# GALT MILE NEWS

JUNE 201

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GMCA







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## BEATING BACK UTILITY GRAFFITI: 87EP1



For more than a decade, the Galt Mile Community Association met with intermittent success while trying to enforce a City promise to maintain in a "Disney-like manner" the self-funded landscape and hardscape features included in the 1993 Galt Mile Improvement Project. In late 2008, alternating periods of healthy green and crispy brown sidewalk beds finally came to an end.

Appointed by the Galt Mile Community Association Advisory Board, Commodore resident Jose "Chepo" Vega provided two ingredients required to reverse the rotating neglect - unrelenting oversight and the dogged pursuit of City officials charged with neighborhood maintenance. For more than a year, Chepo has undertaken a campaign to eliminate the local incarnation of a nationwide street blight he calls "Utility Graffiti".

Intuitively, it's a no-brainer. "Just make the bums who vandalize our streets erase their stinkin' mess. What's the big deal?" It's not that simple. The cryptic multicolored ciphers aren't random insults to the neighborhood's aesthetic integrity. They are the functional by-product of a company parented by the State Legislature, Sunshine State One-Call of Florida, Inc. (One-Call or SSOCOF).

The company maintains a current and comprehensive statewide database of buried system components belonging to their extensive membership of public utilities and private companies (operators). When informed of a planned excavation anywhere in the State, One-Call notifies member operators with facilities in the area of the proposed excavation or demolition. Within two business days (except when emergency repairs are indicated), they deploy an 8-color palette and scores of anagrammatic identifiers to mark the location of interred gas lines, pull boxes, water lines, electrical plexus, telephone linkages, cable conduits and other buried utility components. They also generate a similarly marked hand-held map for delivery to the excavator. Armed with a map of the buried utility elements, the job can proceed without wreaking havoc on local utility services. Before the One-Call system was legally formalized in Florida, black-outs, dry-outs and the loss of telephone, internet and television services hit buildings, blocks or entire neighborhoods with alarming frequency.

Marking an area for excavation requires high-priced personnel using a pantheon of expensive electronic detection equipment. The need to quickly and accurately perform this function has cultivated a specialized niche market. Some larger companies exploit economies of scale to financially justify developing in-house marking capabilities. Smaller operators and other utilities opt to outsource this responsibility to dedicated marking companies such as the United States Infrastructure Corporation (USIC).

Member operators are mandated to only map areas earmarked for excavation within 30 days. For projects that extend beyond one month, they are supposed to return each subsequent month to map the next 30 days of planned excavation. While this strategy effectively limits the utility graffiti a neighborhood must tolerate at any given time, it doubles mapping expenses for a two month project and multiplies marking costs for a year-long project by a factor of twelve. Forced to choose between a statutory slap on the wrist and a healthy addition to the corporate coffers, operators will often flood the street with months of markings while executing a boilerplate apology to One-Call alleging some unfortunate administrative oversight.

Since excavators are liable for damages that result from misreading degraded or adulterated markings, if wind, rain or foot traffic erodes the marking medium, the excavator must postpone demolition and ask One-Call to repeat the mapping process. Since time is money, excavators and operators both prefer using marking materials blended to endure a nuclear winter.

In a perfect world, the markings are erased when the construction is complete. In fact, the markings ordinarily survive the attendant project by months - or years. When local governments across Florida passed a wide variety of ordinances requiring that operators apply for a permit, pre-mark the target area, use certain low impact paints or remove the marks when the job was finished, the legislature responded with a statute that countermanded these local laws and forbade future interference with One-Call operations.

When the legislature passed the Underground Facility Damage Prevention and Safety Act, Chapter 556, F.S. in 1993, it failed to provide for removal of the markings required by the legislation. Last year, Florida Senator Michael Bennett filed Senate Bill 982 to cure that enigmatic omission. Unfortunately, his bill was neutered during an eleventh hour swap for a committee substitute. Instead of requiring that facility operators remove whatever substance they use to mark a designated area, SB 982 encouraged One-Call to educate member operators about the benefits of low-impact marking practices, reducing the bill to a bad joke. It also prohibited local government from "adopting any conflicting laws."

Out of options, Chepo appealed to the Advisory Board for ideas. Unable to agree on a meaningful target, flustered board members decided against initiating an angry letter writing campaign. After some discussion, it was suggested that the community relations department supported by every major utility might be receptive to a project that could generate a truckload of statewide positive publicity. These wellfunded corporate appendages are always on the lookout for opportu Continued on page 5

#### Graffiti.. Continued

nities to rehabilitate corporate reputations shattered by decades of arrogantly abusing a mostly captive customer base. It would certainly be a step up from sponsoring refreshments for participants in a golden age Mah Jongg tournament or slapping the corporate logo on county fair chariot pulls for three-legged bulldogs. City Commissioner Bruce Roberts informed Advisory Board members about a city department that regularly interfaces with utility representatives.

The board asked Commissioner Roberts and County Commissioner Chip LaMarca to broker a meeting with City and County utility liaisons, One-Call representatives and the neighborhood association. At a subsequent Presidents Council meeting in Coral Ridge Towers, Roberts reported that he'd received enthusiastic feedback from a key official in Sunshine State One-Call. He also consulted with Public Works personnel who work with corporate counterparts in utilities that service Fort Lauderdale residents. Following the roadmap outlined earlier by the Advisory Board, Roberts announced that he and County Commissioner LaMarca would next arrange a meeting with all the parties.

Roberts initially contacted Damage Prevention Liaison Sergio J. Clavijo of Sunshine State One-Call and spelled out the community's objective. Clavijo agreed to meet with GMCA officials and representatives of Utilities that service the Galt Mile neighborhood immediately following the March 17, 2011, Advisory Board meeting. Hitting the

phones, Roberts, LaMarca and Clavijo reached out to representatives from AT&T, FP&L, TECO Gas, Comcast and USIC (United States Infra-structure Corporation – a well-reputed underground utility locator engaged by many Florida utilities).

The 2 PM meeting in Galt Ocean Club included Distribution and Collection Division Chief Kris Kmon from the City of Fort Lauderdale Public Works Department (repairs road surfaces), Utility Coordinator
Wayne Windsor from TECO Peoples Gas, Cable Damage Prevention
Coordinator Margaret Rodriguez from AT&T, Statewide Cable Locator
Mario Escalona from FP&L, USIC's Thomas Fernandez (marking contractor for FP&L, AT&T & Comcast), Sergio J. Clavijo and his boss Damage Presentation manager Cheryl Ritter of Sunshine State One-

Early in the meeting, it became evident that Clavijo and Ritter survive in a state of quiet desperation. The same people who bitterly complain about the street markings would spit blood if their telephone lines were clipped by some non-compliant landscaping contractor or more to the point, if their lives were endangered by an inadvertently ruptured gas line. Consequently, One-Call also takes heat for the ac-tions of member-operators who inflame neighborhood tensions by overmarking excavation sites and fail to remove markings for longcompleted projects. During the 20 years spent in futile anticipation of a legislative rescue, all parties to the One-Call system were forced to make due without an integral part of their operational playbook.

From their discussion with One-Call and area utility representatives, GMCA officials learned that the main obstacle to fimely removal of utility markings is a communication lapse at the final stage of the process. Since there is no financial or statutory incentive to remove the markings, utilities have historically assigned a low priority to following up on a project's progress. Similarly, once excavators finish digging their holes, they collect their fees and hit the wind. Because One-Call doesn't have the resources to aggressively monitor the status of excavations statewide, these projects understandably fall through the cracks. If some methodology could be developed to reliably in-form operators when a project is completed, they would agree to remove the markings in short order.

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## LESSONS FROM A GALT MILE TRAGEDY BY ETIC BETKOWITZ



Last year, veteran Building Manager Jim Beard of the Ocean Riviera called Private Investigator (PI) Jim Rigney, a retired New York City Detective who lives in The Regency Tower.
Rigney's agency, Pelican Group International,
does background checks of prospective buyers
or tenants for several Galt Mile associations. When Beard told Rigney that he had a job for him, he headed south to Beard's building at 3550 Galt Ocean Drive. On his arrival, Beard handed him a file containing a screening application for the Ocean Riviera Condominium Association. Rigney got to work.

Throughout their careers, law enforcement professionals meet counterparts in municipal and State police departments, intelligence agencies, prison systems, the Justice Department and a broad spectrum of Federal and International police, intelligence and penal services. In time, these casual relationships morph into an informal yet impressive informational network. If the former crime fighters become private investigators when they retire, the quality of these contacts is one of the most important professional assets that will serve to distinguish them from competitors. Needless to say, Rigney's post-career outreach is substantial. His Pélican Group International performs investigations worldwide.

For the case he was just assigned by Beard, he would have to collect chips from all over the country. The Ocean Riviera applicant spent time in Grand Rapids & Byron Center (Michigan), Lawrenceville & Grayson (Georgia), Chattanooga (Tennessee) and the North Beach area in Fort Lauderdale. Although it isn't unusual for Rigney to find negative reports about a subject, the bad news about this guy was off the charts. The PI's public and private sources ultimately turned up 30 reports tagging the target a bad risk. Because Ocean Riviera's savvy manager hired an overachieving former gumshoe, the association rejected

the tenant - and a boatload of trouble.

In June of 2010, a persistent Brian Edward Krebs found an alternative location in his preferred Galt Ocean Mile neighborhood. Originally designed as a high-end apartment house, converted into a condo-hotel and finally a condominium, the Galt Ocean Club at 3800 Galt Ocean Drive has a higher proportion of snowbirds than many neighboring associations. It's very popular with South Americans and Europeans seeking a second home in South Florida. They often rent their apartments for most of the year. Other owners live here in Florida.

Coral Springs resident Luis Desousa generates rental income from unit 908, a Galt Ocean Club apartment he's owned for decades. Given the economic squeeze, he was lucky to fill his unit with a tenant. On his "Linked in" page, Krebs lists his occupation as CEO and owner of Oncology & Biotech Recruiting, a biotech sales placement service listed at 4326 Bougainvilla Drive in Lauderdale by the Sea. It also indicates that Krebs was formerly a sales representative for Eli Lilly and Co. in Chicago.

Krebs graduated from East Grand Rapids High School in 1991. He maintains having earned all-conference and all-state honors while performing as the captain of the football, hockey and baseball teams. He also claims that he graduated from Western Michigan University and was working toward a master's degree from the University of Michigan. Ironically, on his Facebook page, he purports having a Master's Degree in Mental Health Counseling.

Although unaware that Krebs' yellow sheet stretched around the block, Desousa knew that Krebs took "heavy medication" to stabilize his moods. Nevertheless, Desousa felt comfortable with Krebs' credentials and considered him a viable tenant. Had Desousa checked online Broward County court records, he would have known that Krebs was convicted of attempted burglary and assault and battery in 2003 and ordered to probation. Presumably, he was oblivious to what his tenant was capable of.

On April 17, 2011, Galt Mile Community Association President Pio Ieraci copied an email to every member association. leraci also serves as President of Galt Ocean Club Condominium. Entitled "One Killed - 5 injured - Stabbing" and addressed to "All", a seemingly exasperated leraci wrote:

"Please excuse this intrusion into your Sunday evening and the tone of this note. It seems that we as association leaders are constantly lambasted as "bad people", "intolerant", "condo commandoes" etc.

Last week Brian Krebs a tenant/renter at GOC (Galt Ocean Club) threw a lamp through his 9th floor apartment window, sending shards of glass down to the pool and pool deck below. He went on a rampage inside the apartment smashing the toilet bowl, all glass tables, imbedded a butcher knife in the wall etc. The GOC security staff has photographs of all the damage. The Fort Lauderdale Police stayed at the building waiting for Krebs to return. The GOC security staff was instructed by the Administration not to allow this lunatic back into the building fearing imminent danger to residents of the building.

The next day Krebs arrived at the building with the owner of the apartment and letter from his attorney, threatening the Association with legal action if he was barred from reentering the building.

After investigating the April 9th incident at Galt Ocean Club, police issued a BOLO (be on the look-out) advisory for Krebs, warning officers that he was on the loose and possibly dangerous. Police didn't issue a warrant or charge Krebs with any crime.

Apologizing again for his "rant", leraci came to the point. As tight-knit vertical communities, we rely on Statutory Law, condominium documents and the Associations' rules and regulations to insure members a safe and secure home environment. They also protect us from inadvertently or intentionally abusing or endangering one another. Unfortunately, as associations cycle through periods of political upheaval, it becomes popular to attack the board members, managers and security staffers only because it's their job and/or responsibility to enforce those rules.

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Ironically, the fact that these markings persist long after the related construction is finished isn't lost on the local residents. If a community representative could somehow confirm a project's completion and promptly notify the operator, the markings could be expeditiously addressed. As Sergio explained, it is impossible to ascertain a project's status based solely on casual observation. However, if the community representative was provided limited access to proprietary documentation by the utilities and public records by the City, any lingering uncertainty about a project's completion might be dispelled. Admittedly unaware of any precedent for this type of ad hoc solution, optimistic participants viewed the meeting as an important first step. Before proceeding, the utility liaisons would try to solicit corporate approval while One-Call and the City explore potential statutory or regulatory obstacles.

At the April 4th Presidents Council meeting in Playa del Sol, after describing some of One-Call's historical problems, Sergio Clavijo and Cheryl Ritter outlined the prospective initiatives currently under consideration. Earlier in the day, they met with Commissioners Roberts and LaMarca at the Beach Community Center to discuss the bureaucratic mechanics of moving the project forward. Following One-Call's Playa del Sol presentation, Commissioner Roberts announced "If successful, the Galt Mile community will have established a prototype that will be duplicated in hundreds of Florida neighborhoods."

While any reasonably well balanced Galt Mile resident will readily concede that the removal of graffiti falls short of warranting national acclaim, Roberts' parting observation is on the money. The local ordinances invalidated by the Legislature were originally enacted in response to tens of thousands of complaints issuing from all parts of Florida. If the recent talks yield a viable alternative, One-Call will offer the process to any community whose residents want to reduce the extent and duration that their streets resemble a New York City subway station in 1976, More to come...•

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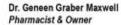
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#### Krebs...Continued

Having conferred with association attorney Becker & Poliakoff "to insure that the Association had taken all possible steps and precautions to protect the residents of the building," leraci summorized his motive for sending the email to neighboring associations.

"I hope this serves as a 'wake up call' that Association administrator/boards are placed in difficult positions daily, I fervently believe that the vast majority of Boards really strive to act in the best interests of all owners.

In closing I am saddened by the terrible circumstances that have occurred, however am grateful that we Administrators/Board members/Security Staff continue to stand and insure that Statutory Law, Condominium Rules and Regulations are upheld to the best of our abilities."

Following his rampage, Krebs explained to Desousa that his tantrum was triggered when a friend stole his pills. In an act of contrition apparently orchestrated by Desousa, Krebs equipped himself with a peace offering when he returned the next day a new toilet that he and Desousa picked up at Home Depot. On Thursday, April 14th, Desousa accompanied Krebs to a meeting with the Galt Ocean Club security staff. He again defended his tenant, requesting that Krebs be allowed to return to the unit he trashed.

While appreciating Desousa's wish to exercise tolerance, leraci expected the longtime association member to weigh that against placing his neighbors in harm's way. leraci told reporters "I understand being compassionate, but under these circumstances, he should have said, 'I need you to be out of the apartment immediately.' This guy was dangerous."

On April 16th - late Saturday night – the evicted Krebs was listening to a local musical group called the Untamed Band while knocking back shots at Fishtales, a popular restaurant and bar at 3555 Northeast 33rd St in the North Beach (Galt Ocean Shoppes) neighborhood. When the time came to pay the tab, Krebs balked and verbally lashed out at the bartender before departing. He returned to the bar at 3:30 am Sunday morning and resumed his argument over the bar tab.

The Untamed Band's drummer, a well-liked 54 year-old South Florida musician and music promoter named Jimmy Pagano, was drawn into the conflict after finishing his set at the bar. Krebs pulled a knife and stabbed Pagano in the throat. Prostrate and bleeding profusely, Pagano begged for help. Two employees and two customers jumped on Krebs, who continued slashing away. While successfully restraining Krebs until police arrived, all four were injured during the melee. Pagano bled out from his neck wound. He was pronounced dead at Broward General Medical Center at 4 a.m.

Fort Lauderdale Police spokesman Sergeant Frank Sousa stated the obvious, "There is no reason that anybody can justify going to the next level over a bar bill. No-body's life is worth a dispute over a bar bill." Recognizing the bravery demonstrated by the four surviving victims, Sousa remarked "Everyone who was trying to help our victim put their lives at risk, and they suffered a stab wound as a result of it." Stabbing victims Guy DiBona, Evan Abel, John Eierhart and John Rossi were sent to Broward General Medical Center to dress their wounds. Also injured during the outburst, Krebs was sent to the hospital in police custody. He was charged with one count of premeditated murder and four counts of aggravated battery with a deadly weapon. On April 25th, he was ordered held without bond.

After the bloodbath, it remained unclear whether Desousa ever realized that his compassion was misplaced. Commenting on Krebs' brutal behavior, the landlord said "I told him that he could not mix his medication with alcohol. He's actually a nice guy. I never thought he would be aggressive."

In addition to the PI's report that described Krebs' repeated proclivity for antisocial and criminal behavior, Ocean Riviera Manager Jim Beard had personal knowledge of Krebs' violent temperament. While Krebs was visiting a relative in Ocean Riviera about four months ago, the police arrived and informed security that they were looking for Krebs. They headed to the unit Krebs was visiting, announced themselves and requested entry. While the police awaited a response, Krebs jumped from the second story balcony and ran, temporarily eluding his pursuers.

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### THE GALT MILE NEWS

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#### Overnedicated..Continued

leraci's frenzied "wake-up call" is a plea to recognize the unfair abuse heaped on security personnel, building managers and board members whose daily efforts keep us safe. Every unit owner has witnessed a neighbor verbally attack security for insisting that their guest sign in or blast the manager for daring to issue a written warning letter. Fortunately, most condo owners understand and respect their association's rules and will pursue civil and legally acceptable methods to express their concerns. However, some residents consider themselves exempt from any rule with which they disagree. They believe their association membership entitles them to abuse the employees and association volunteers that protect them from danger. There are several in every association and they're not hard to identify. Whenever you hear an association member scream at an employee "You work for me," You've found one.

The incident at Galt Ocean Club brings focus to another security issue. Associations often have schizophrenic screening policies. Many will contract for comprehensive background checks when screening a prospective unit owner. Others limit their investigation to the shrinking number of statutory reasons for rejecting a candidate. For tenants, some associations will do little more than "Google" the applicant, if that! Associations generally require the leasing unit owner to assume full responsibility for their tenant's behavior. What if the tenant is Brian Krebs?

The week-long swath of destruction cut by Krebs couldn't have posed a greater danger to his Galt Ocean Club neighbors. The murder he allegedly committed in the bar across the street might have just as easily occurred during his rampage in unit 908. How did this wolf get into the henhouse? The first problem is State Law. Florida Statutes limit the amount of money collected for a background check to \$100 per person. More often than not, how a PI manages the meager available resources will determine whether or not an investigation is productive. If the Galt Ocean Club had the same screening information as Ocean Riviera, they might have also rejected Krebs. Since an accurate screening report represents the front line in the struggle to keep people like Krebs out of our homes, an association should put as much research into selecting a PI as they do for their legal representation or management. Failure is not an option, the stakes are too high.

A strange post script to this tragedy surfaced a few days later. The screenwriter and producer of the "American Pie" movies, Adam Herz, was a classmate of Krebs in East Grand Rapids High School. The "Steve Stifler" character that he wrote into "American Pie" in 1999, "American Pie 2" in 2001, and "American Wedding" in 2003 – an obnoxious hard-drinking jock – was inspired by Krebs. Herz' mega-hit was originally entitled "East Great Falls High" which he based on his high school years in East Grand Rapids, Michigan.





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### **COMMISSIONER LAMARCA BOOKS GALT LIBRARY RESCUE PLAN**

By Eric Berkowitz

On April 28th, residents from every Galt Mile association ignored the mid-afternoon soup-like humidity and streamed to the Galt Mile Reading Center at 3403 Galt Ocean Drive. They were responding to notices posted in their mail rooms, building offices and security stations announcing a celebration sponsored by the Friends of the Galt Ocean Mile Library. The event was ostensibly a reception to acknowledge having swelled their ranks from 120 to 200 members. In fact, it was a strategy meeting called to prevent the county from closing the Galt Mile Library.

About 100 supporters squeezed into a meeting room also known to many Galt Mile residents as their official Election Day polling site. Another 30 monitored the proceedings from an adjacent room where a light luncheon buffet was available to patrons. Terry Claire, a Plaza South activist integrally involved with the Library's survival for the past three years, opened the meeting with a criticism of the County's annual attempt to sacrifice the popular local venue to highly dubious budget considerations. Leann Barber, a Commodore resident who joined Claire in last year's successful effort to keep the Reading Room afloat, reviewed tentative strategies for privately financing a variety of supplemental Library programs.

While managed by Claire and Barber, the event was conceived by Galleon resident Herman Gardner, President of the Friends of the Galt Ocean Mile Library. Persevering and amicable, Gardner has worked tirelessly to improve the Library's inventory and secure its survival. In preparation for the annual budget struggle with the Broward County Commission, Gardner launched a recruitment drive that nearly doubled the strength of his Library support group. For the third straight year, Gardner also convinced the Galt Mile Community Association Advisory Board to leverage the neighborhood association's member outreach and political access in support of the Reading Room.

Terry Claire introduced District 4 County Commissioner Chip LaMarca to an apprehensive audience. For the past two years, they successfully kept the Library's doors open by following a strategy prescribed by former County Commissioner Ken Keechl. Each year, they filled support petitions with thousands of signatures, collected dozens of association and civic resolutions and topped it off with hundreds of residents flooding the Commission

Chamber during the final County budget meeting. Attending library patrons who never met their new Commissioner anxiously awaited LaMarca's take on their con-

At the outset, Commissioner LaMarca assured constituents that he has a personal stake in keeping the Library open. He also informed attendees that it wouldn't be necessary to follow his predecessor's dramatic blueprint for saving the library. Instead, he intends to implement a political solution. When stunned library supporters questioned his commitment, LaMarca said "I've seen for myself how important this library is to the people living here. I've been here when the place was packed and spoke with the patrons and the staff. I used to live in Coral Ridge Towers. There's no way I could stand by and watch it close." LaMarca explained that he had already discussed the issue with County Administrator Bertha Henry and was confident that he could protect the reading center without the convulsive histories. confident that he could protect the reading center without the convulsive histrionics previously orchestrated by the community. LaMarca continued "If I hadn't been asked to help with this effort, I would have offered." His audience collectively took a deep breath.

Having participated in each of the prior years' rescue efforts, an attending GMCA official declared "When Chip LaMarca was elected last November; he was an unknown quantity to many of us. Since then, I've watched him lead the charge to secure our beach renourishment funding, team with City Commissioner Bruce Roberts to remove the Utility Graffiti that mars our streets and throw a safety net over the Reading Center. He's for real."

Following his statement, LaMarca welcomed questions from the audience. Seemrollowing his statement, LaMarca welcomed questions from the audience. Seemingly satisfied that their library's future was provided for, audience members took advantage of LaMarca's invitation and quizzed the Commissioner about other recent sources of controversy. When asked how he felt about offshore drilling, LaMarca said that although he opposes oil wells off Broward's beaches, he supports energy independence and new exploration. When someone added "Don't you mean any Florida beaches," he pointed in the opposite direction and answered "Inland, way over there, where you can't see it." A Playa del Sol resident asked if he supported Congressman Allen West's energy agenda. After describing such issues as outside the Broward Commission's jurisdiction, LaMarca confirmed that he was working with West to draw down Federal funds owed to the firmed that he was working with West to draw down Federal funds owed to the County for beach renourishment. He also said he was extremely disappointed with Tallahassee's failure to fund beach renourishment in the current State budget.

After the meeting, the audience members filed out to the adjacent room. While consuming the buffet spread, the post-meeting conversations were dominated by the low-key rescue plan outlined by LaMarca. If our new County Commissioner could save the Reading Center without a community-wide major mobilization, Herman Gardner's 200-strong Friends of the Galt Ocean Mile Library could revisit their primary mandate, enhancing the mini-library's programs.

While the beach is the heart of our neighborhood, the Galt Mile Library is certainly its soul. Arguably the most popular local resource on Galt Ocean Drive, it provides hundreds of mostly elderly residents with a convenient location to research almost anything, meet with friends or simply book some quiet time. Most of the locals are on a first name basis with every staffer, including temporaries and

Longtime Librarian Marlene Barnes and her staff help the nearly 2,400 residents that visit the Center each week locate "New York Times" best-sellers, DVDs of for-eign films, health-related audio books, Wall Street Journal stock reports or search Google for exotic recipes. Visiting authors review their works, local poets recite their creations and culture groups celebrate their unique ethnicities. Despite its modest designation as a "Reading Room", since the library is networked into the nation's largest library system, it is a doorway to the planet.

Continued on page 11

Books...Continued

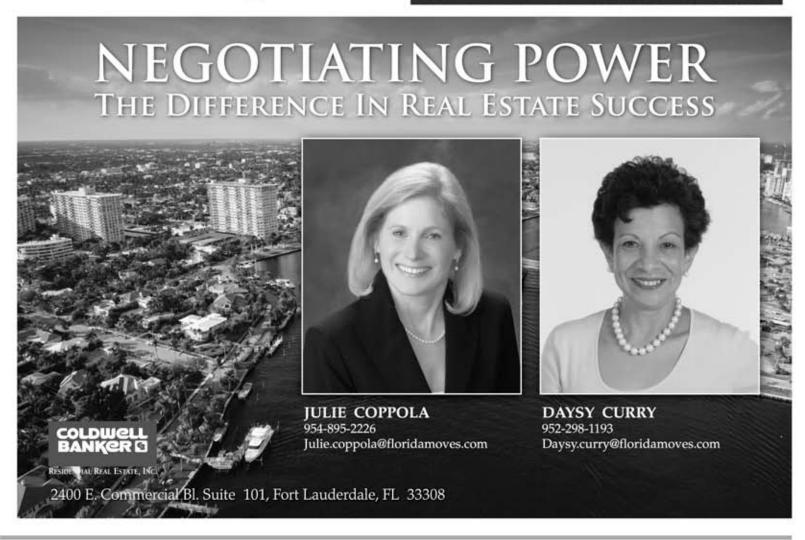
Thousands of previously technophobic local residents who were first introduced to the internet in Reading Room classes keep the six free online computers busy through closing time. While used to update resumes, do homework, check retirement portfolios, hunt for jobs and pay bills, the Reading Room desktops provide hundreds of local seniors 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.

Despite its critical importance to thousands of local residents, Broward County's 4th consecutive whopping budget deficit has once again placed our tiny storefront branch of the huge Broward County Library System on the chopping block. 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 shield their District from sharing painful service concessions by manipulating the criteria used to frame a prospective budget cut. Some proposals sponsored by certain Commissioners only target resources and programs located in neighboring districts, freeing their own constituents from related fiscal impacts.

Continued on page 14





### EASILY REMOVE AND PLACE ON YOUR FRIDGE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED
12 Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166	13	14 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	15
Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5985	Citizens' Crime Alert City Hall, 7 p.m. Info.: 54-828-5377		Business Education Seminar Series: Business Valuation; Speakers: Marcie Bour Mizell Center, 1409 Sistrunk Boulevard 5 to 7 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4752
Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166 Father's Day	20	BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	22
Father's Day Barbeque Fairchild Tropical Gardens 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Info.: & Reservations: 305-256-8399	Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	Lionel Richie Hard Rock Live, 8 p.m. Tix.: www.ficketmaster.com
Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166	27	BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	29
			AAU Karate National Championships (Through 7/2) Broward Convention Center www.ftlauderdalecc.com
Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166	Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	5 Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	6
Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwolk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5985	4th Of July Spectacular! Off A1A & Las Olas 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Info.: 954-396-3622	Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	
Urban Gourmet Market 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-462-4166	11	BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	13
	Citizens' Crime Alert City Hall, 7 p.m. Info.: 54-828-5377	/FNTS	



UNE 16: G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting, Nick's Italian Restaurant, 11 a.m.
JUNE 17: Fight Time 3: "It's WAR", War Memorial Auditorium, Doors open at 7p.m., Info.: 786-543-1177
JUNE 19: Stonewall Street Festival, Wilton Drive, Festival: 4 to 9 p.m., Parade: 6:30 p.m., Entertainment: 7:30 p.m.

JUNE 25 - 26: Intergalactic Bead & Jewelry Show, Emma Lou Olson Civic Center (Pompano), 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 888-729-6904
JULY 2: Home Energy Saver Saturday Workshop, Museum of Discovery and Science, 2 to 4 p.m., 954-713-0940

JULY 5: Motley Crue/Poison, Hard Rock Live, 7 p.m., Tix.: www.ticketmaster.com

JULY 14: 2nd on 2nd Thursdays Block Party, 200 Block SW 2nd Street, 5 to 9 p.m., Info.: 954-468-1541



THU	FRI	SAT
2nd on 2nd Thursdays Block Party 200 Block SW 2nd Street 5 to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-468-1541	Jozz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.	Riverwalk Urban Market 227 SW 2nd Ave. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-298-5607
BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards	The Fort Lauderdale Bus Loop 300 SW 2nd Street 6 to 11 p.m. Info.: 954-260-6194	Great Gators! (Through 6/19) Flamingo Gardens, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Info.: www.flamingogardens.org
Port Lauderdale Aquatic Complex 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4580	Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd, & A1A 7 p.m. Info.: 954-776-5092	25 Riverwalk Urban Market 227 SW 2nd Ave. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-298-5607
BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards	m. h. a.	Saturday Nite Alive A1A from Harbor Drive to Sunrise Blvd 7 to 11 p.m. Info.: 954-564-8300
30	Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.	Riverwalk Urban Market 227 SW 2nd Ave. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-298-5607
BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr), 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards	Plant ID Workshop (First Friday of EVERY Month) Fairchild Tropical Gardens, 1 p.m. Reservation: www.fairchildgarden.org	Saturday Nite Alive A1A from Harbor Drive to Sunrise Blvd 7 to 11 p.m. Info.: 954-564-8300
7	Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.	Riverwalk Urban Market 227 SW 2nd Ave. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-298-5607
BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. S5/person for 3 boards		19th Annual Int'l Mango Festival (Through 7/10) Fairchild Tropical Gardens 9:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Rihanna with Cee Lo Green BankAtlantic Center, 7:30 p.m. Tix.: ticketmaster.com	Jazz on the Square The Village Grille Commercial Blvd. & A1A 7 p.m.	Riverwalk Urban Market 227 SW 2nd Ave. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-298-5607
BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge (3400 Galt Ocean Dr) 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards	Sode BankAtlantic Center, 8 p.m. Tix.: fickelmaster.com  ADDITIONAL EVEN	Soturday Nite Alive A1A from Harbor Drive to Sunrise Blvd 7 to 11 p.m. Info.: 954-564-8300

ADDITIONAL EVENTS
Saturdays: Yoga @ Riverwalk, West side of Esplanade Park, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., free, Info.: 954-732-0517 Saturdays: Cardio & strength training @ Riverwalk, Esplanade Park, 11 to 12 p.m., free, Info.: 954-732-0517 Wednesdays: Cardio & strength training @ Riverwalk, Esplanade Park, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., free, Info.: 954-732-0517 Saturdays through September 3: 3rd Annual Saturday Nite Alive, Fort Lauderdale Beach A1A, 7 to 11 p.m. Fridays (June 17th - August 5): Starlight Musicals, Holiday Park, 7 to 10 p.m., Info.: 954-828-5363

# UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR AREA

July 17 - 22 USTA National Boys 14 Clay Court Championships Jimmy Evert Tennis Center, Ft Lauderdale Schedule & Tix.: 954-828-5378

July 19 Mama Mia, Broadway Broward Center for the Performing Arts Tix.: 954-462-0222

July 20 - 31 Cirque du Soleil Algeria BankAtlantic Center Tix.: www.ticketmaster.com

July 21 Art Walk Las Olas Las Olas Blvd from MOA to SE 16th Ave, 5 to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-258-8382

luly 23 - 24 Buckler's 3rd Annual Fort Lauderdale Craft Fair War Memorial Auditorium Info.: 386-860-0092

July 30 - 31 Fort Lauderdale Antique & Collector Faire War Memorial Auditorium Info.: 954-563-6747



FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF EVENTS, GO TO THE **CALENDAR AT** 

WWW.GALTMILE.COM

Books...Continued

One such proposal urges the County to close library branches situated in rented facilities. Since the library in Commissioner Lois Wexler's district is housed in a County-owned property, closing the County's 7 tenanted libraries would only bur-den the constituents of other commissioners. Ms. Wexler has repeatedly tried to torpedo the Galt Ocean Mile Reading Center in Fort Lauderdale, 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. Fortunately, the County Commission has repeatedly refused to benefit certain neighborhoods on the backs of others.

Earlier this year, Broward officials hired a library consultant to review the County's library system and make downsizing recommendations. Instead of visiting the various locations and evaluating their importance to their respective neighborhoods, MGT of America utilized a software program more appropriate to measuring manufacturing efficiencies. After crunching data collected by each branch and pumping out a formulaic report, they sifted the results through a series of skewed assumptions. For instance, they assumed that the average library patron has no problem traveling 6.7 miles to the branch, ignoring the age demographics of the surrounding neighborhood. By considering rental expense for leased branches and ignoring amortization costs for owned facilities, they scored leased libraries at a 12.5% deficit to owned units. Incomprehensibly, they assigned four times the weight to the number of customers attending programs per staff member than they did for the weekly door count. On reading the final report, the County Commission tossed it out.

Given its intensive concentration of non-homesteaded snowbirds, the Galt Mile community makes enormous annual contributions to the County's tax coffers, in return for which it receives almost nothing. Although half the County budget funds the Broward Sheriff's Office, virtually no BSO resources protect the Galt Mile neighborhood. Since we pay the City of Fort Lauderdale for providing our Police and Fire Protection, our county tax assessments actually subsidize neighboring jurisdictions that do use BSO services. We enjoy no local county parks or recreational resources and even fund our own beach maintenance and security. Other than our inexpensive mini-library, the County spends nothing for our slice of the Barrier Island.

What's more, in thirty of the thirty-seven neighborhoods deemed worthy of branch libraries, the County invested in purchasing the structure housing the facility. No such outlay was ever planned for the Galt Mile neighborhood. Instead, the County leased space in 1992 to save money. When the community's population demographics warranted a modest expansion in 2005, the County leased the adjacent space. Had they inspected the site in compliance with county law, they might have discovered the asbestos later found in the floor tiles and textured ceiling materials. Since the toxic material poses no danger if left undisturbed, library patrons were forced to scrap long awaited expansion plans and limit use of the new space to storage.

The County's gaffe shattered any prospect for receiving the modernization or expansion improvements that regularly benefit branches in every other community. Our neighborhood hasn't demanded parity and pressured the cash-strapped Broward Commission to provide us with a new county-owned facility. However, since closing the library would save less than a half year's salary for one entry level management staffer, Galt Mile residents won't tolerate losing a resource that means so much to so many for a budget-based political ploy. At last year's strategy meeting, almost 100 local attendees shouted their approval when an animated 92 year-old Southpoint resident promised, "If they try to close my library, I

will spend my few remaining years making their lives hell." WOOF!

GMCA's Library Supporters Enter Budget Meeting





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