

GALT MILE NEWS

AUGUST 2010

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GMCA



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By Eric Berlowitz

PARRISH to GALT MILE: PROPERTY VALUES FIRING UP

On June 17, 2010, Broward County Property Appraiser Lori Parrish addressed the Galt Mile Community Association Advisory Board. A no-nonsense, straight talking public servant, Parrish is a working class rarity. After serving 4 years on the Broward County School Board and another 16 years on the Broward County Commission, Parrish decided to use business skills honed operating the Swap Shop on Sunrise Boulevard and The Millennium Hollywood's City Place by successfully running for the Broward Property Appraiser's seat in 2004 (re-elected in 2008). The job wasn't what she expected. Before she could begin collecting, counting and categorizing the county's money, she had to clean out a rat's nest of nepots and no-shows inherited from her predecessors.

After serving as Broward Property Appraiser for 36 years, William Markham's passing from a massive heart attack led to the interim appointment of Rocky Rodriguez, a political placeholder who treated the office as Markham's shrine, leaving it exactly as he found it. Grateful winning politicians often dispense government jobs as a reward for campaign boosters and a palliative to dysfunctional friends and relatives. Since their skills and qualifications are often limited to carrying a bag or an envelope from location "A" to location "B", these people are preferably deposited into positions involving difficult-to-track field work. The Property Appraiser's office was the ideal outlet for these political discards.

Over his prolonged tenure, Markham collected a sizable staff of phantom employees. No one understood why the 81 Appraisers listed on Bill Markham's roll couldn't keep pace with the work load. When Parrish took the reins, she discovered that there were actually only 18 still alive and showing up for work. Prior to 2005, calling the Property Appraiser's office was often an exercise in futility. If someone actually answered the call, they would politely ask that you hold on for a minute before hanging up the phone. In addition to the defective communications and rampant absenteeism, the department's fraud unit was operated by one staffer on a part-time basis.

Once elected, Parrish cleaned house. She rebalanced the overwhelmingly white male staff and installed the checks and balances

necessary for efficient oversight. To enhance communications, both in the office and with "clients", she required that staffers respond immediately to phone, fax or email requests while morphing the BCPA web site from a bureaucratic marketing tool into a productive online office. She also expanded the Community Outreach Program. Instead of limiting the local availability of consulting staffers to the "exemption filing" season, the Outreach Program provides year-round assistance to property owners. These changes were so effective that Parrish was able to close two of the four BCPA offices without missing a beat. The Outreach Program will assume additional significance when budget cuts close the remaining satellite office in Plantation on September 24th, leaving only the Government Center-based main office (115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 111) to house BCPA operations.

She began replacing the antique computer system – which was roughly as useful as a Ouija Board – mothballing archaic software originally developed by Commodore for the "Pong" game – and subsequently upgraded by Atari as a platform for "Space Invaders". Today's cell phones offer exponentially greater computing power. By replacing Markham's window dressing fraud program with a fully functional unit, Parrish recaptured \$3 billion in assessed valuations from properties fraudulently exempted from the tax rolls, raking in \$20 million in "found" revenues.

Accompanied by her Director of Media and Governmental Relations, Bob Wolfe, Parrish opened with a review of county property values. Everyone snapped to attention when she said that sales trending from late 2009 and the first five months of 2010 strongly support the conclusion that "we may have finally seen the end of this catastrophic real estate crash." Basing her assessment on valuation statistics compiled through June 1st, she stated that after bottoming out a few months ago, Broward sales prices had since leveled off. She also reported mildly encouraging economic signs.

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Bungled roward each Project ack on Track

By Eric Berkowitz

On April 30, 2002, two busloads of Galt Mile residents attended a public hearing at the Hollywood Beach Community Center in support of the Army Corps of Engineers plan to renourish our shrinking beaches. On May 13, 2003, a contingent of eight Galt Mile residents flew to Tallahassee to refute contentions by outside interests from the Real Estate and Scuba lobbies that coastal residents "don't want their beaches renourished." Our neighbors' testimony to the Florida Cabinet resulted in the inclusion of beaches from Fort Lauderdale to Pompano in the Broward Shore Protection Project. For the past decade, increasingly frustrated Galt Mile residents have been anxiously awaiting promised repairs to what the Florida Department of Environmental Protection characterized as their "severely eroded beach." Although the project was temporarily derailed by events blending elements of "Waiting for Godot" with "The Three Stooges Meet Alice in Wonderland," County Administrator Bertha Henry assures us that our sand is on the way.

When the hopper dredge "Liberty Island" pumped out a last load of sand onto the beach at John U. Lloyd Beach State Park on February 8, 2006, it marked an end to the South Broward portion (Segment III) of the Broward Beach Renourishment Project. Unlike previous beach renourishment efforts, wherein sand was simply dredged offshore and dumped onto eroded beaches, Broward Beach Administrator Steve Higgins delivered a plan based on sustainability. While adding 100 to 150 feet of sand to beaches in Hollywood, Hallandale and Dania, his plan also provided for construction of three boulder mound erosion control structures at the northern end of John U. Lloyd Beach State Park.

Coastal inlets, such as the entrance to Port Everglades, disrupt the natural southerly migration of sand along the shore. This erosion control architecture will serve to stabilize the beach at that very dynamic location without adverse down drift impacts. In addition to protecting the Port, these structures will extend the effective life of the renourishment. Higgins' foresees replacing the need for future full scale renourishments with a series of small fills targeting the hot spots primarily responsible for sand expunged from the system.

At the May 13, 2003 meeting of the Florida Cabinet, representatives of every major grass roots and governmental environmental organization stressed the importance of preserving the beach habitat by implement-

ing the Beach Renourishment plan approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and further adapted by every Federal and State Environmental Agency. To better protect the surrounding marine environment, the Florida Cabinet mandated an 18-month monitoring period following the renourishment of South Broward's beaches. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would use the collected data to enhance environmental mitigations when the Central and North Broward beaches are renourished.

After the monitoring period ended in late August of 2007, a report was compiled by the official monitors from Nova Southeastern University and a joint venture of coastal engineering consulting firms, including Coastal Planning and Engineering, Inc. and Olsen Associates, Inc. When it arrived in Tallahassee, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) analyzed their observations. Along with an evaluation of the post-renourishment beach environment, the report documented two species of coral in the catchment area that the federal government designated as "threatened" in 2006. DEP notified their Broward counterpart that these new corals should be added to the list of protected marine organisms prior to the upcoming Segment II project.

Following several housekeeping correspondences addressing port inlet maintenance, communications between the Broward Biological Resources Division and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection inexplicably broke down. When asked by GMCA officials about the Segment II project, the County beach officials responded with a series of irrelevant diversions throughout 2008 and 2009, focusing instead on additional erosion control devices and a nondescript hunt for sand. When the County applied to the City of Fort Lauderdale for permission to enhance erosion control at Port Everglades on January 6, 2009, a frustrated City Commission refused access to the County, passing a resolution insisting that they first complete the promised Segment II renourishment of Fort Lauderdale's beaches.

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GALT LIBRARY UNDER THE GUN

By Eric Berlowitz

"Why can't we make the landlord sign a lease," suggested Shirley Appelman from Regency Tower. "You'd think that the landlord would want a lease instead of going through this every year," she opined. Of the panel members, Broward Mayor Ken Keechl was the first to unravel Ms. Appelman's train of thought. "I'm sorry, Shirley, it isn't the landlord who's causing the problem, it's the County budget." Although true, Keechl's response wasn't completely accurate. The problem is a County Commissioner prone to playing politics in the Districts of other Commissioners.

The small meeting room in the Galt Library was filled with local residents concerned about the Reading Room's future. Many were here last year for the same purpose, to rescue the library from the budget axe. Since the recession slammed the brakes on the property tax windfall annually enjoyed by local governments throughout Florida, City and County commissioners and council persons have been forced to close budget gaps with spending cuts or tax hikes.

Although Public officials with functional survival instincts bend backwards to avoid raising taxes during an economic downturn, the alternative becomes progressively more difficult every year. In Broward, most of the obvious sources of questionable county spending have already been clipped. As explained by Broward County Administrator Bertha Henry, "The low hanging fruit, they're gone." At least some of this year's cuts are anticipated to hit bone.

In late May, Friends of the Galt Ocean Mile Library President Herman Gardner began asking library supporters and local officials to help shield the Reading Room from the political machinations of certain antipathetic County Commissioners. "Friends of the Galt Ocean Mile Library" is a local 120-member chapter of the umbrella "Friends of Broward County Libraries," a fundraising organization with 29 chapters and thousands of members. While still early in the County budget process, Gardner knew that Broward's parks and libraries have historically served as prime candidates for the budget block. The longtime Galleon resident learned about this County budgeting paradigm from bitter experience.

When reducing expenses, the County Commission is theoretically obligated to balancing the sacrifices required of each District's residents. It is preferable to implement milder, less traumatic service cuts across the entire county than to confine the fiscal burden to certain neighborhoods while selectively exempting others. For instance, budget reductions that cut the service hours for every park or library are far more equitable than completely stripping these amenities from certain neighborhoods while leaving others unmolested.

Unfortunately, commissioners occasionally try to inoculate their District against sharing painful service concessions by manipulating the criteria used to frame a prospective budget cut. Last year, some of the proposals sponsored by Commissioners only targeted resources and programs located in neighboring districts, freeing their own constituents from adverse fiscal impacts.

One of these proposals recommended that the County close library branches situated in rented facilities. Since the library in Commissioner Lois Wexler's district is domiciled in a County-owned property, closing the County's 7 tenant libraries would only burden the constituents of other commissioners. Closer scrutiny revealed two drawbacks. While enraging tens of thousands of county residents, her proposal would save less than a half year's salary for one entry level management staffer. When the Galt Mile Reading Room was threatened by this politically skewed "budget recommendation" last year, neighborhood residents banded together to fight for their library's survival.

Within months, thousands of local residents signed petitions and dozens of associations and civic groups issued resolutions supporting their diminutive Reading Center. This documentation, in its entirety, was copied and sent to every county commissioner. Simultaneously, supportive emails flooded into Government Center. Although regarded as a convenient and useful amenity by most Galt Mile residents, a large group of indomitable seniors view the library as indispensable to their independence, quality of life and peace of mind. They inspired their friends, neighbors and public officials to see through the engineered budgetary spin and prevent the library from falling prey to county politics.

With the assistance of District 4 Broward County Commissioner Ken Keechl, the Galt Mile Community Association and a Library Committee comprised of local residents, the Galt Ocean Mile Reading Center dodged a bullet at last year's final County Budget Meeting. Having learned from last year's political ambush, Gardner sought to preempt another attack on the community library this year.

Responding to Gardner's May plea for help, neighborhood association officials contacted Commissioner Keechl to ascertain how to best protect the Reading Room from another politically motivated budget maneuver. On July 1st, Gardner and Keechl convened an 11 AM strategy meeting at the Reading Center.

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Soon after, the City posted a page on their web site entitled "Help Save Fort Lauderdale Beach," which provides the email addresses of the County Commissioners and states "The Fort Lauderdale City Commissioners need your help to make sure that Fort Lauderdale is not pushed to the back of the line. Let Broward County know that you oppose the proposed Port Everglades Sand Bypass Project and that you want them to implement the Segment II Beach Renourishment Project as promised." Their inclusion of Commissioner Keechl on the contact list wasn't necessary. In an earlier correspondence with the City Commission, the Broward Mayor expressed those same sentiments, demanding parody for Segment II beaches.

Enraged by a two-year runaround, the GMCA Advisory Board launched its own investigation. Asked to ascertain the status of resources allocated to renourish the Segment II beaches, Broward Commissioner Ken Keechl reported that the project's Federal and State funding was intact. Upon contacting Secretary Michael Sole of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the GMCA learned that Broward Beach officials hadn't responded to Departmental inquiries for the past year. While the two agencies were locked in a mysterious bureaucratic limbo, the Federal permit authorizing the project expired. When the GMCA reported this unfathomable stupidity to City officials and Commissioner Keechl, they went ballistic. Ordinarily restrained and imperturbable, Keechl promised someone's "head on a platter."

Prior to proceeding with Segment II, Broward beach officials would first have to repeat the environmental testing required for a new federal permit. Fortunately, since DEP Chief Mike Sole came to Tallahassee via Broward County, he is intimately familiar with the project's scientific and engineering parameters. While an arduous repetition of the federal permit process is unavoidable, in July of 2009, Sole had Florida Beaches & Coastal Systems Environmental Administrator Martin Seeling grant his Broward counterpart, Steve Higgins, a 5-year State permit extension through June 4, 2014, saving the Broward Beach Administrator months of additional paper shuffling.

The GMCA elicited an agreement from Sole to personally oversee future interagency communications and another from Keechl to closely follow the County's progress. Factoring in the additional time required for permitting exigencies and statutory delays attendant to turtle nesting season, the Segment II starting date is projected for late 2011.

Since the plan to rehabilitate our Segment II beaches was initially developed by the County and approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Broward coast has subsequently experienced severe incremental storm damage, predominantly from the serial hurricanes of 2004 and 2005. While all of the Segment II beaches were affected, several beach areas in Pompano and Lauderdale-by-the Sea suffered nearly full displacement. Prior to implementing the planned beach renourishment, a County-conceived interim effort is expected to return these beaches to their pre-storm (2004) condition - while providing a serendipitous benefit to the Galt Ocean Mile beach.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, has allocated \$4.5 million to initiate the planning, engineering and design of an approved storm reclamation effort entitled "Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Project" (FCCE). In a nutshell, before commencing the Segment II beach renourishment, the county plans to dump huge volumes of sand on compromised beach areas just north of Anglin's Pier. Project engineers confirm that the sand will naturally drift south, providing a near-immediate benefit to the northernmost Galt Ocean Mile beach. Within months, the continually migrating sand will similarly enhance beach footage along the entire Galt Mile. Ultimately, along with roughly 100 to 150 feet of sand from the Segment II beach renourishment, the Galt Ocean Mile Beach should realize an additional 15 to 30 feet of beach area from the FCCE project. Former Director Steve Somerville of the Broward County Department of Planning and Environmental Protection (DPEP) offered this less than memorable observation at the 2003 Florida Cabinet hearing, "You can never have too much sand on the beach."

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On May 27, 2010, Broward County Administrator Bertha Henry compiled a correspondence for Fort Lauderdale City Manager George Gretsas entitled "Beach Nourishment Activities Quarterly Report". The report is a status update of the two beach projects that affect every Galt Ocean Mile resident. Since the Broward Beach Renourishment Project and the Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Project are both exercises in coastal engineering, Gretsas copied City Engineer Al Carbon as well as the City Commission on June 14th.

In addition to updates relating to Segments I and III of the Beach Renourishment Project, Bertha Henry's notice to the City contained the following data about the General Information and Segment II project components.

Broward County Beach Erosion Control Program (Status as of May 12, 2010)

Beach Erosion Control, General:

- **Structure Study** Staff is finalizing review of the draft study. Following revision by the consultants, copies of the final report will be coordinated with shorefront municipalities.
- **Sand Search** The investigation located approximately 2.8 million cubic yards of sand offshore of the northern portion of the County, of which approximately 1.4 million cubic yards could be of adequate quality for use on our beaches, pending more detailed evaluations of sand quality and the potential for impacts to coral reef resources from use of the material.
- **Bahamian Sand** County staff is awaiting a response from the Bahamian Government to a request to purchase and import 200,000 cubic yards of Bahamian sand for a pilot project.
- **Funding Advocacy** Staff continues to work with state and national beach preservation associations, elected officials and agencies to advocate for continuation of state and federal funding for beach erosion control projects.

Segment II Beach Renourishment, Hillsboro Inlet to Port Everglades:

- **Project Reformation** The County is evaluating the design of the Segment II beach renourishment project in the context of current physical, economic and environmental conditions. The not-yet-formulated beach fill project could include material from one or more sand sources, and may involve sand brought in by truck. An agenda item for a consultant contract amendment to continue engineering/design and permitting will be coming before the Board of County Commissioners before summer break. The project could potentially result in sand placement on portions of beach in Fort Lauderdale, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, and Pompano Beach.
- **Primary Issues**
 - Increased regulation due to federal listing of two coral species found offshore of Broward County and the designation as critical of all hardbottom habitat;
 - Limited opportunity for dramatic widening of the beaches due to proximity of nearshore hardbottoms;
 - Increased regulatory emphasis on sand quality;
 - Costs for beach renourishment have increased while potential local, state, and federal funds have diminished.
- **Permitting** DEP has extended the formerly issued permit for nourishment of Segment II for five years while project re-formulation is conducted. There is no equivalent draft federal permit, which means a new Corps of Engineers permit will be required for a nourishment of Segment II beaches.
- **Federal Hurricane Beach Rehabilitation** The County has requested that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers implement the approved Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE) Project. The Jacksonville District Corps has allocated about \$4.5 million to initiate planning, engineering and design of a project restore to pre-storm conditions the previously constructed (Hillsboro inlet to the Fort Lauderdale/Lauderdale-by-the-Sea border) Segment II nourishment project. The Corps calculated that approximately 330,000 cubic yards of material would be placed on those beaches. The schedule for construction and exact placement areas are to be determined.
- **Schedule** Broward County-conducted beach construction in Segment II is targeted for November of 2011, pending completion of the engineering/design and permitting processes in a timely fashion.

Bertha Henry
County Administrator

While "heads on a platter" are a poor substitute for a healthy beach, Advisory Board members are sufficiently irate to take a cue from Mayor Keechl and "raise hell" if project progress is again victimized by ineptitude. As future notices are reviewed by the GMCA Advisory Board, they will also be posted on the Shore Protection section of the Galt Mile web site (www.galtmile.com). More to come...



Hopper dredge Liberty Island pumping sand onto John U. Lloyd Beach State Park

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, has allocated \$4.5 million to initiate the planning, engineering and design of an approved storm reclamation effort entitled "Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies Project" (FCCE).

Among the nearly 50 neighborhood residents attending the meeting were Fort Lauderdale City Commissioner Bruce Roberts, GMCA officials Eric Berkowitz, Fern McBride, Fred Nesbitt, Ralph Hamaker, Advisory Board members Frances Konstance, Jean Miller, and Plaza South activist Terry Claire (whose organizational skills were integral to last year's successful effort).

Although the library is a County facility, City Commissioner Roberts is personally familiar with the critical part played by the Reading Center in the lives of thousands of his neighbors and constituents. Last year, Roberts commissioned a bus that transported scores of Galt Mile residents to the final County Budget hearing. At that final budget showdown, Ken Keechl successfully managed the library's defense, reinforced by hundreds of attending residents and a mountain of supportive documentation.

After opening the meeting with a summary of last year's successful campaign, Gardner introduced Commissioner Keechl and the GMCA officials. Almost immediately, audience members began issuing disparate suggestions ranging from orderly attempts to demonstrate the library's community significance to Machiavellian acts of personal and/or political vengeance on any public official seeking to close its doors. The angry and frustrated residents devotedly admitted to needing the Reading Room, each passionately describing how it fulfills his or her life.

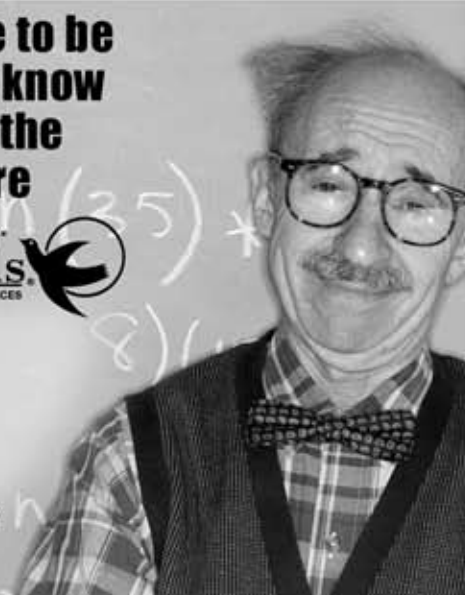
While the beach is the heart of our neighborhood, this mini-library at 3403 Galt Ocean Drive is certainly its soul. Arguably the most popular local resource on Galt Ocean Drive, it has provided battalions of mostly elderly residents with a convenient location to research almost anything, meet with friends or simply log in some quiet time. Thousands of previously technophobic local residents who were first introduced to the internet in Reading Room classes keep the six free online computers

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busy through closing time. While used to make resumes, do homework, hunt for jobs and pay bills, the Reading Room desktops provide hundreds of elderly residents with daily or weekly email and "instant Messenger" access to friends and family around the world - without draining precious dollars from Social Security checks that are already stretched to the breaking point.

Mayor Keechl spelled out the underlying budgetary inconsistency for the concerned audience. Although the savings attendant to closing the small branch libraries is negligible, cuts like these are suggested for political reasons. Protected by their union agreement (Local 1591 of the Amalgamated Transit Union), library staffers would be picked up elsewhere on the county payroll if the branch were closed. \$53,000 of the \$70,854 annual rental would have to be paid to landlord Virginia Erdman if the County bails out. In exchange for depriving neighborhood residents of their nearly 125,000 annual patron visits (during which 88,000 items are annually checked out), the county stands to save less than \$17,854.

Along with the Galt Ocean Mile Reading Center in Fort Lauderdale, other leased libraries at risk are the Beach Branch in Pompano Beach, the Hollywood Beach Library, the Riverland Library in Fort Lauderdale, the Pembroke Pines Library, the Century Plaza Library in Deerfield Beach and the Lauderhill Mall Library. The prospective savings realized by closing each of these is similarly negligible. Some of these branches closely mirror the Galt Mile Reading Center in their critical importance to community residents. The Beach Branch in Pompano and the Century Plaza Branch in Deerfield Beach are frequented by large numbers of elderly residents who also view their facilities as lifelines to the world. Like the Galt Mile Reading Center, they provide social opportunity, emotional sustenance and intellectual stimulation - "Quality of Life" necessities often lost to relocated retirees. Closing the facilities would sever thousands of Broward residents from scattered friends and family. The Galt Mile Reading Center and Beach branch in Pompano also serve as local polling sites for thousands of registered voters.

If the Galt Mile branch were closed, its nearly 6000 cardholding registrants and thousands of cardless patrons (family members and visitors) would be forced to travel to the Imperial Point Library on Federal Highway. Many of our residents originally moved to the Galt Mile because all of their living necessities were within walking distance. Whether unable to drive because of physical disabilities or economic constraints or simply no longer capable of medically qualifying for a license, our neighbors can walk to the library without relying on the "generosity" of others. Instead of pushing a walker across the street, disabled residents without a vehicle will have to plan their daily visits around public transportation and pay their way to and from a facility that is miles away on the mainland. To the library's disproportionately large complement of fixed income patrons plagued with mobility issues, the Imperial Point branch may as well be on Neptune.

There are also mitigating factors unique to the Galt Mile branch. In exchange for making huge annual contributions to the County's tax coffers, Galt Mile residents receive almost nothing in return. Half of our County tax assessment funds the Broward Sheriff's Office. Since we pay the City of Fort Lauderdale to provide our Police and Fire Protection, our county tax contributions actually subsidize neighboring jurisdictions that use BSO services. We have no local county parks or recreational resources and even fund our own beach maintenance and security. The long-awaited Broward Beach Renourishment was approved because the beach is one of the County's primary economic engines, subsidizing expenses all over Broward County and benefitting every Broward resident. There is only one County enterprise that was organized uniquely to enrich life in our community - the tiny Galt Ocean Mile

Reading Center. Absent that, we will have the unique distinction of being the only neighborhood in Broward County that receives absolutely nothing for our County tax dollars.

Following a battery of questions about the budget process and how the County Commission operates, GMCA officials Eric Berkowitz and Fred Nesbitt stressed that the meeting's primary objective was to decide on a strategy to preclude the county budget from digesting the Reading Room. Berkowitz explained that last year, after agreeing that waging a successful campaign would require intimate familiarity with county budget mechanics and insight into Commission politics, library supporters turned to Commissioner Keechl for guidance. By following his suggestions, the community was able to convince the Broward County Commission to hold safe the threatened local Reading Rooms. A majority of the attending residents agreed that we should stick with last year's successful formula and follow Mayor Keechl's advice again this year.

An ardent and longtime supporter of the Galt library, Keechl prefaced his evaluation of the threat with the ominous disclaimer "In politics, there are no guarantees." The Mayor then declared "This year's budget will be the most difficult... by far." Keechl explained that County Administrator Bertha Henry recently asked the commissioners to disclose which appropriations each one considered absolutely necessary to their district. The Galt Mile Reading Center was among the items named by Keechl. Henry then incorporated the "non-negotiable" items contributed by each commissioner into a draft county budget.

The Mayor said "At the June 22nd Budget Workshop, Ms. Henry released the details of her budget. While it preserves the library, it requires a modest increase to the millage rate." Keechl continued "Those of you who know me also know that I have issues with raising taxes. I believe that we can balance this budget without increasing the millage rate."

Since Broward property values dropped 11.7% last year (according to the Property Appraiser's July 1, 2010 valuation certification), the rolled back rate jumped to 5.62. In other words, in order to collect the same tax revenues that Broward collected this year, the county must increase the rate at which property is taxed (millage rate) from 4.889 (\$4.89 for every \$1000 of assessed value) to 5.62 (\$5.62 for every \$1000 of assessed value). Since the 5.3953 millage rate used for the County Administrator's budget is less than the 5.62 rolled back rate, it technically qualifies as a tax reduction according to the State - despite the increased tax rate. As to the raw dollars - the \$758.3 million in tax revenue required to fund Henry's FY 2011 budget is \$43.6 million less than the \$801.9 million that funds this year's FY 2010 budget.

Last year, Keechl said "To me, an increase in the millage rate equates to a tax increase," intimating discord with the statutory definition. However, some of his commission peers would love to meet Bertha Henry part way and approve a tax increase, obviating the need for additional painful spending cuts. The only reason they haven't yet done so is the non-stop hell being raised by local tax watchdogs. Certain commissioners, like Kristin Jacobs, held town hall meetings and dispatched district-wide mailings questioning whether constituents prefer service cuts or tax hikes. Hoping that a moving target will provide flexible deniability, others deftly flip-flop throughout the budget season.

Keechl warned that due to the extremely fluid political environment, it's impossible to rule out an attack on the library at any stage during the budget process. In fact, the County Administrator's budget contains a section called, "Options to Reduce Millage Rate Further" which features a sub-heading entitled "Severe Operational Cuts" and a line item that plainly states "Close Branch Libraries."

Continued on page 11

Mayor Keechl insisted that an eleventh hour assault on the branch libraries could easily succeed, "especially if the neighborhood is unprepared." If launched by some Commissioner, the only defense against a surprise attack is "a formidable demonstration of community support." When asked what that entailed, the Mayor clarified "We must be ready to demonstrate the neighborhood's passionate opposition to closing the Reading Center. That means collecting the same type of documentation the community generated last year." Stewing the offending Commissioner in supportive petitions and resolutions will bring the type of adverse publicity that screws up digestion in elected officials.

Keechl introduced another "factor" that may assume greater relevance in the near future. He said "There is growing pressure to revise how the County operates." Instead of nine turf-protecting commissioners taking turns serving as a figurehead Mayor, the Broward Workshop formulated a proposal replacing two commissioners with a strong Mayor and Vice Mayor chosen by and answerable to the entire Broward electorate. "With this prospect on the horizon, Commissioners with political ambitions will think twice before enraging neighborhoods all over the County, especially politically active communities such as the Galt Mile."

A week later, Plaza South's Terry Claire, a veteran of last year's fight, met with GMCA officials, Herman Gardner of the Galleon and Commodore resident Leann Barber to brief Leann about her new oversight responsibilities. Leann is riding herd on the petitions, Association Resolutions and "letters to Commissioners" that are being completed in every association.

Needless to say, the library's supporters have embarked on their mission to keep the facility's doors open. Please sign the petition in your lobby and the "Letter to Commissioners". They will be collected regularly, compiled into a package and sent to Mayor Keechl. Resolution templates have been emailed to every association. Every Board is requested to pass and sign the resolution. These will also be collected and added to the package prior to being forwarded to the Mayor. The Mayor will duplicate the package for each of his Commission peers and the County Administrator. The payoff - we get to keep our library. Life is rarely so simple.

Two things - please send emails indicating your support for the Galt Ocean Mile Reading Center to Mayor Keechl and/or the other County Commissioners. These will serve to lend credibility to the petitions. Also, the dates for the two County Budget meetings are September 14th and 28th. During one of these meetings, the County Libraries will come under consideration. When that date is announced, please plan on joining us in Government Center... you'll earn your celebratory button, a free t-shirt and a warm fuzzy feeling. Not to worry, Mylanta will accompany the refreshments.

County Commission Contact Info

Please let the County Commission members know that you want the Galt Ocean Mile Reading Center to survive! You can telephone the Commissioners or send emails using the email addresses below. Each County Commissioner maintains an office in Broward County Governmental Center (115 South Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301). To write them, simply insert the appropriate "Room No." found next to their names in the following list.

District 1 - Ilene Lieberman (Room 417) - (954) 357-7001 or

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ilieberman@broward.org
District 2 - Kristin D. Jacobs (Room 414) - (954) 357-7002 or
kjacobs@broward.org
District 3 - Stacy Ritter (Room 413) - (954) 357-7003 or
sritter@broward.org
District 4 - Ken Keechl (Room 412) - (954) 357-7004 or
kkeechl@broward.org
District 5 - Lois Wexler (Room 437B) - (954) 357-7005 or
lwexler@broward.org
District 6 - Sue Gunzburger (Room 421) - (954) 357-7006 or
sgunzburger@broward.org
District 7 - John E. Rodstrom, Jr. (Room 416) - (954) 357-7007 or
jrodstrom@broward.org
District 9 - Albert C. Jones (Room 411) - (954) 357-7009 or
acjones@broward.org
County Administrator Bertha Henry (Room 409) - (954) 357-7362
or bhenry@broward.org

The email addresses above are all posted as links on the Galt Mile web site (www.galtmile.com). On the home page, click the headline "Galt Library Under the Gun", scroll to the bottom of the article to the links. There is also one multi-link that will send one email to every County Commissioner and Broward County Administrator Bertha Henry. Check it out!•

COMMISSIONER BRUCE ROBERTS'S NEWSLETTER

** District 1 Commissioner Bruce G. Roberts' June 2010 Newsletter blends a Hurricane Season preparation reminder, progress with busting up a commercial engine for the South Florida drug trade, a new parking venue that will enable drivers to feed the meter without interrupting their dinner, and prospective salvation for Fort Lauderdale Stadium. He opens with a reminder that, prior to the past few seasons, when Hurricanes repeatedly shredded City services, survival became largely dependent on reviving primordial "hunter gatherer" instincts. Those of us that fail to implement appropriate preparations may cultivate an opportunity to revisit that experience. For residents that envision becoming part of the solution instead of part of the problem, Roberts recommends the free training offered to Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers.*

Updating his March 2010 report on the Pill Mill trade, Roberts reviews some of the City's recent strikes against illegal Pain Clinics. During the past legislative session, lawmakers enacted Senator Mike Fasano's Senate Bill 2272, A.K.A. the Pill Mill Bill. Among its common sense regulations is a medical oversight requirement for Pain Clinics. Working with State Health authorities, D.E.A., F.B.I., and the Broward Sheriff, Fort Lauderdale police have initiated a campaign to cripple the South Florida supply chain of legal drugs that ultimately fuel the illegal street drug trade.

On April 5th, the Florida Department of Health shut down the Fort Lauderdale Pain Relief Center at 201 W. Oakland Park Boulevard. Two weeks after suspending the clinic's main physician, 85 year-old Dr. Michael Lazopina, for over-prescribing thousands of painkillers, the Health Department closed the clinic for operating without a "designated physician" responsible for ensuring medical standards. The Fort Lauderdale Pain Relief Center is owned by Integra Health Services, a company run by chiropractors Michael Rechter and David Romano, who operate similar clinics in Dania Beach, West Palm Beach and Jacksonville. Not surprisingly, they also run an MRI facility in Louisville along with pain clinics in Louisville and Elizabethtown, Kentucky - one of three states where huge numbers of South Florida prescriptions are filled and resold.

On May 4th, the Health Department closed the Broward Chronic Pain and Recovery Center on Powerline Road after suspending the medical license of Dr. Alfred E. Boyce on April 28th for prescribing 10,800 tablets to six patients over a six month period. The pills were predominantly oxycodone and Xanax, two highly addictive drugs that are Mother's milk on the Black Market. The 80-year old Dr. Boyce is a local police blotter "Hall of Famer". His license was also suspended in 2004 and 2005 when the chiropractor running an Oakland Park cosmetic medicine clinic left four people comatose from overdoses of botulinum toxin shots ordered in Boyce's name. The Pill Mill is owned by businessman William D. Benton.

Five days earlier, on April 30th, Fort Lauderdale police and state agents raided the Mercy Wellness and Recovery Center on Northeast 48th Street, another of Benton's cash cows. Benton also owns the Fort Lauderdale Pain and Rehabilitation Clinic in a strip plaza on Commercial Boulevard around the corner from his Broward Chronic Pain operation. Doctors working in these clinics are paid between \$800,000 and a \$1,200,000 a year, based primarily on the number of people they'd plied with pills.

On May 24th, Fort Lauderdale police and Florida Department of Health officials raided the Broward Urgent Care clinic at 1409 SE First Ave. The clinic's medical director, Dr. Bernard Cantor, is an obstetrician and faculty member at Florida International University medical school. The clinic's president is Alan Daley. Simultaneously, Federal agents arrested Boca Raton internist Dr. Michael Roy Shook, owner and supervising doctor of the Lauderhill Medical Clinic at 2762 W. Oakland Park Boulevard. Although state health authorities filed a disciplinary case against the 52-year-old Shook on February 10, 2010 and barred him from prescribing narcotic drugs, he and the clinic's listed president, ultrasound technician Gary Adams, continued hawking up to 700 pills a month to "mules" from Eastern Kentucky. Following a two-year investigation by a federal task force in Kentucky and South Florida, members of the "James Marsillet II" drug ring in Kentucky identified Shook as their primary supplier.

Roberts announces a new Parking technology that offers several unique conveniences to drivers. The City cut a deal with Verrus Mobile Technologies to create a Pay by telephone parking option. At locations identified by a green "Pay by Phone" sign, vehicle owners can manage their parking charges using their cell phones. At first glance, this is a somewhat cumbersome alternative to popping some change into a meter. It also requires the creation and subsequent oversight of an account funded by your credit card. However, this new parking technology offers several significant advantages. The most useful of these is being able to extend the time period by simply calling from wherever you are - no more running out of restaurants during dessert. Second - your account can also be used wherever Verrus offers this service, such as throughout the City of Miami and for certain car services and taxicabs. For drivers that require receipts for tax purposes or reimbursement, they can be generated at will from the Verrus web site. If your vehicle is mistakenly ticketed while using the service, a quick call to Parking Services sends the citation to the round file. At two bits a pop, this service is a

worthwhile endeavor.

When Sarasota hijacked the Baltimore Orioles spring training program, Fort Lauderdale Stadium wound up in the City Commission's lap. They could have either held a garage sale to attract another club, which would mean fixing it up and taking a beating on the rent, or consigning the once proud facility to a slow death hosting little league finals. Commissioner Roberts reviews a preferable alternative to watching the recession chew up the Stadium's rusting hulk.

The Schlitterbahn Development Group (SDG) deal will renovate and transform the 18,500-seat Lockhart Stadium into a state-of-the-art tournament-sized multi-use athletic field that will meet the standards for National Federation State High School Association (NFHS) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). It will become a lynchpin for the Sports Village and a water park featuring the Tidal Wave River (the first computer-controlled, endless river with adjustable wave action), Master Blaster (uphill water coaster using water-injection technology) and the Endless Water Slide (an Aqua Veyer-based downhill compliment to the Master Blaster). The facility will accommodate virtually any sports venue and serve as the permanent home of The Broward County Sports Hall of Fame - recognizing inductees Angelo Dundee (Boxing), Chris Evert (Tennis), Andy Granatelli (Auto Racing), Dan Marino & Danny Kanell (Football). The City should grab the deal and count its blessings. Holiday conflicts will delay Roberts' next pre-agenda meeting until after the summer hiatus. The Commissioner's June offering reviews some innovative solutions to several difficult problems. Read on... - [editor]*

Continued on page 13



District 1 Commissioner
Bruce Roberts

FROM THE DESK OF COMMISSIONER BRUCE G. ROBERTS

Now that Hurricane Season has started, this is a good time to remind everyone to make sure you are prepared. Though only a few may lose power, we cannot forget the damage that even a tropical storm can do. The City is ready to respond, but I urge residents to make their own preparations for this hurricane season. Part of this preparation should include creating a disaster plan and assembling a disaster supply kit. The kit should include at least three days worth of water (one gallon, per person, per day) and non-perishable food for each person in your family. Other essential supplies you should have readily available include: a can opener, flashlights, a battery operated radio, batteries, cash, pet supplies, medications, extra eyeglasses, contact lenses and supplies for people with special needs. For a complete list of emergency supplies and other preparedness tips.

Visit the new City hurricane website at ci.ftlaud.fl.us/hurricane/index.htm. If you are interested in helping your fellow residents after a hurricane, I encourage you to join the Community Emergency Response Team (or "CERT"). CERT is a highly trained, volunteer group that

Continued on page 15

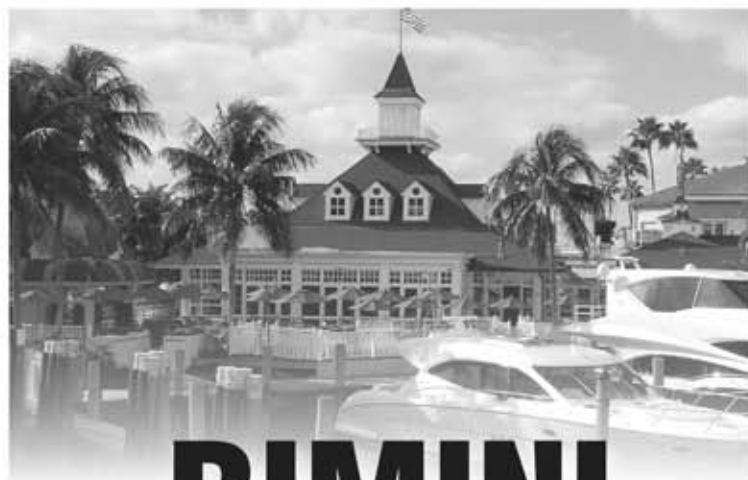
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Parrish observed that the number of properties in foreclosure is down significantly compared to last year, along with the MLS real estate inventory of available properties. The number of filings in South Florida fell 49 percent in May from a year ago (filings dropped 55 percent in Broward County and 36 percent in Palm Beach County). However, the value of certain distressed individual properties or isolated neighborhood pockets may be subject to further declines. Since condo values traditionally take longer to stabilize and recover than single family homes and commercial properties, she warned that certain condo communities may also experience modest dips in value.

The 2010 assessments are based on property values as of January 1, 2010, as measured by qualified sales recorded during the January 2, 2009 through January 1, 2010 assessment period (with greatest weight given to sales in the 4th quarter of 2009). The 2011 assessments will reflect the prices realized during this calendar year. Next year's tax roll will therefore remain relatively flat (i.e., similar to the 2010 tax roll values). Since the positive indicators bode hardening values and prices for 2011, these improvements won't be reflected in the tax rolls until 2012.

Using a laptop and a projector, Parrish displayed the 2010 Estimate of Taxable Values for Broward as of June 1, 2010. Although the Property Appraiser doesn't officially submit a Certification of tax roll Values to ad valorem taxing authorities, special assessment districts, and the Department of Revenue until July 1st, the June 1st estimate is virtually identical to the final numbers used to calculate the rollback rate and a proposed millage rate. The only possible changes may issue from correcting errors discovered during the 30 day period prior to July 1st.

According to her statistics, taxable values for the overall county dropped an average 12.1%, although the numbers vary for each municipality, neighborhood and taxing authority district. Valuation declines in the County's largest cities are 10.6% in Fort Lauderdale, 11.8% in Hollywood and 14.7% in Pompano Beach. To better demonstrate that the county statistics blend a wide range of valuations, Parrish pointed out that Davie and Lauderdale-by-the-Sea only saw a 7.4% drop while North Lauderdale values plunged 24.3%.

Parrish demonstrated some of the useful tools available on the BCPA website. Broward property owners can file for a Homestead Exemption online. To file for other exemptions, simply download the appropriate form from the forms page, complete the application and send it in. Using the Property Search feature, anyone can research the valuation history of any Broward property, including recorded notices. The website's Community Outreach Calendar details the locations, time and place for 12 months of outreach events.

Prior to opening the floor to questions, the Property Appraiser ran through some locally scheduled events, stating "A BCPA staffer will assist Galt Mile residents with Homestead, Senior and other property tax exemptions at the Beach Community Center on Friday, June 25, 2010 from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM. Over the summer, events are scheduled for Fridays at 10 AM on July 30, August 27 and September 24, 2010."

When asked if a new property owner could still apply for a 2010 Homestead Exemption, she answered "To late file for 2010, you must be on the title and the property must have been your permanent residence as of January 1, 2010. The deadline is September 20, 2010. If you purchased your home this year, you inherited the seller's exemption status for the current tax year." Parrish reminded Advisory Board members that new homebuyers are eligible for an \$8000 Federal credit if buying their first home or if they can document having lived for 5 consecutive years in their previous primary residence.

Several members asked why they saw a small valuation increase on

their last TRIM notices despite a decline in the property's value. Parrish explained that under Florida law, a homestead "recapture" rule might cause some taxable values to rise even when the overall market value drops versus the previous year. Parrish said "If you are Homesteaded and your 'Save Our Homes' value is less than the market value as of January 1, your overall assessed value is increased each year - up to the 3% annual cap - until it eventually reaches the same amount as the market value." The Department of Revenue set this year's "Save Our Homes" (SOH) rate at 2.7%. Parrish added "Roughly 182,000 Broward homeowners will experience the recapture effects of this law - mostly owners who purchased and homesteaded their properties before 2003."

Given the growing impact of foreclosures on associations, members asked Parrish how foreclosures and short sales affect a buyer's prospective exemptions. Parrish said that the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR) issued an advisory opinion that foreclosures generally should not be used for assessment purposes. However, Property Appraisers may qualify a foreclosure sale if the property was listed for sale on the MLS open market and the property is in decent condition. Using the same criteria, Property Appraisers can similarly qualify short sales.

Returning to the laptop and projector, Parrish said "You can search for recorded notices of foreclosure, liens, lis pendens, release of liens, court judgments, and various other documents on the Broward County Records Division website." While punching up an example, she explained "By using the 'Category' feature on their search page, you can limit your search to foreclosures or liens."

A member asked whether unit owners can rent their units without losing their Homestead exemptions. Quoting from the governing statute, Parrish responded "Section 196.061 of the Florida Statutes says that 'rental of a dwelling previously claimed to be a homestead for tax purposes shall constitute the abandonment of said dwelling as a homestead.' Ordinarily, only active duty military personnel are exempt." Parrish then described a universal yet little known exception to this rule.

She said "Under a hardship situation, we will allow a once-in-a-lifetime exemption, provided the entire rental term falls within a single calendar year." To clarify the type of hardship considered for this exception, Parrish said, "For example, if someone was hospitalized from March through October and wanted to rent their home, we would allow a one-time exception to the abandonment rule. However, if the unit was rented for only a single day from December 31st through January 1st, the exemption would be lost. The rental must end before January 1st and can only be used once during any property owner's lifetime." Parrish recommended that unit owners interested in exploring this one-time exception - renting their Homesteaded property without sacrificing the exemption - contact her office.

Before Parrish wrapped up her presentation, GMCA President Pioletti expressed concern about a notice sent to Galt Mile associations by the Property Appraiser's office requesting that they turn over any information about unit owners that may have improperly applied for a Homestead Exemption. Pioletti said "I am disturbed by this request. Not only are we being asked to do your job, I believe that it's wrong to violate the confidentiality of our members' information."

When discussed during a previous Advisory Board meeting, the Board members decided against cooperating with this request. While fraud costs everyone money, it was deemed inappropriate for associations to disclose confidential information about their members unless withholding that information placed anyone in danger. To preclude inadvertent compliance with this request by some unsuspecting association office employee, it was also suggested that each association should instruct their administrative personnel to turn over such requests to the Board.

Continued on page 18

assists the City after local emergencies. Through Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue, you can receive free training that covers disaster terminology, standard triage, basic first aid, fire suppression, light search and rescue techniques and disaster awareness. After graduation you will be prepared to care for your family and your community, and you will be part of a team that may be called upon to assist the City during an emergency. Free beginner and continuing education classes are available. For more information please call 954-828-6832.

Pain Clinic Update We have recently closed two clinics by Holy Cross, one by Executive Airport, one on Oakland Park Boulevard, and "raided" the clinic near Broward General Hospital. I know there are several others in the City, but please be assured that this Commission is aggressively pursuing the elimination of ALL illegal pain clinic operations within our City. Our Police Department and Code Enforcement are actively involved in this undertaking along with federal agencies and the Florida Department of Health... progress is being made.

Pay by Phone Parking is Now Available On April 1, 2010, the City implemented Pay by Phone Parking. In areas where this service is implemented, you no longer need cash for parking. Simply park your car, make one short phone call, and then head for your destination. You can even choose to receive a text message reminder before your parking time expires. You have the option of calling back and extending your parking session from anywhere, subject to meter time limits. Pay By Phone parking is convenient, easy and safe. When you pay for your parking by phone, your parking space and parking time are automatically displayed on a handheld device used by the parking officer. The regular parking charge plus a 35-cent convenience fee (25 cents if you de-select the optional 10-cent text message reminder cost) will be charged to your credit card. A history of transactions is then viewable any time you log into your account. For more information log on to http://ci.flaud.fl.us/parking/pay_by_phone.htm.

Fort Lauderdale Stadium Four proposals were submitted to redevelop this property. One of the responses came from Schlitterbahn regarding a waterpark and multi-sport multi-use athletic facility. While Schlitterbahn has several award winning parks in this country (ranked #1 for the last twelve years), it is also an internationally recognized successful and reputable family enterprise. They are agreeable to a fair market appraisal as the basis for the rent, which is consistent with City of Fort Lauderdale requirements and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines for long-term leases of Airport property. Schlitterbahn gave a presentation at the Conference Agenda on June 14, 2010. The plan is to transform the site into a destination attraction – one that integrates sports including youth facilities, water-based entertainment, retail opportunities and lodging. They will keep and upgrade Lockhart Stadium. They are confident that the park will attract hundreds of thousands of sports enthusiasts and vacationing families, as well as create new jobs and expand tax revenues. They propose to spend \$110 million to construct the park and will not ask the City for any financial support. The Commission is seriously looking at this proposal, and directed Schlitterbahn to negotiate with City staff and the Broward County School Board. I will keep you updated.

As a reminder, I host two Pre-agenda Meetings per month in addition to attending homeowner meetings at your request. The pre-agenda meetings focus on items of interest as well as the upcoming agenda. They are held the Monday before a Commission Meeting, 6p.m., Cardinal Gibbons High School, Media Room. Also, we have changed our usual summer schedule – our last meeting until recess is July 7, 2010 and will resume again August 17, 2010. We will not be having a pre-agenda meeting July 5, 2010 as the offices will be closed due to the 4th of July holiday.

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AUGUST/SEPT

SUN	MON	TUE	WED
8 Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166	9 Aerosmith BankAtlantic Center 7:30 p.m. Tix.: 954-835-7825	10 	11 Summer Movie Series "The Muppet Movie" Las Olas Lawn 8 p.m.
15 Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166	16 Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Cardinal Gibbons High School, Media Room 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	17 	18 Summer Movie Series "Chocolat" Las Olas Lawn 8 p.m.
22 Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166	23 First Day of Classes Broward County Public Schools	24 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.	25 Natalie Merchant Broward Center Tix.: www.browardcenter.org
29 Hippifest Broward Center 7 p.m. Tix.: 954-462-0222	30 Classic Gold Music Rewards Hard Rock Live 8 p.m.	31 Tears For Fears Broward Center 8 p.m. Tix.: 954-462-0222	1 Meatloaf Hard Rock Live 8 p.m.
5 Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5985	6 Everglades Bird Festival Flamingo Gardens Info.: www.flamingogardens.com	7 Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Cardinal Gibbons High School, Media Room 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	8 Erev Rosh Hashana Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF EVENTS, GO TO THE CALENDAR AT
WWW.GALTMILE.COM

ONE SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

THU

FRI

SAT

12

2nd on 2nd Thursdays Block Party
200 Block SW 2nd Street
5 to 9 p.m.
Info.: 954-468-1541

BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr)
7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

13

Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

14

Gardening Class: Orchid Basics
Flamingo Gardens
10 a.m. to Noon
Registration:
www.flamingogardens.org

Gun and Knife Show
(Through 8/15)
War Memorial Auditorium
Info.: 954-828-5380

19

BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr)
7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

20

Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

21

Gardening Class: Butterfly Gardening
Flamingo Gardens
1 to 3 p.m.
Registration: www.flamingogardens.org

26

BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr)
7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

27

Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

28

Gardening Class:
Tropical Fruit Trees in S. Florida
1 to 3 p.m.
Registration: www.flamingogardens.org

2

BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr)
7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

3

Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

4

9

2nd on 2nd Thursdays Block Party
200 Block SW 2nd Street
5 to 9 p.m.
Info.: 954-468-1541

BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr)
7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

10

Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

11

The Off Broadway In Broward Series Presents
BARE
(Through 9/18)
Broward Center for the Performing Arts
Tix.: 954-462-0222

UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR AREA

September 16
G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting
Nick's Italian Restaurant, 11 a.m.

September 23
Neil Young
Hard Rock Live, 8 p.m.
Tix.: ticketmaster.com

September 25-November 20
Synergy Dragon Boat Racing Series
Quiet Waters Park
Info.: 954-232-7434

September 25-27
7th Annual Butterfly Days at Fairchild
Fairchild Tropical Garden, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Info.: www.fairchildgarden.org

October 1
Crosby, Stills, and Nash
Hard Rock Live, 8 p.m.
Info.: www.ticketmaster.com

October 2 - January 9, 2011
Clyde Butcher Photography Exhibit: America the
Beautiful: The Monumental Landscape
Museum of Discovery & Science and AutoNation IMAX Theater
Info.: 954-467-6637

October 28 - November 1
Ft Lauderdale International Boat Show
Info.: 954-764-7642



Parrish answered, "I understand that that you may be hesitant to inform on your neighbors or reveal information you consider confidential. The letter is simply a request for your help. I hope you understand why I am so passionate about fraudulent exemptions. These people are increasing the tax bill for every other Broward property owner, not unlike those association members that default on their assessments and force their neighbors to assume their obligations." She emphasized that this type of fraud is a strategically planned annual rip-off, not a desperate knee-jerk reaction to current financial pressures. Particularly irksome to Parrish is the fact that most violators can well afford the assessment. Parrish said "These crooks couldn't care less that they are hurting every one of their neighbors. When I see the pain suffered by taxpayers struggling to scrape by this economic catastrophe, I don't have much patience for those who deliberately add to their burden - and yours - and mine!"

Hoping to better illustrate the moral dilemma precipitated by her request, Ieraci retorted, "Lori - we are all very grateful for the improvements you've engineered in the Property Appraiser's Office. We all support your efforts to stamp out the fraud that costs us \$millions every year. Although I personally agree that fraudulent exemptions

are despicable, I believe that Board members are obligated to safeguard confidential information about the association's members." In what appeared to be a duel for the last word, the Property Appraiser leveled a response that was pure Parrish, "I understand, Pio, nobody likes a rat."

FYI - A few weeks later, Parrish's mildly encouraging economic indicators grew a bit brighter. When the July 1st Tax Roll Values were released, the 12.1% decline in county-wide valuations contracted to 11.7%. The estimated 10.6% decrease in Fort Lauderdale property values was revised to 10%. After these July 1st valuations are certified by Parrish, they provide guidance for every taxing authority struggling to find a millage rate that will fund their objectives without fomenting a taxpayer rebellion. Perhaps Parrish is right... maybe things are looking up!

For additional information about Property Appraiser Lori Parrish, your tax bite and access to years of "Ask Lori" entries (scores of relevant questions asked by Broward residents about taxes, exemptions and valuations were answered by the Property Appraiser), check the "Property Appraiser" page on the Galt Mile Community Association web site (www.galtmile.com). Click "Issues" on the horizontal navigation bar at the top of every page, click Property Appraiser and scroll down... simple!•

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