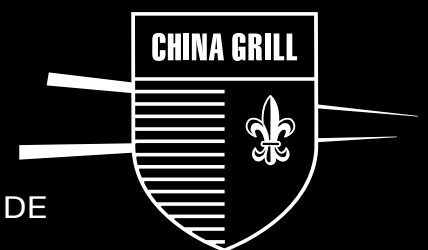
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Letters



Editor's Note:

The following is the text of a speech given by a 16 year old from Coral Ridge on June 24, 2008. It was given before an historic vote by the County Commission to enact tough new language into the county's Land Use Plan to make it more difficult for developers to fill in the county's last 61 golf courses.

He stood at the podium, under the TV cameras and spoke directly to all nine county commissioners.

He gave a powerful speech that was much stronger than that given by developers' paid lobbyists. The audience was touched and who knows, maybe he even got us a couple of extra votes. The final vote was 8 to 0.

"My name is Alex Alghussain and I am here today because I am the 3rd generation of my family to call Ft. Lauderdale home.



When my grandmother came to Ft. Lauderdale in 1950, green space was everywhere, and no one thought about it. As a runner for Cardinal Gibbons High School, I think about it everyday. Training year round to run cross country and track and field, I realize first hand how little green space there is in Broward County. My school is next to a small park which affords my team little room to run workouts. Fences around playgrounds, baseball fields, soccer fields, and tennis courts, provide a maze for us to run through when preparing for our races.

Since there is a lack of substantial amounts of green space in our city, we are forced to run on sidewalks of cement and roads of asphalt that in turn wreak havoc on our bodies. Many team members, including myself have experienced injuries from running on sidewalks and streets for prolonged amounts of time that put the brakes on an entire season of hard work.

I continually have to ice my shins and knees in order to prevent serious injuries. I see the preservation of green space in Broward as a necessity to our communities and our future.

As teenagers, our future is determined by votes cast by adults. My teammates and I hope that the adults voting today will carefully consider the power they have and do the right thing.

You grew up in a time when open space was taken for granted because there was

enough. Now you need to ensure that we can have the same experience to enjoy open green space just as you did. Large areas of green space in communities where housing is plentiful should be preserved to benefit the public, like our state parks do, for all ages. An environment with substantial amounts of green space is imperative to a productive city where the citizens can live a healthy lifestyle. Where do kids fit into the future of Ft. Lauderdale?

Where do kids run, play, and go to be outdoors away from streets and traffic? We have the opportunity to keep the remaining green space and golf courses such as American Golf Course and the Coral Ridge Country Club Golf Course as they were planned in the beginning for outdoor activity by all ages.

I would appreciate your careful consideration about where we are heading. I hope for a future Ft. Lauderdale as great as the one that brought my grandmother here 58 years ago."

Don't Cut And Run

by Carlton B. Moore

Here in South Florida, as elsewhere, local governments are in the midst of an economic downturn that continues to downturn. Slow growth, a declining housing base and voter-mandated property tax cuts have already been greeted by officials with newfound seriousness recast as knife-wielding champions of the austere. Bad times make for good theatre.

But particularly during times such as these, we don't need showmanship. We're not helped by alarm. Any reaction so loud, so immediate, must be suspect.

Frankly, the first response should not be to slash till you find a number. First, you find the path out, and second, you make sure that path leads you to a different place - one that can see and survive the next storm.

As the Vice Mayor of Fort Lauderdale, I see the impact of the current storm on a weekly basis as we struggle to balance the city's books while maintaining services. Bro-

ward County Government is in the process of finding \$100 million in budget cuts. Even our schools, once the sacred cow of public institutions, are being forced to make dramatic cuts that reach into the cafeterias. The school district announced that it is moving from whole grain to white bread and from apples to less costly fruit.

Indeed, these decisions are painful, and in large part, unavoidable. But they pale in comparison to the choices - and they truly are choices, South Florida families are making between filling a prescription or gas tank. So for any of us who have the luxury of contemplating what or what is not excess, let's not forget where the real pain lies.

So, how do we lift ourselves out of this? Well, in investment parlance, South Florida's economy has been invested heavily in capital preservation. The capital is our work force, weather, and iconic culture. It's all here in abundance, as it always will be. But any good money man will tell you that capital preservation is a fine strategy - if you're about to retire. To continue investing in an economy based on low-wage service-industry jobs is both fearful and foolish.

As well as the tourism business has treated us, the current climate demands investment in the diverse and dynamic enterprises that are not just capable of explosive growth, but to take us and our imaginations to places unforeseen. That's the new economy. That's the world we should be looking at. And that's what will save us from our periodic cycles of doom. The bad times won't be so bad, and we'll keep our apples, thank you.

Yes, this will pose a significant challenge for government at all levels. But equally, it will require you, our business owners and entrepreneurs, to lead us to this new land built upon high-wage jobs. It's you, who have to demand a healthy business climate,

affordable workforce housing, and capital improvements to our seaports and airports. Your voices must be heard now - above the alarmist cries.

This is a pivotal time, and it will prove to be a clash of visions. As Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties begin their budget planning for 2009, there will be much talk of a falling sky.

But as those of you in real estate know, you can't chase the market down. It is precisely times such as these that bring opportunity. For us, it doesn't knock, so much as beckon.

It's out there. Believe it or not, this is the time to grab it.



Submitting your letter to the Editor:

Your letters to the editor are welcome at the Fort Lauderdale City News. You should include your telephone number so that you may be called for verification. Your name will be included with your published letter to the editor.

Emailed letters are best - email your letter to: letters@citynewsfl.com
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MARGE'S MUSINGS . . .

Oh, Oh, Here We Go Again

by Marge Anderson. (954) 467-8641

Some months ago, I began writing about Social Service Residential Facilities (SSRFs) that stealthily enter Fort Lauderdale Neighborhoods. Some are run well, and present no problems. Some become centers causing great problems, in regard to both esthetics and crime. I have been gratified by the responses I've received from citizens who keep their eyes open to possible negative influences on their neighborhoods. Most of the calls I've received

to me that, since my articles appeared in the City News describing them, plans seemed to change about the use of these buildings.

The property in Poinsettia Heights still looks (to me) somewhat shabby in comparison to surrounding residences. Quiet, perhaps, but neglected, with one person sitting on the front porch at mid-day. Again, I can't make any claims. I can only raise questions. Poinsettia Heights is not zoned for SSRF's. No information from the City is forthcoming.

Now there is news from Lake Ridge. Three new, two-story, yellow

In areas zoned RMM25 (Lake Ridge) a Type V Social Service Residential Facility is NOT permitted (see again, if you have the patience, <http://www.municode.com>, and/or www.ci.fort-lauderdale.fl.us/gis/files/maps/zoning_map.pdf)

The general contractor of the project calls this project "town homes." The contractor further states that the original plan called for four of the big buildings, but for a project of that size the City had some requirements for drainage that would result in a prohibitive cost. The solution apparently is to come back later and build a house for a caretaker on the spot

Service Agency." That's no surprise - the buildings are not even finished yet!

So when is a Social Service Residential Facility NOT a Social Service Residential Facility? When it's called an apartment house. One property in Middle River Terrace was operating as an SSRF and was not in compliance with zoning regulations.

The courts agreed that it was operating as an SSRF and began a series of fines if they did not stop. So the place re-named itself and is still operating as usual. There was even an article in the Sun-Sentinel not long ago about how this agency is helping



have been from residents who are trying to prevent a problem from occurring, rather than closing their eyes and waiting for something bad to happen. In other words, there are citizens of Fort Lauderdale who spend a great deal of their time and effort attempting to be proactive instead of reactive. Unfortunately, City officials, for whatever reason, have been locked into the reactive mode.

One of the properties I wrote about is 715 NE 6 Street, which has been under observation constantly by a resident of Victoria Park. The structure was renovated, and at this writing, the property is still vacant, and no one in the City seems to know what the owner's plans are for the building. In the interim, there has been a fire on the top floor of the vacant property. No explanations were forthcoming.

Over in Poinsettia Park, properties owned by social service agencies are now for sale. One resident reported

buildings are going up on NE 13th Avenue. And the owner is? According to the Broward County Property Appraiser, the owner is St. Francis Community, Inc.

This corporation maintains a website at <http://www.themission.us/>. The site describes a program for individuals suffering from chemical dependency and/or addictive related behavior. The Mission offers a 12-step program, with rules and a daily schedule of work, meetings, classes, and a curfew. This suggests that the program includes shelter, and this further indicates that the Mission would fall under the definition of a Type V SSRF (a facility, the principal purpose of which shall be to provide personal care, shelter, sustenance or other support services, or other treatment and therapy, in addition to active programmatic efforts and may be designed to encourage entry or reentry into the community." See <http://www.municode.com>)

where the fourth building was supposed to be.

When queried (at info@themission.us), The Mission states "this project is not part of The Mission." Then why are they building it? The answer may be, to furnish apartments. For whom? The public? Or for handicapped people, who are protected under federal law from being discriminated against under the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act? T

he argument that handicapped people have nowhere to go does not hold water when viewing a zoning map. There is property to the south and east of NE 13 Avenue where the zoning would be proper (south is zoned B-1, east is zoned RMH-60 and CB).

When Code was asked to investigate this property, they determined that "there was no evidence that the buildings were being used as a Social

people whose homes are in foreclosure. This is all well and good, but the fact remains that the property, and many like it, is being operated without following the zoning regulations.

Why have laws on the books if they are not going to be enforced? People buy single family residences in locations with certain zoning regulations. The City should honor their expectations that certain types of facilities will not be built next to them, especially those that skate around laws by calling themselves something they are not.

Could an ordinary citizen rent an apartment at 1020, 1026, or 1034 NE 13 Avenue? Go try it.

Hmmmm, what could I call my house so I could get around zoning requirements or maybe even avoid paying taxes?

The Society for the Protection of Neighborhoods?

Business Announcements

BIMINI BOATYARD IS BACK!

Bimini Boatyard Bar & Grill is undergoing a refit after almost 19 years as Fort Lauderdale's premiere waterfront dining experience. Locals and tourists alike recall with fond memories the days when the Happy Hour at Bimini Boatyard was the place to be at 5pm. Under new local ownership, our goal is to revive this local icon by combining great



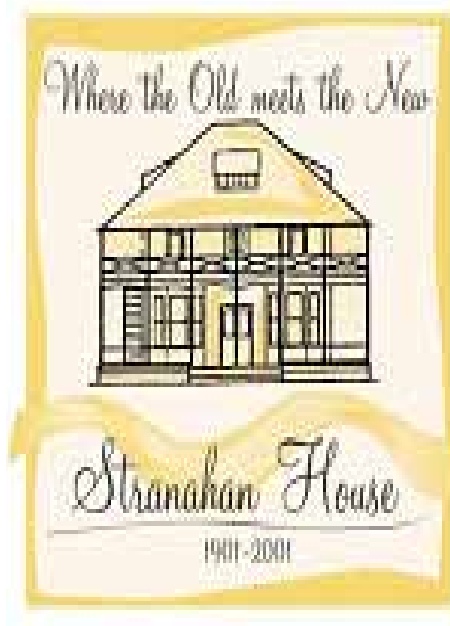
food with exemplary service. Over the next several months, the restaurant will undergo subtle changes to better serve our customers. The lower bar is being renovated and will reopen in mid July as the Bimini Bar. Additionally, the exterior patio will receive new tables, chairs and umbrellas; as well as the resurrection of the outdoor Tiki Bar for weekend entertainment. Beyond the physical changes, authentic Bahamian dishes will be added to our menu as well as traditional drinks found in the tropics. Not to worry, our menu favorites such as our World Famous Bimini Bread, Crab Cakes and Signature Diane Salad will remain. Stop in and rediscover a slice of Fort Lauderdale's culinary history.

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Stranahan House River Ghost Tour

The Historic Stranahan House and the River Taxi have their River Ghost Tour underway. The tour starts at the Stranahan House where the group is greeted on the porch of this 1901 home and then taken inside where they tour the downstairs area, are introduced to some of the methods the ghost teams use to do their investigations and meet some of the spirits that are said to be present inside the House.

The journey along the River is narrated by Sea Dog John, who introduces you to some of the colorful characters that lived and worked along the banks of the New River. This is a fun tour filled with authentic history. Tours are one hour long and given every Friday night at 7:30 p.m. Pre-paid reservations are a must. Call 954-524-4736.

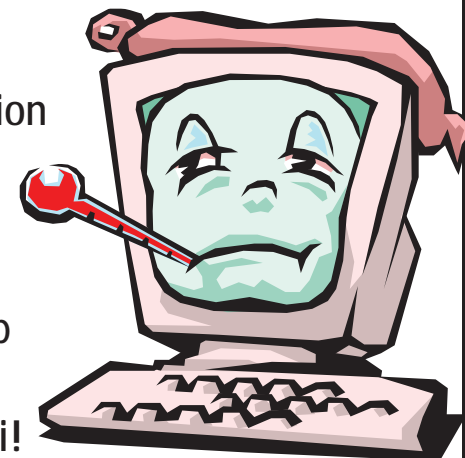


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