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October 2006
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Volume IV Issue VIII

ONE BRICK AT A TIME

MDHA Recovering from Scandal

By Malika Bierstein
BBT Staff Writer

In the wake of a corruption scandal that crippled the Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA) and left thousands of city residents angry, displaced, living in unsanitary conditions or looking to relocate, some local developers and Housing Agency officials are not giving up the fight.

"The county is going through a transition process," said Michael Cox, owner of the Miami-based Biscayne Housing Group (BHG). "I think they are handling it well, but we are concerned that there will be a slowdown. We currently have a number of county-funded projects. The county is working with us to ensure that those projects move forward. We are very happy with the job that Cynthia Curry is doing in reassuring developers and investors that the county is going to stand behind us and get it done."

The MDHA has been under fire after a Miami Herald investigation exposed millions of dollars paid to developers over the past five years that never translated into finished projects. Many of the recipients used the funds to pay exorbitant consulting

fees, compensate employees or fatten their own pockets. To make matters worse, instead of selling completed homes to low-income buyers, many were instead sold to private real estate investors or wealthy families who simply flipped them for a profit. While some of those county funds have been accounted for and returned, some of them have not, and a crucial problem still exists: The demand for affordable housing in Miami far

exceeds the supply. Thankfully, developers like Cox and his partner, Gonzalo DeRamon, are stepping up to the plate.

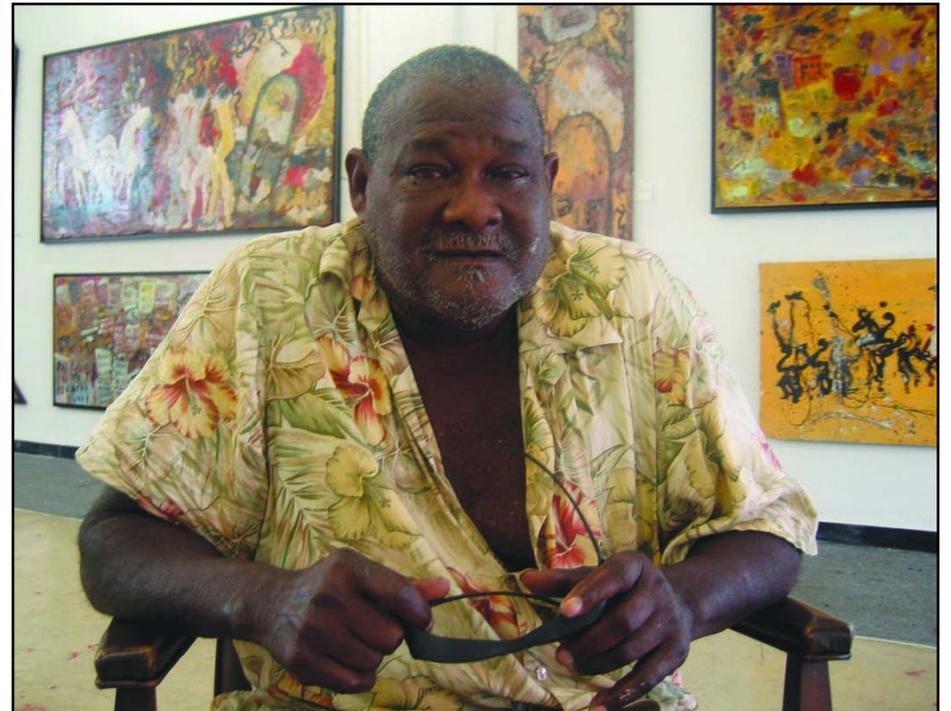
Having received \$240 million worth of tax-credit funding from the State of Florida to con-

struct 850 units, BHG, who primarily focus on affordable rental housing, are targeting Miami-Dade County in a big way. They are pleased with the level of cooperation they have received from the city thus far. Several of their projects are set to break ground in the next few months and will hopefully be completed by 2008.

BHG currently has a number of joint venture projects in the works with Carlisle Development Group: YMCA Village Carver, a 300-unit mixed development project in Little

Many of the recipients used the funds to pay exorbitant consulting fees, compensate employees or fatten their own pockets.

Continued on page 16



"I make like I'm a warrior, like God sending an angel to stop war, like in my art."
See Page 28 for "Purvis Young: Paintings From the Street"

Nirvana: Not Living Up to its Name

Problems Continue to Plague Condo

By Ivana J. Robinson
BTT Contributing Writer

After publishing a brief about long-awaited amenities arriving at Nirvana Condominium, located on 15 bayside acres along N.E. 6th Avenue at 64th Street, the BBT faced vocal disagreement from residents who have yet to see either a pool or fitness center materialize, despite sale and rental contracts promising both.

Original condominium documents list December 2004 as the estimated date for the pool's completion. Since that time, real estate developer Midtown Group, a partnership between Midtown Equities

from New York and Miami-based Samuel & Co., provided a variety of dates and explanations for not carrying out the project.

"By the time I purchased in June 2005 that date had already slipped by half a year," said Ted Eull, president of one of Nirvana's condo associations.

According to Eull, the project was initially suspended because the developer failed to apply for a proper permit: "They needed a construction — not renovation — permit, since they ripped the whole thing out."

The next postponement came after

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Yankee Holiday

Our editor's tome on a newfound affection for firearms

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Increase the Peace

Athletes and politicians in Liberty City to denounce violence

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The Screaming Room

A selection of '70s horror gems for Halloween

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Wynwood Roundup

The BBT's arty-smarty does criticism double-duty this month

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The Biscayne Boulevard Times is published the first week of each month. We are hand delivered to all the homes along both sides of Biscayne Boulevard from NE 15th Street to NE 107th Street.

The neighborhoods we cover include: Arch Creek, Bayside, BelleMeade, Biscaya, Buena Vista, Davis Harbor, Design District, Edgewater, El Portal, Magnolia Park, Miami Shores, Morningside, North Miami, Omni, Palm Grove and Shorecrest.

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

You Make This Possible

As we release our 44th issue of the paper, I am astounded by the growth of the Biscayne Corridor. When I launched the Biscayne Boulevard Times in January of 2003, I could never have envisioned how far we and the Biscayne Corridor would travel. In looking back at our first issue, the ads for properties for sale are almost comical. A three-bedroom house in Morningside was \$259,000; eight units west of Biscayne, \$225,000; and retail and apartments on Biscayne, \$549,000. Also in that first issue is a letter from Johnny Winton congratulating us on our inaugural issue. We both liked each other back then. And there was a small article on an unused railroad wasteland being touted as the next urban neighborhood: Welcome to Midtown.

My reason for launching the BBT was to give voice to a neighborhood that was on the verge of change. And change it has, some for better and some for worse. I was really tired of seeing our neighborhood being ignored and treated like an unwanted orphan by the local media outlets. Since then, many of those same out-

lets have tried to muscle into our territory, but because of our loyal readers and advertisers they have been unable to put a damper on our ability to inform you, the reader.

I bring this up for a specific reason. Back in 2004 I tried to expand our vision of journalism to North Beach and was met with an unbelievable amount of resistance from some of the larger, better-financed media outlets. They hijacked our advertisers by offering free ads, and began to publish articles that reflected the concerns of the North Beach residents. I didn't have deep enough pockets to fight them off, so I closed the paper. Funny thing is, as soon as we pulled out, they quit reporting news stories about issues that affected the North Beach area, knowing that the residents there had no alternative.

I tell you this because in our four short years we have come up against different media outlets trying to steal advertisers in the Biscayne corridor. So far, on a wish and good local reporting, we have remained the source for news, art and entertainment from downtown to Aventura,

even though some of these deep-pocket media centers have tried to put us out of business. I shudder to think what the local news scene would look like if the Biscayne Boulevard Times were not around.

But thanks to you, the reader, and the advertisers that pay for this real estate we call newsprint, we are still around. And I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed being the source of dissatisfaction for many of our elected officials, and being the bearer of news that is important to the quality of life we enjoy here. However, from the amount of construction cranes that dot our skyline and the never-ending parade of self-serving public officials that abuse our tax dollars, it is evident to me that the BBT still has its work cut out. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you, both readers and advertisers, for the support that allows us to continue that work.

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News That Was Used

Dear BBT

I just wanted you to know that I thoroughly enjoyed your September 2006 issue, which I read in its entirety. It's nice to know what's going on in the neighborhoods around you. I was especially pleased with the Gabrielle Redfern article on "Special Assessments." This has been a long-term discussion on the part of our condo board over the years.

I have always recommended (to no avail) paying a reasonable maintenance fee so that the association can establish needed reserve accounts, thus avoiding special assessments to the extent possible.

I plan to share Gabrielle's article with the condo-owners who will be attending our September 9 meeting, at which a special assessment will be announced by the board. While we have no choice but to accept the assessment to pay current bills, hopefully owners will read the article and support the need to create reserve accounts for the future. I look forward to Gabrielle's subsequent articles.

*Katherine Swede
Miami Shores*

Grateful Shorecrester

Dear Editor,

Thank you soooooo much for your excellent centerfold report on N.E. 79th Street – including the good, the bad, and the ugly – the photos, who owns what, it's worth, future plans... all of it.

You cannot know what a great service this is for residents of Shorecrest. This is the kind of information we should be getting through our homeowners association but which we do not. In fact, our neighborhood continues to be represented by our HOA board president on issues without our knowledge or input until *after* she comments on them before the city commissioners and with developers, etc. Only then are we told things, and that information is usually sketchy.

You know our story.

This is excellent reporting and I really wish you would enter your paper into the public service category of the Pulitzer Prizes. Your paper and your reporting contribute more to our quality of life and to our knowledge than any other source on a regular basis.

It's invaluable. I wish you could get the recognition you deserve for being on the side of residents in this city.

*Thanks Again,
Maggie Steber
Shorecrest*

Nirvana? Not Exactly...

Dear BBT

In August you published news in your paper that Nirvana condos would soon have their pool and fitness center. I was surprised to see that and then I realized that you had gotten your information from the developer. Their job is to sell their condos here at Nirvana. I can assure you that the pools and fitness center are not open and they have no idea when they will open. I was told in mid-May that the pool would be done in about a month, so on good faith I moved in here.

Upon meeting other residents I found out that the developer has been saying that for **TWO YEARS!** The fitness center is the same story: What I have heard is that it was completed without permits and the City of Miami will not allow them to open it.

I think that you should publish a retraction to your article as it is simply not true. I would have loved to go swimming and use the fitness center but it hasn't happened. It could be worse for us, thankfully we didn't buy at Nirvana... we only rented and we count the days until our lease is up. This isn't meant to sound harsh, it is just plain honest.

The developer would love to be done here so that they can move onto their next project; the plain fact is that they didn't do things correctly, and what is worse, instead of correcting their mistakes they have false information printed on their behalf.

*Nicole Gonthier
Nirvana – N.E. 63rd & Biscayne*

More Letters to the Editor on page 8



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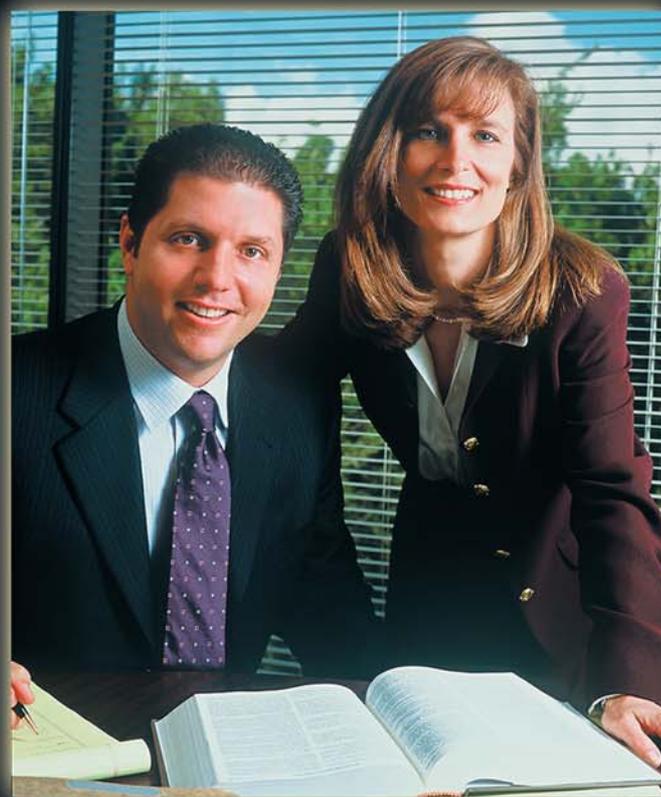
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Tree-Hugger

Dear BBT

I have followed with great interest the stories about Tree Ordinances in the different districts of Miami-Dade and I thank you for the coverage of this important issue. It is really a shame that our county, with its tropical climate, has less tree cover than many other large cities in the North of the United States.

Regarding the comment that Miami Shores has implemented an ordinance to protect public areas, this is a good beginning, however homeowners still can cut any trees without responsibility. Granted, many are cut on weekends so the inspectors do not see the deed being done, but I have seen many beautiful trees — Royal Poinciana, Black Olives, Oaks, rare palms and many more, some more than 60 years old and in great condition — be cut down, maybe because they just drop some leaves. These trees cannot and are not being replaced except for cement, brick or other hard ground-coverings and a few ornamental plants, and it is a loss for all residents.

Please continue to cover this issue, it is extremely important to educate the public that trees are after all not only beautiful but really beneficial to our environment.

Thanks and best regards,
Lilian L. Hardy
Quayside

The Last Straw

Dear BBT

They say that asking a voter what he thinks about politicians is like asking a fire hydrant what it thinks about dogs. So here is what I think about a politician or two and Miami's latest property tax crisis...

Like the majority of Miami voters, I twice voted for Mayor Manny Diaz. I trusted that he would lead us out of bankruptcy, reduce corruption, return our pride in Miami and provide us with a brighter future. Like many voters I was not very impressed with his selection of the City Manager that revealed himself to be like a bull in a china shop. I was not pleased with his real estate partnership with that same City Manager and a City Commissioner with anger management issues.

I was not amused by his claim of ignorance with regards to the Fire Fee negotiations and its irresponsible settlement that was wisely overturned by the courts. On Wednesday, our Mayor gave a stirring speech at the City Commission meeting, where he stated the obvious regarding all of our concerns pertaining to high property taxes, high insurance costs and inadequate affordable housing for the poor and even middle class.

He is in his second term of office and these problems are not new. What is new are all the cranes, all the new construction, all of the oversupply of luxury housing units and all of the increased traffic. So now our Mayor says that he will lower the property millage rate to \$8.99 per \$1,000 of appraised property value,

down from last year's rate of \$9.26. But that is just a drop in the bucket and will not be of much value to homeowners or to landlords and rental tenants.

Then there is Frank Jacobs, Miami-Dade's chief tax assessor. He is by far the most despised county bureaucrat by all those folks that have trusted in Miami's future and invested in new homes, pre-construction condos, rental properties and office buildings.

It is not enough that property taxes in Miami are one of the highest while we continue to be the third poorest city in the nation. New home-buyers use to be able to reasonably estimate exorbitant taxes based on what was paid for the property. Now they are in shock to discover that the property taxes are much higher due to it being unfairly based on the appraised value of the neighborhood properties.

Let's say that I live next door to Frank Jacobs and own an exotic car like a Porsche, and he drives a practical Honda Accord. Would it not be totally unrealistic to expect that his car should be taxed at a higher rate just because mine is next door?

Let's say that I bought the house next to Frank Jacobs, did not know any better and paid way over market value for it. Would it not be unfair to expect his property tax to increase drastically as a result of my mistake?

We must remedy our property tax problems now before the gap between rich and poor continues to increase, and more of the middle class exodus from

Continued on page 9

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My, Oh My, MiMo is Here – What's Next?

By Frank K. Rollason

Candidate for City of Miami Commissioner, District 2

A couple of months ago the City of Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board designated the Upper Eastside Biscayne Boulevard Corridor as the MiMo (Miami Modern) Historic District. The intent of this designation is to save the historic motels along the strip and to limit intrusive development detrimental to this objective.

So, where do we go from here to reach this objective? It is relatively easy on the part of government to instill such limitations and requirements, but quite another for the owners of such properties to reach their business potential with little or no financial help from the very government which set up the restrictions. The answer is for the city to come forward with various methods of assistance to enable the district to become successful; after all, the success of the district is the success of the city.

The most obvious form of assistance is through a grant program, which would be targeted to perform

some immediate restoration to the front façades of the motels, and once again get them lit up in neon to set a tone for the district. A comprehensive program funded by the city, either through the Department of Community Development utilizing Community Development Block Grants or through the Department of Economic Development, would provide a significant impact to the area and give a vision of its overall potential.

People are visual creatures: We respond favorably to improvements that have an immediate impact, and become supportive of the next steps required to make a plan come together. This was evident in an interim improvement project the Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Agency performed in the 24-Hour Entertainment District between N.E. 10th and 11th Streets. There we had an abandoned railroad spur that ran behind the clubs from N.E. 2nd Avenue to N.W. 1st Avenue. It was in poor repair, overgrown and lent itself to the seedier side of life that tends to inhabit this type of environment. Through an interim improvement project of approximately \$600,000, we were able

to restore the area into the vision of The Grand Promenade, complete with new paving, lighting, landscaping and irrigation.

These minimal improvements showed the surrounding business-owners the potential of the area, and inspired others, including the CIFO Art Gallery, to relocate to this emerging area. With a little bit of financial assistance from the city, the same results could happen in the MiMo Historic District. The city could also provide technical assistance to the property-owners in the way of grant application preparation and workshops on how they can access city departments for complying with permitting and zoning requirements. This sort of outreach program to owners would be the city making a statement that, yes, we have established the MiMo District, but we are here to assist you in turning your dreams into reality.

The bottom line is that the success of this new historic district is a win-win for all involved – the owners, the city, the residents and the visitors, and it is certainly in the best interest of the city to extend a helping hand to the owners of these properties.

The Last Straw

Continued from page 8

our community. We must renegotiate the terms of all city services pension funds that are placing us and our future in a serious financial bind. We must lower the property millage rate to be more comparable to that of Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville.

We must increase the Homestead Exemption credit to between \$50,000 and \$100,000. We must figure out a fair Homestead Exemption Portability plan that will not penalize homeowners when moving to another part of the city, county or state. We must have a City of Miami Mayor that cares more about the citizens than he does about lobbyists and developers. We must have a Miami-Dade Chief Tax Assessor that is elected and responsible to the voters.

Harry Emilio Gottlieb
Coconut Grove

“You Are What You Fish”: The Letters Keep Coming...

Dear Editor,

I am an underwater photographer who has a passion for the marine life and the ocean. I moved to Miami in 2004 in order to get closer to many dive destinations. Thank you so much for bringing this issue to our attention. I was totally shocked to learn what our government is doing to contaminate our water. Is there anything we could do to stop these outfalls as an individual base? I forwarded your article to PADI Project Aware Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that conserves underwater environments through education, advocacy and action. I wanted to get their attention to what's going on in South Florida. You can learn more about them by visiting:

<http://www.projectaware.org/americas/english/contact.asp>

Thank you again for revealing such an important issue to us.

Best regards,
Mina Kuhn

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N.E. 71st Street Storm Sewer Project Plans Unveiled

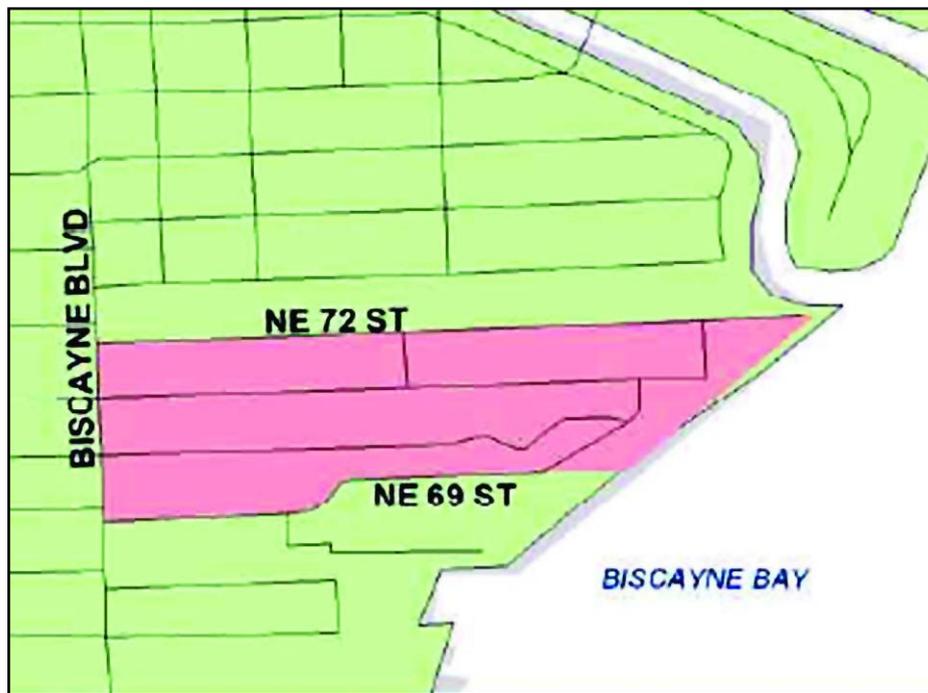
Bayside Residents to Receive Long-Awaited Flood Relief

By Malika Bierstein
BBT Staff Writer

Plans for the City of Miami's N.E. 71st Street Storm Sewer Project were released in a September 13 meeting of the Bayside Residents Association at Legion Park. Project Manager Jose Lago was present, in addition to Metric Engineering representatives, to answer questions and explain the scope of the project.

"We began in 2003 with a preliminary drainage analysis to address the flooding issues behind the seawall," said David Reynolds of Metric Engineering. "We have seen the reported drainage issues that have occurred and, based on recommendations from that analysis, have assessed what additional measures needed to occur to get the water off your streets."

The project, which encompasses the area bounded by N.E. 69th Street, N.E. 72nd Street, Biscayne Boulevard and Biscayne Bay, includes drainage improvements, roadway restoration and site restoration. In regard to drainage,



The project encompasses the area bounded by N.E. 69th Street, N.E. 72nd Street, Biscayne Boulevard and Biscayne Bay. It includes drainage improvements, roadway restoration and site restoration.

specified improvements include three new outfalls to the bay, storm sewer system improvements, five 100-foot gravity wells and 3-by-4-foot rock trenches, which will provide porous cavities where water can seep underground. Drainage improvements will increase the discharge capacity of storm water into the bay and hopefully ease the flooding that Bayside residents have been struggling with for years, a problem that has recently been exacerbated by the strength and frequency of hurricane-related storms.

Specified roadway and site-restoration improvements include roadway milling and resurfacing throughout the entire project limits, pavement-marking and reconstruction of cracked gutters and curbs, sidewalk repairs, sodding and new ADA-compliant handicap ramps. Pending approval by the

Historic and Environmental Preservation Board, medians along N.E. 69th Street may be extended.

Residents voiced concern over traffic delays and the obstruction of their personal property as a result of the construction, in addition to the preservation of trees and other natural resources such as the manatee habitat and sea grass in Biscayne Bay.

"The city's program will only be impacting a limited number of trees, which are mostly palms, but we are trying to stay away from all existing trees, whether native or exotic," said Lago. "Worst case scenario, if we happen to damage one we will replant it. I can assure you that preservation is not going to be a problem."

Idel Mederos, a contractor for Metric Engineering, stated that with construction taking place during normal busi-

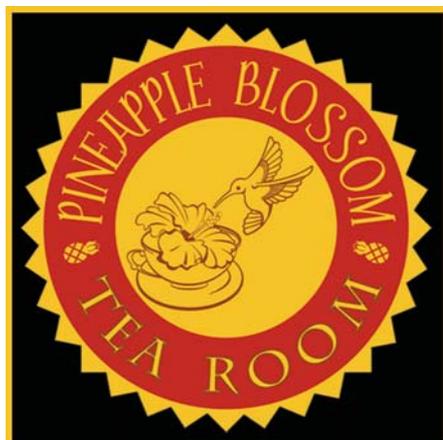
ness hours they do not anticipate traffic delays. Driveways will only be obstructed while they are working directly in front of your house and you may have to park somewhere else overnight, but a construction schedule will be provided for those residents in advance. District 2 Commissioner Linda Haskins asked for the city inspector to ensure that proper notification is given to minimize interruptions. In addition, Haskins requested as a safety measure the placement of warning signs in any areas where there are electrical lines and deep holes.

The project, estimated at \$2,473,500, is being funded by the Stormwater Utility Trust Fund. With the design phase currently complete, the city is scheduled to begin construction in December.

"We have 12 months to do the project, but we are being very conservative by giving it a year," said Mederos. "If all goes well, it will be finished in nine months. In order to do that we are going to have a number of drainage crews working simultaneously. We will also have two to three cranes and excavators working at the same time. All of the milling and resurfacing should take three weeks. Traffic is going to be open. It doesn't mean that we are going to affect your daily lives."

BBT

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Film Workshop Turns Classrooms into Hollywood

Florida Film Institute Provides Unique Opportunity for Students

By Christian Cipriani
BBT Editor

The Florida Film Institute (FFI) is a North Miami-based nonprofit organization that conducts filmmaking workshops at various Miami-Dade schools. They give students the rare and invaluable chance to write, shoot, score and edit their own short film. Stephanie Martino-Rizzi – who developed her skills in art and fashion design over years spent between New York and Los Angeles – created the program in 1994 when she was still executive director of the Miami Film Festival.

In 1999 she left that post to manage the FFI fulltime. Initially, the program only served two schools, but in recent years that number has grown to five annually when the funding is right.

And according to her, “It’s the best-kept secret in town.”

Partnered with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, their biggest supporter, the FFI formulates a curriculum of 12 classes, often targeted at high school and middle school cinematography,

drama and TV productions courses.

“[In these sorts of classes] students already have an aspiration for learning about the craft,” Martino-Rizzi said. “We teach the Hollywood style of filmmaking, and everyone has a job.”

Having a group of 25 to 30 students work together on one project is a good crash-course in cooperation, the bedrock of any successful film but by nature antithetical to the individualism of academia.

Four classes dedicated to scriptwriting nurture everyone’s one-page story treatments until the group chooses the best three after all have been presented. From those three, the students chosen as the writing team develop the scripts until it’s time to re-pitch and choose a finalist for production – just like in Hollywood, or at least an ideal version of.

Martino-Rizzi and her FFI colleagues encourage story-driven scripts – not that future David Lynch’s aren’t encouraged, but personal abstractions don’t lend to mass inclusion in the production process. According to her, the themes that routinely surface are less

than saccharine:

“When you’re dealing with teenagers, it’s always pretty much grim. It’s what they see, so you’re dealing with some type of violence, the goody-good kid gets beaten up, but good always wins. There’s always that struggle... We’ve gotten

drug prevention [and] unwanted pregnancy films... [But] it depends on which areas we go into and it depends on the kid. When we go into Overtown, they’re struggling with family issues, violence on the street, and so we try to steer that group [toward] a more morally correct story, or a story that’s more fulfilling.”

What’s so impressive is the real-deal organization of the whole affair. Shooting takes place in one day, but in the past students have used up to three locations (chosen by students location scouts, of course), and the FFI furnishes a genuine 16-millimeter camera (worth about \$90,000, so it’s operated by a professional), lights, a digital sound-system (“DAT is a thing of the past,” Martino-Rizzi said) and acting coaches.

At a time when anyone with a digital camera and a computer can be a “filmmaker” and contribute to the thousands of festivals held annually (there were less than 400 in the whole world when Martino-Rizzi started with the Miami Film Festival), familiarizing students with real cameras is quite novel.

“And we give them 800 feet of film to shoot,” she said. “In college you only get 400.”

Of the 45 total workshops the FFI has conducted since its inception, 20 of the films produced have either won prizes or been accepted as entries into various local and national festivals.

Unauthorized, made in 2005 by students at Ferguson High School, is an ambitious 12-minute story about a gambler’s daughter heading off to school

“It’s the best-kept secret in town.”

— Stephanie Martino-Rizzi
President, Florida Film Institute

FILM SCHOOL X

The Miami Children’s Museum, in conjunction with the Florida Film Institute, has been working together for the past ten years. The program consists of three parts and is **free** to students from elementary through high school.

Each workshop will have an in-depth look at the following topics: scriptwriting, location shooting, cinematography, acting on screen, lighting, directing, editing, sound, wardrobe, make-up and marketing. In addition to the aesthetic and technical basics of the discipline, the workshops address the business environment of the motion picture industry in order to realistically prepare the students for a career. At the conclusion of the workshop series, the students will work as a team to produce a five- to ten-minute short film.

Orientation will begin
in October 2006

To apply for the program all interested students must attend orientation, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. *Dates TBA and are subject to change!*

For more information, please contact Cecilia at 305-373-5437 x 104 or email cecilia@miamichildrensmuseum.org

More info is available at
www.ffilminstitute.com

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with the wrong bag. It contains a mysterious payload connected to his debts, prompting a black-suited thug to descend on the school in a murderous bid to recover the goods. Clean editing and a well-paced story garnered it top prize at last year’s Miami Children’s Film Festival, along with nods for best actress and cinematography.

This year, Miami Northwestern High students finished *A New Love*, a four-minute parable of a girl who chooses the nerdy boy over the smooth thug who punches him out in a fit of jealous rage. Clichéd as this may be, even in its brevity *New Love* was the more engaging of the two due to curiously natural

Continued on page 52



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Nirvana

Continued from page 1

owners asked the developer not to build a separate bathroom structure that would block their view of Biscayne Bay, but rather to put bathrooms inside one of the existing buildings.

“The plan had to be revised, so the project was delayed until fall 2005,” said Eull. “But since that time the only cause of delay is their slow pace of work.”

Midtown Group project managers Vivian Bonet and Colin Carby did not return calls for comment, and property manager Steven

Brown said he’s not familiar with any details about the pool or gym.

“It’s a developer’s issue,” said Brown. “I manage the property to the pool gate. From the gate onward it’s the developer’s responsibility.”

The most recent rationale for the setback was noted in the August BBT: They are waiting for the city to install a water-

meter. According to Christine Fernandez of the City of Miami Office of Communications, Nirvana had their water-meter installed about a month ago.

“Nirvana is missing inspections that were required prior to obtaining the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) and Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO),” said Fernandez. “As for the

pool, they missed the steel-framing and pool-piping inspections. They are currently applying for a TCO and have been calling for inspections.”

In addition, Nirvana’s fitness center, built in 2004, could not get the city’s approval because the roof

failed repeat inspections.

“Nirvana spa is missing roof, slab, tub, sewer, water service, insulation and dry-wall inspections,” said Fernandez. “It is the contractor’s responsibility to call for the inspections and the city typically performs these inspections the next working day.”

“The building is just sitting there board-

“If the developer won’t fix the problems and honor their legal warranty, then the associations will file a claim against them.”

—Ted Eull, Nirvana resident and condo association head



“I’ve never seen anybody doing any work around the fitness center,” said Black.

ed up,” said Nicole Black, who has been renting a two-bedroom unit at Nirvana since May 2006. “I’ve never seen anybody doing any work around it.”

Eull discussed residents’ concerns with Midtown Group project managers on several occasions. According to him, construction manager Bonet, who’s been on the project since January, said that construction was handled poorly by the previous contractor. That comes as no surprise to many residents who struggle almost daily with sewage problems, roof leaks, mold, inoperable elevators and broken safety equipment.

“When I first came, it really felt like nirvana,” said Black. “But carrying my daughter and groceries to the moldy apartment on the sixth floor quickly changed my mind.”

According to the office of the Fire Marshall, Nirvana’s buildings must be brought up to the current code in terms of safety equipment or else they’ll face penalties from the fire department. The level of renovation escaped their attention until recently because permits were pulled piecemeal instead of one major permit for the entire project. This begs the question: Who will pay for the necessary improvements, the new owners or the developer?

Nirvana is a multi-condominium phased development, and even after the buildings have been turned over to the owner-controlled associations, residents believe Midtown Group bears responsibility for construction deficiencies since they allegedly did not fund any reserve

Continued on page 15

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Mandatory inspections for the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy are still missing for the new pool.

Nirvana

Continued from page 14

accounts.

According to the Florida Statute 718, if the developer fails to establish or fund the reserve accounts prior to the turnover process, it must grant to the purchaser of each unit an implied warranty for the roof and structural components, fireproofing and fire protection systems, and for mechanical, electrical and plumbing elements.

The statute states: "The warranty shall be for a period beginning with the notice of intended conversion and continuing for three years thereafter, or one year after owners other than the developer obtain control of the association, whichever occurs last, but in no event more than five years."

"The developer turned over the buildings with no bathroom fans, with broken elevators, and improper life safety equipment, among other things," Eull said. "Even the guardhouse, which is eight by ten feet, has not been finished yet. They were cited for violations by the city on few occasions but still haven't fixed the problems."

Recently, Nirvana's various associations had Crain Engineering perform independent inspections of the buildings to deter-

mine the construction quality and the extent of repairs needed.

"If the developer won't fix the problems and honor their legal warranty, then the associations will file a claim against them," Eull said. The associations' attorney Aaron Cohen could not be reached for comment.

In addition, Midtown Group intends to build three new buildings on the property. Although the City of Miami Planning Advisory Board does not recommend approval of that development, the City Commission hearing is set for October 26. Some of the residents believe the

"The developer turned over the buildings with no bathroom fans, with broken elevators, and improper life safety equipment, among other things."

— Ted Eull, president of one of Nirvana's condo associations

pool may be finished soon because the developer might want to put their best foot forward for the Commissioners come October.

"Even if they do open the pool and gym by then, they're almost two years late, and other problems remain," said Eull. "It's our strong belief that this is not the kind of development the community needs, and we hope the City Commission sees that."

BBT

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Affordable Housing

Continued from page 1

Haiti that is geared toward families and the elderly; YMCA Village Allapattah, a 200-unit mixed development project that will also be geared toward both families and the elderly; Villa Patricia, a 339-unit project in Little Haiti geared solely toward the elderly; Amber Garden, a 110-unit elderly community in Allapattah; and Labre House, a 90-unit project with Camillus House that will provide permanent housing for the formerly homeless as well as employ drug counselors and life coaches to provide tenants with much needed skills.

Applicants for the Labre House must satisfy the HUD definition of homeless, which is "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill)."

Additionally, applicants must be substance-free six months prior to occupancy, agree to random drug testing and to take part in the Supportive Services Program, which requires they work with case managers at Camillus House once they are a resident. Application requirements for other Biscayne Housing Group projects are monitored and must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Fair Housing

"We are being blacklined by the government. Over 80 percent of the people that live in these areas have criminal backgrounds and would not benefit from affordable housing because they do not fit the criteria."

— Charles Cutler, Overtown resident

Act guidelines in regard to income restrictions.

"In the two years that we have been working in this community, we have been able to facilitate joint venture partnerships with other developers, religious organizations and non-profit organizations," said Cox. "We are so proud of that project [Camillus] and have the greatest relationship with the YMCA. There will be recreation facilities and onsite day-care. All of the residents, in addition to members of the community, will be able to partake in the activities."

The Gatehouse Group, a Boston-based real estate firm that acquires and develops affordable multi-family rental properties throughout the U.S., currently has four affordable housing projects in the Overtown, East Little Havana and Miami River area: Brisas del Mar Apartments, a 160-unit senior citizen development; Miami River Park Apartments, a 211-unit family development that includes town-homes, a high rise and a garden-style building; Tuscan Place Apartments, a 199-unit family development; and Tuscan View

Apartments, a 175-unit senior citizen development that recently received its temporary certificate of occupancy and is currently in the leasing stage.

Lafayette Square Apartments in Little Haiti, a 296-unit joint venture project with BAME Development Corporation, is expected to break ground in the next seven to eight months, in lieu of county funding. The family-oriented project will be completed in two phases of 160 and 136 units,

Continued on page 17

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Affordable Housing

Continued from page 16

and should be finished by 2008.

Nick Inamdar, vice-president of Gatehouse, said that a major source of funding comes from federal tax credits disbursed by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, which mandates a property remains affordable for the next 50 years and that every unit be set aside for those with incomes no greater than 60 percent of the median. In an email to the BBT, Inamdar wrote:

"The lack of affordable housing in Miami-Dade County is an issue that could stagnate our growth and strength as a community. The Gatehouse Group has built over 5,000 affordable housing apartments throughout the country, and we have rarely ever developed in an area where the need is so desperate. Although the county has temporarily halted its funding of new developments, the development community has been assured by senior county officials that not one home will be lost that is in the pipeline, realistic, and cost-effective. We are confident in their commitment to the people of Miami-Dade County and we look forward to starting construction on... Lafayette Square."

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the generally accepted definition of affordability is that a household spend no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing, the high end of a bracket which is considered extremely low-income, according to HUD's definition, and an unrealistic number when low salaries coupled with high housing costs are quickly creating one of the most unaffordable cities in the country. In 2005, 297,957 Miami-Dade County households paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing, with 135,197 households paying more than 50 percent. Some of the increase in rent may be attributed to a rise in amenities included with rental properties such as air-conditioning, central heating, water or complete plumbing, but whatever the reason, the bottom line is that people simply cannot afford to pay it.

Another problem lies in the fact that people in need of affordable housing are being weeded out through a process that is supposed to be designed to help them. For example, a majority of Overtown residents cannot get housing or jobs due to required background and credit checks, so even if more affordable housing is built, the people for whom it's intended won't benefit because they'll never meet the requirements. Some of them have two jobs and still cannot afford housing.

"Liberty City and Overtown are subjected to abject poverty," said Charles Cutler, an Overtown resident, in a meeting of the Community Affordable Housing Strategies Alliance on Sept. 8. "We are being blacklined by the government. Over 80 percent of the people that live in these areas have criminal backgrounds and would not benefit from affordable housing because they do not fit the criteria. We need some type of leverage put in place."

According to Cynthia Curry, a senior advisor at the MDHA, County Commissioners allocated \$15.5 million of general funds for MDHA programs to include safety and security, rehabilitation of vacant units and a rental assistance housing program. This is the first time that general funds will be used to support the Housing Agency. Initiatives have also been implemented to set up satellite branches for the Office of the Inspector General, Affordable Housing One-Stop Information Web Portal, Affordable Housing Homeownership Loan Program, Affordable Housing Review Committee and Controls to Ensure that Homes Remain Affordable. With more formal procedures for all MDHA business areas and more audits being done, the hope is these measures effect the development a more efficient and accountable system.

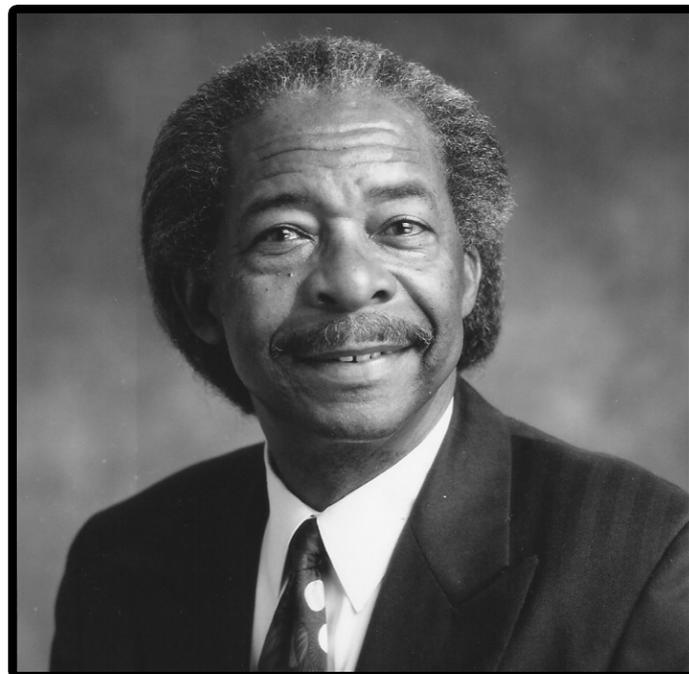
"The primary goal of the Housing Agency is to provide housing to the neediest in the community by expediting the renovation of public housing units and the development of single-family homeownership," Curry stated in an email to the BBT. "Despite internal problems, a considerable amount of affordable housing has been constructed. Since 2001, \$94.4 million supported the construction or rehabilitation of more than 9,400 affordable housing units in 103 projects, with an average surtax investment per unit at \$10,525. That does not mean though that change was not needed; a serious cultural change across all levels at the Housing Agency is happening. Everyone at the agency must be dedicated to helping those in need."

The Community Affordable Housing Strategies Alliance will hold a final recommendation meeting on Oct. 19. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

BBT

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Nov. 7 ~ Touch #104

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American Legion Unveils Improvements

Veteran's Open House Doubles as 9/11 Memorial

Story & Photos by
Christian Cipriani
BBT Editor

Veterans, neighbors and City of Miami representatives gathered on the morning of Sept. 9 at the Harvey W. Seeds American Legion Post #29 at Legion Park to remember 9/11 and get first glimpse of their newly renovated bar and patio.

Mayor Manny Diaz could not attend the event due to illness (nor, for that matter, could Fire Chief William Bryson), so District 2 Interim Commissioner Linda Haskins cut the ribbon in his place as Commander Phil Johnson, speaking on behalf of the Post, reminded everyone to "remember her name come November." It was also noted that as a child, Diaz was an American Legion-sponsored little league player.

After members of the Boy, Girl and Sea Scouts raised the flag to half-mast, Haskins delivered an impromptu address to the 50 or so guests – many of them war veterans – gathered on the front steps beneath the strong midday sun. She offered condolences to the victims of 9/11 and their families, and of the U.S. proclaimed, "We are the best."

Remarks offered by Commander David Magnusson of the Miami Police Department, who is also a master's student in history, used many quotes to frame a central belief that everything the U.S. does as a country from hereon will be informed by the terror attacks. But in keeping with Haskins' patriotic tone, he took from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* Brutus's post-murder declaration, "Who is here so vile that



Children receiving their toy police cars.



Boy, Girl and Sea Scouts raised the flag to half-mast in honor of 9/11 victims.

will not love his country?"

Magnusson called for vigilance and characterized terror suspects as wanting to take our liberties and eventually control of this country. While both speeches were an earnest attempt to honor the tragedy, the whole affair could have benefited from fewer nationalist clichés and greater attention paid to the victims rather than politics.

In the lobby, amidst the merciful breeze of the air-conditioning, the crowd joined hands for a prayer led by Rev. Jerome Starling, whose modest frame houses the drawn, powerful voice of a preacher. He took the podium to voice outrage over the recent rise in gun violence, with particular lament made for those children so trag-

Continued on page 19



The crowd with hands clasped and heads bowed as Rev. Starling leads them in prayer.

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American Legion

Continued from page 18

ically taken by errant fire. Rev. Starling founded the No More Stray Bullets (NMSB) program nine years ago to educate schoolchildren and promote nonviolence after his niece, Rickia Issac, was slain.

The program utilizes doctors from Jackson Memorial Hospital and local professors to teach children the danger of guns, and holds regular gun buy-backs in trouble spots. No questions are asked about the surrendered weapons, in exchange for which the police offer \$50 vouchers. The Harvey Seeds Post is one of the program's partners.

County Commissioner Audrey Edmonson, NMSB's main political supporter, remarked to the crowd, "No one suffers more than the family of a victim of a stray bullet." Evoking the memory of Sherdavia Jenkins and others, she said children should be able to play in their yards without fear.

Commander Magnusson returned to address the audience, and said: "We are probably the most violent country in the



Neighborhood Resource Officer Frederica Burden talking with Rev. Starling. Officer Darrell Nichols is in the background.

world – go figure... We need to grow past violence instead of getting used to it. Accepting it is not okay."

The line he was forced to toe was not enviable: Magnusson tried to both denounce American street violence and advocate military action against those forces that threaten American liberties. He is nevertheless a learned man of

Continued on page 61

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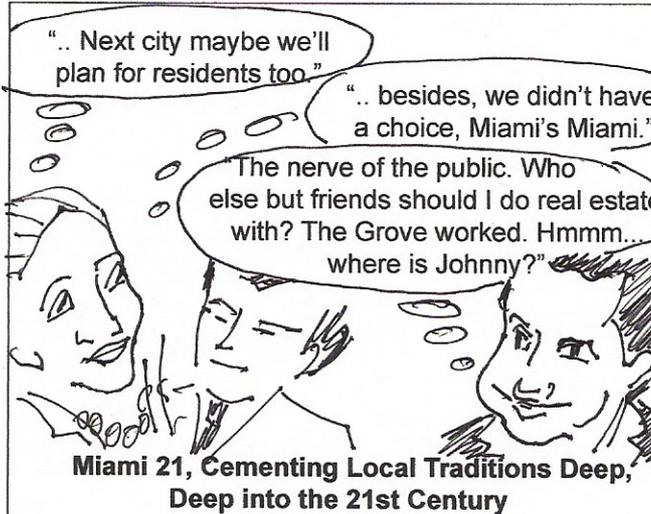
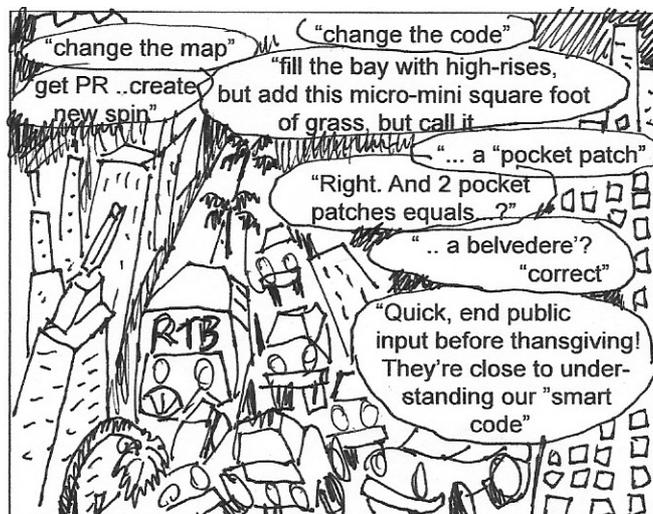
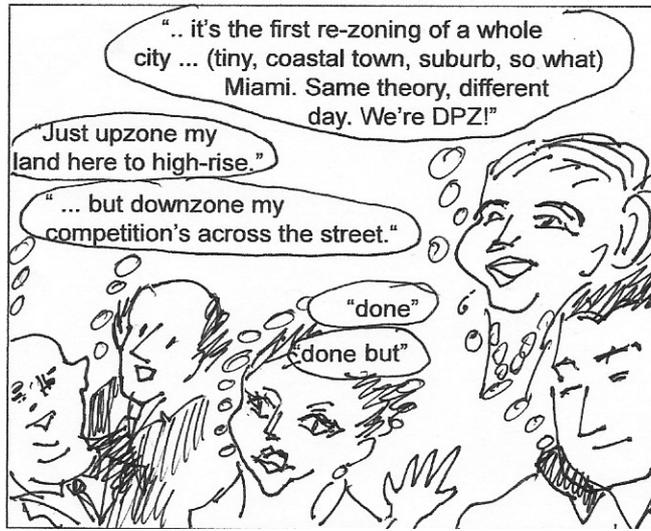
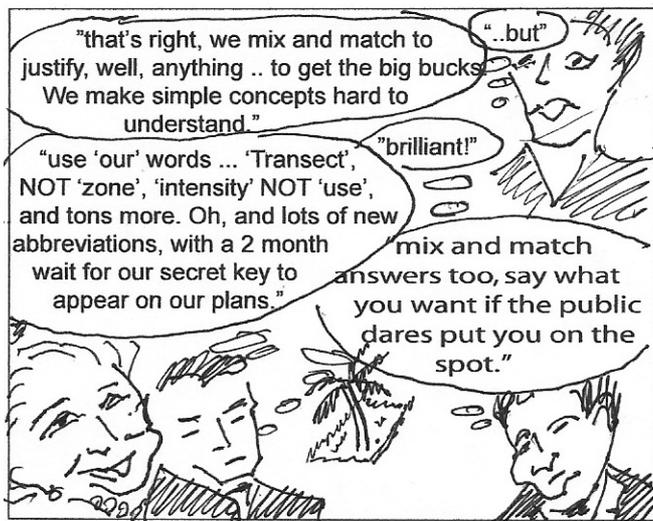
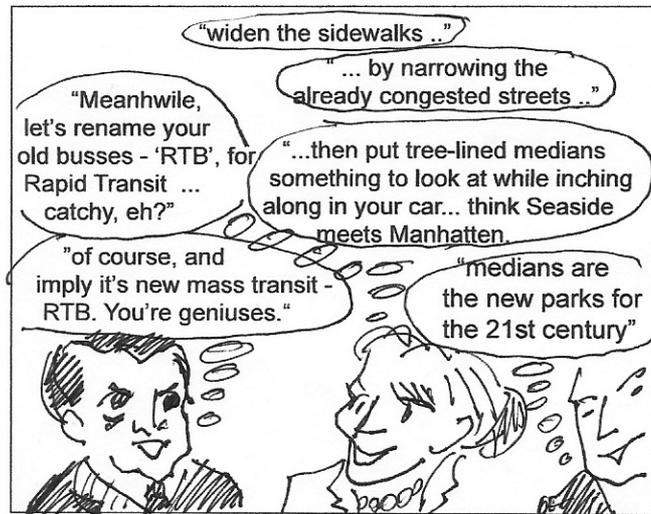
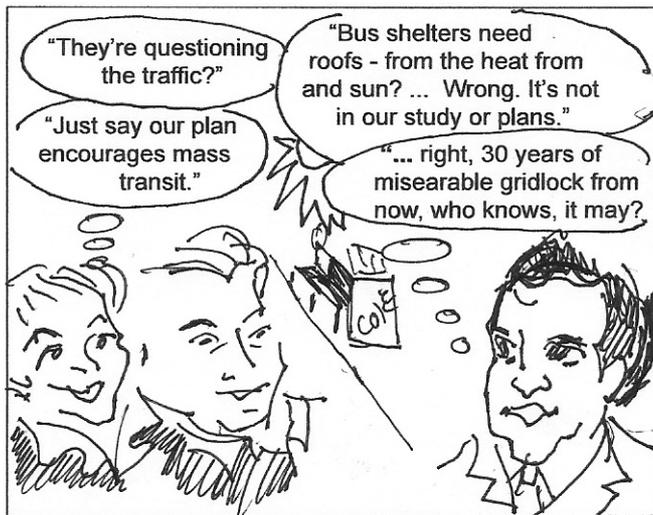
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BBT Editorial Cartoon by MARTIN ASWEGO



Temple Israel Announces Concert Series in Performing Arts District

Temple Israel of Greater Miami, an 80-year-old jewel in the Performing Arts District, has announced its season of concerts for 2006-2007. The series will include gospel, chamber music by members of the Cleveland Orchestra, a piano prodigy, modern versions of Yiddish classics and a baroque oratorio. The concerts will be presented in the temple's Bertha Abess Sanctuary, a beautiful Moorish building listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Bethune-Cookman College Concert Choral, one of America's great black college choirs, will present "From Bach to Gospel" on Sunday, Nov. 5 at 3 p.m. This concert will be free and open to the community.

The Cleveland Duo and James Umble, composed of two members of the Cleveland Orchestra and a noted saxophonist, will perform a concert of chamber music, mostly by Jewish composers. The concert, during the Cleveland Orchestra's residence in Miami, will be on Sunday, Jan. 21 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10.

A 21-year-old piano prodigy from Moscow, Ilya Petrov, will perform virtuoso works by Mozart, Liszt, Chopin, and Prokofiev on Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m. This concert is presented in collaboration with Julian Krieger's Friends of Chamber Music of South Florida. Tickets are \$10.

"Hip, Heymish and Hot" is a musical revue of Yiddish jazz and soul. The revue is performed by Eleanor Reissa, a Tony-nominee and former artistic director of New York's famed Yiddish Folksbiene Theater. The program will be presented on Saturday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15.

The season closes with **Handel's great oratorio, "Saul,"** performed by the Miami Bach Society, with baroque orchestra. The oratorio tells the biblical story of David's triumph over Goliath. The concert will be on Sunday, April 22 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$25.

Temple Israel is located at 137 N.E. 19th St., one block west of Biscayne Boulevard. Free parking is provided. For further information, email TIArts@templeisrael.net or call 305-573-5900.

NoMi to Quench Water Needs with Major Expansion

\$112 Million Plan Unveiled to End County Dependence by 2015

By Christian Cipriani
BBT Editor

Anticipating a continued rise in population growth rates, multiphase plans were unveiled at a September 11 budget hearing to expand North Miami's water program. With \$112 million in updated treatment facilities and expanded infrastructure, the city could cease purchasing additional water from the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department (MDWSD) – for a 20-year savings of nearly \$35 million – and increase daily production from its current average of 8.7 million gallons a day (mgd) to 20 mgd by the year 2015.

The Winson Water Plant, nestled between Oleta River State Park and the old Munisport Dump (now swiftly becoming Biscayne Landing, a \$1 billion mega-development), according to the city's website, "Pumps ground water from the Biscayne Aquifer [and] treats the water through aeration, chemical processing and filtering," to meet roughly 60 percent of North Miami's water demand. The other 40 percent of their 13.5 mgd needs are met through buying up the difference from county sources.

But after expanding the Winson site, brackish groundwater will instead be drawn from 1,000 feet into the Floridan Aquifer, and purified through a combination of limestone and reverse osmosis (RO) techniques (RO being a fancy term for a filtering method not unlike the one used in a Brita or similar device). The city of Hollywood has successfully used this method since 1996.

The upgraded facilities will use 15.6 mgd of raw groundwater to produce 12.5 mgd of drinking water, with the rest pumped back into what is called the "boulder zone."

Phase I, set for completion in 2010, carries an estimated price tag of \$94.5 million, \$42 million of which will go toward adding an RO facility to Winson. An extra \$17 million will be used to increase infrastructure capacity by 2015 – extra mains, pipes, etc to serve the North Miami area.

The design phase will occupy much of 2007, at which point Mayor Kevin Burns and city council must approve biddable plans and move to secure funding. A combination of state sources – from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to Community Development Block Grants – could provide up to \$20 million in backing.

Efforts to lower North Miami's county water dependence are not new. In May 2000, Gov. Jeb Bush line item vetoed a request for \$750,000 from the Ecosystem Management and Restoration Trust Fund to expand the Winson plant, part of a total \$313 million in vetoes given that year for a variety of reasons.

The combination of modified treatment techniques and a single, self-regulated production source may also help address the issue of water quality. According to findings published by the Environmental Working Group, a not-for-profit, nonpartisan group that analyzed North Miami tap water tests between 1999 and 2003, "Customers of the City of North Miami Water drank water containing up to 18 pollutants," the majority of which were described as "industrial."

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MAM Selects Architect for Museum Park Project

Members of the Miami Art Museum (MAM) Selection Panel met in a public meeting at the MAM on Sept. 14 to select the best out of 12 architects in the running to design the Museum Park Project.

Herzog & de Meuron, a Swiss architectural firm, were selected as the best in terms of their experience, with 13 internationally acclaimed museums completed or in progress, including the new Olympic stadium in Beijing, which will open next year. In addition, the architects were selected based on their understanding of South Florida's climate of severe heat and other weather conditions, as well as our foliage. Members of the public raised questions and gave comments regarding the architect selection process.

"We have decided to pay for the architects ourselves to save going through what would have taken almost a year through the county to do," said

Aaron Podhurst, chairman of MAM's Board of Trustees and Architect Selection Committee. "We lose \$300,000 a month every time we don't get started, so we have decided to utilize private funds for the project. We didn't have to have an open Sunshine type of meeting, but we wanted the community to be a part of it and understand what we're doing. We're all in this together as a city, as a county, as a museum."

The project, which is estimated at \$1 million, will be built on land in Bicentennial Park donated by the city and will contain of a museum, a planetarium and a park with a sculpture garden. It is currently in the preliminary Concept Design Phase, which should be completed in the next four to five months. According to Terrence Riley, MAM's director, an unveiling of the nearly completed design is scheduled during next year's Art Basel.

Pro Bono Fair at Temple Israel

The Human Services Coalition (HSC) and the Put Something Back Program from the Miami Dade Bar Association are matchmaking. They want to help you tap into our community's rich supply of quality lawyers while assisting attorneys by linking them up with exemplary nonprofits.

On Thurs. Oct. 26 at 6:30 p.m., both groups are hosting the HSC/Put Something Back Pro Bono Fair at Temple Israel in Miami. The goal is to link professionals with nonprofits that could use their services for free.

They request you take a short survey by Oct. 6, the information gathered from which will help in the matchmaking process. For more details on this visit www.hscdade.org and open the PDF link on their homepage, or contact Patricia Maldonado at 305-576-5001 x 16. HSC is located at 260 N.E. 17th Ter., Ste. 200 in Miami.

Mount Sinai Offers Free P.A.D. Screenings

Mount Sinai Medical Center is conducting a free community screening campaign, called Stay in Circulation, aimed at helping adults over the age of 50 learn about their risk for peripheral artery disease, or P.A.D.

In the United States, more than 8 million Americans suffer from P.A.D. – hardening of the arteries (also known as atherosclerosis) in the limbs. One in 20 Americans over the age of 50 has P.A.D., and many of those with the disease do not experience symptoms. P.A.D. can reduce mobility and increase the risk for heart attack and stroke. If left untreated, it can be fatal.

"When people think of cardiovascular disease, they typically think heart attack. There is another cardiovascular disease that affects your limbs – typically your legs – that can be just as dangerous," said Abelardo Vargas, M.D., of Mount Sinai's Peripheral Vascular Disease Center. "We're providing an opportunity for people to find out if they have P.A.D. and learn how to reduce their risk."

As part of the Stay in Circulation campaign, Mount Sinai is offering free P.A.D. screening at its main Miami Beach campus, located at 4300 Alton Rd. To schedule a screening appointment, please call 305-674-3905.

People who are at risk for P.A.D. include anyone over the age of 50, especially African Americans; those who smoke or have smoked; and those who have diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, or a personal or family history of vascular disease, heart attack, or stroke.

Stay in Circulation is part of a national awareness campaign sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (part of the National Institutes of Health), in cooperation with the P.A.D. Coalition.

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Superheroes Hit the Beach at Halloween Miami 2006

Don your mask, tights, and magic bracelets (if you you've got 'em) and prepare to party for Truth, Justice and American Values at Halloween Miami 2006, whose theme this year is "Superheroes Hit the Beach." SAVE Dade's annual costume extravaganza, slated for Saturday, October 28, moves from its longtime Upper Eastside home to an expanded setting at Miami Children's Museum, on the MacArthur Causeway.

"We're excited to make the move to a larger and more comfortable venue so the crowd can celebrate in style," said SAVE Dade Executive Director Hedly Peña. "The setting of the Miami Children's Museum, combined with the outrageous costumes our partygoers are known for, will create a smashing evening."

Halloween Miami 2006 marks the 11th anniversary of the event that began as Belle Meade's neighborhood Halloween party. It has been recognized as one of Miami's best community events. The event benefits SAVE Dade (Safeguarding American Values for Everyone), which advocates for equal rights for persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities. This year's



Revelers at Halloween Miami 2005.

event features music by DJ Q-BAN. Costumed guests can compete in the midnight costume contest to win prizes courtesy of the Winter Party Festival.

Tickets are now available online at www.HalloweenMiami.com (major credit cards accepted) as well as at local ticket outlets (cash only). See the event summary below for details. Halloween Miami is a "21 and over" event.

The Presenting Sponsor of Halloween Miami 2006 is Bacardi Limón. Sponsors include Kubik, Williamson Cadillac Hummer, Red Hot Designs, Carson Realty Group, and Winter Party Festival. Media Sponsors are Biscayne Boulevard Times, Express Gay News and The 411.

Saturday, October 28, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. DJ Q-BAN starts at 9 p.m. Miami Children's Museum, 980 MacArthur Causeway (across from Parrot Jungle), Miami. Advance purchase tickets (through October 20): general admission \$35; VIP \$100. October 21 to 28, general admission \$45; VIP \$150. VIP rooms feature

Mojitos and open bar from Bacardi, hors d'oeuvres from top area restaurants and karaoke studio. Purchase tickets online at www.HalloweenMiami.com until midnight October 27. All major credit cards accepted. You can also purchase tickets at MPower Project Gym, Lambda Passages, New Concept Video and Dr. Robert Guda/Doctors Vision Center. Visit www.HalloweenMiami.com for more info.



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City of Miami Parks & Rec Receives Award

The City of Miami Parks and Recreation was the recipient of the 2006 Agency Excellence Award - Category I for populations over 200,000 from the Florida Recreation and Park Association at the annual FRPA Annual Conference on Aug. 30 in Orlando.

The award recognizes and honors the state's most outstanding community park, recreation and/or leisure service agencies for excellence in Parks and Recreation management. In order to receive the award, the department was required to highlight accomplishments in a number of areas including recreation and athletic programming; fitness and wellness activities; and staff training and development.

"We accept this award as a sign we are moving in the right direction," said Ernest Burkeen, Director of City of Miami Parks and Recreation. "Thanks to our master plan and efforts to engage the community and deliver premier programs, we have received an honorable recognition which demonstrates our commitment to delivering the best to our residents."

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MPAC Opening Weekend Closes with Huge Free Event

On Sunday, Oct. 8, from noon to 10 p.m., the Carnival Center for the Performing Arts will welcome the entire community to Target Globalbeat, presented by Target, a free grand finale to the Center's four-day Grand Opening celebration. With more than 40 indoor and outdoor performances by hundreds of local artists, Target Globalbeat will be a huge celebration of Miami's cultural diversity and talent, and an opportunity for all South Floridians to be among the first to visit Miami's new home for the performing arts.

Six parades will run through the Center during the day, including the Bahamas Junkanoo Revue of Miami, The Samba Academy, a Chinese Dragon performance by the Miami Overseas Chinese Association, a traditional Haitian rara procession by Rara Lakay, brass band sounds from the high energy Miami Street Band, and the annual Miami Carnival, which will bring hundreds of costumed Caribbean dancers and performers through the heart of downtown Miami for a special stop in the Center's Parker and Vann Thomson Plaza for the Arts, on Biscayne Boulevard between N.E. 13th and 14th Streets.

Target Globalbeat will salute Miami's Caribbean and African-American communities with calypso from Florida Memorial Steelband, reggae from Nubian Players, gospel from Cooper Temple Church of God in Christ Mass Choir, the energetic West African dance troupe Delou Africa Dance Ensemble, and the acclaimed Haitian konpa group Zenglen, among others. Paying homage to Miami's rich Latin American influences, the



Center will also host the seven-piece Cuban timba band Tiempo Libre in a rare hometown performance; Latin funk rockers Siete Rayo; traditional Afro-Peruvian music and dance group Peru Expresión; Mexican norteño band Grupo Impecable; Argentine tango from Los Tangueros; the popular Cuban son band Conjunto Progreso, and more.

The day will also feature performances from several young Miamians who define the city's unique sound: The Spam Allstars, Latin Grammy nominees Locos por Juana, champion turntablist DJ Craze, up-and-coming R&B singer Urban Mystic, Kendall hip-hoppers Mayday, the break-dancing D-Projects, and Black Violin, the classically trained duo of hip-hop-playing violinists. Irish fiddling, Japanese taiko drumming, Middle Eastern music and dance, Indian dance and sitar, bluegrass, klezmer and more round out the world of performances at Target Globalbeat.

Target Globalbeat is free, but space is limited for the indoor performances. Vouchers, which are redeemable for wrist bands on the day of the event, will be available at the 13 Miami-Dade County Commissioners' District offices from Monday, September 18 to Friday, Sept. 22. Carnival Center recommends contacting the District offices for a specific time and date to pick up vouchers. Vouchers can be redeemed at the Target Globalbeat Tent on Sunday, Oct. 8 for wrist bands which provide admittance into the Center during any one of three three-hour sessions beginning at noon, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Wrist bands will also be issued, as space permits, on Sunday at the Target Globalbeat Tent up to two hours before the start of each session. Arriving early is highly recommended. Details, including the performance schedule, list of Commissioners' offices, directions to Carnival Center and parking information, are available on the Carnival Center website at www.carnivalcenter.org.

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2006/07 North Miami Budget Set

North Miami Mayor Kevin Burns and the City Council approved and adopted the city's upcoming 2006-2007 fiscal year (FY07). The millage rate was dropped from the current rate of \$8.50 to \$8.30. In order to drop the rate, the council reduced the total proposed FY07 budget to \$150,332,112, a decrease of about \$1.2 million over the proposed budget.

During the first budget meeting, a Magnolia Park resident named Ellen complained bitterly about salary raises for city employees, specifically their method of presentation ("possible maximums" brought to the table, not exact figures), and questioned \$60,000 for Christmas decorations, though she assured council members, "I am not a grinch."

Irma Braman, president of the Museum of Contemporary Art's (MOCA) volunteer board of directors, also lobbied for increased funding: "We are truly understaffed," she said.

Five fulltime, museum-paid employees plus four part-timers stretch the museum's coffers, but beyond the six city-paid staff members, Braman said MOCA needs North Miami's financial backing for a fulltime fundraiser. She also said an addition by a renowned architect would be a boon to patronage.

On the city's side of the table there were complaints about their own people. Mayor Burns called Building and Zoning "one of the most frustrating departments in this city," and said he "has a lot of

issues" with its structure and performance. Problematically, many inspectors – especially high-level ones with structural engineering knowledge – do contract work for multiple cities, often netting up to \$100,000 annually. While North Miami wants to beef up its code enforcement with fulltime inspectors, they can't offer more than \$70,000 a year. The city is forced, then, to deal with contract inspectors who cash in by spreading themselves thin between various municipalities.

From these and other discussions, the following additions were born into the budget: Five additional code enforcement officers, an additional special magistrate to hear code enforcement cases, lamp replacement and maintenance, as well as installation of emergency lighting at Claude Pepper Park, a city-wide branding initiative, purchase and installation of new Financial Management Software (FMS) system, continued funding for COPS in Schools Grants Program that provides for two fulltime school resource officers and initial funding for the cyclical replacement of police radios. The City's Community Redevelopment Agency will have a budget of \$3,992,308 to implement various residential and commercial redevelopment projects throughout the city in the coming year.

A 3.5 percent cost-of-living increase was also approved for city employees, with the exception of

police union employees who are still under negotiations with the city for a new contract.

Peter Cruise, president of the North Miami Police Association and not part of the bargaining team, lamented, "We are losing people quickly, [but] are within percentage points of agreeing on salaries."

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Purvis Young: Paintings From the Street

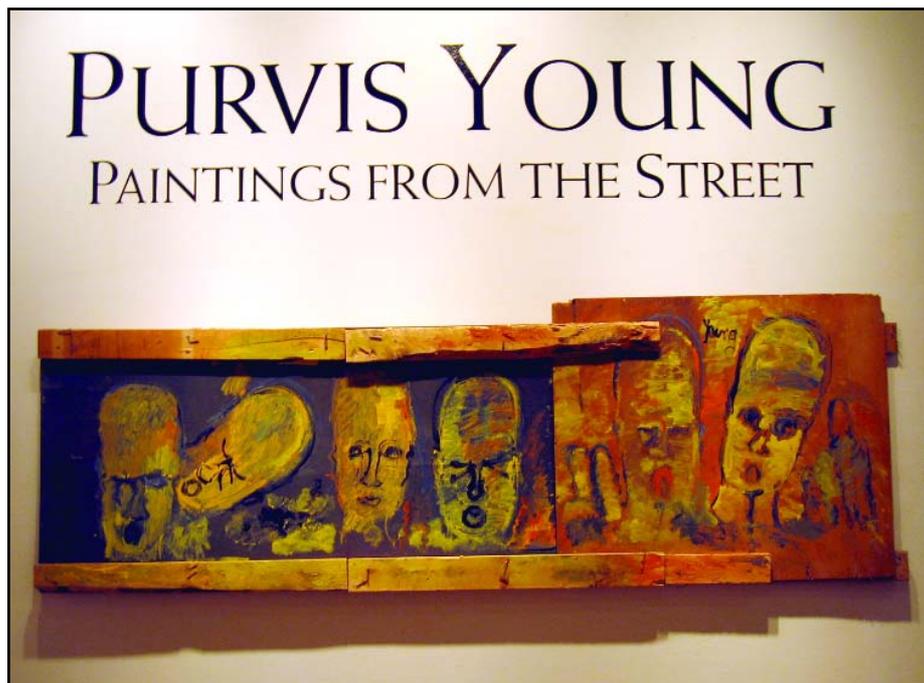
“Picasso of the Ghetto” Paints Life in Overtown

By: Malika Bierstein
BBT Staff Writer

When Purvis Young first created a mural from house paint and plywood scraps in 1972 along a stretch of I-95 in Overtown known as Goodbread Alley, no one yet realized that the cultural and economic divides he painted would give way to self-expression and artistic fame, such that would project Young far beyond the city streets that bore him.

“My feeling was the world might get better if I put up my protests,” said Young in an excerpt from *Souls Grown Deep, African-American Vernacular Art*, in reference to the Goodbread Alley project. “Even if it didn’t, it was just something I had to be doing. I make like I’m a warrior, like God sending an angel to stop war, like in my art.”

In *Purvis Young: Paintings from the Street*, a collection of 100 pieces of his work on display at the Boca Raton Museum of Art until November 26, it is



A 100-piece exhibition of Young’s work is at the Boca Raton Museum of Art through November 26.

evident just how much of Overtown’s cultural traditions, street smarts, struggle and violence, assimilation and emo-

tional and economic unrest Young incorporates into his art. He paints what he sees, capturing on canvas the conditions of the people and city that surround him and translated quite literally through the titles of his work: *Truck Yard and Train Depot*, *City Life*, *Been Framed*, *Music with Warriors*, *Tent City Violence*, *Dead Man*, *Funeral Procession*, *Carrying the Beloved* and *Pregnant Lady with Syringe On Top of the World* to name a few.

His paintings exist on everything from plywood to broken pieces of furniture and other miscellaneous bits of trash. There is no glitz and glamour, no pretentiousness in the stark reality of his pieces, much like the artist himself, who claims he “was put on this earth to

paint, not to live” and seems generally unaffected by the level of fame thrust upon him, despite the fact that his work appears in more than 60 public collections, with six exhibitions this year alone. He still lives and works in the very city that affected him enough to want to paint it.

“There is an aura and an energy that emanates out of his work,” said Skot Foreman, guest curator for the Boca Museum exhibition and someone who has been actively handling elements of Young’s work since the early ’90s. “It’s the roughness of the medium, the combination of colors, the in-your-face subject matter [and] the boldness of it. He has taken nothing – an environment that is so harsh, so negative, so wrought with violence, prostitution, homelessness – and created something beautiful. I believe there is magic in that. Overall, there is something about Purvis that is uniquely Purvis. I haven’t seen anything like it since.”

After learning about “Freedom Walls” such as The Wall of Respect in Chicago, The Wall of Dignity in Detroit and The Wall of Consciousness in Philadelphia, murals done by local artists without official sponsorship or sanction that represented a rallying point for the community and a visualization of their collective values and successes, Young created a mural at the intersection of N.W. 3rd Avenue and 14th Street, coined Goodbread Alley for a Bahamian bakery that once operated there. The mural was a collage of hundreds of paintings done with house paint, which Young affixed to the sides

Continued on page 29

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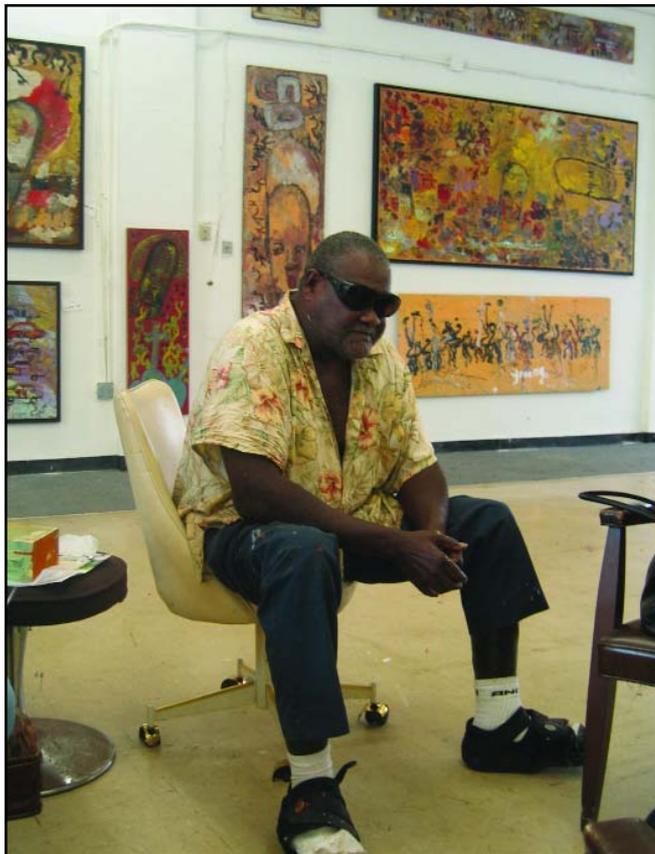
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Purvis Young mugging for the camera at his Miami studio.

Purvis Young

Continued from page 28

of the abandoned buildings.

But the Department of Housing and Urban Development condemned the buildings in 1975, and tore them down to clear the site for public housing projects. Most of the work was lost or destroyed. A few of the original pieces remain in the possession of a small number of Miamians fortunate enough to have saved them. Soon after, local collectors and dealers took notice of Young, in addition to a number of tourists who bought his early work and eventually helped to bring his art out of Overtown and into the wider community.



The public mural Young created along NE 14th Street in 1972, later coined Goodbread Alley.

Young is self-taught and began drawing at the age of 6, but he didn't officially begin painting until age 20. Now, 43 years later, he's still painting, filling up the studio he runs on N.E. 17th Street and 2nd Avenue with Martin Siskind, his informal manager and friend.

Siskind, a former restaurateur, antique dealer and art dealer, has a

rather unsavory reputation in Miami, and has been linked to a number of alleged scams involving real estate deals, antiques and artwork. Young himself admitted to an incident in 2002 in which Frederic Snitzer, a well-known Miami gallery owner representing him at the time, had to hire a lawyer to retrieve over \$10,000 worth of Young's artwork from Siskind. But he's put all of that behind him, stating that he trusts Siskind completely in his professional and personal affairs.

"[The Snitzer incident] is something I have forgotten," he said. "There's people that wrote things about Martin trying to keep me away from him – people who bought my art – but I think he's

great. They don't have nothing good to say and they're the ones I have to watch out for, you know. A lot of guys know me but never introduced me to any art dealers. One day I got sick and I asked him [Siskind] to carry me to a doctor. I was in bad shape with my diabetes and he told me that if I don't get

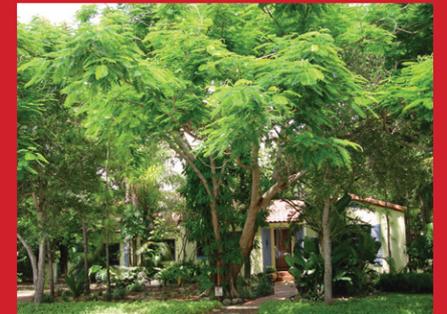
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Purvis Young

Continued from page 29

.....
 on dialysis I'm gonna die, and ever since I've been with him. We're like friends. I took an oath that I will not sell to any other art dealer. I took an oath, I won't do that, but there is no formal contract between us. It's on a personal level."

Questions, however, have been raised as to the spelling of the artist's name. During the exhibition at the Boca Museum, he autographed catalogues "Pervis Young" instead of Purvis Young. The latter is the widely known spelling, and the one used in all materials related to the Boca exhibition. In addition, www.purvisyoung.com is a website owned by Foreman that contains Young's biography along with a history of his work. Siskind owns a placeholder at www.pervisyoung.com, as the site is currently under construction. Young credits the misspelling to a simple error made by banks and different people that he worked with that was never corrected, though he says Pervis is "the way my mother spells it." When asked about the creation of an entire website around the Purvis spelling, Young said that Foreman had given him money to produce the

site and so he allowed it, though he admits that he didn't really know what a website was when he made the agreement. He just figured it was okay.

Despite all of the politics associated with his name, his fortune, and his daily health struggles, Purvis remains positive. In the works are the publication of a catalogue on Purvis by the Rubell Family Collection which will include a combination of essays and color photos of his work; an exhibition at the Bass Museum in Miami Beach sometime next year; a documentary by the director of Purvis Young Studios, Richard Fendelman; and a possible kidney transplant.

"I've traveled to places like Louisiana and Mississippi and found out that some people don't like Purvis Young, the artist," said Young, "but I mostly keep to myself. I can't solve the world's problems. I paint the world's problems."

Purvis Young Studios will be open to the public for an exhibition of his work on December 1, 2006.

BBT

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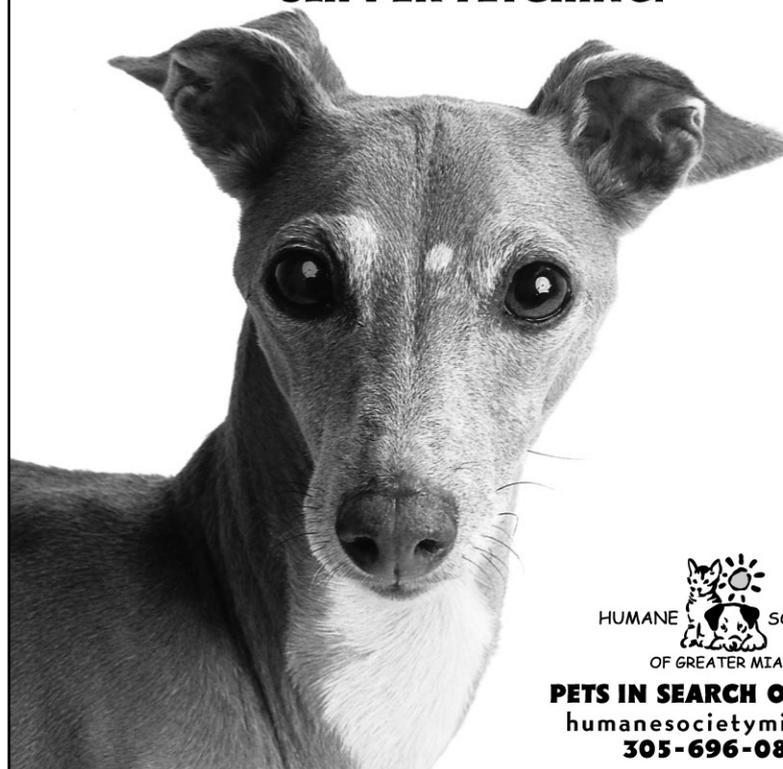
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Wynwood Gallery Walk Delicious

Showings at September's Second Saturday Nice, Too

By Victor Barrenechea
BBT Contributing Writer

On Saturday, Sept. 9, the Wynwood arts district became the bustling hub of the Miami art scene. With Art Basel only a few months away, the streets were packed with art aficionados, downtown hipsters and casual spectators, as well those in search of free drinks (of which there were plenty to be had).

And even children got in on the action – at least there were droves of them at Edge Zones, the World Arts Building. Most of them gathered around one exhibit where animatronic, penis-headed figures encased in glass danced around when you pressed a nearby orange button. Kids had fun pressing the button and watching the figures dance. They loved it! Underage kids also served Bacardi Raz (a kiddie drink, anyway) to gallery-hoppers while a bland, straight-to-VH1 band plodded along dully.

As far as art, they had Rachel Hoffman doing a performance piece entitled *Wunder Tchotcke* in a room decorated something like a child's bedroom, with dolls, stacks of fruit, tacky decorations and a vaguely aquatic theme. Two girls in furry animal outfits lounged on pieces of furniture, making everyone who entered the room feel awkward and uncomfortable.

Another room featured Nelson Gutieres' *Dog Days*,



A detail from Beth Reisman's *Brothers*, 2006, acrylic on panel, 60 by 60 inches.

comprised of long strips of paper run along the bottom half of the room with dogs drawn in charcoal and blood. The centerpiece was *Doggy*, a chocolate dog sculpture melting within its glass case.

Victor Payeres' *Above the Clouds* featured a bunch of cliché Juxtapoz-styled paintings with an occasional ham-fisted pop cultural icon (Dumbo, Mickey Mouse) thrown in at random.

The most interesting works at the World Arts Building were Magali Wilensky's mixed fabric

pieces. These abstractions were made of coiled, wrapped fabric in intricate swirling designs with vibrant colors.

Whatever Edge Zones lacked in terms of decent art they more than made up for with food – pasta salad, nachos, many different kinds of cheese and fun-sized chocolate bars. It was definitely the best food spread of all the galleries.

Ingalls & Associates also dished out an amazing array of refreshments – various assortments of wines, beer and liquor.

One eye-catching piece at Ingalls was *Murtropolis*, by Charles Huntley Nelson. On a flat screen played a mesmerizing video collage of the classic Fritz Lang film *Metropolis* that would slowly fade over scenes from Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi's *Goodbye Uncle Tom*. It also included other pop culture references like a lightning bolt striking the Capitol building, from an old album cover by D.C.-based hardcore band Bad Brains.

Other pieces at the gallery were purposefully – but poorly – hung. One tiny painting stood alone on the blank wall, hung about a foot off the ground so you had to bend down to get a good look at it, mocking the conventional art space setup. But when you're inundated with so much art from so many galleries, a

Continued on page 33

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Wynwood Gallery Walk

Continued from page 32

challenging setup like that runs the high risk of turning people away and going unnoticed.

At Locust Projects, Nicolas Lobo showed his large-scale wooden model of an electromagnetic field. It had neat little touches like almost unnoticeable tints of bright color that gave the waves of wooden planks a subtle sense of movement. The material itself was a noteworthy choice, as regular plywood is as far removed from electromagnetic imagery as it gets.

As the evening wore on, Kevin Bruk gallery became a packed house, and understandably so as it featured works by Craig Kucia, one of the night's highlights.

With his paintings, Kucia produces somewhat surreal, innocent, almost childlike scenes. His visual and thematic approach evokes a world like that of a children's book – familiar yet mysterious at the same time. The paintings are colorful, and frequently employ a subtle yet incredibly effective technique that makes figures seem almost three-dimensional, literally popping off the canvas, often with piercing, vividly rendered eyes.

And there are also lots of animals. One painting shows a kid in the woods dressed as a ghost – sheet on head, holes poked out for the eyes – in a bright purple nighttime Halloween scene reminiscent of an old Peanuts comic. Standing next to him is an identical sheet with no legs poking out, floating on its own – a real ghost!



Chris Byrd, *Untitled*, from *Adventureland*, 2006.

While thematically consistent, there's still plenty of variety within Kucia's paintings as he melds conventions of abstract art into his representational works. Some paintings include floating geometric shapes, for instance squares falling from the heavens. One painting was a kaleidoscopic rendering of owls sitting in a tree, with bright circles dancing in the foreground, and white paint splattered on certain segments of the canvas. Another of Kucia's techniques is to apply strips of paint straight out of the tube, sometimes clumped

and coiled in a tiny pile and sometimes cut up and stacked, but almost always hidden within the scenery.

The David Castillo gallery was the other big highlight of the evening. Vibrant fragments of colors dance upon Beth Reisman's canvases. Her work is like a jumbled puzzle: Layers and layers of contrasting colors are placed in large masses as random as the Earth's continents on a map, behind which float placid, solid-colored backgrounds. There's a whimsi-

Continued on page 39

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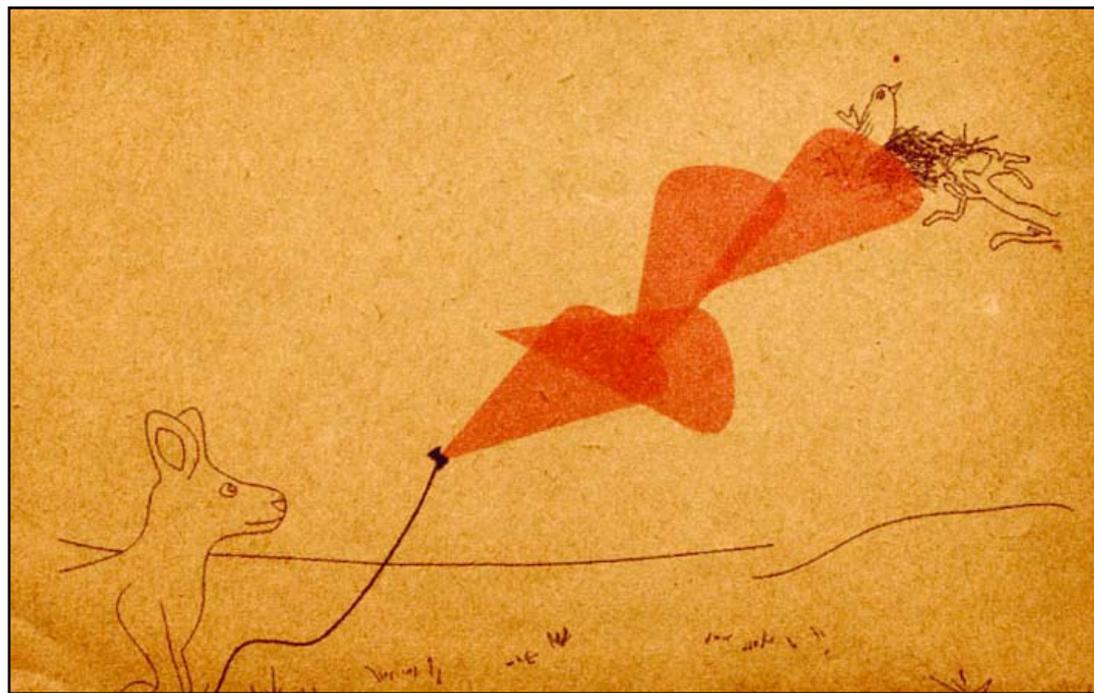
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www.alejandravonhartz.net

ALONSO ART

181 N.W. 6th St.
305-576-4142
www.alonsoart.com

DORSCH GALLERY

151 N.W. 24th St.
October 14, 7 to 10 p.m.,
Opening for "Live Shape"
by Franklin Einspruch

INGALLS & ASSOCIATES

125 N.W. 23rd St.
October 14, 7 to 10 p.m.,
Opening for "Imaginable Matters"
by Yui Kugimiya
October 14, 7 to 10 p.m., Opening
for "New Work" by Simon Lee

LEONARD TACHMES GALLERY

3930 N.W. 2nd Ave.
October 14, 7 to 10 p.m.,
Opening for work by Erika Morales
~ ~ ~

GALLERY EXHIBITS:

ABBA FINE ART

233 N.W. 36th St.
305-576-4278
www.abbafineart.com

"911 Revisited" by Debra Holt,
through December 16.

AMEDAMA GALLERY

811 N.E. 79th St.
305-759-0229
www.amedamaart.com
Open by appointment only

AMBROSINO GALLERY

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North Miami
305-891-5577
www.ambrosinogallery.com

ART FUSION

1 N.E. 40th St., Suites 3, 6 & 7
305-573-5730
www.artfusiongallery.com

"Mysteries and Masters," October 6
through December 28.

ARTFORMZ

130 N.E. 40th St. #2
305-572-0040
www.artformz.net

Work by various artists, October 14
through November 7.

Continued on page 35

Pizza by the Slice ~ Stromboli ~ Wings ~ Calzone ~ Shrimp Scampi

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ART & CULTURE ON THE BOULEVARD

Art Listings

Continued from page 34

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111 N.W. 1st St., Suite 625
305-375-4634
www.miamidadearts.org

THE BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 N.W. 32nd St.
305-576-2828
www.bakehouseartcomplex.org

"Get to Know Us," through October 14.

BARBARA GILLMAN GALLERY

2320 N. Miami Ave.
305-573-1920
www.artnet.com/bgillman.html

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY

3550 N. Miami Ave.
305-573-2700
www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com

"Las Goyescas" by Mario Brito,
through October 7.

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL

180 N.E. 39th St., Suite 210
By appointment only:
teamwaif@yahoo.com

BETTCHER GALLERY

5582 N.E. 4th Ct.
305-758-7556
www.bettchergallery.com

CHELSEA GALLERIA

2441 N.W. 2nd Ave.
305-576-2950
www.chelseagalleria.com

"Fragments" and work by Rosa
Muñoz, October 14 through
November 7.

CAROL JAZZAR CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St.
305-490-6906
www.cjazzart.com
By appointment only: carol@cjazz-
art.com

DAMIEN B. CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

282 N.W. 36th St.
305-573-4949
www.damienb.com

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 N.W. 2nd Ave.
305-573-8110
www.castilloart.com

Beth Reisman solo show, through
October 31.

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 N.E. 39th St.
305-573-4046
www.diasporavibe.net

Work by Juana Valdes, October 12
through November 26.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave.
305-576-1804
www.dlfinearts.com

Through October 28:
"Open House" by José Bechara and
"hidenvalleyranch" curated by José
Carlos Díaz

DORSCH GALLERY

151 N.W. 24th St.
305-576-1278
www.dorschgallery.com

"Blanco del Fuego" by Lucas R.
Blanco, through October 7.
"Live Shape" by Franklin Einspruch,
October 14 through November 11.

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

51 N.W. 36th St.
305-573-9994
www.dotfiftyone.com

EDGE ZONES

World Arts Building
2214 N. Miami Ave.
305-303-8852
www.edgezones.org

ETRA FINE ART

10 N.E. 40 St.
305-438-4383
www.etrafineart.com

FAKTURA GALLERY

7128 N.W. 2nd Ct.
305-758-9005
www.fakturagallery.com

FILTRO: A FOTO SPACE

2320b N. Miami Ave.
305-571-9565
www.filtrofoto.com

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 N.W. 1st Pl.
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com

Work by Gean Moreno, through
October 7.

GALERIE EMMANUEL PERROTIN

194 N.W. 30th St.
305-573-2130
www.galerieperrotin.com

"True Stories" by Sophie Calle and
Work by Leandro Erlich, through
November 26.

INGALLS & ASSOCIATES

125 N.W. 23rd St.
305-573-6263
www.ingallsassociates.com

"Being There" and "Mutropolis,"
through October 8.

"Imaginable Matters" and "New
Work," October 14 through
November 8.

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305-576-4454
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305-576-2000
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Frances Trombly,
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Continued on page 38



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WANKEE

BY CHRISTIAN CIPRIANI

I

“Do you realize I’m holding something in my hands that could end your life in a split second? Do you trust me enough not to kill you?”

That’s the sort of heavy, philosophical comment one expects when an Oxford theology graduate gets his hands on an AR-15. The semi-automatic rifle shares a shadow with the AK-47, with a fraction of the punch – a gun in sheep’s clothing, if you will. He and I were having a nice little Thursday at a nearby firing range that will remain unnamed because of the following conversation:

Me: “Hi, we’d like to shoot some guns.”

Staff: “Right boys, we’ll need to see some I.D.”

Me: “Well, he’s a foreigner, and he forgot his passport.”

Staff:

“The law says he can’t shoot, then, *do you understand?* That’s what the *law* says. Wink, wink.”

He didn’t wink, but said the words out loud, and it was implied that The Law wasn’t walking through the door anytime soon. He spoke in a drawn-out, covert tone normally reserved for moonlit espionage, me with a briefcase handcuffed to my wrist and him five feet behind in a trench-coat, repeating the agreed-to code phrase:

“The eagle...flies...*at dawn.*”

Indeed, but the only eagle around here was the Bald one perched on the roof of this storage garage-cum-firing range, a monument to freedom so great that an unidentified foreigner can wander in off the street and exercise Second Amendment rights he doesn’t even have.

In retrospect, it’s perhaps better he didn’t bring the passport.

Inscribed in calligraphy on its opening page is a royal decree from the Queen of England demanding all peoples offer this roving ward of the Crown their fullest cooperation, lest their heads be taken violently. That sort of threat would have sent these guys packing, a caravan of pickup trucks gunning for England to personally dump my friend’s body on the steps of Buckingham Palace.

But as it went, they willingly handed over multiple firearms, headphones, glasses and heaps of gleaming bullets. Instruction consisted of, “Here’s the safety, now don’t kill yourself.”

It was a muggy afternoon in early August. My friend Tom had flown into Miami from London three days prior for his first trip to America in more than a decade. And now, without Mum

and Dad in tow, he was bent on having a severely American holiday.

“Absolutely amazing!” he said, eyes tracing the AR-15’s barrel. “I can’t believe you can actually own this. I think our army gets to have these.”

Tom’s observations echoed with equal parts horror and jealousy; this, after all, wasn’t the kind of recreation normally sought by sensitive, educated men. But any hint of civilized repulsion melted away when he stepped up and emptied the entire magazine, a string of focused blasts that left the Bad Guy’s silhouette largely intact and Tom in peals of laughter.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM... WA-BOOM!

If Mummy could see him now... well, soon enough. Extensive photographs will serve as both memories and physical proof of having been in the U.S., a nation at once hateful of armed and dangerous nations, and righteously supportive of its own armed and dangerous citizens – and, in this case, anonymous tourists.

II

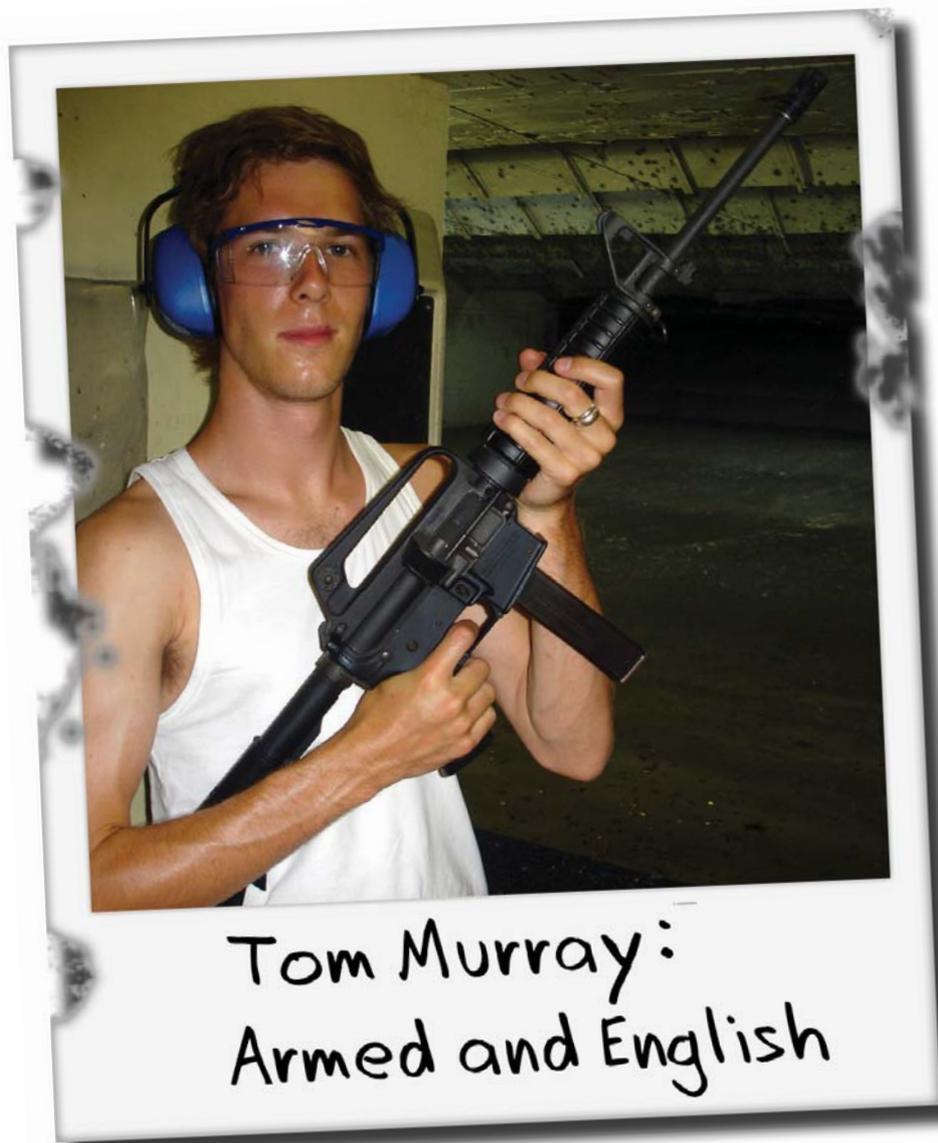
I’ve always been terrified of guns and of violence in general. I can tolerate nearly anything on film, but real-life pain doesn’t bode well with my stomach. Once, in the third grade, a fifth-grader tore a dodge ball from my hands; in a flash of courage – such that I’ve never experienced since – I flung my little fist into his left cheek. He in turn split my lip and we both went down crying. It was my first and last fight.

Since then I’ve navigating danger with my brain. My Darwinian survival mechanisms long ago adjusted their arc, so I can outwit, but not out-hit, and where this puts me in the food chain is debatable. A few steps beyond frat boys and the entire state of West Virginia maybe, but inside every well-adjusted man hides a sleeping thug, one easily excited by bank-heist flicks and Winston Churchill speeches.

I had my first weapons experience four years ago, in England. It was at my friend John’s cottage in Winchester, an idyllic countryside village teeming with trout and verdant farmland, a place in which one half expects to hear a town crier. As he explained it, rabbits destroy crops and so it was our sacred duty to mow them down with antique shotguns. But unless you count SUV run-ins with deer, I didn’t grow up in a hunting family. I went along mainly for the outfit:

Knee-high Wellington boots, a herringbone cap and knotted walking stick; my only regret was not having enough time to grow a handlebar mustache. This was a look I’d fantasized about in English class but couldn’t, for whatever reason, pull off back in Pittsburgh.

Over an afternoon spent traipsing through damp fields, my interest in shooting bunnies – weak from the start – waned as I delved further into my own mental cinema. On the reel was a high-brow sequence about





gentleman hunters in the hills outside Bombay ... or something like that. E.M Forster lite, with me as director and star.

I punctuated my fantasy hunt with utterances like, "By God, Lord Wigglesworth, *the beast is near* – I can feel it in my jodhpurs!" before pounding some aimless shots into a tree. I'd guffaw, and order my boy-servant to lash the White Bengal's pelt to our elephant and fetch me a tall glass of gin...

Back in the real world, our "hunt" had gone astray and lost momentum. The rains were picking up, so for no sound reason I crouched at the base of an oak – droplets gently petering off the brim of my cap – and sniffed the air, long and purposeful, like a dog. It felt very natural. This is the sort of thing a boy does when left to his own devices. He communes with his inner-Neanderthal.

My caveman senses lost somewhere back in the Pleistocene, I smelled only errant gun-smoke, Thumper's scent drifting over the next hillside. When John finally gunned down the elusive hare, it turned out to be a baby. Its squeals were sad, its death rather pointless. I decided that, aside from the blasts – which I really enjoyed – this sort of thing wasn't for me. But two years later I moved with John into a London flat and realized this was *exactly* the sort of thing for him.

The English have a well-honed talent for rationalizing bad situations, but the device failed to explain why squirrels, as a nonnative, pestilent species, must be trapped in our garden and drowned in the bathtub.

"Because, the bastards eat the tulips," I was told.

Yes, that is a story I should skip over entirely.

III

It would be two years until I again felt the cool weight of gunmetal, when on a visit to see family in Pittsburgh my eldest brother, Jim, said, "Let's go to the gun range," no question mark.

At this point I'd never been, and didn't know it was becoming a semi-regular activity for him, and occasionally his wife. I regarded the invite with the same inward snobbery I felt toward his personal politics. Jim is Conservative to the bone, but over the years we've found common ground enough to stifle what for years were terrible, heated fights.

I cradle few political convictions, and when caught in these family feuds operated from a platform of pure antagonism, having once read that intelligence is the ability to hold in the mind two conflicting ideas simultaneously. With this as my bedrock maxim, I latched onto the opposite of whatever Jim thought and pushed until he cried immature flip-flopper. Then it devolved into personal jabs.

Ah, family...

With some reservation, I rode along to the Pittsburgh Gun Club only to find the gate sealed off by the ATF – rumor was the staff ran a small-time cigarette and arms trade until the hammer fell. So on we went to Anthony Arms, a dealer/range east of downtown, whose several hundred square-feet of walls proudly display the corpses of every animal known to Christendom. In one corner stands the front half of an African elephant, his hulking mass frozen mid-charge. I think I even saw a saber-toothed tiger, but either way decided these men were not to be trifled with.

The whole scene was different than hunting in England. It wasn't about a leisurely Sunday stroll in the countryside, inhaling the beauty of a storied land in the company of a friend. This was a to-the-point, stripped-down operation where anyone with \$30 and a driver's license could stand in a dank underground alley and blow holes through a Xerox of Osama Bin Laden.

A handgun – or military-grade rifle for that matter – doesn't have the same literary allure of a century-old Spanish musket. Here is a device machine-crafted for the sole end of dumping a projectile through a moving target at 1,200 feet-per-second, and to stand as physical reassurance that a man's home is his castle. Unlike John's hunting rifle, I was genuinely afraid to touch the pistol, assuming from so many fear-driven newscasts that try as I might, I couldn't help but shoot myself.

It wasn't until safely through the first clip that I officially warmed up to the Berretta 92FS. Broad-shouldered and meaty-looking at only 34 ounces, the 92's elegant lines spoke directly to my love for Italian aesthetics, namely Ferraris and dangerous-looking brunettes. If the Spanish musket was romance, this was lust.

But, as before, my interest in shooting stopped when the bullet left the chamber. I scarcely considered the target and came only for the explosion, the moment when a short burst of flame detonated between my hands, discharging a shell stage right.

The blast of a gun communes with some primordial instinct, some gene that brought this species through millennia of violent struggle only to be silenced by a long effort beginning with the Enlightenment. And as a former philosophy student, I'm okay with that. It should be quieted or we'd all be Republicans. But every now and again I like to partake in this terrible pastime because it amuses the hell out of me.

I doubt I'll ever own a gun and have yet to hear a good argument beyond, "Because I can." If you want to shoot recreationally, rent one. If you're life is in such clear and present danger that you need to be armed, *move* – money well spent, and meaningless compared to an accidental death. Family, friends and even our own selves pose more calculable danger than the faceless 'perpetrator'.

Once, at a shooting range in Pembroke Pines, I heard the cashier explain to a customer: "You never know,

they don't work alone anymore. A lot of them work in gangs." So of course, we should be armed, I thought – then *no one* would dare attack another. But they tried this once: It was called the Wild West and it ended very badly. No, gun-as-protection is just silly, so often a misguided stab at confirming 'independence' in the face of an overstated threat. Gun-as-recreation, though, *yeeeee-haw!*

Another reason I'm afraid to own a gun is that I'm already losing the fear, and fear keeps you sharp. Accidents happen when you turn sloppy, and safety measures can only combat so much human error (perhaps a gun-safe hooked up to a breathalyzer, no?)

If my first range outing was marked by fear, I must have skipped a few steps because my third smacked of lunacy. There I stood, roommate in tow, demanding, "The loudest, most dangerous thing you've got, and that revolver there, too."

The session ended with my right shoulder battered red by the butt of a 12-gauge shotgun, my left palm stroked with abrasions. These were from some Billy the Kid-style, rapid-fire cowboy crap I tried to pull. My target fell to pieces when I shot it point-blank in the face, and having watched *The Deer Hunter* two nights prior didn't help, either. I kept dropping a bullet in the chamber, spinning it, and whispering:

"Remember the mountains, Nicky? One shot."

My roommate wasn't laughing.

IV

And that, for me, is the scariest part of this whole business, which Tom latched onto immediately in reminding me that he literally held the future in his hands – my future, specifically. The notion of voluntarily handing someone full control over your Life/Death switch is tough to process. A gun's safety is infinitely more secure than the one on a man's rational mind. Security on the latter is, at best, negotiated.

For me, holding a firearm puts a lot of a senseless ideas into the head, the kind that are impossible to stifle because how much you *should* be thinking it and how hard you *end up* thinking it are inversely proportional. It's a pattern that bleeds into a host of less threatening situations, the most illustrative of which is trying not to think about sex in Church, a problem I hope we all share or else I'll feel seriously hell-bound.

With a gun, however, most never cross the line; they just relish the mortal danger, flirting with the sharp edge of possibility – a very human tendency we all engage in some form. Shooting invigorates my mind on many levels, from the childish satisfaction I get from the *BOOM* to the philosophical puzzles through which I'm forced to work each time I feel the trigger.

Yes, I've found myself a good pastime. Or maybe I'm just turning into a hick.

Art Listings

Continued from page 35

LEONARD TACHMES GALLERY

3930 N.W. 2nd Ave.
305-572-9015
www.leonardtachmesgallery.com

Work by Erika Morales,
October 14 through November 11

LOCUST PROJECTS

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www.locustprojects.org

LUIS ADELANTADO GALLERY

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305-573-7373
www.luriegalleries.com

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www.themoorespace.org

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www.cifo.org

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101 W. Flagler St.
305-375-3000
www.miamiartmuseum.org
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"Miami in Transition," through Oct. 29.

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770 N.E. 125th St.
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
\$5 adults, \$3 seniors/students, free children under 12/North Miami residents, Tues. admission is by donation

Work by Shimon Attie, though October 8.
"Elusive Signs," October 12 through January 7.

MOCA AT GOLDMAN WAREHOUSE

404 N.W. 26 St.
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
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Send art listings/events to Times@biscayneboulevard.com or Visit BiscayneBoulevard.com to post your events in between issues.

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GALLERY PEEK

A Snapshot of Local Gallery Offerings



Craig Kucia

the best things are made on napkins, 2006

Oil on canvas

96 x 120 inches

Price: \$22,000

Showing at Kevin Bruk Gallery

A feeling of conventional abandonment is ever present, which keeps Kucia's work fresh and opposite of today's mainstream painting in very apparent ways. This is achieved not only via the fantastic, poetic and storybook-esque content, but also by the deliberate puncturing of the picture plane's integrity; by actually building up and "sculpting" oil paint on top of and away from the surface of the canvas, and by the scraping away of images in select areas of the composition.

Wynwood Gallery Walk

Continued from page 33

cal sense of disorder going on here, but the intricately overlapping jumbles placed over what appears to be a peaceful bright blue sky produce an interesting dynamic of chaos vs. order.

In Castillo's smaller "project room" hung local artist Chris Byrd's first exhibit, consisting of paintings with lots of intertwining loops and lines – broad tangles of colors like spaghetti on a plate. Colors intertwine and twist, but sometimes large sections are filled-in with big splotches of paint, the outlines still visible. The choice of contrasting colors makes the eye jump about the canvas with unexpected rhythms. Byrd seems to start with pencil first, but even the pencil marks overlap with the painted portions to create complicated mazes of color. A few smaller, black-and-white pieces hung opposite the massive anchor canvas, and possessed a rough unfinished look about them, as if they were studies.

Over at Fredric Snitzer Gallery hung Gean Moreno's jumbled collage tapestries, looking like the decorations of a teenage stoner's bedroom. To have actual teenage stoner's decorate the

gallery would've probably yielded more interesting results than Moreno's facsimile of.

Fache Art displayed extensive work by... Carla Fache. Her blurred but geometric abstract-expressionist paintings are almost identical to the blurred but geometric abstract-expressionist paintings of Mark Rothko.

The atmosphere at Dorsche Gallery was surprisingly dull, but had absolutely no bearing on the art displayed, which incidentally was also dull. (At least they finally got air-conditioning.) Among the offerings that night were Lucas Blancos' vague paintings of what looked like a workspace/art studio reminiscent of art school sketches of random objects found in the classroom – cans, cartons, etc...

At the start of the evening, a comparably boring crowd at Filtro took in two photography displays, each with similar themes of urban surroundings. There was plenty of wine and a good selection of cubed meats to nibble on, but as midnight neared, the place became a veritable hot-spot packed with crowds spilling out into the street, the wine and food all gone, and along with them, me.

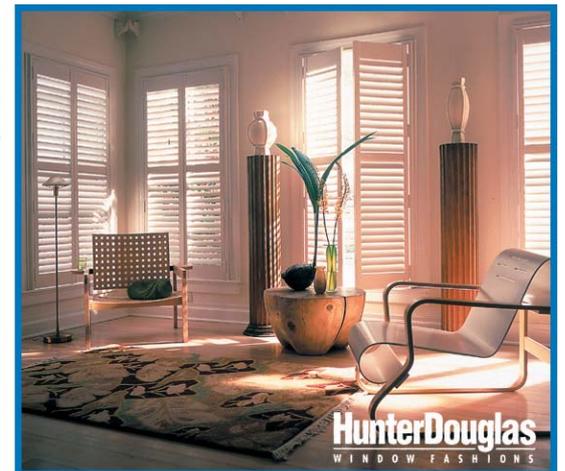


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A Solid Showing at Karpio Facchini

By Victor Barrenechea
BBT Contributing Writer

If you were around at art openings last September you probably noticed a fair share of glossy orange flyers with the words "Deep Homo" parodying the "Home Depot" logo. They were everywhere, and on Friday, September 15, the show opened at Karpio Facchini Gallery.

It wasn't a particularly lively atmosphere. The crowd was very European-cum-South Beach. They played techno and served Mexican cuisine – nachos with excellent guacamole dip, and margaritas.

The evening's real highlight was David Rosenbloom. We've all heard the expression "guns don't kill people, people kill people," and whatever your stance on gun control, it's an oversimplification of the problem of gun violence. Rosenbloom's work seems to explore the true meaning of this phrase with all its nuances.

He set up a light box, and on a curved panel projected a large x-ray of a hand holding a pistol. The inner-workings of the gun, the mechanical components, the actual bullets – essentially its skeleton – were visible. Just the same, so was the skeleton of the hand clutching it. Because of the hand's tight grip on the gun, and the uniform look and colors of the x-ray, it made the two seem almost inseparable. The gun was attached to the shooter like another appendage, and though a person was certainly wielding the gun, that doesn't let the gun off the hook. Both are equally culpable.

Rosenbloom expands further on this idea: On the wall facing the x-ray hung a large picture of a machine gun affixed with a bayonet – bones replacing the gun butt, all in front of a bright white background. The bones appeared to be the ulna and radius, the two that make up your forearm. It made the statement that it was impossible to separate the human component from a shooting, be it victimizer or victim. Both images, large and cutting through their stark backgrounds, evoked strong images of power.

Ray Smith was the other big featured artist. One wall of his work was covered with about 15 rectangular panels of nothing but smiley faces floating around. Alone it didn't seem like much, but there was a messy painting off to its left – also a sea of dancing smileys, but underneath it a figure shrouded in white cloth, almost



David Rosenbloom's haunting indictment of the shooter

Klansman-like. He mysteriously appears in the background with piecing, serious eyes. Upon closer inspection, it seems the smiley faces were cut out and pasted onto the mystery man.

The painting is covered in thick, brightly hued paint, but with oddly contrasting background colors. The paint was clumpy and scratchy. Some smileys within the outline of the figure were severed to fit within the lines. The figure doesn't jump out; he hangs in the background of the painting like a ghost – quite a contrast to the wall of smileys. The painting had some interesting touches to further the sense of mystery. One tiny, glowing bulls-eye and an even smaller blue dot are almost

unnoticeable.

Was the placement of these works intentional? We don't read from right to left, but viewing the works like that is the best way of looking at them and getting the full effect.

Smith has other clever ways of distorting images. A number of paintings featured a boxer, only with torso obscured by a series of boxing-gloved arms that seem to spin in a clocklike, Ferris wheel motion around the body. No heads. Using crème-colored backgrounds and bright red paint for the boxer's shorts and glove gave the figures a definite camp feel,

but with a 1920s antique quality about them.

Continued on page 42

The gun was attached to the shooter like another appendage, and though a person was certainly wielding the gun, that doesn't let the gun off the hook. Both are equally culpable.

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Karpio Facchini

Continued from page 40

The movements of these arms are slightly reminiscent of the way many futurist paintings would depict movement, often blurring and obscuring the scenes in which the movement took place. One was painted on a round disc depicting nothing but the spinning arms, to great effect. One, with reddish background, shows a female boxer.

It's downhill from there for Smith. The next painting of a watch-piece was good, though not as impressive. It was a melted watch-face. The "Angelus" timepiece's insides were distorted, with a swirling vortex in the center – somewhat hypnotic, certainly eye-catching and well-rendered, but not as good as the aforementioned pieces.

The subject of the next painting was a row of guns. They too were twisted and distorted, curving out and bending and melting to approximate the motion of a spraying fountain. Deep globs of color were used in the camouflaged portion of one of the rifles, while for others Smith left actual portions of the wooden panel. These were painted on to fill in the wooden portions of the guns, all to great effect.

Once again, well-rendered and eye-catching, but not up to par with previous works. Smith's most uninteresting piece, however, was a painting of ballerina floating gracefully through the air, with flowing legs and skirt. Her skin was wooden-brown and the painting had a gray/silverish background. It was his largest painting there, yet you really had to strain to keep any sort of interest in it.

But that doesn't mean you shouldn't keep interest in Smith's work. He may be hit or miss this time around, but when he does produce a hit, it's certainly something worthwhile.

BBT

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While clever marketing, the show's title had little to do with the artwork.

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ART & CULTURE ON THE BOULEVARD

Around Town: Culture Briefs

Area Happenings for the Month of October

By Tad Simmons
BBT Columnist

Remember That Movie "Mask"? That Kid's Face Was Crazy

As the Japanese say, "Konichiwa." But I'm Tad Simmons, so I'll just say, "Howdy!" Until now I've been safely penning this column in anonymity, but I now feel ready to expose myself to the community (at the insistence of my AA sponsor).

So here I sit, chin in hand, positively tingling with nervous sensations!

It is I, Tad Simmons, who has brought you these monthly Culture Briefs, hand-picked from a cornucopia of worthy events and spectacles. And while I don't personally attend any of these, I often paste my head into the pictures, which I post to my grandmother in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Stories of her "little Taddy" rubbing elbows with the many beautiful people of Miami send the gals at church into a frenzy.

"Yes, Gram Gram," I tell her, "Rick Ross is as radiant as he is talented."

But this month I vow to attend something in person: I will not let the temptation of so many free wine coolers or the fact that I am uninvited deter me. If it is a gallery opening, I also vow to leave those watercolors of my cat, Alan Goldberg, taped to the fridge where they belong (a minor incident that Emmanuel Javogue needs to get over).

Godspeed, faithful readers, during this fine month of October, and if you see me out kicking up the golden autumn leaves, stop and say hello - Tad always has time for a chat.

~ ~ ~

A Home for My Falsetto

The Miami Gay Men's Chorus has started rehearsals for the fall season and welcomes new members. No audition required.

Rehearsals are Thursdays, 7:30 to 10 p.m. at the Miami Shores Presbyterian Church, located on N.E. 6th Ave. at 96th St. But note this is only for adults. For answers to your questions, call 305-604-8787 or visit www.miamigaychorus.org.



On Oct. 14, in addition to the regular Second Saturday ART + Design Night, the Miami Design District Merchants Association presents a **Masquerade Dance** to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. The gala, to be held in the **Moore Building** on N.E. 2nd Ave. at 40th St., runs from **8 p.m. to 12**

a.m., so you will be home in time for the rerun of "7th Heaven." Fifty, a SoBe eatery, will provide finger foods by the open bar, and advance tickets can be purchased for \$25 at Urbania, while procrastinators will be shaken-down at the door for \$40 and a few teeth.

There will also be a special **mask decorating contest**. There is a whole rigorous procedure to follow here that I don't feel like retyping, so go to www.UrbaniaDesign.com

for details. Fantastic prizes will be awarded for the best designs, so break out the **fake blood and fried chicken skin**. Punishments will be dealt to anyone using glitter or a butterfly theme.

~ ~ ~

Like Salman Rushdie, Except No One Knows Him

Square Peg Productions is a new alternative theatre group, and its inaugural production, *Three Angels Dancing on a Needle*, by exiled Iranian artist Assurbanipal Babilla, begins a partnership with Deluxe Arts that will bring together the worlds of visual art and theatre. The production has graced stages throughout the U.S. and Europe, but this is its first showing in the Southeast.

Three Angels is a comedy about love, lust and all the impure thoughts in between, as three characters play out absurd fantasies of sex and revenge in a search for happiness in all the wrong places. Sounds like a good weekend in Tad's book!

Babilla is a well-known playwright and artist in several mediums. After his exhibit

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Around Town

Continued from page 24

of **erotic nude self-portraits** was put on trial, banned and subsequently **burned** during Khomeini's regime, he fled Iran in 1979. Last year he was awarded a Hellman/Hammett grant in recognition of his **courage** in the face of political persecution.

Both the main production and an opening piece, *Nerves*, will be performed by Miriam Kulick, Merry Jo Pitasi and Odell Rivas under the direction of Michael Yawney, at **Deluxe Arts, 2051 N.W. 2nd Ave.** in Wynwood.

The suggested donation is \$10, for info call **786-214-6040**; the limited run of seven performances are **Oct. 12-15 and 18-19 at 8 p.m., and Oct. 22 at 2 p.m.**

~ ~ ~

Walk Downtown?

How Novel

On **Wednesday, Oct. 4, from 6 to 8 p.m.**, join the **Performing Arts Center Neighborhood Walk** as they explore the historic district around the city's new Carnival Center for the Performing Arts with the Historical Museum's Dr. Paul George. See the 1929 Art Deco **Sears Tower** and learn how architect Cesar Pelli incorporated this Miami landmark into the new building. Meet in front of the Omni Metromover station on Biscayne Blvd. and bring a flashlight. Spooky! HMSF members \$17, nonmembers \$22; for information call **305-375-1621** or email **a.prieto@hmsf.org**.

~ ~ ~

You're in the Jungle

Baby, You're Gonna Die

While Axl Rose is busy turning himself into a **hideous freak** via plastic surgery and cornrows, fans of the late great Guns 'n' Roses can slip on their skull-and-crossbones thongs, shoot up a little *Mr. Brownstone* and take a trip back to *Paradise City* with **Appetite for Destruction**, the "ultimate G'n'R tribute band."

This is *Anything Goes*, baby! I'm gonna bring *My Michelle* and rock out till she screams "*You're Crazy*," then I'll tell her, "*Back Off Bitch, Don't Damn Me*, okay? *You Ain't the First* and right now ya got me feelin' *Right Next Door to Hell*, so quit *Double Talkin' Jive* before I knock you into a *Coma*..."

But then I'll feel bad and tell her, "*Don't Cry*, don't have a *Breakdown*, you been my girl for *14 Years* and I

don't want us to end up *Estranged*... I just lead a *Reckless Life* and sometimes *Get in The Ring* too quickly. I should show more *Patience*, 'cause *You're One in a Million*. Don't *Move to the City* and start dating *Nice Boys* – stay with us *Bad Apples*. Not to beat a *Dead Horse*, but I got a *Bad Obsession* for you and just wanna *Live and Let Die* and go hand-in-hand with you back to *The Garden of Eden* when we're both *Dust 'n' Bones*."

You see what Tad did there? Then we'll totally make out. **Oct. 20, Studio A, 60 N.E. 11th St.; www.studioamia-mi.com** for info.

~ ~ ~

That Hendrix Song Will be in Your Head All Day Now

Miami International University of Art & Design presents *cross/town/traffic*, a new exhibit curated by the artist Gary L. Moore comprised of multimedia works by ten rarely seen artists connected to the St. Mary's Art District. Moore recently completed a large sidewalk installation near the new Performing Arts Center. The exhibition explores the visual, social, material and spiritual complexities nurtured in a distinctly subtropical urban environment.

The exhibiting artists are Gismo, Monique Leyton, Brad Kuhl, Skip Van Cel, Jacquelyn Jackson-Johnston, Matthias Saillard, Damien Racine, Rosaria Pugliese, Deryl Daniel Mackie and Purvis Young.

The exhibit, on display in the University's main gallery until Oct. 27, is located on **Biscayne Blvd. at 15th Street**, downtown. An opening reception will be held on **Thurs., Sept. 28 from 4 to 9 p.m.**

~ ~ ~

Surprise! Great Reasons to Run Do Exist

On **Saturday, Oct. 21**, you can participate in the local **Race for the Cure**. If you're a running enthusiast, lace up your New Balances because today's your day!

The Komen Race for the Cure will kick off at Bayfront Park in downtown Miami as a sister event to more than 100 others in the U.S. In theory you will be racing against more than 1,000,000 other people, so you'll probably **lose**. Sorry, Tad's honest, but optimistically so! On the **sunny side**, you'll

be raising money and awareness for a terrible illness that warrants no cheek-tonguing. It's awful, plain and simple.

The race is open to mobile folks of all abilities, from elite runners to cancer survivors.

Up to 75 percent of the net funds raised will be used to fund local breast cancer projects, with the remaining 25 percent going to national research through the Komen Foundation Award and Research Grant Program.

Be at **Bayfront Park at 7:30 a.m.** for mimosas and a pancake breakfast before the race starts at 8:30. It's a 5K Run/Walk, 1 Mile Fun Walk and a Tot Run, with a goal of 11,000 participants.

Hopefully this event will promote **positive awareness, education and early detection of breast cancer**, and raise funds for breast cancer research.

~ ~ ~

How PANtastic!

The **Performing Arts Network (PAN)** kicks off another exciting season with a well-rounded fall schedule featuring performances and classes in diverse forms of **dance, music and theater** for people of all ages. PAN provides the whole family with the opportunity to stay fit and healthy

while learning to **creatively express themselves** under the guidance of some of the best performing artists in South Florida.

It reminds me of my own childhood, when Dad would come home from a 12-hour shift at the mine simply **jazzed** for a free-form dance session. He'd fire up the incense and prepare tofu salads while lecturing me on the importance of diversity. But I digress...

PAN also welcomes their new Flamenco instructor, Paola Escobar. Join him on **Oct. 8 at 7 p.m. for Juerga Flamenca** with Ballet Flamenco La Rosa, a traditional Flamenco jam session with live music and dancers from the company. This event gives artists and audiences a chance to enjoy authentic Flamenco music and dance in a traditional setting, with improvisation and interpretation of the many rhythms that are the essence of Flamenco.

For a full schedule of classes and performances, or for more information about becoming involved, visit PAN, located at **13126 W. Dixie Hwy.** in North Miami. Call **305-899-7729** or visit **www.panmiami.org** for more info.

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Halloween Horrors from the '70s Vault

Dark Flicks You Probably Haven't Seen, But Should

By Christian Cipriani
BBT Editor

Daughters of Darkness

(Les Lèvres Rouges; Director's Cut)



Belgium; 1971 (English language)

Starring: Delphine Seyrig, Andrea Rau, Daniele Ouimet, John Karlen

DVD: Anchor Bay Entertainment
100 minutes



For years the only version of this film seen in America was one truncated to 87 minutes, but Anchor

Bay recently released a letterboxed edition of *Daughters of Darkness* at its full 100-minute running time. None of the tired vampire stereotypes – fangs and bare necks – emerge in this one, and instead the viewer is treated to director Harry Kümel's vision of Countess Elizabeth Bathroy, a charmingly sensual woman who looks and acts like a golden-age Hollywood starlet.

She's forever dressed for an evening out and commands the world with coquettish, breathy coos. This may or may not also be the Countess Bathroy from 300 years ago, whom legend holds preyed on the blood of young women. What is true, however, is that young girls in nearby Bruges keep turning up dead and bloodless.

Stefan and Valerie have just eloped when we meet them on a train in their sleeping carriage during the opening scene. "Do you love me?" she asks of her new husband. "No... and you?" he replies.

He is immediately less-than-likable, and issues with his rich and controlling mother (whom he's taking Valerie to England to meet) hang a dark veil over what should be a joyful time for the young lovers. The mother scenario plays out in a thoroughly bizarre – if not entirely relevant – twist. Valerie, for her part, remains naïve and compliant to her new husband's dark side, but intuition tells her something's amiss with the Countess.

The unnervingly pretty stars and their glassy-cool art-house delivery make for a strangely paced film that borders on pretentious but never quite falls victim to its own measured beauty. The newlyweds arrive on the off-season at a sprawling 19th-century hotel on the Belgian coast and have the royal suite – and entire complex, with its vaulted ceilings and eerie antiquity – all to themselves.

The Countess and her attendant – Rau, looking seductively porcelain – take a strong interest in the couple, and the hermetically sealed hotel begins to weave an otherworldly life of its own.

Daughters has its downsides, but the performances are memorable (Seyrig is haunting, in fact) and its dark and foreboding tone is quite unlike anything you're likely to see in a modern 'horror' movie.

The Wicker Man

UK, 1973

Directed by Robin Hardy

Starring: Edward Woodward, Christopher Lee, Diane Cilento, Britt Ekland

DVD: Anchor Bay Entertainment
84 minutes (but try to find the 99-minute version!)



Continued on page 45

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Around Town

Continued from page 43

Tad's Outta Jokes



Miami Art Central (MAC) is pleased to present *Video: An Art, a History, 1965-2005*, an international group exhibition based on the video and multimedia installations of the Centre Pompidou which recounts the history

of this very contemporary field, punctuating the main phases of contemporary art from 1965 to 2005. Curated by Christine Van Assche, Media Arts Curator at the Centre Pompidou, this exhibition brings together a selection of 37 works by some of the most important artists in this field, ranging from the earliest pieces made with extremely limited resources to impressive displays of audiovisual resources unleashed in more recent productions. It will be on view at MAC through December 10, 5960 S.W. 57th Ave. Call 305-455-3333 or visit www.miamiartcentral.com for details.

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Halloween Horrors

Continued from page 44



I'll likely be skewered by film geeks for not giving this one a perfect score, but while I really enjoyed it (though not as much as I feel I was supposed to), I don't think it's perfect. I will, however, admit that *The Wicker Man* is one of the most strangely memorable films I've ever seen.

It is a combination mystery/thriller, horror and... musical, whose legendary soundtrack is cited as a major influence in the mid-1970s British folk resurgence. Police Sergeant Neil Howie (Woodward) is sent by seaplane to investigate the alleged disappearance of a young girl, Rowan Morrison, from Summerisle, a remote island off the coast of Scotland. The tightly wound Christian investigator doesn't know quite what to make of the leering, insular villagers, who follow a neo-Pagan religion of sun-worshipping and such under the guidance of Lord Summerisle (Lee).

Those who actually answer Sgt. Howie's inquiries, he soon realizes, usually provide false information that doesn't add up (first, she doesn't exist; then, she's dead; then...), but they remain upbeat and cheery – often breaking into elaborate folk numbers – while he grows ever more frustrated. His only opinion is that their Paganism – with its open sexuality, rituals and foreign beliefs – is repulsive.

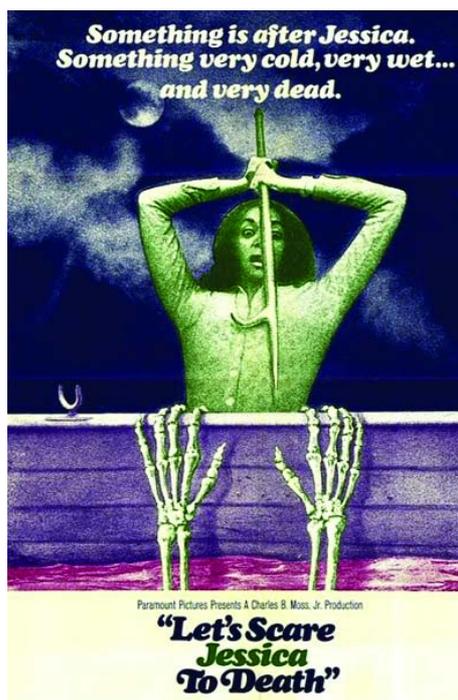
The musical numbers add a strange tone of cultish reverie, the most entertaining of which is a tavern full of haggard men shouting a bawdy, sing-song ode to Willow (Ekland), the landlord's daughter. Her bursting sexuality intoxicates Sgt. Howie, and during that first night he nearly explodes with shameful frustration as she prances about nude in the next room in a primitive mating song, beckoning him to visit her.

Soon after is the eve of May Day, when the islanders perform long-standing rituals to encourage a healthy growing season. It is here when Sgt. Howie learns the truth of Morrison's fate and comes face-to-face with his own.

The ending is one for the ages, and while I felt the film was to some degree hokey, it's nonetheless a worthy cult favorite; few works of cinema have juxtaposed doom and celebration to such sinister effect.

Fun fact: *The Wicker Man* opened in the U.S. on a double-bill with *Don't Look Now* (see our box of further suggestions).

Let's Scare Jessica to Death



U.S., 1971
 Directed by John D. Hancock
 Starring: Zohra Lampert, Barton Heyman, Kevin O'Conner, Gretchen Corbett
 88 minutes
 DVD: Paramount Home Video



Now I'll have the opposite problem: Why did this deserve 4.5 palm trees, the geeks will cry? Objectively it probably doesn't, but *LSJTD* is one of those films you either adore and find yourself haunted by (especially if you saw it at an impressionable age), or consider just another horror flick. But excitement over its recent DVD release suggests many still remember and appreciate this excellent example of a long since dead brand of low-key '70s horror.

This is the sort of film I only wish I saw as a child, when memories form so fantastically that they grow into lifelong myths, like the attic of a grandmother's house. While I've argued to a dear friend of mine, whose horror film knowledge is near encyclopedic, that 'atmospheric' is an over-used cinematic adjective, the atmosphere in *LSJTD* is palpable – technically simply but rich with emotional weight.

Here we have the story of Jessica (Lampert), a young woman of questionable sanity who's just been released from a New York sanitarium. Along with her husband, Duncan (Heyman), and their friend Woody (O'Conner), the trio moves to a newly

purchased Connecticut farmhouse so remote it's accessible only by ferry, to till the earth and start anew.

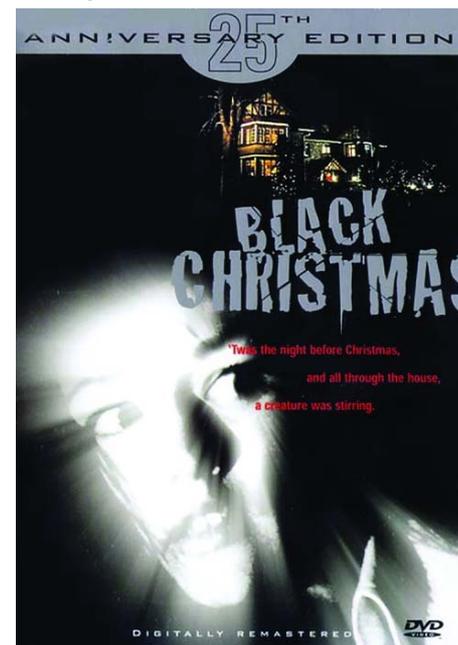
Jessica stops along the journey to indulge her morbid fascination with grave-rubbings and thinks she sees a young girl. But she disappears, and Jessica keeps this to herself for fear of seeming uncured. The citizens of their new hometown, all aging men bearing mysterious bandages, give them a cold reception.

The seeing-and-hearing-things continues for Jessica, but still she says nothing, and when a redheaded squatter named Emily (Costello) turns up in their house, the trio becomes a happy-hippy foursome. But the story of the house, the new girl and the town goes much deeper, and terrifyingly so, forcing Jessica to question her sanity, and later, defend her life. Or was it all in her head?

Lampert's convincingly fragile performance; Hancock's well-crafted visual space – indeed, a surreal New England haze hangs over the entire film – complemented by a foreboding soundtrack; and edge-of-your-seat tension collude beautifully. This film will stay in your head for a long, long time.

Black Christmas

(*Stranger in the House*, U.S.)



Canada, 1974
 Directed by Bob Clark
 Starring: Olivia Hussey, Margot Kidder, Keir Dullea, Andrea Martin
 DVD: Eclectic DVD (25th Anniv. Edition)
 98 minutes

Continued on page 46

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Halloween Horrors

Continued from page 45



There are a lot of win-win factors presiding over this film: Bob Clark had just directed *Deathdream* and *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things*, both of which later achieved minor cult status; Olivia Hussey and Margot Kidder were at the top of their fame, while Keir Dullea would later be known for his role in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*; and as a horror film, *Black Christmas* introduced some ideas that would later become horror conventions.

Years before *Halloween* hit the screens, this film placed holiday reverie at the mercy of a psycho killer. We open with a party at Pi Kappa Sig, where the sorority sisters are winding down for winter break away from their sleepy college town of Bedford. Barb (Kidder), the resident lush, asks Jess Bradford (Hussey) and Phyl (Martin) to stay at the house with her for a few days into the vacation.

But a deranged, perverted crank call (which doesn't seem to be the first) from "Billy" turns threatening and unnerves some of the girls. When a timid sister named Clare storms off to bed after Barb drunkenly dismisses her fears, she's of course brutally murdered.

All killer scenes, however, are shot through a wide-angle, first person lens, and only once do we see his

eyeball, leering through a crack. At the time, this villain was altogether new – vicious, mysterious, a terrifying psychopath with no discernable motive except to brutalize everyone in the house.

An abortion subplot involving Jess and her unstable, controlling boyfriend, Peter (Dullea), mirrors the shifting gender and social values of the early '70s while raising frightening questions about who this killer might be. In fact, the entire dynamic between the sorority sisters and their housemother is very natural and convincing.

Loving direction by Clark, excellent performances, spooky music and an adroitly constructed atmosphere make this film as pleasing to watch as it is scary. For those who want a good old-fashioned horror flick, this is the most consistent nail-biter of the bunch.

Further Recommendations

Martin



(1978)
Dir. by George Romero



Martin, a reluctant "vampire" who may just be going through the motions in response to a supposed family curse, is sent to live with his cousin in suburban Pittsburgh.

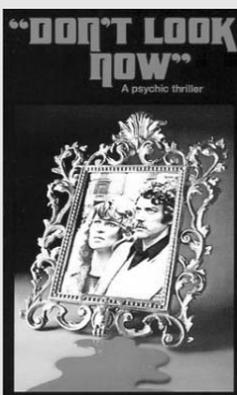
John Amplis is mesmerizing as the melancholy teen bloodsucker, and Romero crafts a story of great wit and tension. Highly recommended.

Don't Look Now

(1974)
Directed by Nicolas Roeg



Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland star as a young, cultured couple dealing with the tragic drowning of their young daughter. They use his gig overseeing a church restoration in Venice to escape from the madness, but find more than they bargained for in this surreal mystery. Highlights: The most beautiful and convincing love scene you'll ever watch; the flat-out weirdest ending you'll ever watch.



House on the Edge of the Park

(1980)
Dir. by Ruggero Deodato



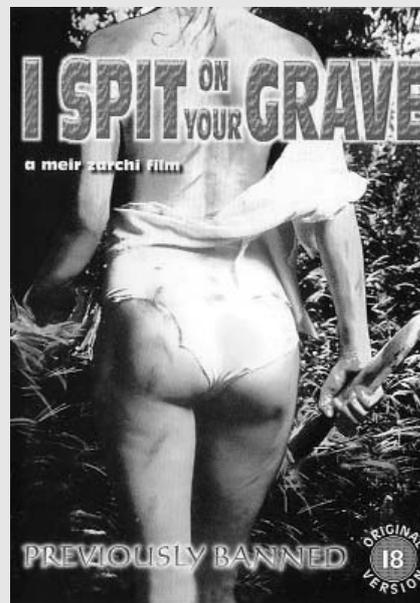
Alex and Ricky (David Hess from *Last House on the Left* and John Morghen from *Cannibal Ferox*) crash an upscale party for a bit of savage rape and



murder: This is disturbing Italian horror *par excellence*, long banned in the UK and a brand of chilling sleaze you're unlikely to see at the local multiplex. The strong-stomached may want to try the Shreik Show uncut version.

I Spit on Your Grave

(Day of the Woman)



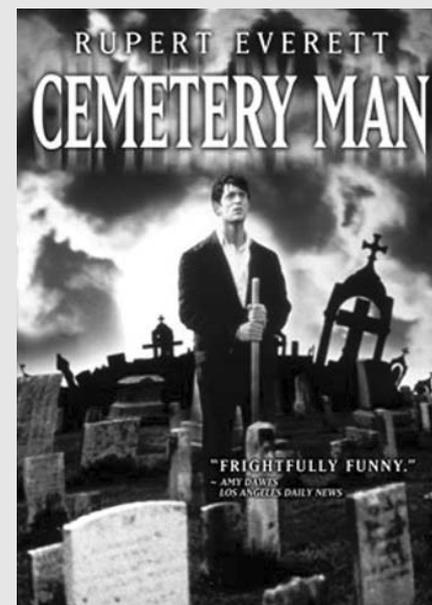
(1978)
Dir. by Meir Zarchi



More sleaze, but this time the rape victim turns vigilante and goes on a murder/castration spree brutal enough to garner an X-rating upon its theatrical release. One of the most gruesome of exploitation films, Camille Keaton (Buster's granddaughter!) won a Spanish film award for portraying the rabid heroine. Widely banned, which should be reason enough to check it out.

Cemetery Man

(Dellamorte Dellamore)



(1994)
Dir. Michele Soavi



Soavi, a disciple of Italian horror godfather Dario Argento, crafts a surreal fairytale about a cemetery caretaker who might be going mad. Rupert Everett (yes, you read that right) is superb as a tortured zombie-killer, his predicament both humorous and nightmarish. If this strange journey doesn't entice you, seeing one of the sexiest women ever to grace celluloid might. And the ending is a real trip.

There's No Excuse for Unsheltered Stops

Give Us Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Unbearably Hot

By Priscilla Arias
BBT Columnist

As I drove down Biscayne Boulevard one weekday afternoon, I took notice of my old bus stops – the ones I most frequented before I bought a car. I saw that the bus shelter recently installed on Biscayne Boulevard at N.E. 107th Street is a big hit; people huddle under it when it rains, and enjoy shade from it when the sun's out. It's also much cleaner now that they installed a trash can. I wonder which other stops have been sheltered since my bus-riding days?

As I continued down the Boulevard, I passed bus stop by bus stop with no shelter of which to speak. I saw people in mid-afternoon standing under a cloudless sky, protecting their faces from the 90-degree sun using magazines, book bags, umbrellas or simply their hands. One woman with a toddler waited impatiently in the scorching sun as she used her purse to shade the little boy.

Of the few shelters I saw, most were embarrassingly rundown, with broken or missing side and back panels and even one (or at least only one that I saw) without a bench! The woman waiting under this benchless bus shelter was sitting in her daughter's stroller with her daughter on her lap.

Much to my dismay, this little trip down memory lane (a.k.a. the Boulevard) started to irritate me, because I knew exactly how they felt. It was not too long ago that I, too, weathered the heat and the rain waiting for my bus. I remember the times I was punished by inconsiderate bus drivers for waiting under some shade just a few feet away from the stop. They'd pretend they didn't see me and just drive on by. One time in particular, the bus sped off when I was less than two feet away from the door, and in spite of me tapping its side.

Needless to say, I was left wondering why nothing has been done about the missing and broken-down bus shelters. Why were some very nice ones being erected while others at the very next block seemed forgotten?

The BBT has covered this issue since as early as 2003, and little has been done since then. We did learn, however, that advertising plays a big role in



Above: A woman is forced to wield an umbrella at an uncovered bus stop in Miami Shores.

Below: Outside Publix on N.E. 6th Avenue: Nothing complements armfuls of groceries like a burning rump.



whether or not a bus stop gets sheltered. Advertising helps the city, county or incorporated municipality pay for the installation and maintenance of the shelter. Prospective bus shelter advertisers, nonetheless, are more likely to advertise in trendier or higher-class and higher-traffic areas of the city than say the corner of N.E. 2nd Avenue and 64th Street, who's uncovered stop features a broken bench. Areas such as this one are last in line, and are usually the ones who should get the most attention.

Not only does location play a role on the overall attention paid to bus stops, but each municipality's government has the final word on whether or not to furnish, shelter or open them to advertis-

ers. This may be another reason why some areas have nicer and better-kept

bus shelters than others. However, the majority of poorly maintained stops that I saw were within the City of Miami. Why is the city being so neglectful?

Apparently, the BBT isn't the only one who wants something done about the unsheltered benches. Frank Rollason, a City Commission candidate from District 2, and Steve Hagen, from the watchdog group Citizens Against Everything Bad, have been pushing for this for over four years.

In an email to the BBT and Rollason, Hagen offered the following as a remedy for the current bus shelter situation: "There should be a bus shelter at every bus stop where space allows. A trash-can should be provided at those stops with heavy use. There should be a [phone] number on each shelter for people to call if the bus shelter is not maintained. A bus bench should be provided at all other stops and bus benches should not have advertising. Why not be creative in Miami and perhaps install heavy duty umbrellas where a shelter won't fit, allowing the provider to advertise their name only on the edge of the umbrellas as we see in cafes? They could be anchored to prevent theft."

I would also suggest looking into street furniture companies that specialize in space-saving. If some benches must remain unsheltered due to absolute lack of space, then those benches should be made of a heat-resistant material so that people can actually sit on them without getting scorched.

The solutions seem clear-cut and simple enough. Let's just hope the City of Miami is reading.



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Lessons from Ernesto

Small as He Was, Our Response Was Important

Last month's brush with Ernesto allowed us to think about our response – a trial run for the bigger things to come. And one thing we can all agree on is there *are* more devastating storms in our future.

We cannot all agree on the appropriateness of our response to Ernesto. But in hindsight, which is always 20/20, it seems we overreacted. The wind barely blew, and we get more rain on a typical Thursday afternoon in August than we did on August 29, 2006. Yet storm warnings, hurricane watches and tornado watches were issued, gas lines formed, and water bottles and loaves of bread flew off store shelves. Businesses were closed and houses boarded up, schoolchildren were dismissed from classes for two days and shelters were opened.

Ernesto's silver lining is that we are now able to leisurely examine the response without recriminating the perceived overreaction. Many folks, especially forecasters at the National Hurricane Center (NHC), were humbled by the sudden deflation of the weather system that impacted South Florida. If the stars had aligned in a different fashion, we might now be dealing with a disastrous aftermath of major proportions.

That being said, let's grade our Ernesto Prep Skills. We all went through it just a few weeks ago, so sit back and take mental stock of how you and your condominium responded.

Most important was your individual response for you and your family. Did you have enough basic supplies on hand so you could avoid the long, last-minute lines at stores of first resource like Publix and Home Depot? We must never forget we are in the six-month annual window that is hurricane season. There is no good excuse not to stock up and be prepared. A little at a time over the course of the season makes it easy. Start with the water and work your way down. By the end of six months, adding one or two items from your list (lists are available everywhere from your corner grocery store to any news organization

site on the internet) to your cart during each trip to the store will have you totally prepared. If the season goes by



CONDO COUNSEL
By Gabrielle Redfern

uneventful, in December begin eating the foods and store the hard goods in your plastic hurricane bin. You get a head start next year as a bonus!

Your condominium should have on hand a few supplies for the good of the community. A supply of water, toilet paper, flashlights and bug spray goes a long way when you need it the most. A grill with charcoal and lighter fluid, a lighter and a can opener will help residents communally

cook the food salvaged from freezers without electricity.

A single cooler stocked with ice can save residents' lives by having a place to store medicines and other vital supplies that require refrigeration. At the building I manage, we laid out stocks of these types in our lobby. Also this

year, my building hung a flashlight in every stairway landing of our tower. We bought them during "Hurricane Tax-Free Week" at the start of the season, on sale, with batteries.

If you reside in a full-service building, each staff member who battens-in should be provisioned with a cot, blanket and pillow. Two flashlights, an emergency radio, charged cell phone and three days of food and water should be available to them as well. You should be prepared to compensate staff 2.5 times the hourly rate over 8 hours a day they stay on-duty. Does your association

budget for emergency-related overtime?

Did management keep you informed of the progress of the storm, and what they were going to do? I know we called each homeowner in residence several times to keep them informed of the building's preparation progress and plans, and to offer assistance. We cleared off each balcony and closed each shutter to which we had access. That may be the stuff of the individual, but the very legal title of a condominium, cooperative or deed-restricted community governed by a mandatory membership homeowners association is common interest. The wind does not know that Joe's wrought iron patio table should fly only through Joe's window, not his neighbor's.

Did you back up your computer and records? Did you store your important papers in water-tight containers, and did

management do the same with the individual records of each owner?

Although technology exists to scan in all such documents and store them in a computer database easily downloaded onto one-inch removable hard-drives, this does not mean all asso-

ciations have had the time or technical resources to do such archiving. Perhaps future budgets should include time and attention to getting this task done.

You may have been angered by your level of response, that you wasted time in gas lines, at the grocery store or shuttering your house. You may be kicking yourself for overreacting, or be disappointed that your association did too much. But in these times, and with what recent history has shown, it is better to be prepared for the worst and hope for the best, which is what I hope you can say about your response!

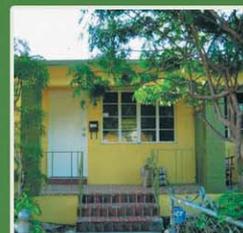
Ernesto's silver lining is that we are now able to leisurely examine the response without recriminating the perceived overreaction.



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Best Buy's Geek Squad – An Inside Look

You've seen the hokey yet oddly appropriate ads, with the snazzy twin-tone VW Geek-Mobiles and faux *Men in Black* outfits. You've probably seen their in-store departments at Best Buy. Perhaps you've even had them over your house. But just how does a huge electronics retailer go about transforming 11,000 highly trained computer specialists into the Geek Squad – perhaps the most formidable (and recognizable) consumer PC consulting force in the country?

The answer likely has as much to do with the daily confusion and frustration encountered by millions of computer users as it does with the cleverness of the concept itself. Founded by Chicagoan Robert Stephens in 1994 with just \$200, the Geek Squad hit the big leagues in 2002 when they joined up with Best Buy as the retailer's consumer PC-service arm. Geek Squad now operates nearly 800 locations in North America, and this number includes both their own stores and individual precinct outlets inside all those Best Buy showrooms. As their advertisements and name recognition will attest, the Geek Squad has come a long way since.

It's been exactly 25 years since IBM officially inaugurated the PC revolution. Yet computers remain notoriously difficult to use, rife with security vulnerabilities and other confusing problems incomprehensible to the vast majority of lay consumers. This is as much the fault of the major software and operating system vendors (Bill Gates, phone your office) as the expanding list of internet and entertainment tasks with which we continue to burden these little machines of ours. But who to call? The individual hardware/software purveyors and their overseas support centers are of little help when the issue is system-wide, such as a spyware or virus infestation. And does anybody out there (within a reasonable price range) really have the expertise to help install that wireless home network you've always dreamed of?

Interestingly enough, no one company had ever made a serious effort to tackle the home PC support market; such was considered the 'no-fly zone' of customer service, given its prohibitive resource costs and the headaches entailed in remote computer support. And heaven knows there was (and continues to be) a ton of potential business! Yet only now has somebody figured out how to efficiently provide this nationwide PC service, and to do so in a manner which not only solves people's computer problems

but also fosters an enviable level of brand loyalty. Geek Squad unites respectable know-how with one of the most trusted names in home electronics, and this has turned out to be an impressive combination.

How it Works

The service is based on three tiers of assistance: 1) in-store help; 2) 24/7 phone support, and 3) the famed House Call, long presumed to be a forgotten art form. As one might imagine, recruitment and training are of paramount importance. Geek Squad prospects are pretty much who you'd assume them to be – technically savvy self-starters with a history of customer service, who also love technology. A good number already work for Best Buy in some capacity as well, often as audio-visual technicians. Top GS agents are not made overnight; most begin as in-store Counter Intelligence Agents (CIA), servicing Best Buy's walk-in support clients. This requires an "A+ Certification" in hardware and software, and inculcates the basics of fixing the infinite variety of potential PC issues.

From there the CIA graduates to the level of Cadet, who with suitable training is permitted to go on service calls to customer's houses if necessary (known as a 'follow-home'). These employees are limited to lower-level services such as computer setup or wireless network installations. Above that comes a Double Agent, who drives his own VW Bug and works with the entire district's 800-number and in-store support calls for any type of problem. And beyond Double Agents sit the rarified Special Agents and Certified Special Agents, further licensed and accredited to work on business and corporate accounts. All the while every GS Agent learns the ins-and-outs of PC support, from stamping out viruses and spyware to installing corporate servers and virtual networks.

So what does a Geek Squad visit entail? Assuming you don't feel like lugging your laptop or desktop into a Best Buy for onsite support, your first step is to call 1-800-Geek-Squad or log on to www.geeksquad.com. Flat pricing for a wide range of services is available (never an hourly charge), depending on whether a customer is helped over the phone,

brings the machine to a store or requests an in-house visit. The Agent follows a preset troubleshooting script and keeps detailed logs of everything he does for the

customer, whether PC-related or not. These records can lean a little toward the arcane, but are quite useful for tracking problems and establishing aggregate patterns for learning purposes (i.e., a Knowledge Base). Meanwhile the Agent gets the customer's okay on the agreed pricing, and then sets to work diagnosing and fixing the trouble. There is a 90-day service guarantee for Geek Squad Precincts

and stores, while onsite support is guaranteed for 30 days and remote services for five.

This customer-centric business model has also precipitated an interesting side phenomenon. When the Geek Squad likes a product – be it for home networking, PC diagnostics or spyware prevention – it

gets pushed, and sold. Having 11,000 agents recommend something can't help but positively impact sales, right? Well, although Best Buy and the GS officially deny playing favorites, sales numbers for certain software packages have indeed benefited from their imprimatur. And why not? These are the guys in the trenches, serving nearly three million customers since 2004, and their opinion counts. Among their favorites, according to *Internet News*: Trend Micro's PC-cillin antivirus software, and Webroot's anti-spyware. But you didn't hear it here.

It goes without saying that if you like doing a job nobody else wants, business will usually follow. Hard to believe, but even with a hundred million frustrated PC users out there clamoring for support, nobody had ever made a serious attempt to serve them. Now that the Geek Squad is a household name, the rest of us are left to wonder:

Why didn't I think of that?

Thanks to Viviana Weiwall, Cristian Luzbet, Elizabeth Brown, Juan Rojas and the Geek Squad website for contributing to this article.



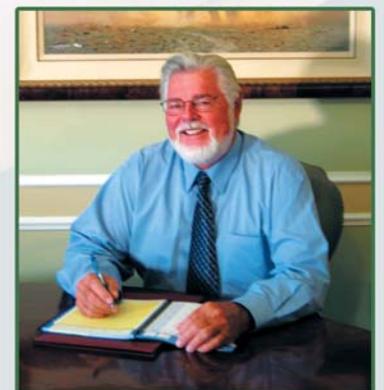
Tech Talk

By Marc Stephens

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Say No to Palm Trees



In Search of a Flower, by Arango; \$14,000

The Art of Living, a visual art experience, opened to the public on September 30 in the indoor-outdoor space adjacent to UVA69, the trendy restaurant at 6900 Biscayne Blvd. The interactive art exhibit features work from artists of various backgrounds – experimental and conceptual innovators – surrounded by a unique collection of Asian furniture.

“Fine dining and fine art at one spot is the whole concept behind this,” said Sinuhe Vega, the owner of UVA, whose paintings will be displayed at the event. “Our goal is to offer exceptional art and furniture at the prices that the neighborhood can absorb.”

The furniture on hand is priced from \$250 to \$6,000, while paintings and sculptures start at \$7,000. The collection will present works by Brazilian, Italian, Cuban and American painters and sculptors.

“We want to bring art to the people, and show them what it’s like to live surrounded by art,” said Jesus Manuel Rojas, of Leiter Gallery. “Our Sculpture Garden is an example of an alternative option to an expensive landscaping. You can buy a sculpture for \$7,000 and have an extraordinary art piece, or spend \$20,000 for ordinary trees and shrubbery.”

Art of Living is presented by Leiter Gallery and produced by The Art Team Corporation. For more information send an e-mail to leitergallery@aol.com.

— By Ivana J. Robinson, BBT Contributing Writer

Decorating Sense: Magy Interiors

When Magaly Ramirez, owner of Magy Interiors at 217 N.W. 36th St., moved from her native Dominican Republic to United States, she had a husband, a child, a B.S. in architecture and no idea what the future held. She followed the trail of many Dominican immigrants, who during the deep economic crisis of 1980s pursued a better life across the ocean.

“Those were very difficult years for everybody, especially for professionals like my husband and I,” said Ramirez.

Falling world sugar prices slid the Dominican Republic into an economic depression, while high inflation, coupled with problems in the delivery of water and electricity, resulted in violent protests, including a paralyzing nationwide strike in June 1989.

That same year Ramirez moved to United States, learned new language and embarked on a new career path. Since foreign architects encounter various difficulties in satisfying licensing requirements in the U.S., Ramirez attended the University of Miami, and in 1992 obtained her B.A. in interior decorating, with a focus on window treatments.

“When I first came, I started as a drafter for an engineering company,” said Ramirez. “Then, I worked in the window treatment department of the Portfolio Collections until 1993, when I started my own business, Magy Interiors.”

Ramirez’s approach to decorating is eclectic, a combination of traditional and contemporary elements. She juxtaposes time periods, styles, ethnicities, materials and artistic traditions, creating very personality-driven spaces. However, when working with clients, her “only preference is customer’s taste.”

Magy Interiors initially opened on N.E. 39th Street in the Design District, and after a brief stint in a studio above UVA 69, it’s back inside a more



than 2,000-square-foot showroom at 217 N.E. 36th St., which will open by mid-October.

Besides location, Magy Interiors has changed its face many times throughout its 13-year history. In the beginning the focus was on fabrics, draperies and blinds. As the business grew, so did the scope of Ramirez’s work, which now includes everything from designing floors to kitchens to accessories, and of course Ramirez’s specialty window-covers.

“We offer an array of window treatments, from brand name manufactures like Hunter Douglas, Graber, Pfieffer and many more,” she said. “At the same time, the personalized service our clients receive guarantees the best results.” For more information call 305-756-1222 or visit www.magyinteriorsonline.com.

— By Ivana J. Robinson, BBT Contributing Writer

ASPIRA of Florida Moves to Inter Design Building

ASPIRA of Florida has moved its administrative offices to the third floor of the Miami Inter Design-I (MID-I) building, at 4100 N.E. 2nd Ave. in the Design District. The move coincides with ASPIRA’s 25th anniversary in Miami-Dade County.

ASPIRA also has a national presence, with offices in Washington, D.C., and affiliates in eight states and Puerto Rico, with Delaware being the most recent addition.

ASPIRA encourages school-age children to stay in school and continue on to college. In South

Florida, ASPIRA enrolls nearly 1,600 elementary, middle and high school students in after-school clubs where they conduct community service projects, practice leadership skills, receive homework help, visit local college fairs and learn how to apply. The agency also serves 900-plus middle school students in its three leadership charter schools.

“We do not seek out and address deficits in our young people,” explained CEO Raul Martinez. “Rather, we identify what is positive within them and build on this. In fact, our students demonstrate

the success of this approach with a dropout rate lower than national and state averages.”

He boasts that nine out of ten graduating seniors in ASPIRA programs continue their education beyond high school. Of course, parents must receive some of the credit and ASPIRA mobilizes them to support their children. The agency provides adult literacy and skills classes, as well as teaching parents how to help their children in school.

More Business Briefs
on page 52

A Recipe for Success: Watermelon Ceviche

By Chef Jeremiah

The BBT welcomes back Chef Jeremiah as the resident chef. Visit him at his café/bistro, Bullfrog Eat, located at 2344 N.E. 2nd Ave.

This one's specifically for our new neighbors in Biscayne Park.

Watermelon ceviche goes well with seafood, as it's crisp and light and refreshing – the ultimate summer treat.

Watermelon comes in all sorts of colors, sizes and shapes, and with the advent of hybrids it's quite possible to obtain

melons with no seeds. This here dish revolves around the original ruby-red fruit. Natural sweetness balances out the harshness of atypical ceviches – a

match made in heaven.

If for some odd reason you've slept through the early portion of this Millennium, let's talk about a technique

of long ago, now new again: *Seviche*, as we like to spell it, is derived from somewhere in South America, most likely in Peru or Ecuador, where turf battles take place over who makes what better. At any rate, you can search the internet for food history; what we really want to talk about is preparation.

The short of it is this: Acid reacts with protein in such a way as to cure it.

Add salt to aid this process, and if pulled off correctly, watch the magic before your very eyes. You don't have to be even remotely skilled in the culi-

nary department. A sharp knife helps, or someone who can cut things really small and pretty.

Fish will be our base. Not to be biased, but a white-fleshed fillet will work best in this application. But if you're picky, do it with what you will. Freshness is *muy importante* – odor-free, firm, with a nice sheen.

Let's get to work.

Cut all ingredients the same size, the purpose of which is twofold: Everything will 'cook' evenly, and your friends will be impressed by this stylish composition. What do we put in our ceviche?

Old school style: Straight forward 'leche de tigre' base of lime juice, chili, cilantro, salt and a touch of sugar. Squeeze your yellowish limes first, and then put them aside. Apply this to your fish and hit it with salt and citrus, then put to the side and it'll work on its own. But remember to keep an eye on it (like a younger sibling who's had too much Pepsi).

Now for the goodness: Texture and flavor will derive from the garnish. This quasi-salad requires the practice

and knife skills of an Iron Chef. If you're no Morimoto, don't despair – just consult your local chef. Slicing and dicing comes with practice or one of those robo-chop gizmos on late-night TV.

Onions and garlic are the basis of flavor, so they should be in everything (except maybe *crème brulee*). Spicy heat from a green chili (jalapeno or Serrano) offsets the sweetness of watermelon. Make your watermelon rind into a bowl by scooping out the flesh, and remember to save all that juice.

At this point, check up on your caffeineated younger sibling – the marinated fish, too. It should start to turn opaque, which Roget claims "not able to pass light through." If it looks white, taste a piece. Good? Is it seasoned?

Now you just need to put it all together. Toss the cured fish with the watermelon and reserved juice. Add judicious amounts of finely chopped cilantro, jalapeno, onion, and garlic. Mix thoroughly. Finish with some of the marinating juices, 'leche de tigre'. Season.

Bon appetite!



Fresh tilapia is a good choice for ceviche.

All Points Bulletin: Columnist Missing

Dearest Readers: The conclusion to last month's special west-coast food special "California Dreaming" will not run because our venerable columnist J.P Chops has gone missing in action. A worried state of shock has come over us all. His last confirmed sighting was in Las Vegas, smoking a cigarette after breakfast at the Venetian Hotel, but the trail was lost shortly thereafter. The tapes we recovered from his suite were incoherent and suggested a vicious struggle had taken place.

Rumor has since placed him hauling illegals in the cab of an armored bread truck between Tijuana and the San Diego's finer suburbs; operating cut-rate shark-hunting tours from a 30-foot schooner called *Mary Jane Blige* off the Encinitas coast; and camping out with heavily armed cult members in a military dumpsite 100 miles east of Carlsbad, yet these remain speculative. All correspondence has ceased on his part. If anyone knows the whereabouts of J.P. Chops, or has heard of his locale, please contact us.

Thank you,
The Management



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Traditional ~ 10:55 am

Wednesday

Fellowship Dinner ~ 5:45 pm
Prayer & Praise ~ 6:45 pm

Saturday

Contemporary Service ~ 7:00 pm

Miami Film Institute

Continued from page 12

performances and a competent soundtrack of original hip hop.

Being such a small nonprofit, the FFI depends heavily on a staff of independent contractors who first believe in the merit of the endeavor, and who also want to give back to the young community. Most of the instructors, like Francaesca Seiden of Wynwood-based 3GZ Productions, Alyn Darnay of Chaos Films and Tavares Beverly of Beverly Boy Productions, are veterans of South Florida's vibrant film industry. Some, like Seiden, are even Miami-educated. Her all-girl production company recently finished and screened *Darkbeat*, an acclaimed documentary on electronic music.

"There's a very strong industry here and we're growing all the time," said Martino-Rizzi. "There are three film commissioners' offices – Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami and Miami Beach – and they work very closely together... sharing ideas and getting people moving."

She, for one, wants to see Miami's

reputation in the industry grow beyond just a pretty backdrop for shows like *CSI: Miami* and *Nip/Tuck*, and films like *Miami Vice*: "Florida needs to provide more incentives to bring in more film... tax breaks, hurricane insurance issues, etc."

Impacting future film industry players at a young age is a good tactic, and there have been many success stories. Aaron Davidson cut his teeth at the FFI's Children's Museum workshops (see box on page 12), and is now a rising star on the festival circuit: "He's really going to be a filmmaker."

There are others, too: Last year, two brothers – whose ADD prompted Martino-Rizzi to offer the kind description "challenging" – produced work through the FFI that led to an acceptance at the Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH) in the Design District. Filmmaking is also a chance for perhaps less visible students to display talents their peers never knew they had, or to encourage interaction between kids who might normally not bother with one another.

After all, everyone's name is the same size when the credits roll.

Business Briefs

Continued from page 50

The Lock-man Cometh

After years of training and experience as a locksmith technician, Diego Castro opened AAA Miami Locksmith in April 2004. A tenacious Columbian immigrant, he chose Wynwood because of its great potential, and was soon pleasantly surprised by the area's rapid growth.

Castro opened his business with exactly zero clients, but Miami Locksmith soon made a reputation for itself, and now services more than 50 exclusive clients in addition to regular walk-in customers. Castro attributes his increase in business to a policy of always giving each client his 100 percent best service.

Products offered by AAA Miami Locksmith range from regular locks, knobs, levers, deadbolts and hinges, to panic-bars, lockers, padlocks, door-viewers and access controls, to name a few. They offer full installation and maintenance of all their products, as well as repair services, door and auto unlocking services, and re-keying for doors and auto, for commercial as well as residential customers.

Visit AAA Miami Locksmith at 3531 N.E. 2nd Ave. For more information call 305-576-9320 or visit www.aaaml.com.

New Lifestyle Store Looks Promising

The newest of a growing trend of lifestyle stores in the Upper Eastside has opened at 730 N.E. 79th St. Rara Avis sells women's and men's clothing and accessories, home-wares, beachwear, lingerie and professional styling services for private events.

The unique name is from the Latin, meaning, "A phenomenon; a prodigy; something quite out of the common course." October 7 would be a good time to drop by the shop and see for yourself if this is the case. They'll be having a jewelry show featuring a pair of new designers. For more information call 305-751-1855.

Big Promotion for Rising Cultural Leader

Miami Light Project (MLP) is proud to announce the promotion of Rebekah Lanae Lengel from Programs Manger to Director of Marketing & Communications. Lengel joined Miami Light Project in summer 2002, and under this new position, she'll be responsible for corporate philanthropic procurement, media purchase and placement as well as organizational marketing and branding.

In addition to her work with MLP, Lengel also volunteers her time as a member of the Board of Directors for Youth Expressions Inc. and Crystal Parrot Players, as a member of the Miami Emerging Arts Leaders Task Force and as a panelist for Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Departments Community Grant Program. In May 2006, Lengel was awarded the Arts & Business Council of Miami's inaugural "Emerging Arts Leader Award." She was recognized in March 2005 as a one of the top "Women in South Florida's Urban Community" by Urban America Newspaper and was selected by the Association of Performing Arts Presenters as one of 18 individuals across the country to participate in the 2005 Emerging Leaders Institute; she remains active with the organization as an ELI alumna and panelist.

For information about MLP visit www.miamilightproject.com.

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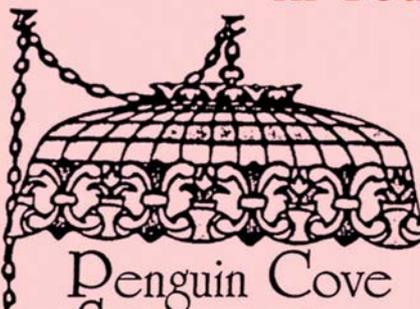


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Let Uncle Sam Help You Create a Nest Egg

By Gilda Iriarte
BBT Columnist

One advantage of owning a home is being able to deduct mortgage interest and real estate taxes from your federal income tax obligations each year.

You can protect even more of your hard-earned salary by buying real estate as an investment. Owning rental real estate has some significant tax advantages that put more money in your pocket. In fact, Uncle Sam's tax benefits are a major reason so many fortunes have been made in real estate. The second main factor is that financing real estate investments with mortgages creates leverage and increases the upside potential.

Now that we've entered a buyer's market, it's a good time to consider buying income property. After all, the days of flipping property and making big bucks in a short amount of time are over. Buying and holding property for a long period of time can provide you with a good source of income for retirement.

If you have the patience and determination that it takes to become a landlord, you can create a nest egg for the future. While

your properties appreciate, you can take advantage of the generous tax breaks available to those who buy and rent out properties. IRS rules tend to be complicated, so I suggest you seek the advice of a professional tax advisor from the outset.

What is Tax Deductible?

All the expenses associated with investment real estate are tax-deductible. This means you get to deduct management fees, taxes, insurance, repairs, homeowner's dues, utilities, legal and accounting fees, and any other expenses incurred from owning and renting property from whatever income you receive from the property. You also get to deduct a portion of the cost of the property each year in the form of depreciation.

Depreciation Deduction

You can deduct the cost of residential property, such as houses, condominiums and apartment buildings, over 27.5 years. This is done by dividing the cost of the building by 27.5 and the resulting number, known as depreciation, may be deducted from your income each year as long as you

own the property, up to 27.5 years. Commercial buildings are depreciable over 39 years. The process is the same as with residential buildings, but the time is longer.

Passive Loss Rules

If after taking all the deductions your income from the property is zero, or you show a loss, you will pay no ordinary income tax on your rental income. If you have a loss – and most do during the early years, especially when depreciation is figured – you can deduct up to \$25,000 in passive losses as long as:

- Your adjusted gross income (AGI) before the real estate losses is less than \$100,000;
- You “actively participate” in the rental activity. Active participation means owning 10 percent or more of the property and making management decisions such as approving tenants, signing leases and authorizing repairs;
- If your adjusted gross income is between \$100,000 and \$150,000, the exception is phased out pro-rata. That means that with an AGI of \$125,000 you can deduct up to \$12,500 in passive real estate losses. With an AGI over \$150,000,

you cannot deduct a rental real estate loss but you're allowed to carry the loss to future years. You will eventually be able to deduct your carryover losses when you either sell the property or generate some passive income.

What Happens When You Sell?

If you've owned the property for more than a year, your profit – the difference between sales proceeds and basis (cost plus capital improvements) – is generally considered a long-term capital gain. That means you pay only 15 percent tax on your profit. The amount of depreciation you deducted is subject to your regular income tax rate.

An advantage of holding long-term is that you can defer income taxes on the property's appreciation until you sell. In the meantime, you can refinance the property and take out part of the equity in cash.

When you sell, you can spread your taxable gain over several years by taking back a mortgage for part of the sale price.

You can also defer income taxes indefi-

Continued on page 55

LOST

MY REASON TO PURR.



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Childhood Obesity: A Growing Concern

By Kara Burnstine, MSRD, LD/N
Miami Beach Community Health Center

Let's face it – our lives are busy. We have instant oatmeal and instant messaging. We have our kids running computers, but not running or playing outside. We have fast food restaurants on every street corner, and finding information is as easy as a click of a button (no more walking to libraries). Although it seems as if our minds are in constant motion, our bodies are not. Our kids may be getting smarter, but unfortunately their bellies are getting larger.

The Prevalence of Obesity

According to Institute of Medicine (IOM), since the 1970s the prevalence of obesity has more than doubled for preschool age children aged 2 to 5 and adolescents aged 12 to 19, and has more than tripled for children aged 6 to 11. Currently, approximately nine million children in the U.S. over six years of age are considered obese. According to a recent USA Today article, about 20 percent of children in the U.S. will be obese by 2010 if measures are not taken to slow this epidemic. In the article, the term 'obesity' is used to refer to children aged 2 to 18 who have body mass indexes (BMIs) equal to or greater than the 95th percentile, developed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

What are the Causes?

The rise in childhood obesity cannot be blamed on any one cause, but a combination of environmental, genetic, biological and social factors. Many families no longer sit and eat home-cooked meals. It's easier, faster and cheaper to pick up fast food for the kids because maybe mom and/or dad work late and



Encourage family mealtime at least once a day

don't have time or energy to cook. How about homework? Children oftentimes are so bombarded with homework they can't find time for recreational sports after school. What about computers? Yes, they are such a timesaver, but computer and video games are replacing basketball and freeze tag.

When it comes to family, genes can play a large role in obesity. If one parent is obese, a child is three times more likely to become obese. If both parents are obese, the risk is tenfold. Childhood obesity transforming into adult obesity increases from about 20 percent at age four to 80 percent by adolescence. Adolescence may also play a role in obesity. Elevated hormone levels during this period can cause a sudden weight increase.

Understanding the Consequences

Just like anything in life, there are always consequences to our actions. For a child, being overweight or obese has many costs, and not just financial. Physical health risks include diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, high cholesterol, menstrual abnormalities and orthopedic problems. Emotional problems may include low self-esteem, negative body image and depression. Social health consequences include stigma or stereotyping, discrimination and teasing.

Now that we know the prevalence, the causes and the consequences of childhood obesity, let's discuss some strategies to fight this serious nationwide health problem.

Some Strategic Planning

Encourage family mealtime at least once a day; serving healthy foods and eating together enables parents to become positive role models. It also can establish regular mealtime schedules;

Keep healthy snacks on hand; yogurt and cheese sticks, cut-up fruit, hard-boiled eggs, baked chips, peanut butter sandwiches on whole wheat bread, baby carrots and ranch dressing are all quick and easy for kids to grab or prepare by themselves;

Get your children involved with food preparation; cook with them, take them food shopping, teach them how to

measure out the ingredients or even help chop or cut food if they are old enough. This oftentimes assists with children trying new foods;

Encourage children to eat slowly and at regular times. Snacking while watching TV may be a recipe for disaster. Food should be kept in the kitchen and snacks **should not** be given within an hour of mealtime;

Plan menus in advance; meals tend to be healthier when planned ahead of time;

Try to make eating fun. Cut chicken into dinosaur shapes with cookie-cutters, make fun shapes with carrots and cucumbers. Be creative with food;

When getting fast food, try to order grilled chicken rather than fried, order small fries instead of large, encourage children to try the salad or baked potato offered, drink low-fat milk instead of soda;

Don't overly restrict food; this can backfire and cause children to rebel and overeat;

Get your children moving! Jump rope while watching TV; go on family bike rides; take the dog for a long walk; help with chores like ironing or vacuuming; try rollerblading; try a hip-hop video at home; play hopscotch or dodge ball with friends. The goal here is to try new things until they find something that works.

Remember, any positive change is good. Don't expect miracles overnight and keep goals realistic and achievable. Try to accomplish one goal at a time before introducing new ones. Healthy eating and physical activity are keys to successful weight loss/maintenance in children and adults. These are habits that are formed over time and with much effort, but once you can make lifestyle changes part of your daily routine, you are on your way reaching your wellness goals.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

- American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org
- Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov
- Institute of Medicine
www.iom.edu
- Kids Health
www.kidshealth.org

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Seven Quick Tips to Get Lean

By Jairo Morales
Personal Trainer

#1: Cut Carbohydrates at Night

Our fuel source for physical activity is glycogen (blood sugar), which is derived from carbohydrates (carbs). Eating carbs at night increases your risk of storing fat. You burn only small amounts of glycogen at rest because your metabolic rate is slower while you sleep. You shouldn't eat any later than three hours before bedtime.

#2: Fine-Tune Your Cardio

Done correctly, cardiovascular workouts promote fat loss. The two best times to do cardio are before breakfast or directly following a weightlifting workout. First thing in the morning means you've not eaten anything for several hours. Your body will be unable to recruit its fuel from stores of carbs and will instead burn stored body fat for energy. Along the same lines, during a weightlifting workout you will have burned your previously stored carbs through strenuous lifting and will have to rely mainly on body fat to continue with the cardio portion of your workout.

#3: Eat More Fiber (Vegetables)

Fiber promotes fat loss, whether you cut calories or not. It slows down the digestion of carbs, which in turn slows

the entry of sugar into the blood; this initiates a smaller output of insulin. Lowering insulin production favors fat-burning, while high insulin levels signal cells to hoard fat.

#4: Rotate High- and Low-Carb Days

People on low-carb diets will lose fat, but they'll also lose muscle. As you lose muscle, your metabolism slows down... not good. To try to avoid this, follow a three-day low-carb diet with a high-carb intake on the fourth day, then repeat the cycle. While you may lose some muscle in those first three days, taking the body out of its "starvation mode" can keep it to a minimum. Keeping your protein intake consistent every day can further offset this loss.

#5: Drink Plenty of Water

While you're dieting, adequate water intake promotes an increased ratio of fat loss to total weight loss. Increase your water intake while dieting because water dilutes metabolic wastes (from protein and fat breakdown) and allows for easier removal.

#6: Avoid Processed Foods

By shunning processed foods you can cut out much of the associated fat, refined sugar and additives. Choose foods that are as close to their natural state as possible to get far more of the natural vitamins and minerals that often get destroyed through commercial preparation.

#7: Eat on a Schedule

By planning several small meals a day, you provide your body with a steady supply of nutrients, including blood sugar. This will reduce the likelihood of a binge caused by a ravenous appetite. Space five to six meals, three to four hours apart throughout the day and you will be constantly curbing hunger pangs. A good idea is to get in the habit of cooking and carrying your own meals rather than buying ready-to-eat fare or dining out. This way you can vouch for all the ingredients because you prepared them.

Jairo can be reached at 786-390-8931; find him online at www.onefitness.com.

Your Finances

Continued from page 53

nitely by doing a "tax-deferred exchange," also known as a "Section 1031 exchange." In this transaction, you swap your property for another "like-kind" property. It doesn't matter if the property you sell is a rental single-family house, an apartment building or commercial building. You may invest the profits into any other type of investment property. There are specific guidelines you must follow so you must consult a tax professional for advice.

Gilda Iriarte is a real estate and mortgage consultant in Miami with a Harvard MBA and 25 years experience.

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How Has Halloween Changed Since You Were a Kid?

By Victor Barrenechea—BBT Contributing Writer



Javier Rodriguez

"I'm from Puerto Rico, first of all. When we were younger, we (bleeped) up every neighborhood. Here in Miami, it's just like any other night, except people are in costumes."



Courtney Lamothe

"I think when you're younger it's fun to get dressed up and go trick-or-treating. Then you reach a stage where Halloween becomes boring. But once you're of age to drink, it becomes really fun again."



Zachary Schuerger

"I really don't really think it's changed that much. It's still mayhem."



Mark Smith

"There's a lot more concern with safety issues. Kids nowadays are not allowed to go out door-to-door by themselves."



Briana Butler

"It's not as fun because I can't go trick-or-treating."



Lindsey Hausler

"I feel like there's more pressure for girls to dress more provocatively."

BE HEARD!

Do you have a question for "Word on the Street?"
Send us an email: editorial@BiscayneBoulevard.com

Your Spiritual Personality Test

By Hernan Pisano, MBA
Shores Yoga, Miami Shores

With increased offerings of “spiritual” alternatives, Miami has become further populated by all sorts of “pop spiritual characters.” Regardless of the different ideas we may believe in (Christian, Buddhist, Nietzschean, etc) there are startling similarities among them, or should I say *among us*. Before you keep reading, just grab a pen and circle “yes” or “no” besides each description below to see how you rank in this spiritual personality test.

The Fundamentalist

He knows the Truth, and it is clear to him – no questions asked. He is illuminated, he speaks with God (or God speaks through him). The problem is that you should have gotten it too! The fundamentalist tends to be directive and judgmental... obviously “for your own good.” He is extremely disciplined: If his thing is early morning, no problem, 4 a.m. it is. If his thing is having plums for four weeks in a row, no problem! By nature he is a preacher. Since he got the Truth, why shouldn't he try to share it? Some fundamentalists become media masters (or big fiascos), and build empires out of their revelations. Their convictions drive them far... but sometimes far out. Because of his drive and opinions, the fundamentalist tends to get along with uncritical, weak ego, father-figure-searching types.
YES/NO

Have you seen the Spiritual Materialist in action?

He has done all the workshops available. He had read all the books you haven't even opened. He hangs pictures of all the Big Kahunas in his office/healing center/studio/house. He has gone to

exotic countries in search of enlightenment. He has accumulated all the spiritual wealth he can, but that's not important. What is important is that he thinks that having done so makes him more worthy of enlightenment/salvation/bliss/fun than you. Beware of the two versions of this one: The slightly arrogant one (like me) who straight out considers himself “better” or superior, or the ‘humble’ one (which goes something like this – being humble *is* being better than the rest, including *you*). As the fundamentalist loves to teach, the Spiritual Materialist loves to learn, but hates to be taught. They don't make good partners.
YES/NO

The Rebel

The Rebel goes something like: “What all the others are offering is just marketing. I/we are the real deal. The ‘others’ sold their soul to the system.” The Rebel is, by definition, marginal (or appears so), and despite his/her family or eventual wealth, he looks opposite what he considers mainstream: If mainstream is *not* having tattoos, he is all inked up. If mainstream is *having* tattoos, his skin is snow-white. The rebel is sharp, witty, incisive and a loner by definition (growing into an organization would be too mainstream). If his inspiration is socially oriented, he might wear provoking t-shirts (‘Che Guevara’ is a preferred one in a Cuban exile hub like Miami)... The rebel is ideally suited for cult leader positions, if he doesn't realize before that he needs to work, feed a family and save for retirement.
YES/NO

There are also some Authentic Legacy types

This guy probably follows a leader/guru/master from the last century

and has studied all the minuscule details of his master's doctrine. He cherishes his books, pictures and some distant memory of his pilgrimage to the master's country. Any blend with another or deviation from that is unacceptable, and not the ‘true’ doctrine. His respect for other things ‘authentic’ is great – nothing is worse than to adapt with the tides of times through unorthodox, creative methods. As the memory of his master dilutes in time, the Authentic grows isolated, as more and more people are swept to the funky trend of the moment.
YES/NO

And finally, the Unconditional Lover

Also in two flavors – the messianic “I am God, and love you all,” which is most predominant in males, and the conflict-avoidant “I so want to be loved that I will love you all before you can reject me” type. These people are sweet people-pleasers. I love them – *everybody* loves them. They hug and kiss in public, and cry in private. In order to recognize this type, search for key phrases like

“unconditional love,” “open your heart,” “forgive everything” (I use this one a lot). Sometimes this person loves because he or she wants to be loved! Is there any more egotistical reason to love?! Lots of love is their ideal, but sometimes this too much, too superficial, too sugary, and we end up missing a good, frank discussion with our ‘unconditional’ lover.
YES/NO

If you identified with one of these types, don't worry, I did too. Now, if you identified and didn't laugh at yourself (or at me) you fell into a different, serious, category: The Lack of Humor type.
YES/NO

If so, forget everything. Stop reading and go to the hospital right away. Lack of humor is a *serious disease*.

BBT

Hernan Pisano is an MBA and yoga teacher at Shores Yoga in Miami Shores. You can reach him by email at Hernan@nextlogica.com or by calling 305-759-6461.

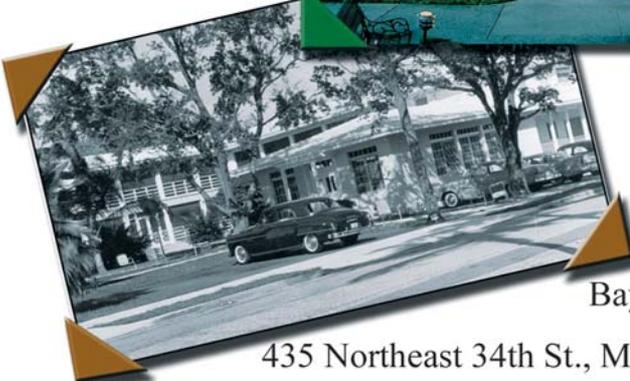
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Recycling Our Way Out of a Plastic Bag

By Jim W. Harper
BBT Columnist

"Why don't you recycle in Miami?"

I have heard this question recently from several foreign students who span the globe from Switzerland to Brazil to Taiwan – the implication is that they are ahead of us in the recycling game. And I often hear the same question from Americans who have relocated to Miami.

Here's our answer: Recycling is for amateurs.

Our more advanced culture practices the other two R's first: reducing and reusing. We are reducing the burden on recycling centers and reusing our bins to store hurricane supplies.

Duh.

When it comes to the topic of recycling, the people of Miami-Dade are full of war stories. One young woman in Aventura quit her job at a Barnes & Noble bookstore because it refused to recycle thousands of paperbacks. It made her cry.

Miami resident Richard Strell spent months lobbying the city manager's office to get recyclables picked up at his house. Finally, a special truck appeared, only to disappear after one month of service. (Coming soon to a theater near you – *Garbage Trucks in the Mist.*) Today he hauls his plastic bottles to a condo near N.E. 35th Street and Biscayne Boulevard.

My recycling dead end took place three years ago, at the renamed Portofino Apartments on Biscayne Boulevard in North Miami. Hundreds of units and not a recycling bin in sight – so I tried to make a difference. Calls went unanswered; laws were brushed aside; nothing happened, and I gave up.

The solution was to move to a single-family house where recycling was

already offered. I pay the City of North Miami \$3.36 a month for this privilege.

Miami-Dade County provides recycling services to many municipalities, including Aventura, El Portal and Miami Beach. Unincorporated county residents pay recycling fees within their \$399 annual solid waste bill. This price-tag is a bargain compared to the going rate in Miami Shores: \$661.52. The problem is getting what you pay for.

The county's total recycling rate is 18 percent. Since 1994, the state has mandated a rate of 30 percent.

Whoops.

But the situation is worse than it looks statistically. Consider your own recycling rate: for every can of soda you drink, how many actually make it into a recycling bin versus a trash can? I am not trying to blame the consumer. I am blaming a system that does not place recycling bins next to every trash can.

The biggest impediment to participation is that public recycling services are provided only to single-family homes, whereas most materials appropriate for recycling are consumed in places like hotels, apartments and businesses. Private companies must establish their own programs with a private recycling company.

In other words, the government is not going to help you, and it probably will ignore you. That's the tune of recycling in Miami. The county mandated recycling

in 1992 for all business, yet it turns a blind eye to those who don't. Instead of enforcing proposed fines of up to \$950, it prefers to offer advice.

Well, in that spirit I offer a few suggestions of my own:

Instead of a fine, assist businesses in providing a \$1,000 donation for the past

14 years of non-compliance. After 1,000 donations, the county's recycling program will be worth a million bucks!

For the hotel and tourism industry, try collecting recyclables in fashionable pink bins. These deco-style bins could also serve as

advertising space for Evian and Absolut. Who am I kidding? Grab your bottle of Absolut and go where Richard Strell goes, to the condo at 35th and Biscayne. If you're too drunk to locate the recycling bin, do what the locals do: Dump it in Biscayne Bay.

If you still really want to recycle, take my final word of advice: Move somewhere else. Until someone comes up with better ideas, here are a few things that us mere mortals in Miami-Dade can do.

Batteries

Florida law prohibits the dumping of certain batteries, including rechargeable nickel-cadmium (in cell phones) and lead acid batteries. Take these batteries for recycling to major retailers such as Radio Shack, Target or Home Depot.

For places served by Miami-Dade County, use the first recycling-day each month for traditional battery types, which go inside a zip-top baggie at the top of the green bin. Or contact The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation to find a local recycler at 1-800-8-BATTERY.

Computers, TVs, Paint, Chemicals, Etc.

Visit the county's Home Chemical Collection Center at 8831 N.W. 58th Street on Wednesday through Sunday.

Plastic Bags

Your best bet is to take them to Publix, where green bins outside the entrance accept them for recycling. It is a small inconvenience to collect and transport them, but you will be surprised at how many you collect in a month. Next time, ask for paper.

Local Recycling Resources

City of Miami: 305-575-5107.

A second blue bin is available free, and you may recycle phone books from November to February.

Miami-Dade County: 305-594-1500; email: dswm@miamidade.gov. To request bins, visit

www.miamidade.gov/dswm/bins.asp, or call 305-633-3100. Businesses may obtain a free copy of the Commercial Recycling Guide from the Department of Solid Waste Management.

Miami Shores/Biscayne Park: 305-795-2210

North Miami: 305-895-9870

GreenerMiami: A-Z Disposal & Donation Guide at www.greenermiami.com



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A Few Thoughts on the Use of Mulch

By Jeff Shimonski
Tropical Designs of Florida

Attention to soil health is the key to successful horticulture, but so often a horticulturalist's main focus is the health and color of foliage and flowers; spraying pesticides; fertilizing; and pruning to keep the plant healthy. But what really helps the plant to thrive? To answer this question it is necessary to look underground. How healthy is the rhizosphere? What conditions surround the plant roots? What is the soil like? Is it the native oolitic limestone that is almost impossible to cut through, or some type of sand or black soil?

Roots provide stability and seek out water and nutrients for the plant. This is unfortunately an area of horticulture that is much neglected. Plants and trees are often installed without a thought to future development of the root system. This is often the reason some plants do so poorly in some areas and not others. Often in areas of new construction, plants and trees are dug directly into compacted structural fill. This is the fill put under structures to reduce settlement. We all saw the results of these plantings after the hurricanes last year, when trees were blown out of their holes with the root ball still attached. This fill has no macropores or large spaces between soil particles because the soil was compacted, therefore plant roots cannot grow through it to create tree stability or absorb water and oxygen needed by the plant. There is also no organic matter in this soil. It is essentially inert, unable to support most plant life.

One way to nourish the soil is through the use of mulch. Mulching and compost use is a cornerstone of good horticulture. The addition of this organic matter to the soil as a top-dressing has many benefits.

- Provides a clean look to the landscape
- Reduces weeds

- Provides a blanket of insulation to the soil and roots below from extremes in temperature, and reduces soil water evaporation
- As mulch is decomposed by various micro organisms, nutrients are made available to plant roots
- The addition of decomposed organic matter retains more moisture in the soil
- The use of mulch from local tree-trimming operations reduces the amount of organic material that is needlessly dumped into landfills each day



A long-stemmed thermometer shows week-old tree mulch at 126° F. This mulch should not be used for another couple of weeks.

Years ago at the original Parrot Jungle in Pinecrest, we would purchase Cypress mulch by

the 100-yard truckload to put into some of our public areas. These areas were changed out three to four times a year. Over time we tried Pine, Eucalyptus and even Melaleuca mulch, but nothing had the longevity of Cypress chips. Chips always last longer than shredded mulch because there is less surface area, so various microorganisms have less room to decompose the wood (the greater the mass of an object, the less surface area it has). There is of course the wood-density factor, but larger chips will essentially break down more slowly.

When we used the fairly well-decomposed Cypress chips in other areas of our garden, I began to notice a decline in health of some of the plants, especially the larger trees and palms over time. This was not happening in areas where we used tree-trimming mulch.

I eventually realized that a layer of overly thick mulch would intercept rain or irrigation, leaving roots to dry out in the dry season or during droughts when irrigation was restricted. I have done many landscape site audits where I would ask the owner or property manager how often the irrigation system ran. The answer was usu-

Continued on page 61

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BISCAYNE CRIME BEAT

Compiled by Derek McCann from Actual City of Miami Police Reports

Ungrateful Crime Victim

Palm Grove

Victim had filed a police report claiming someone had broken into his home and taken several items. Police later called phone number listed on the police report, but only got an answering machine; they did not hear back from victim for several days. The following week they called victim again and a hurried voice came on the line. Victim explained he was very busy and didn't have time to talk; he then stated he had to take a call on the other line. He then hung up on the officer. This case is closed pending future cooperation from victim.

Flirting Now

a Ruse for Robbery

500-Block of N.E. 66th Street.

Tenant arrived home and was greeted by a man with a gold grill in his mouth. The grilled man lustily grabbed his crotch and said, "I don't mean no disrespect, but you make my [expletive deleted] hard." One day later, this same man was seen with a female accomplice inside the same apartment complex and it was later discovered that he had broken into one of the apartments via the front window, stealing items estimated at \$30,000 in value. No arrests have been made.

Unique Way to Start a Business

200-Block of N.E. 68th Street

Victim noticed that over the past 3 months, items had been removed from inside and outside his property. He filed several reports, but to no avail. However, one night he witnessed a neighbor on his

property removing a power drill from his Jeep. He followed the man to his home and saw several of his missing items in the neighbor's backyard. The neighbor was in the process of starting an upstart contracting company. Victim filed latest report in order to take this matter to the State Attorney's office.

Hair Loss Can Lead to Crime

3103 Biscayne Blvd.

Balding man blithely entered local Walgreen's carrying a large military backpack. He casually opened it, looked around, and started placing items in his bag. Hair products, deodorants and several bottles of Rogaine were placed inside the bag. Unrelenting, he continued up several other aisles and continued this behavior. Store staff apprehended the man and called police. The man was arrested carrying \$359 worth of merchandise.

The Stresses of Moving

Belle Meade

Tenant was being evicted for nonpayment of rent. She had finally agreed to move out and rented a U-Haul truck for the day. Landlord had even agreed to assist her in moving out her furniture.

Upon taking a break from helping her, he saw her removing two large items, wrapped with a blanket to the truck. Later that evening, when he inspected the apartment, he saw that two of his window air-conditioners had been removed.

Hitching a Thief

5400 Biscayne Blvd.

Woman was leaving a downtown club slightly inebriated. A seemingly Good Samaritan that she had talked to inside the club offered to drive her home. During the ride up

Biscayne Boulevard, the woman asked if they could stop so she could buy some cigarettes. She pulled money out of her purse then exited the vehicle, leaving her purse in the car. The Bad Samaritan drove off with her purse.

Mother's Angst for Wayward Son

Omni

Two juveniles broke into a home via the kitchen. The living room was ransacked with couches turned upside down. Liquor had been stolen from the refrigerator and from the kitchen cabinets. The juveniles were seen fleeing by bicycle and were apprehended by officers. One officer called the one juvenile's mother and was told she is sick of her son's mischief and ordered to officer to do whatever was necessary to correct his actions. Both boys were arrested.

Dude... Leave My House

700-Block of N.E. 83rd Terrace

Victim was peacefully lying in bed when he heard a noise emanating from the adjacent bathroom. He was horrified to see a stranger coming out of his bathroom. Victim screamed, "What are you doing in my house?" To which suspect

responded, "Dude said I could come in here tonight." Victim screamed back, "Who the [expletive deleted] is dude? Suspect then reentered bathroom and exited out the window. Several personal items were found strewn across the bathroom floor. Police later canvassed bathroom for prints but results came up negative.

Should Have Tried a Spinning Class First

N.E. 2nd Avenue at 56th Street

Victim heard someone rummaging through her yard and peeked out the back window to find a portly man riding off with her bike. According to the police report, the bike was a \$160 beach-cruiser type maroon bike. Victim flagged down a police car and the corpulent thief was apprehended half a block away. Report noted man was panting heavily and sweating profusely.

Foreign Beer Prices Enrage Man

Palm Grove

Man entered gas station and grabbed a 12-pack of Heineken beer. He brought the beer to the counter and asked how much it was. When told the price he yelled, "Too much!" He returned the 12-pack to the refrigerator and came back with a 6-pack, but the cashier had his back turned to him as he was writing on a pad. The suspect became angry and said, "[Expletive deleted] this!" He left with the 6-pack of Heineken and fled by vehicle. License plate was noted in police report.

Hostile Takeover

1000-Block of N.E. 79th Street

Victim was leaving country for an indeterminate amount of time and had a trusted employee to look after his business in his absence. However, this past month, owner noticed there had been no credit card deposits made to his bank account in nearly three months. Neighbors had informed him that the employee in charge had removed the credit card machine and was now only accepting cash. He had also created his own company at the address: Riax. Victim had only found out about this after he received a call from said employee indicating that the business was now his and he was obtaining a liquor license.

Continued on page 61



CRIME BEAT

Compiled from City of Miami Police Reports



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A Few Thoughts on the Use of Mulch

Continued from page 59

ally, "Several times a week." I would then scoop away mulch to show the dry ground underneath and explain that it might be better to use a thinner layer of mulch and irrigate less frequently but for a longer duration to allow the water to leach further into the ground.

Another critical point is that wood is decomposed by fungi. They are the only organisms that can decompose the cellulose and hemicellulose found in cell walls. Green plant material is decomposed by bacteria and other micro organisms. If only wood chips are utilized as mulch in an area, a fungal dominated soil will result, affecting the species of plants that grow in this area (some better, some worse). The same is true for a bacterial-dominated soil; therefore, a mix of both seems to be a good compromise when many species of plants are grown.

The only mulch that I have used for the past four years at Parrot Jungle Island is that which has come from tree-trimming operations. The results have been very good. I have found by applying a 3- to 4-inch layer of mulch, irrigation and rain is not kept from entering the soil.

Fresh mulch will heat up, sometimes to over 150°F. This happens because of bacterial activity on the green plant material. Hot mulch can kill plants and trees within 24 hours if placed over the root zone; it is therefore a good idea to let the pile sit for several weeks before using it. Also, never place mulch against the trunk of a tree. This can cause collar rot and eventually kill the tree.

Jeff Shimonski is an ISA Certified Municipal Arborist, license #FL-1052AM, with many years of tree experience as principal of his company, Tropical Designs of Florida. If you have any concerns about the plant life on your property, Jeff is a great resource. Contact him by email at jeff@tropicaldesigns.com or log onto his website, www.tropicaldesigns.com, for more info.

Police Reports

Continued from page 60

Pick-Pocketing Mother

200-Block of N.E. 62nd Street

Victim was helping a customer when she felt a hand entering her right pants pocket. The suspected had pulled out two dollar bills and a bracelet. Having caught the suspect, victim said she could have the two dollars but could not have the bracelet. Suspect left the store muttering she had to go to the pawn shop then pick up her kids; she told victim she has a responsibility to her kids first. Thus far, there have been no arrests.

Dirty Laundry Clouds Judgment

Morningside

Man left his efficiency apartment to pick up his laundry, which was located on the opposite side of the building. When he returned to his apartment five minutes later, his wallet, left on the kitchen counter was missing, as well as a mini DVD player. The victim had neglected to lock his door.

Consequences of Rushing into a Relationship

Belle Meade

Woman called police in reference to a burglary. Though there was no sign of a break-in, several items were stolen from the apartment's living room. The only other person who had a key was the live-in boyfriend who she had not seen in three days. She had known the boyfriend only two months. When boyfriend's alleged place of employment was checked by police there was no record of him in the database.

American Legion

Continued from page 19

considerable insight and was a good choice to represent the police department.

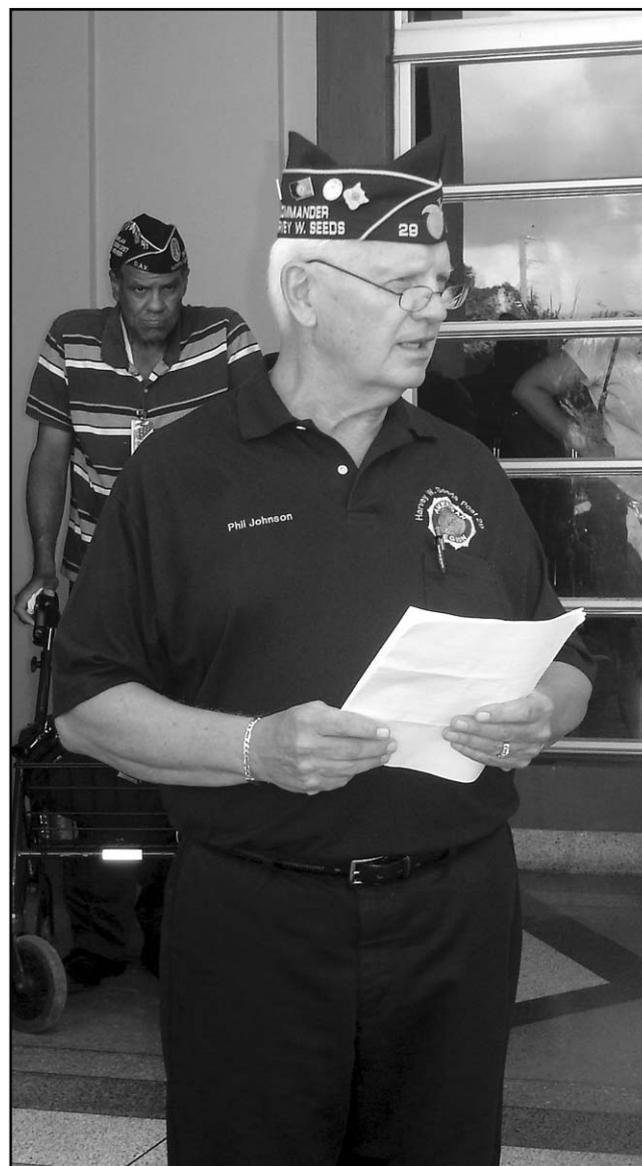
Children in attendance were given toy wooden police cars, fashioned by hand at a hobby shop in Plantation. Commander Johnson handed the first to Darrell Nichols, an Upper Eastside Neighborhood Resource Officer, and said jokingly, "So we can get the job done Darrell, here's yours."

After the 50-plus toy cars were distributed, everyone retired to the newly renovated bar/restaurant for cocktails and lunch. In the large, glass-enclosed seating area, which offers views of Legion Park and Biscayne Bay, guests took in a classic American meal of hot dogs and potato salad while mingling with Starling, Haskins, community activist Bob Flanders and the many war veterans in attendance.

The event was a great opportunity for the public to see the fine work done on the facilities: "A couple of years ago we were almost bankrupt," said Flanders. But they brought themselves back from the ashes by reevaluating what the American Legion means to the community. Now, after a physical and spiritual revamping, the Harvey Seeds Post seems poised to again be a viable local asset.

BBT

Visit BiscayneBoulevard.com to comment on this story, or send an email to editorial@biscayneboulevard.com.



Above: Commander Phil Johnson addresses the audience.

Below: A veteran taking one of the new barstools for a test-drive.



City Commissioners, Alonzo Mourning Lead Peace Rally

Another Gathering Tries to Put Dent in Chronic Violence

By Christian Cipriani
BBT Editor

Twenty-five years ago the United Nations declared Sept. 21 the International Day of Peace, which in recent years has evolved into a worldwide call for cease-fire, if only for a day. And few sections of South Florida could use a day of peace more than Liberty City, where rising gun violence since the start of the year has resulted in the accidental deaths of several children.

“What kids see is what they’ll be,” declared Alonzo Mourning, who plays center for the Miami Heat.

Beneath a sweltering September sun, out between the seemingly endless tracts of treeless, identical apartment blocks, more than 100 students, adults, political leaders and community activists (plus McGruff the crime dog) gathered outside the Liberty Square Housing Project Community Center on N.W. 64th Street to denounce violence.

Georgia Ayers, a Liberty City native who attended her high school prom at the community center more than 50 years ago, lost a grandson several years ago to gun violence, prompting her to start The Alternative Programs, an initiative to prevent crime in the black community.

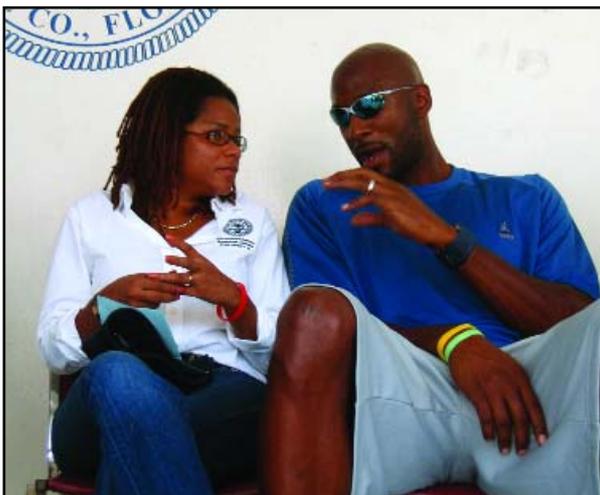
Wielding the microphone fiercely, in her other hand she waved a graphic poster depicting her slain grandson. Ayers’ message was clear: Stop blaming the world – we’re doing this to each other and it needs to end.

Schoolchildren held banners calling for peace and excellence, while outraged friends and family waved signs denouncing the unsolved killings of loved ones. One man held a poster of Prince Owens Gedeon, offering a \$2,000 reward for information regarding his August 5 murder.

The event, however upbeat and inclusive (Miami Northwestern’s marching band were suited up to lead a march through the neighborhood), drew some dissent. Members of the activist collective Brothers of the Same Mind signed the peace wall and were there for support, but they also passed out flyers about police abuse and bore signs reading, “We Want Peace, Not More Police.”

Community relations officers mingled on foot, but a border of police cars around the event and a lineup of well-appointed officers atop gleaming choppers – there to oversee the march – sent the wrong visual message. Gaining the trust of communities like Liberty City will continue to be an uphill climb for the police department.

Overall, the event was a success, if more in a symbolic sense than anything. And it was good to see that someone took heed of the August BBT editorial by bringing in a relevant sports star instead of a retired Dolphin, and by including other City Commissioners besides Michelle Spence-Jones (thumbs up, Joe Sanchez).



District 5 Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones talks with guest speaker Alonzo Mourning of the Miami Heat



The Miami Northwestern High School Marching Bulls



Georgia Ayers, a prominent community activist, holding a picture of her slain grandson.



District 3 Commissioner Joe Sanchez inscribing the message wall with, “Lord, bring peace to those who seek it.”



BBT

Visit BiscayneBoulevard.com to comment on this story, or send an email to editorial@biscayneboulevard.com.

Mommy-Mobiles and Daddy-Rides

New Options for Graduates of the Two-Seater

The South Florida International Auto Show (SFIAS) is coming and here's a tidbit some of you regular readers may be surprised to read: I am something of a car enthusiast.

Growing up partially a "Florida kid" as I did (part of every year of my life was spent in the Sunshine State; learned to drive and got my first drivers' permit here) this is not a surprise.

Even as a kid in 1970's St. Petersburg, I could spot make, model and year a block or more away. As a teenager in New York City, I craved

opportunities to defy all that is New York-sophisticate and fly up the East River Drive with the top down on my yellow Mustang with the Beach Boys blasting – even when out to crawl the clubs, much to my friends' embarrassment. There was even a point in my young adult life that,

along with subscriptions to The Village Voice and *Interview*, I subscribed to *Automobile* magazine, which flaunts the motto "Cogito Ergo Zoom" (I think therefore... zoom).

In 1996 I embarrassed myself and bought a sedan – albeit a German-engineered five-speed. Then in 2004 the moment came to graduate to... a Mommy-Mobile.

As the type of parent who simply cannot picture herself in a minivan, I took the SUV route. I had been completely intrigued by

the Honda Elements I saw popping up all over – very butch (if you're gonna have a truck...), very practical, very utilitarian, very road-trip-worthy and very well-priced. It has a good record on emissions and mileage, and the reliability of a Honda.

After I learned that the Element was also a way to maintain my stern commitment to manual transmissions (you can take the girl out of the sports car, but you can't take the sport out of the drive), I chose a color from the then limited choices, named my price (it was a year-end clearance model), moved Goldi's car seat into my new car, threw the stroller in the hatch and drove home as a full-fledged mobile Mommy.

About ten years ago, prior to purchasing the aforementioned sedan, I went to the SFIAS with my friend Mitch (previously referred to in this space as "Uncle Mitch," Goldi and Izzi's not-really-related uncle), who is a true enthusiast – right down to his 43-year-old and growing Matchbox collection. We had so much fun closely examining speedy and sleek rides, and their lines and options. Two years ago, just after I bought my Element, we made a reunion visit as a pair and I discovered the oddest thing: I was looking at the Mommy-Mobiles and Daddy-Rides. Maker after maker, I was drawn to the clunkier cars and checking how accessible their latch systems were, how many car seats they could fit at once and how easy the hatch was to open with one hand. From Volvos to Caddys to Nissans to Hyundais, I couldn't help but wonder which vehicles had nifty built-in car seats



Hot Kids in the City

By Jenni Person



There are plenty of Mommy-Mobile/Daddy-Ride offerings at the South Florida Auto Show, October 6-15 at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

like my friend Missy's Dodge Caravan.

And the glorious thing was that at the SFIAS, I could leisurely address my curiosity and assess each vehicle – in person – for its family friendliness. Okay, as

leisurely as you can do anything with a toddler in tow, as I did in 2004, or very pregnant with a preschooler to pick up

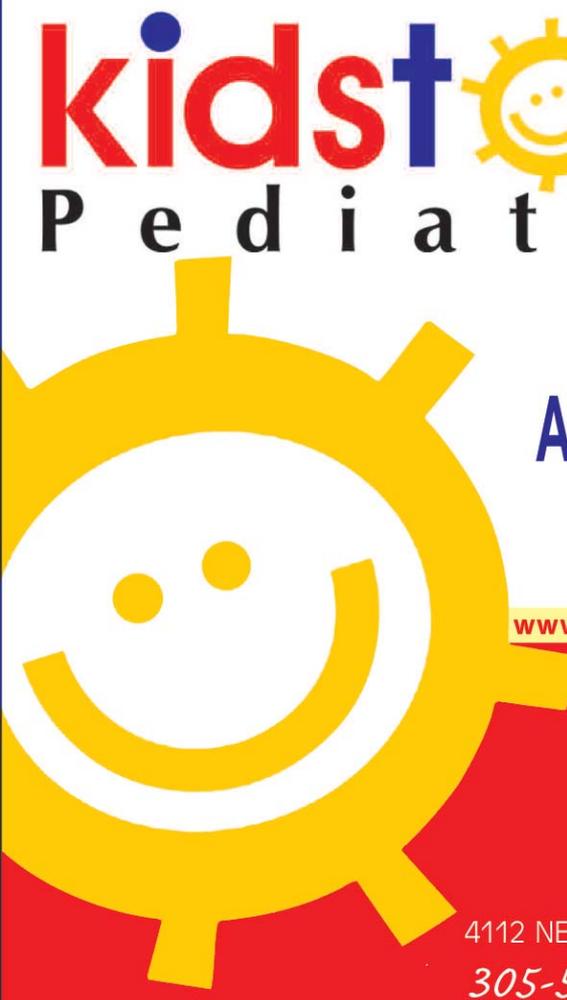
Continued on page 65

HOT KID TIP

A Fair to Remember!

Celebrate the diversity of Miami's Upper Eastside on October 15, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Rainbow Pride Resource Fair. The fair will feature music, including the choral stylings of the Gay Men's Chorus; food from Biscayne Corridor eateries as well as popcorn and cotton candy; and fun for families including a bounce house, rock climbing, face painting and more. The event takes place at Legion Park on N.E. 7th Avenue (behind American Legion Hall).

The fair is for all neighbors, although organized specifically for LGBT families by the City of Miami's NET (Neighborhood Enhancement Team) offices, with lots of community partners including the Biscayne Boulevard Times, the Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, the Biscayne Corridor Chamber of Commerce, SAVE Dade and Temple Israel of Greater Miami.



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NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS & EVENTS

For weekly email updates about community meetings with agenda links and other information, email newsletter@biscayneboulevard.com and put 'subscribe' in the subject.

OCTOBER 2

7 p.m.
Greater NoMi Historical Society
Chamber of Commerce
13100 West Dixie Hwy.

7 p.m.
NoMi Chamber Installation
Banquet
Mayor Kevin Burns as Chairman
Shores Country Club, 10000
Biscayne Blvd.
Contact the Chamber at 305-891-
7811 for ticket info

Seth Bramson on the history of
Surfside and NoMi
North Miami Library, 835 N.E.
132nd St.

www.miamigov.com

Palm Grove Neighborhood
Association
Email palmgroveboard@aol.com
for time and place

OCTOBER 4

6 p.m.
Buena Vista Heights Association
Coral Rock Church
N.W. 46th Street and N.W. 1st
Ave.

OCTOBER 9

7 p.m.
Biscayne Park Village
Commission
Ed Burke Recreation Center
11400 N.E. 9th Ct.

OCTOBER 16

7 p.m.
Zoning Board
Miami City Hall
3500 Pan American Dr.
www.miamigov.com

OCTOBER 30

7 p.m.
Zoning Board
Miami City Hall
3500 Pan American Dr.
www.miamigov.com

OCTOBER 17

7 p.m.
North Miami Police "Stat Trax"
workshop
Follow the crime statistics
of your area
North Miami High, 800 N.E.
137th St.

OCTOBER 5

7:30 p.m.
Biscayne Gardens Civic
Association
15000 N. Miami Ave.
305-948-0750
www.biscaynegardenscivicassociation.org

OCTOBER 10

7 p.m.
El Portal Council Meeting
Village Hall, 500 N.E. 87th St.
www.villageofelportal.org

OCTOBER 21

7 to 11 p.m.
Enchanted Forest's Haunted Trail
Costume contests, games, and,
of course, the Haunted Trail!
N.E. 135th St. and Biscayne
Boulevard

ATTENTION OAKLAND GROVERS!

A bid to rezone the nearly 115,000-square-foot plot of land fronting the Little River, at 399 N.E. 82nd Ter. in Oakland Grove, will go before Miami's Zoning Board at 7 p.m. on **October 16**, at **Miami City Hall, 3500 Pan American Dr. in Coconut Grove**. Property records list the owner as "Katia Tralkos," but it's actually a woman named Katia Traikos. The issue was covered in a July BBT cover story, at which point many neighbors expressed concern about the impact of 101 town-homes planned for the site. To coordinate with Oakland Grove leaders, neighbors should email Tamara Hendershot, at floofie@bellsouth.net or Slade Cole, at sladejcole@bellsouth.net.

7 p.m.
Biscayne Park Village Council
Ed Burke Recreation Center
11400 N.E. 9th Ct.

7 p.m.
North Miami Council Meeting
City Hall
776 N.E. 125th St.

OCTOBER 11

7 p.m.
Bayside Residents Meeting
Legion Park Community Center
6447 N.E. 7th Ave., 2nd floor
Contact: giriarte@bellsouth.net

OCTOBER 23

7 p.m.
Upper Eastside Miami Council
Board Meeting (open to public)
Legion Park
6447 N.E. 7th Ave.

OCTOBER 12

9 a.m.
Miami City Commission
City Hall
3500 Pan American Dr.
www.miamigov.com

OCTOBER 24

7 p.m.
El Portal Council Meeting
Village Hall, 500 N.E. 87th St.
www.villageofelportal.org

OCTOBER 13

7 p.m.
Greater NoMi Historical Society
presents

OCTOBER 26

9 a.m.
Miami City Commission
City Hall
3500 Pan American Dr.

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Mommy-Mobiles

Continued from page 63

from school on time, like in 2005.

My friend Evan, dad of 3-and-a-half-year-old Ariel, a classmate of Goldi's, recently told me he wants to get a new car. I told him to wait for the auto show, and I mean it. It is like an all-you-can-eat buffet of automobile possibilities – whether you just want to watch the market or the time has come to replace your wheels. Once you narrow down your search from seeing every car on the market in person, you can head out for very efficient test drives. And as a parent, here are some of the things you are going to want to remember to consider in your search, in addition to the usual issues of budget, safety and fuel efficiency:

Driver friendliness, comfort, and ease:

When you are multitasking at the wheel with kids behind you who are either so noisy you can't think straight or so peacefully sleeping you don't want to stir them, how easily can you reach and control everything else around you – radio, cell phone charger, water bottle, box of wipes – is key. And so is how much you can do one-handed – from throwing a stroller or camping equipment in the trunk to flipping seats down to fit gear. **Space:** How many kids and just how much gear will the vehicle allow you to safely schlep? How many car seats (rear- and forward-facing) or booster seats can it hold at



Two sleeping kids in the road-trip-tried-and-true Honda Element.

once and how much space do you have to install them, both in terms of the space you need for your own body to get them in and out as well as the distance between the latch points being wide enough for your car seat (I found this to be a problem with a rear-facing Britax Roundabout, the smaller Britax, in a 2004 Honda Accord). Further, as much as I love my Element, the suicide doors are a pain with a rear-facing car seat, as the back seat is nestled behind the open door – so, consider rear-facing car seat access and installation if you have a

newbie or plan on welcoming one during the life of your car.

Materials: Leather and vinyl clean up more easily than fabric. However, carseats slip less on fabric, while leather will require rubber shelf liner or such to be stable. Also, stiff leather is tough to manipulate when trying to access a latch system (see above struggle with the Accord).

Amenities: Most cars, especially Mommy-Mobile and Daddy-Ride types, offer built-in DVD players and navigation systems, but check out how they are controlled, shared, mounted, etc. Also, most new cars are equipped not only with standard CD players, but also optional MP3 jacks. I also noticed that a lot of cars intended for parents have an abundance of cup-holders – and even juice-box holders – and little nooks for stashing things like wipes and sunscreen.

The 2006 South Florida Auto Show takes place at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$3 for children 6-12. Discount tickets to the show are available at participating new car and truck dealerships and McDonald's restaurants in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. Show hours are: Friday, October 6, 5 p.m. – midnight; Saturday, October 7, 11 a.m. – midnight; Sunday, October 8, 11 a.m. – 11 p.m.; Monday-Thursday, October 9-12, 2 p.m. – 11p.m; Friday October 13, 2 p.m.- midnight; Saturday, October 14, 11:00 a.m.- midnight and Sunday, October 15, 2 p.m. – 9 p.m. For more info, visit www.sfliautoshow.com.

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PET PERSONALS



Boomer is a 3-year-old neutered male German shepherd mix. He loves to play with toys and other dogs. Boomer enjoys rolling around in the grass at the park and chasing butterflies. He is a very sweet boy and he loves to act like a super-sized lap dog, and he will sit by your side and give kisses readily. He would make a great addition to your family. Please adopt Boomer from our Soffer & Fine Adoption Center, 16101 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami Beach, 305-696-0800.



Baby is a sweet and loving 3-year-old spayed female! She is a purr monster and she really enjoys the company of other kitties. She loves to play with toys and would do great in a home with children. Please adopt Baby from our Soffer & Fine Adoption Center at 16101 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami Beach, 305-696-0800.

These pets can be found at our brand new shelter, the Soffer and Fine Adoption Center, located at 16101 West Dixie Highway in North Miami Beach. The center is open for adoptions Mondays and Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. and Sunday from 12 p.m. until 5 p.m. (closed Tuesdays). Thank you!

The adoption fee for a dog or a puppy is now \$90 (and still includes: spay/neuter, up-to-date vaccinations including rabies if dog is four months or older, de-worming, microchip identification, Miami-Dade County dog license or puppy tag, dogs six months and older are tested for heartworm disease and Ehrlichiosis, free puppy training or low-cost dog obedience classes, and new parent support)

The adoption fee for a cat or a kitten is now \$60 (and still includes: spay/neuter, up-to-date vaccinations including rabies if cat is four months or older, de-worming, microchip identification, FeLV and FIV tests, cardboard cat carrier, and new parent support).



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The Art of Socialization

What is It, And Why It's So Important to Get Your Dog Off on the Right Paw

"My dog doesn't like children"; "he's protective"; "she is wary of strangers"; "he doesn't like other dogs"; "my Yorkie doesn't like to leave the house"; "my Chihuahua doesn't like to be touched, or walk on grass or [fill in the blank]"...

Sound familiar? Sadly, many of our canine friends suffer from fears/phobias and behavior problems that may have been easily prevented had the dog been gently exposed to it early in life. Unfortunately, many people aren't aware how critical the first few weeks of an animal's life are, and think a dog's behavior is solely based on their genetic makeup or "temperament." If only! We know better now. Animals are not robots pre-programmed from birth. It is our job to be proactive and give them the best head start in life we can so they can cope in a human world.

Socialization is the exposure process of introducing your dog to new people, places and things. What dogs learn about the world in those first few weeks of life may stay with them and shape the dog they become. It is very important for your pet to have great experiences with children, men, people in funny hats, other dogs and anything else you can think of. You might think it is the professional show dog that benefits the most from extensive socialization. Sure, they would have no career without it, but it is the average family dog that is at greatest risk from lack of socialization, because this animal may be given up or euthanized when it shows bad behavior towards another person or pet, or becomes too much trouble to deal with. The family dog, after the puppy novelty wears off, will usually settle into a routine of meeting very few new people on a regular basis and will be taken less places when it is

reaches full size.

You cannot overdo socialization, but you can certainly not socialize your pet enough. It is believed the socialization window closes at four months of age, and at three months for some breeds. This is when fear responses usual develop. Since the earliest it is advised to get a puppy is eight weeks old (so it can learn how to socialize with other dogs in the litter) the clock is ticking to expose it to lots of new experiences.

Where you get your puppy can give it a good head start in life. If you are going to a breeder, only deal with a reputable one who breeds for the betterment of the breed. The puppies should be whelped inside the breeder's house where they can get used to the sounds of home life, and where people are around to interact with them – not the back yard. Great breeders will tell you their socialization plan. They know how critical it is to a pup's future wellbeing. Some enlist the neighbors' children, babies and adult friends to interact with the pups every day as soon as they are old enough. The puppies go to different rooms in the house, have different toys, cat tunnels and other surfaces to walk on to develop confidence. If you are rescuing a pup, pick a pup that seems friendly, confident and sweet. (Do not get your dog from puppy stores that mass-produce poor quality, unsocialized pups in a world where most dogs end up executed simply because there are too many pets and not enough homes. They are breeding for money, and these pups

usually cost far more than a pup from a rescue or a reputable breeder). Give your new puppy a few days to settle in, and then bring him with you everywhere. He or she should be a social butterfly!

A good rule of thumb is your pup should meet one hundred friendly people by 3 months of age, and another hundred by six months of age. Most of the people should be friendly men and children as these two groups are the most likely to spook a dog later in life. Let

strangers toss or hand-feed treats, play gently, etc. Your dog does not like children because he likes little Jimmy next door. He likes Jimmy. He must meet as many *new* friendly children as possible. Let neighbor Jimmy bring his siblings over for cookies and puppy play. If you have kids of your own, take the pup to

the bus stop and school with you to meet more kids. Have your adult friends over for brunch or the Dolphins game and let the dog meet everyone. Meet friends with dogs for morning walks. There are many ways to disguise your puppy socializing with fun for the humans involved.

So when are you finished socializing? Never really. Just as you or I may lose our people skills if we stop meeting people often, so can your dog. You will want to maintain his happy meet-and-greet personality. You will want him to have friendly, new experiences often to be a confident well-adjusted dog. Remember, liking someone or something and tolerating it are too different things. If you find your dog already exhibiting nervous or reticent behavior with certain individuals or situations, seek professional help.

Lisa is head Dog Trainer for Pawsitively Pets! You can reach her at 786-942-PETS; www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com



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By Lisa Hartman

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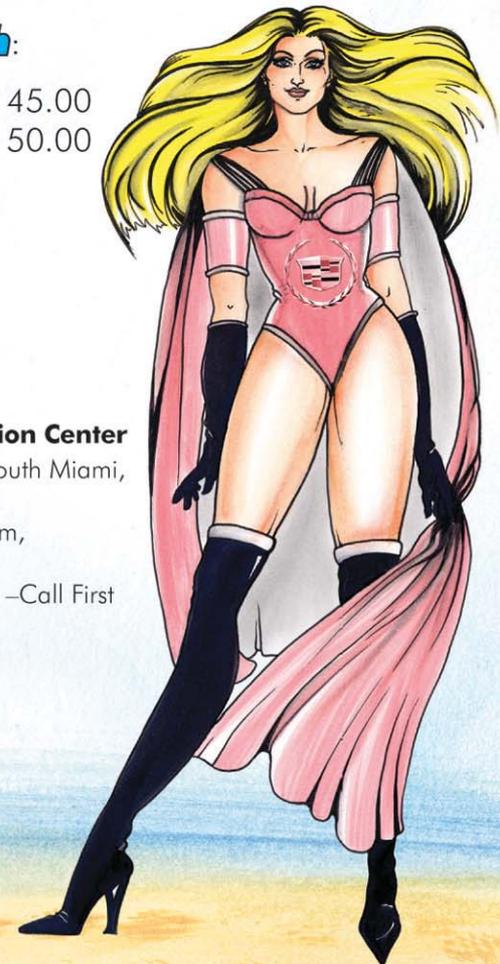
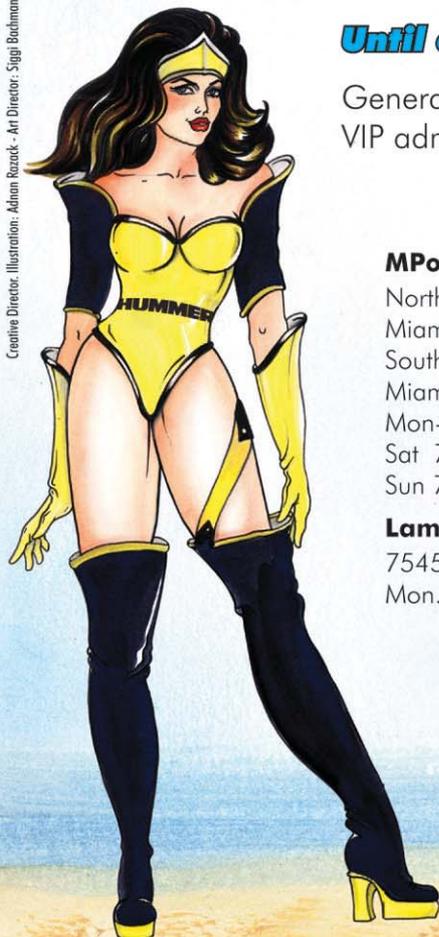
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