

GALT MILE NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GMCA

JANUARY 2016



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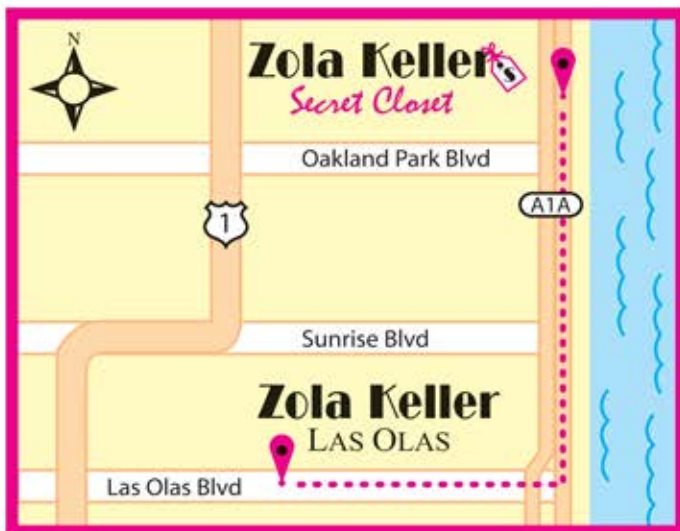
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BANNED BUS LAYOVER on the Galt Mile



By Eric Berkowitz

After three months of fomenting fear and frustration while chewing up public and private infrastructure, in October, Broward County Transit (BCT) announced that the layover sites of four Broward bus routes would no longer obstruct Galt Ocean Drive. Buses from three of the four routes were relocated, leaving only those from Route 55 to clog the narrow beachfront artery. Suddenly in December, despite a promise by County officials to mitigate the bus barricade, buses from Route 72 enigmatically reappeared on Galt Ocean Drive. Having worked to purge the buses, Galt Mile officials flashed back to an impromptu remark by BCT Operations Representative Oscar Correa, "You can expect these buses to block your street while the A1A Greenway Project proceeds over the next two to three years." WOOF!

In contrast with buses that simply thicken local traffic by picking up and discharging passengers along a route, by definition, a layover site acts as an on-street bus depot - where three or four buses serving a particular route are stacked while drivers take a stroll, grab a long lunch, adjust for scheduling glitches, or snooze through their shift. When irate Regency Tower President Eileen Bendis tried to find out why empty BCT buses were blocking her association's driveways, Broward County Transit Project Manager Arethia Douglas explained that the drivers were following work protocols enumerated in their union contract, although conceding that these don't include leaving buses unattended for two or three hours.

Since layover sites invariably impede traffic while prompting complaints about pollution and noise, they are expressly located along wide, two to four-lane thoroughfares (like A1A), where motorists can navigate around the blockade - or they are consigned to sparsely populated outlying streets - tactically sequestering their innately adverse impacts. When the resulting traffic plug is loosed on a heavily populated local street, it wreaks havoc.

Havoc on Galt Ocean Drive

To accommodate Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) construction of the Galt Mile A1A Greenway, buses from Routes #36, #55 and #72 that historically laid over on A1A just south of 41st Street, were shifted to Galt Ocean Drive last July. Galt Ocean Drive was already hosting the layover for Route 11 buses. BCT Project Manager Douglas also told Bendis "I knew this was a bad idea," when FDOT officials asked her to transplant the layovers to a busy residential street that's technically too narrow to

even support a bike lane. Without informing neighborhood officials, tiny Galt Ocean Drive was suddenly burdened with anchoring four of Broward's busiest bus routes. As Douglas anticipated, the layovers blocked the street and stymied association operations. They also threatened the lives of local residents.

In 1996, streetside association cutouts were built and paid for by Galt Mile residents participating in a \$3.8 Million self-assessed neighborhood improvement project. Despite City assurances that they would only be used by the public as loading zones, County buses left unattended in the cutouts blocked waste removal pickups, moving vans for residents relocating to or from the building, and large-load deliveries. Vacated buses parked in front of association driveways blocked drivers from entering or exiting the property.

The blockade's threat to residents and property, as detailed in the September 2015 newsletter and summarized elsewhere in this edition, was substantially mitigated when impacted associations funneled additional resources into bulking up security. Since three or four buses abandoned daily in front of Playa del Mar and Regency Tower wholly obstructed a view of the street, scores of accidents were narrowly averted by incremental security staffers assigned to escort pedestrians across the street and guide departing drivers around the buses onto Galt Ocean Drive. Unfortunately, they were less successful when trying to locate the drivers of vacated buses that blocked EMTs responding to emergencies in Galt Mile associations.

Repeated pleas for relief by frustrated Board members, managers and residents were ignored by BCT Operations personnel. By late August, angry emails began pouring into the neighborhood association. Having sent Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca pictures of four Broward buses parked in front of Playa del Mar and another three buses blocking both Regency Tower driveways, Galt Mile officials described how the bus barricade blocked traffic, documented damage to both public and association property, and imparted how the buses endangered local residents while crippling association protocols. At a subsequent August 25 discussion arranged by LaMarca with Broward County Transit Director Tim Garling, GMCA President Pio Ieraci exhorted Garling to remove the buses before someone is hurt - or killed.

Continued on page 9



SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE...SO

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

10 Las Olas Sunday Market
333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave.
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-426-8436

LBTS Farmer's Market
Town Hall, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
info.: 561-714-2745

11 Palm Beach Business Expo
Embassy Suites, Boca
5 to 8 p.m.
Info.: 954-838-9644

Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting
Beach Community Center, 6 p.m.
Info.: 954-828-5033

12 BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting
City Hall
Regular Agenda: 6 p.m.

13 BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

17 Las Olas Sunday Market
333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave.
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-426-8436

Sunshine Music Fest
Mizner Park Amphitheatre, Boca
11 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Info.: www.sunshinemusicfestival.com/boca-ration

18

19 BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

20 BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

19th Annual ArtPalmBeach Art Fair
(Through 1/24)
Palm Beach County Convention Center
Info.: 561-290-8053

24 Boots, Brews, & BBQ Festival
Bubier Park,
Noon to 6 p.m.
Tix. & Info.: www.eventbrite.com

LBTS Farmer's Market
Town Hall, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
info.: 561-714-2745

25

26 BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

27 BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

31 Las Olas Sunday Market
333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave.
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-426-8436

2016 Florida Fast Expo Car Show
Miami Airport Convention Center
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-647-6610

1

Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting
Beach Community Center, 6 p.m.
Info.: 954-828-5033

2 BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

Groundhog Day

Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting
City Hall
Regular Agenda: 6 p.m.

3 BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

7 Las Olas Outdoor Green Market
333 E Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave.
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-426-8436

Sunday Jazz Brunch
Riverwalk, Downtown FL
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-396-3622

8

9 BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

10 BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

Palm Beach Jewelry, Art & Antique Show
(Through 2/16)
Palm Beach County Convention Center
Info.: 561-822-5440

JAN 10: Oshogatsu: A New Year's Celebration, Morikami Museum, 10 a.m., Info. & Tix.: <http://morikami.org/event-calendar>

JAN 15: Evening on the Avenue, Cultural Plaza (414 Lake Ave.), Lake Worth, 6 to 10 p.m., Info.: www.lakeworth.org/calendar

JAN 15-17: 39th Annual Art Deco Weekend, Art Deco Historic District (1001 Ocean Drive), Miami Beach, Info.: 305-672-2014

JAN 15-31: South Florida Fair, South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB, 10 a.m. to 12 Midnight, Info.: 561-793-0333

JAN 16-17: Flamingo Fest 2016, Flamingo Gardens, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Info.: www.flamingogardens.org

JAN 17: 5th Annual Cool Wheels Benefit Car Show, Quiet Waters Park, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Info.: 954-410-5536

JAN 17: Gift of Life's 5th Annual 5K Walk for Life, Palm Beach Plaza, FAU in Boca, Registration: 8 a.m., Walk: 9 a.m. Celebration: 10:30 a.m., Info.: 561-982-2900

JAN 23: White Elephant Sale, Coral Ridge Towers South (3333 NE 34th St.), 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: Marie Altenburg at meo714too@aol.com

JAN 23-24: 27th Annual Downtown Delray Beach Festival of the Arts, Atlantic Ave., Delray, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 954-472-3755

JAN 23-24: 7th Annual Boca Raton Fine Art Show, 72 N. Federal Hwy., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 248-684-2613

JAN 30-31: Fort Lauderdale Fine Art Festival, Huizenga Plaza, Info.: 954-487-8061

JAN/FEB

ME THINGS DO! CHECK OUT WHAT'S GOIN' ON

THU

FRI

SAT

LOTS HAPPENING IN FEBRUARY!

<p>14 Garth Brooks World Tour With: Trisha Yearwood (Through 1/16) BB&T Center, 7:30 p.m. Tix.: 800-745-3000</p> <p>Learn to Cross-Stitch Lake Worth Library 6 to 8 p.m.</p>	<p>15 2016 International Orchid Show (Through 1/17) War Memorial Auditorium Info.: 954-764-1239</p> <p>Evening on the Avenue Cultural Plaza, Lake Worth 6 to 10 p.m.</p> <p>2nd Annual Moss New River Extravaganza Esplanade Park, 6 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954-778-9177</p>	<p>16 South Florida Folk Festival (Through 1/17) Hugh Taylor Birch State Park Info.: SoFlFolkFest@gmail.com</p> <p>29th Annual Boca Fest (Through 1/17) Town Center Mall of Boca 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info.: 954-472-3755</p>
<p>21</p> <p>G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant 11 a.m.</p>	<p>22 Beach Bonfire Lake Worth Beach (10 South Ocean Blvd.) 6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>10th Annual Chocolate Festival (Through 1/24) Fairchild Tropical Gardens 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Info. & Tix.: http://www.fairchildgarden.org/</p>	<p>23 Citywide Yard Sales Jaco Pastorius Park (4000 N. Dixie Hwy.), Oakland Park 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-630-4507</p> <p>Winter Brew Festival Bubier Park, 2 to 6 p.m. Tix. & Info.: www.eventbrite.com</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>29 Palm Beach Home Show Palm Beach Convention Center Info.: 954-946-6164</p> <p>Evening on the Avenue Cultural Plaza, Lake Worth 6 to 10 p.m.</p> <p>17th Annual Delray Beach Garlic Fest (Through 1/31) Downtown Delray Beach Info.: 561-274-4663</p>	<p>30 Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Drop-off Events Mill Pond Park 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-8000</p> <p>The World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra Broward Center for the Performing Arts, 2 p.m. Info. & Tix.: browardcenter.org</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5 Evening on the Avenue Cultural Plaza, Lake Worth 6 to 10 p.m.</p> <p>West Palm Beach Antiques Festival (Through 2/7) South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB Info.: 941-697-7475</p>	<p>6 Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Drop-off Events Coral Springs Public Works Westside Maintenance Complex 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-8000</p> <p>Reflections In Glass XXXIII OPEN Car & Truck Show Quiet Waters Park 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Info.: 954-778-1455</p>
<p>11 Palm Beach Jewelry, Art & Antique Show (Through 2/16) Palm Beach County Convention Center info.: 561-822-5440</p> <p>Winter Business Expo 2016 Broward Convention Center 4 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-838-9644</p>	<p>12 Florida ASDA Winter Stamp Show (Through 2/14) War Memorial Auditorium info.: 800-369-8207, ext. 4</p> <p>Beach Bonfire Lake Worth Beach (10 South Ocean Blvd.), 6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>Publix Health & Fitness Expo Broward County Convention Center Info.: 561-241-3801</p>	<p>13 Buckler's Craft Fair (Through 2/14) South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB info.: 386-860-0092</p> <p>24th Annual Florida Renaissance Festival (Through 2/15) Quiet Waters Park, 10 a.m. to Sundown Info.: 941-776-1642</p>

February 14
11th Annual Fort Lauderdale A1A Marathon
401 SW 2nd St. at NW 5th Ave., Fort Lauderdale
5:30 a.m. to Noon
Info.: 561-241-3801

February 19-21
West Palm Beach Spring Home Show
South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB
Info.: 855-523-5311

February 20
Funky Fun Run on 13th Street
Middle River Terrace Park at North Dixie Hwy., 3 to 8 p.m.
Info.: 954-563-5454

February 20-21
13th Annual Polynesian Cultural Festival
Jaco Pastorius Park in Oakland Park, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Info.: 954-630-4507

February 20-21
24th Annual Florida Renaissance Festival
Quiet Waters Park, 10 a.m. to Sundown
Info.: 954-776-1642

February 20-21
Street Painting Festival
Downtown Lake Worth, 10 a.m.
Info.: www.streetpaintingfestivalinc.org

February 21
Gala in the Gardens
Flamingo Gardens, 5 to 8 p.m.
Info.: www.flamingogardens.org

February 25-28
15th Annual South Beach Wine & Food Festival
South Beach, Miami, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Info.: 877-762-3933

February 27-28
73rd Annual Davie Orange Blossom Festival, Parade and Rodeo
Davie Town Hall
Info.: 954-797-1163

February 27-28
Delray Beach Fine Art Festival
Delray Beach Center for the Arts [45 E. Atlantic Ave.]
Info.: 954-487-8061

FEB 6-7: 42nd Annual South Florida Depression Glass Show, Emma Lou Olsen Civic Center, Pompano, Info.: 305-884-0335
First Saturday of Every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd. & the Beach LBTS (Meet at Pavilion), 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info.: 954-776-1000
First Saturday of Every Month: North Beach Art Walk, 3280 NE 32nd St, 7 to 11 p.m., Info.: 954-537-3370
Second Saturday of Every Month: Beach Sweep, Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, 1100 Seabreeze Blvd., 7 to 11 a.m., Info.: 954-593-8501
Mondays: Food Trucks at Artspark, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Youngs Circle in Hollywood
Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736
Saturdays: Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars, Fox Astronomical Observatory at Markham Park, Sunset to Midnight, Info.: 954-384-0442
Daily: Yoga on the Beach, Ocean Manor Resort (4040 Galt Ocean Dr.), 9:30 a.m. (weather permitting), Mats supplied, \$10 donation, Open to the Public, Info.: 754-779-7519 or 516-840-1455

Commissioner Chip LaMarca's

DECEMBER 2015 Newsletter



"In his December 2015 message to constituents, District 4 County Commissioner Chip LaMarca applauds Broward County Transit (BCT) for launching full-featured new buses onto local thoroughfares, describes how a burdensome access glitch to the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center will soon be corrected, advises pet owners to protect their furry companions against rabies, wandering off or getting snatched, and cites local photographer Fred Johnson for landing the cover page of the 2016 Florida Association of Counties Calendar.

In acclaiming the 31 new buses purchased by BCT, LaMarca refers to "MyRide Broward", a real time bus tracking system that alerts riders to when the next three buses will arrive at any particular bus stop. Deploying Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology to locate buses and estimate arrival times, the continuously updated information is instantaneously transmitted to smart phones and other online devices (i.e. tablets, computers, etc.). After the projected launch date in spring of 2016, the real time output will be made available on the Broward County Transit website (Broward.org/BCT).

17 of the new buses are articulated - carrying up to 57 passengers in two attached compartments totaling 60 feet in length. Five others are 40-foot, diesel hybrid-electric powered buses seating 38 customers, fully accessible with a low-floor design and a ramp for wheelchair boarding through the entrance door. Since the last nine 45-foot buses are dedicated to long-distance service (Express routes to Miami, etc.), BCT took a page from the airlines, as their 55 high-back seats have extra hip-to-knee space, and each is equipped with LED reading lights, individually controlled air conditioning vents, 110-volt electrical outlets, Wi-Fi and USB ports.

Although overlooked in LaMarca's newsletter, of far greater relevance to Galt Mile residents was a recent BCT rider alert advising that buses from Route 72 may once again "layover" on Galt Ocean Drive. Unlike buses that pick up and discharge passengers along a route, a layover site serves as an on-street depot, where three or four buses are stacked while drivers stretch their legs, eat lunch, or parse a few hours to achieve enlightenment (as authorized in their union contract). Since they invariably interfere with traffic, layover sites are located along wide, multi-lane thoroughfares, where motorists can skirt around the anticipated blockage - or on largely vacated streets.

When construction on the Galt Mile A1A greenway project began in July, BCT officials relocated the layover sites for buses in Routes #36, #55 and #72 from A1A to Galt Ocean Drive, ignoring how Route #11 buses were already laying over on a beachside street too narrow to legally support a bike lane, much less anchor four bus routes. The resulting traffic plug blocked the street, undermined association operations and threatened the lives of residents.

For almost three months, three or four buses regularly left unattended on both sides of the narrow street pinched off traffic, blocked drivers from entering or exiting association driveways, usurped association cutouts ordinarily used for waste removal, move-ins / move-outs and large load deliveries and blocked Fire-Rescue EMTs headed for Galt Mile associations. Since the blockade wholly obstructed a view of the street, daily accidents were narrowly averted by alert association security personnel assigned to escort pedestrians across the street and guide departing drivers around the buses onto Galt Ocean Drive.

Inattentive bus drivers damaged street lamps, signage, trees, sidewalk panels, curbs & association landscaping. In a November 20, 2015 article that capped a 3-year exposé, Sun Sentinel Reporter Brittany Wallman credited a BCT driver on the Galt Mile (Route 55) with 16 collisions, 25 written warning slips and 30 days of unpaid suspension. When shrugged off by BCT operations personnel, angry Galt Mile residents, managers and board members contacted the neighborhood association for help.

On August 25th, when Galt Mile officials detailed the potentially disastrous repercussions for County Commissioner Chip LaMarca, he brought BCT Executive

Director Tim Garling to the table - who agreed to either re-route the buses or find alternative layover sites. Shortly thereafter, LaMarca informed Galt Mile officials that Route 72 buses would layover at El Mar Drive in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea while buses from Routes 11 and 36 would no longer service Galt Ocean Drive, leaving only Route 55 buses to clutter our street. Officially approved at a mid-September BCT administrative transit hearing, the corrective measures were implemented on October 11, re-turning Galt Ocean Drive to its residents.

On December 28, several Galt Mile residents notified the neighborhood association that Route 72 buses were once again parking on Galt Ocean Drive. Allowing for the prospect of an administrative foul-up, Galt Mile officials shot emails to LaMarca and Garling, asking why the anathematic conveyance was again blighting Galt Ocean Drive while demanding its removal. Given Garling's promise to relocate the route's layover to Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, how LaMarca and Garling plan to address this surreptitiously revived threat will be forwarded to the Advisory Board, member associations and neighborhood residents. Stay tuned.

For years, the aging Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center has been leaking customers, competitively hampered by the absence of an integrated hotel and an idiotic requirement that optometrists, stamp dealers, crafters, biomolecular researchers and other conventioners or expo-goers driving to the Center (or its attached garage) show a government issued-ID, undergo vetting for arrest warrants, have their car trunk inspected while asked, "Do you have any weapons?"

Putting Convention Center visitors through a security grinder was an unintended consequence of a poorly planned reaction to 9/11. After the Trade Center went down, former Governor Jeb Bush assigned 141 National Guard reservists from the 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery (who lived from Fort Pierce to Fort Lauderdale) to protect the port, specifically the huge stores of petroleum that supply gas stations in 12 South Florida counties and jet fuel dumps in South Florida Airports. By erecting a temporary security gate (made permanent in 2005) at the nearby 17th Street and Eisenhower Boulevard shared access to the Convention Center, the County serendipitously burdened the Center's future patrons with invasive security protocols meant instead for visitors to the port.

Although 3 different plans to improve the center and correct the security gaffe went south during the past decade, Broward officials are finally addressing these competitive impediments. Having eroded longstanding opposition by local hoteliers to building a Headquarters Hotel, the County is crafting plans to enhance and expand the center, and has already begun severing access to the convention center from the port's security envelope.

The \$12.7 million plan to relocate the security gate replaced a planned bypass road that spiraled from \$30 million to \$93 million before being quashed by the County Board in 2013. The relocation price-tag included revisions to the port's fiber-optic security infrastructure and navigating costly regulatory dogma with the Coast Guard, the Broward Sheriff and the U.S. Transportation Security Administration. To check out the rest of Commissioner LaMarca's December 2015 Newsletter - Read on... - [editor]"

Dear Broward County Residents,

I am honored to serve as a County Commissioner, representing our coastal communities from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale. Here are some recent highlights from Broward County.

New Broward County Buses in Service
More than 30 new Broward County Transit buses are currently or will

soon be on the road serving customers. Those customers will benefit from Broward County's nearly \$26 million investment by having a more comfortable ride and more reliable vehicles. All buses will be equipped with updated technology as part of the MyRide Broward real time bus tracking system, coming soon to BCT!

Continued on page 13

BCT Flea Circus Moved to LBTS

Conceding that the situation was intolerable, Garling agreed to undo the damage. He crafted a remediation plan for approval at a September BCT administrative transit hearing. While he could re-route buses attached to Routes 11 and 36, given the dearth of local municipal parking lots or other appropriately cloistered locations, finding alternative layovers for Route 55 and 72 buses would prove more difficult. On September 8, Garling approached the Lauderdale-by-the-Sea Town Commission with the prospect of moving the Route 55 and 72 layovers to El Mar Drive between Hibiscus Avenue and Palm Avenue (in front of the old Holiday Inn). Since the former hotel was awaiting planned redevelopment, locating the layover adjacent to a block-long construction site would minimize resident complaints about noise and exhaust emissions.

The Town Board agreed to host one of the two routes, rejecting the Route 55 buses while approving the layover for Route 72 - as long as BCT respected the Town's traffic laws and parking rules. Despite a BCT promise to comply, Commissioners added a loophole: the layover could be terminated by LBTS Town Manager Connie Hoffmann on 30-days' notice. Two prospective impediments prompted the Caveat; a possible conflict with future construction at the adjacent old hotel site, and the reputed propensity for BCT drivers to ignore rules or laws. On October 11, Garling announced that buses from Routes 11 and 36 would no longer service Galt Ocean Drive, and buses from route 72 would layover in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, leaving only buses from Route 55 on the Galt Mile. The BCT website simultaneously affirmed that the Route 36 and 72 layovers would be discontinued on Galt Ocean Drive.

On December 28, when Galt Mile officials learned that Route 72 buses were once again parking on Galt Ocean Drive, they notified LaMarca, requested an explanation and demanded their removal. When one of the BCT drivers was asked why the Route 72 buses had returned, he said that BCT officials moved the layover back to the Galt Mile because LBTS residents kept pulling down BCT signage. Given the difficulty of finding locally viable layover sites, it seemed unlikely that BCT would desert a location approved by the Town Board because

some Yahoos vandalized a sign. After a few days without a response from LaMarca or Garling, Galt Mile officials decided to explore a more credible prospect.

LBTS Boots the Buses

BCT didn't leave El Mar Drive because vandals molested their sign - they were booted out of LBTS by the Town Manager. As provided in the minutes of the LBTS November 10 Town Commission meeting, "Regarding the buses on El Mar Drive, Town Manager Hoffmann noted that the Town is receiving complaints related to noise and exhaust fumes. Buses have been asked not to park on the sidewalk. ...This issue will be brought before the Commission with a recommendation at a later time." Two weeks later, at the November 24th LBTS Commission meeting, Hoffmann said "I have given the County Mass Transit folks the 30 days' notice that we promised them - that we are withdrawing our approval of their use of El Mar Drive as a rest layover for their busses. The reasons for this action are excessive noise, documented damage to our property, and their drivers' failure to follow instructions on where to park the busses. The County will cease to use that area by December 21st and has promised to repair the damage they have done to light fixtures, our sidewalks, and water meters."

When Hoffmann invoiced the Broward Transportation Department (parent agency to Broward County Transit) for infrastructure damaged by reckless drivers, her frustration resonated with Galt Mile officials. A bent signpost between Regency Tower and Playa del Mar serves as a reminder of driver proclivities to play pinball with parked vehicles and sidewalk infrastructure. Since buses parked along both sides of the street often hopped the curb (onto the sidewalk), Galt Mile residents with smart phones texted association officials when BCT drivers broke a curbside sewer drain, cracked aggregate sidewalk panels, collided with a street lamp, cracked cutout pavers and damaged adjacent vehicles.

Neither Garling nor BCT Operations personnel are strangers to neighborhood complaints about layover sites or chronically negligent bus drivers on the County payroll. While most BCT drivers are competent and courteous, provisions in Broward's agreement with the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1267, prevent the County from washing out drivers who cause up to four collisions or run 4 red lights - every two years.

Continued on page 12



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COMMISSIONER BRUCE ROBERTS



"In his January / February 2016 Newsletter, City Commissioner Bruce Roberts celebrates Fort Lauderdale's designation as a Digital City for using technology to facilitate municipal objectives, notes that the Winterfest Boat Parade snagged 9th place in the 10Best and USA TODAY's Readers' Choice awards for Best Holiday Festival (although he neglected to mention that Fort Lauderdale was named number 3 in the Readers' Choice runoff for Bikini-Watching), applauds the City's number 10 ranking in a 4th quarter 2015 Industry Report by HomeVestors / Local Market Monitor listing the Top Ten Cities for Real Estate Investment, considers a pilot program that implores smokers to desist in certain City Parks, endorses "Reality Check", which enables FLPD officers to treat wayward juveniles with a portable version of Scared Straight, warns against "self-radicalized" terror-mongers using the internet to up their game, summarizes initial impacts of the City's new Vacation Rental Ordinance and relishes Port Everglades' record-breaking growth.

Fort Lauderdale officials have long considered regulations to deter transient tenant vacationers from raising Hell in residential neighborhoods. In doing so, they sought to avoid collapsing the City's tourism and Real Estate markets, fiscal engines critical to Fort Lauderdale's economic health. Satisfying these competing objectives would require navigating a regulatory tightrope. Since tourism and Real Estate revenues also fuel the State Budget, lawmakers in Tallahassee feared how local regulations would impair these statewide income streams. In 2011, proponents from the vacation rental industry seeded a political epiphany that resonated with State Lawmakers. Vacation renters, off-site property managers and absentee landlords don't vote for the Public officials who were fiddling with regulatory recipes to control the rental market. Full-time residents do.

Convinced that local officials were about to eighty-six the baby with the bathwater, the legislature quickly pumped out a law that precludes cities from imposing new rules on Vacation rentals. The Statute doesn't affect pre-existing regulations (local laws passed before 2011), nor does it alter the rental rules forged by community associations. It does restrict cities from prohibiting vacation rentals, capping the term of a lease or limiting the number of times the property is leased annually.

In the five years since then, the conflict between Vacation Rental landlords and their abused neighbors has exploded, as the cultural progeny of Spring Breakers turned short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods into month-long imprints of Animal House. Increasingly enraged by noisy weekend parties in rental properties marked by front lawns covered with garbage and a dozen decomposing vehicles, residential Homeowners in communities like neighboring Lauderdale Beach demanded relief by City officials.

To circumvent the pre-emptive Statute, Fort Lauderdale took a page from the State. The Division of Hotels and Restaurants licenses vacation rentals. Nothing in State Law prevents municipalities from also requiring local licenses to operate within their borders, or enforcing compliance with local safety regulations. Patterned after a similar Flagler County law that already survived a Court challenge, Fort Lauderdale's ordinance mandates compliance with Florida Building Code occupancy standards, which limits two guests to each bedroom. Guest vehicles must be legally parked "within the subject property," not on the street.

The properties must comply with current health and safety requirements for transient establishments. Along with fire extinguishers on each floor, a rental property must feature an interconnected and hard-wired smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detection and notification system. The ordinance bars sexual offenders or sexual predators from occupying rental properties located within 1,400 feet of a school, school bus stop, child care facility, park or playground. Property owners must provide proof of having paid the \$300 State licensing fee, a \$750 initial registration fee to the City (which subsequently drops to \$500 annually) as well as county and state taxes. Once an inspector confirms that the property meets State and local requirements, and the owner is issued a Certificate of Compliance, the property can operate as a Vacation Rental. Licensed venues must also submit to \$75 annual safety inspections and provide a local contact capable of addressing emergencies within 1 hour of notification.

Galt Mile snowbirds who purchased units for their planned retirement - and speculators who play the housing market - often fund their investment by renting their Galt Mile property to tenants approved by association screening committees. To avoid the maintenance and security pitfalls that afflict transient housing, most association documents restrict members to renting their units once each year, although some provide for a second lease - usually in cases of proven hardship. When sneaky tenants bolt to dodge the balance of a lease expense, the snowbirds and speculators left holding the bag often collectively pressure associations to loosen rental restrictions, and expand the number of leases that owners can execute annually.

Since media hype surrounding the City's Vacation Rental Ordinance was primarily comprised of anecdotal nightmares by single-family homeowners, many Galt Mile residents are under the mistaken impression that it doesn't apply to condominiums or cooperatives. In fact, it applies to "any unit or group of units in a condominium or cooperative or any individually or collectively owned single-family, two-family, three-family, or four-family house or dwelling unit..." Hundreds of Fort Lauderdale condominium owners renting thousands of units will be forced to cough up the expenses required to achieve compliance with the ordinance. Fortunately, since the ordinance exempts properties rented to Transient Occupants less than "three (3) times in a calendar year," those strict association rental requirements shunned by Galt Mile snowbirds and speculators will now shield them from the new law's substantial annual fees and costly compliance requirements. Hey... we dodged a bullet! To check out the rest of Commissioner Roberts' January / February 2016 Newsletter, read on... - [editor]"

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016 - DISTRICT 1 NEWSLETTER
COMMISSIONER BRUCE G. ROBERTS

FORT LAUDERDALE NAMED 2015 DIGITAL CITY: The City achieved a top-ten ranking in the 2015 Digital Cities Survey, a program of the Center of Digital Government. Every city, town, village and consolidated city/county government in the U.S. is invited to participate in this annual survey, which examines an organization's comprehensive use of technology programs. Ft. Lauderdale ranked eighth overall among communities throughout the nation with a population between 125,000 and 250,000. The City was recognized for its innovative uses of data and technology to promote civic engagement, support citywide policy, and operate efficiently. Cited initiatives that enhance open government and facilitate community collaboration include the Granicus Legistar System and the e-comments tool, citywide telephone town hall meetings, Property Reporter, EthicsTrac, financial transparency portal and the LauderSrv customer service application. The information Technology Security Division's recent organization-wide employee training initiative demonstrated proactive efforts to maintain a secure network infrastructure. Also, through our comprehensive Strategic Management System and diligent performance measurement in Clearpoint, we were recognized as a proven results-oriented organization that monitors progress on the collective goals through the City's Vision and Strategic Plans. Kudos to our full team of Community Builders for their efforts in using technology to drive innovation and enhance services!

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Bad Apples and Broken Promises

For years, Sun Sentinel journalist Brittany Wallman has been adding to an ongoing exposé of Broward bus drivers who, despite driving records blemished by dozens of accidents and scores of moving violations, continue to drive for the County. To imbue her articles with statistical credibility, Wallman organized County Records into a 750-page online database of customer complaints filed against drivers employed by Broward County Transit between 2010 and 2013. Accident & incident reports were also compiled into a 1,290-page database.

Wallman laments how a termination process mandated by the union contract, when coupled with management's fear of arbitration, made it nearly impossible to discharge a county bus driver for incompetence behind the wheel. To terminate a driver, management must demonstrate the driver's involvement in more than 4 preventable accidents or having run more than four red lights during the previous 24 months. In fact, according to Article 10, Section 3 of the contract, "After twenty-four (24) months all materials pertaining to discipline in an employee's file will not be used for disciplinary purposes." After 2 years, accidents are expunged from the driver's record as a cause for termination, allowing BCT drivers a virtually unlimited number of preventable accidents without getting canned – as long as they don't cause more than 4 within a 24-month period. Since a five-member Accident Review Board (two of whom are named by the bus driver's union) decides whether accidents were preventable, nearly 75% of the accidents are exempted from consideration (they don't count!). Even if the standard for termination is met, when a driver invokes a right to arbitration, BCT management folds like a cheap suit. After a slap on the wrist, the driver is back on the road - and causes more damage.

Nearly half of the 629 County drivers between 2008 and 2013 had clean records (zero preventable accidents). Of the 3,556 reported accidents (and their \$7.1 million cost to County taxpayers for bus-related injuries and property damage), the vast majority were attributed to just under ten percent of the drivers (59 - to be exact). In February, Wallman featured the driving antics of 69-year-old Fred Fischer, who - despite rear-ending 13 vehicles and crashing his bus 21 times while enduring 19 suspensions and 32 disciplinary actions - is still driving a County bus. More recently and closer to home, on November 20, 2015, she looked at the driving record of 62-year-old North Lauderdale resident Charles Raymond Smith, whom Wallman credited with 16 accidents, receiving 25 written warning slips, and serving 30 days of unpaid suspension. Wallman also observed that the 21-year County driver is currently plying his trade in a Route 55 bus, placing him at ground zero in the Galt Mile neighborhood.

The LBTS Town Commission evicted the County buses because drivers broke the rules that BCT promised to follow, ignoring repeated warnings against parking on the sidewalk and capriciously destroying town property – just like they did on the Galt Mile. Also, since LBTS wouldn't tolerate the noise and exhaust fumes at a location that's largely uninhabited, BCT officials thought it less egregious to move the offending layover to a site smack in the middle of 14,000 Galt Mile residents. As BCT was being tossed out of LBTS, a "Rider Alert" was posted on the BCT website, announcing that the Route 72 layover was being returned to Galt Ocean Drive on December 20, 2015.

Migraine or Minor Setback?

Armed with the LBTS meeting minutes, on December 30, GMCA President Pio Ieraci sent another message to LaMarca and Garling. Referencing an attached copy of Hoffmann's rationale for ousting BCT buses, Ieraci inquired "If 'noise, fumes, drivers who do not follow instructions & damage to property' is not acceptable to LBTS, why would it be acceptable to the Galt? We were promised that only the #55 bus would layover on the Galt. We formally request that bus #72 be relocated IMMEDIATELY to someplace other than the Galt. I look forward to your prompt attention to this matter. Happy New Year!"

More to come... and a happy and healthy New Year... to you and your family!!!•

THE GALT MILE NEWS

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The new buses will serve various routes and serve thousands of customers each day. Broward County Transit (BCT) provides safe and economical bus transportation via fixed route, express, community bus and paratransit services to its customers. Annually BCT provides nearly 40 million rides to customers and operates 44 major routes within 410 square miles of Broward County, as well as carrying commuters to Miami and connecting with neighboring transit agencies. For more information about BCT or for help planning your trip, visit their website or call customer service seven days a week at 954-357-8400 or TTY 954-357-8302.

Port Security Checkpoint Demolition Scheduled

Visitors to the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center will enjoy easier access to the Center and the parking garage once demolition of the old checkpoint to enter Port Everglades is completed sometime later this month. In the past, all visitors entering Eisenhower Boulevard from 17th Street Causeway had to clear a security checkpoint, showing a driver's license or passport, before turning into the Center and its attached garage, which also provides access to a Cruise Terminal. The new checkpoint was built south of 20th Street, and south of the Convention Center, eliminating the need to clear security. Cruise passengers will clear security once they enter Terminal 2. The relocation of the new security checkpoint and demolition of the old checkpoint are among the many projects that make up the Seaport and Convention Center Security Improvement Project, which separates the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center from the Port's controlled access area to allow for improved traffic flow in and out of the Convention Center. For more information, visit porteverglades.net.

Animal Care Clinics Make it Easy to Protect and Identify Pets

Rabies vaccinations and Pet Registration Tags are required by law, and Animal Care makes it easy to protect your pet by offering a series of monthly events throughout the County so that dogs and cats can be vaccinated, registered, and micro-chipped, quickly and conveniently. There is a \$300 fine for pet owners who do not have their dog or cat vaccinated against rabies and a \$300 fine for pets that are not registered with the County.

Cost for a one-year rabies vaccination and Broward County Pet Registration Tag is:

- \$25 if your pet is spayed or neutered
- \$35 if your pet is not spayed or neutered

Microchips, with free registration, are also available at each Rabies Clinic for \$15. Micro-chipping is a permanent form of identification. Once the chip is registered, pets are safeguarded in case they become lost or stolen. Each Rabies Clinic takes place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. To attend a Rabies Clinic event, pet owners must be a Broward County resident. No appointment is necessary and customers are taken on a first-come, first-served basis. All dogs must be on a leash and all cats must be in carriers. No cash or checks please; only debit and credit cards will be accepted. For a complete schedule of the 2016 clinics, visit our website.

Broward County Resident Wins Calendar Cover

A photo showing a beautiful morning along Fort Lauderdale Beach is the "awesome weather" photo for the 2016 FAC Calendar. "Sunrise at Fort Lauderdale Beach" in Broward County is the chosen cover photo for the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) 2016 Calendar. The winning cover photo was one of many photos submitted by Broward resident Fred Johnson. The 2016 Florida Association of Counties Calendar is for sale on the FAC website.

Contact Us

The Resident's Guide to Government provides a convenient resource to help people stay connected to their local government. It includes contact information for County officials and Federal, State, and local agencies. Visitors can subscribe to eNewsletters and social media sites. Sign up at Broward.org/District4 to receive email updates from our office. If there is anything that we can do to assist you with your vision for a better Broward, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 954-357-7004 or by email at clamarca@broward.org.

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Broward County Commissioner, District 4 •

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—Bruce...Continued

WINTERFEST BOAT PARADE: We are pleased to announce the Winterfest Boat Parade made the list for the 10Best and USA TODAY's Readers' Choice contest for Best Holiday Festival.

FORT LAUDERDALE AMONG TOP CITIES FOR REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT IN Q4: Grand Rapids, Mich., topped the Best Markets Top 10 List, with Orlando second. Texas cities remain strong, with San Antonio #3, Dallas #4 and Austin #5 rounding out the top five. "In the last year, prices in all of the top 10 housing markets have increased by at least 6 percent," said HomeVestors co-President David Hicks. The fourth-quarter 2015 Best Markets Top 10 list for real estate investing includes (in order from 1-10): Grand Rapids, MI; Orlando; San Antonio, TX; Dallas, TX; Austin, TX; Portland, OR; Seattle, WA; Charlotte, N.C.; Salt Lake City, UT; and Fort Lauderdale.

VOLUNTARY PILOT PROGRAM ENCOURAGING NEIGHBORS/VISITORS TO NOT SMOKE IN CERTAIN CITY PARKS: It is recommended that your City Commission adopt a resolution encouraging neighbors and visitors not to smoke in certain parks by participating in a voluntary pilot program with the American Lung Association (ALA) and authorize acceptance of \$1,000 from the ALA for the purchase of signs which will be designed by the City, to be displayed encouraging neighbors and visitors not to smoke. Four civic associations have passed resolutions requesting to participate: Imperial Point - Dottie Mancini Park; Tarpon River - Hardy Park; Victoria Park - Holiday Park; and Middle River Terrace - Middle River Terrace Park. City parks attract individuals and families who enjoy and engage in healthy recreational programs and activities. In addition, there are strong environmental reasons to encourage patrons not to smoke. The trash that is created by cigarette butts tossed on the ground is a significant environmental issue.

FLPD PARTNERS WITH THE REALITY CHECK PROGRAM: The Reality Check Program - founded by Larry Lawton - is designed to prevent teens and young adults from making bad choices by providing a first-hand account of the consequences and results of poor decisions. The Fort Lauderdale Police Department has recently acquired 10,000 Reality Check video gift cards, through the use of Law Enforcement Trust Funds. These video gift cards will be carried by our officers so that they are readily available to the community as officers encounter teens, young adults and parents who might benefit from hearing about the realities of a life of crime or bad conduct. The gift card gives viewers access to a video that can be viewed on any computer, smart phone or tablet. The video covers topics such as choice making, consequences of being arrested and avoiding and dissolving bad associations. The FLPD believes knowledge is power. We hope that as our community youth hear the experiences of someone who has been

exposed to the criminal justice system, they will understand that the choices they make today have the potential to affect the rest of their lives. The FLPD is committed to our community, and this partnership between them and The Reality Check Program is a positive step for our community youth.

NATIONAL TERRORISM ADVISORY SYSTEM BULLETIN: We are in a new phase in the global threat environment, which has implications on the homeland. Particularly with the rise in use by terrorist groups of the Internet to inspire and recruit, we are concerned about the "self-radicalized" actor(s) who could strike with little or no notice. Recent attacks and attempted attacks internationally and in the homeland warrant increased security, as well as increased public vigilance and awareness. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the FBI are providing additional guidance to state and local partners on increased security measures. The public should expect an increased presence of law enforcement across communities in the weeks ahead. More stringent security should also be anticipated at public places and events. This may include a heavy police presence, additional restrictions and searches in bags and the use of screening technologies. There are 3 types of Advisories: **BULLETIN:** Describes current developments or general trends regarding threats of terrorism. **ELEVATED ALERT:** Warns of a credible terrorism threat against the U.S. **IMMINENT ALERT:** Warns of a credible, specific and impending terrorism threat against the U.S.

Continued on page 16

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 -In populated places, be responsible for your personal safety. Make a mental note of emergency exits and locations of the nearest security personnel. Keep cell phones in your pockets instead of bags or on tables so you don't lose them during an incident. Carry emergency contact details and any special needs info with you at all times. For more visit: <http://www.ready.gov>

Stay Informed: The U.S. Government will provide additional information about any emerging threat as additional information is identified. The public is encouraged to listen to local law enforcement and public safety officials.

-We urge Americans to continue to travel, attend public events and freely associate with others but remain vigilant and aware of surroundings while doing so, particularly during the holidays.

If you see something, say something—report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.

VACATION RENTAL REGISTRATION PROGRAM UPDATE: On 11/1/15, the City's Ordinance C-15-29 which governs the registration of vacation rentals became effective. 50 applications were received prior to that deadline date. Since the ordinance became effective, 76 properties have been registered as vacation rentals. Three of the registered properties have been awarded a Certificate of Compliance. Summary as of 12/18/15: 76 vacation rental applications received; 3 certificates of compliance issued; 31 applications determined to be complete and ready for inspection; 42 vacation rental applications incomplete and

require additional information; the 76 applications received will generate \$68,970 in registration (\$750) and business tax (\$157.50) fees, of which \$45,375 has been collected to date. The registration process is completely paperless. Applicants are able to view legislation regarding the program and submit applications, payments and complaints electronically. To date, staff has received 50 complaints regarding properties that may be operating illegally. Of those, three of the properties reported have submitted applications and are actively involved in the registration process. The remaining 47 properties are under investigation.

PORT EVERGLADES DEVELOPMENT: Port Everglades broke its own world record for the most cruise passengers to embark and disembark in a single day with 53,485 guests. The Port hosted eight cruise ships on December 20, 2015, including Carnival Cruise Line's Carnival Conquest, Celebrity Cruises' Celebrity Silhouette, Holland America Line's Eurodam and Nieuw Amsterdam, Princess Cruises' Regal Princess and Royal Princess, and Royal Caribbean International's Allure of the Seas and Navigator of the Seas. And Port Everglades welcomes back Costa Cruises to Broward County. An Italian cruise line owned by Carnival Corporation, Costa Cruises has sailed from Port Everglades since the 1960s and is returning for the winter season following a four-year hiatus.

OFFICE CONTACT: Robbi Uptegrove – 954-828-5033; email: ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov. In addition to hosting two pre-agenda meetings twice a month, I am also available to attend your HOA meetings to update your neighborhood on what is going on in the City as well as answer any questions/concerns you may have. Please contact Robbi to schedule.

EMAIL LIST: If you would like to be on our email list so that you receive information pertaining to the City – especially District 1 (i.e. news releases, meeting notices, events), please let Robbi know and she will add you. •

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Monday through Thursday
Offer expires February 28, 2015

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at the Promenade behind DSW

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Now showing the Met Opera
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trilogy

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**RECEIVE 15% OFF
YOUR DINNER PURCHASE**

15% off any food or non-alcohol purchase for Dinner. Excludes tax, alcohol & gratuity. Dine-in only for dinner 3:00 pm – 10:00 pm Monday through Thursday. Not valid with any other offer, discount, coupon or gift card purchase. Not Valid with Chef's Specials. One coupon per table, per visit. Other restrictions may apply. No Cash Value. Coupon must be surrendered upon redemption. Coupon will not be replaced if lost or stolen. Excludes group and event dining.

Monday through Thursday
Offer expires February 28, 2015

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Join us for a complimentary gift and tour.

Discover the affordable beach lifestyle

- Spacious rental apartments
- Fitness center
- Wellness center
- Spectacular ocean and Intracoastal views
- Heated pool, whirlpool and sundeck
- Weekly housekeeping
- Ocean-view dining room
- Piano lounge
- Local transportation
- Chef-prepared meals
- Live entertainment
- Available on-site Assisted Living
- Art studio and library
- Ocean-access boat docks
- Beauty salon



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