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NEVER 2005 CONSTRUCTION 6Br/5.5BA, 2 car garage, 5474SF. Metal roof w/ impact windows and doors. Solid built by “GP” owner! 3/4”mahogany wood flooring throughout, high vaulted ceilings! Huge center island natural gas "chefs" kitchen! Grand master suite w/ large balcony & angle bay views!! A must see to the quality minded buyer 24 hr. guard gated. $2.49M

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SANS SOCI ESTATES NON-WATERFRONT KEYSTONE ISLAND “CARRIBEAN CONTEMPORARY” HOME

SANS SOUCI ESTATES 2 STORY MEDITERRANEAN WATERFRONT
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WIDE BAY VIEWS FROM POOL DECK, 75’ DOCK, SANS SOUCI ESTATES BOATER’S DREAM HOUSE 27,000LB BOAT LIFT!
OWNER W FIN. 20% Down 4Br/3BA, Pool, 2 Car Garage, New Built Addition Hi Vaulted Ceilings Over 3,200 SF. 24” Marble, 2016 Granite Kitchen and Baths. Hurricane Impact windows and doors in place. $1.69M

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5Br/4Ba, Pool, 3732 SF Oversized Lot. High Ceilings, 36’ Marble Plank Flrs Throughout, Huge Center Island Gourmet Kitchen, Spacious Great Rm /Living/ Master W/ Hi-End Bath. New Seawall! & New Dock! $1.59M

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Great Story, Bummer Ending

Thank you to Kathy Glasgow for the compelling and very sad story of Tray Battle (“Crime and Redemption,” December 2016, January 2017).

It was wonderful to read a two-part story, and I was checking my mailbox for the January issue of the BT for the conclusion. I couldn’t wait to hear how it ended.

To say I’m disappointed in this ending is an understatement. I wish guys like Tray Battle could hit the reset button and start everything over. His is an all-too-familiar story of systematic neglect and poor decisions. It’s heartbreaking.

I hope the BT can do more serialized content in the future — it was a great read, and a very engaging story.

I’ll be praying for Mr. Battle and wishing him a more peaceful journey moving ahead.

Thanks for the story.

Kristin Burke
Glendale, California

Your Writer Strikes Gold Again

Thank you, Janet Goodman, for your informative and well-researched article (“Raccoons and Robotics,” January 2017). I can always count on you to learn something new.

Your choice of the unique and challenging subject relating to raccoons, robotics, and our local park environment makes your column extremely valuable.

Phyllis Barash
Miami Beach

Our Great Neighbors Take to the Street

Thank you for Jenni Person’s article this month, about taking her daughter to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Women’s March (“Road Trip, Seriously,” January 2017). It is a crucial time for all of us to stand up and be heard.

I live here in Biscayne Times territory, but I work with Planned Parenthood Global in Latin America. I have spent the last 20-plus years working across the Latin America region to improve the health conditions for women so that they have the freedom to make their own best decisions about their lives and futures.

It is a challenging and inspiring job to work alongside so many brave and committed Latin American advocates who are fighting in very hostile environments to gain the rights my generation has taken for granted in the U.S.

And now I find myself in the ironic position of volunteering my time on behalf of women here because our country is at critical risk of tumbling backward.

None of us can take this sitting down. If it means driving across country to attend the march in D.C., or showing up at the many local events or signing petitions or calling/e-mailing your legislators, we all have a role to play.

I hope we can read more about these issues in the pages of Biscayne Times. It’s great to hear about the actions of our neighbors on behalf of all of us who are currently feeling under siege, whether we are women, queer, immigrant, disabled, poor, people of color, teachers, scientists, public workers, journalists, lovers of oxygen and the Earth, or just plain old-fashioned believers in the rule of law, respectful discourse, and democracy.

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Commentary: LETTERS

Under Miami 21, Special Area Plans allow developers to request zoning changes resulting in much bigger, taller, and densely populated developments than they would otherwise be entitled to build.

So please, Ms. Mansfield, don’t blame the neighbors if developers are using the American Legion and its veterans — not to mention land from our public park — as pawns to patch together a much larger development than just the land leased from the American Legion.

They want to build the largest development ever built in Miami’s historic Upper Eastside, one that is completely out of size and scale with the surrounding neighborhood.

That is what the neighbors are objecting to. We do not agree that the City of Miami should control public parkland — our land — to be used to allow a developer to build a project that would dominate our urban landscape and change its character forever, irreversibly.

It is very much to be hoped — since the developers lost no time in tearing down the American Legion’s old headquarters building — that they will in fact follow through on all their promises to the American Legion.

There is nothing to stop them from building their “of right” nice rental apartment building and the new clubhouse for the Legion. Nothing, of course, unless they themselves choose not to honor their agreement with our veterans.

Deborah Stander
Belle Meade

Willful Ignorance at Work?
I feel compelled to respond to Julie Mansfield’s letter regarding the potential development of land adjacent to and at the site of the former American Legion Post on NE 64th Street ("Neighbors Should Stay Out of This Matter," January 2017).

Mrs. Mansfield admits she does not live near Legion Park, yet she thinks neighbors of Legion Park should stop objecting to the proposed upzoning of land adjacent to Legion Park, which is required to permit the erection of five buildings, including a couple of high-rises, with more than 700 new residential units and 30,000-plus square feet of new retail space.

While some of Mrs. Mansfield’s enumerated goals are laudable, like repairing the Legion Park community center and building “some nice rental apartments for veterans and working people,” using these alleged goals as a subterfuge for planting five massive new structures and the resultant detriment to traffic and quality of life of all who live nearby, are decidedly not.

Further, Mrs. Mansfield appears ignorant (maybe deliberately) of the following:

• The developers can build “some nice rental apartments for veterans and working people” under current zoning. They just can’t build 700-plus apartments without getting changes and special treatment at Miami City Hall.
• The fact that building up to five new structures of this magnitude will have a permanent impact on “anyone else” is precisely what is of concern to us who live nearby.
• No one is asking the developers to contribute for improvements to Legion Park. The park functions perfectly well as it is. It provides daily enjoyment to many neighbors and as many as 200 children who are happy to have it remain in its present form. The developers’ “offer” to improve the park is a thin disguise to buy upzoning and to make use of the park to improve the marketing potential of their market rate apartments and condos.
• It appears the developers hurriedly demolished the American Legion Hall building while the City of Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board was in the process of requesting historic designation for Legion Park. Also, the American Legion property is being leased by the developers, as buying the property would have triggered a reverter clause, and the site would have gone back to the state.
• For Mrs. Mansfield to invoke “heroes who risked their lives to protect our nation” as a reason to grant the needed variances to build this massive structure, which will inevitably impact the lives of thousands of residents, is deceitful at best.

It is inevitable that reasonable development will come to our area. However, the quality of life of those who live around this property cannot be subservient to the profit desires of a real estate speculator. The existing zoning restrictions are there for a reason, and should be followed.

Peter Otto
Bayside

Editor’s note: See This Land Is Your Land (page 43) for an update of the Legion Park development story.
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In the Realm of Alternative Facts
Hold on, it’s going to be a bumpy four years

By Jack King
BT Contributor

While a whole bunch of Americans weren’t paying attention last fall, we ended up with a very strange president who was elected with a minority of the vote. I know you’re thinking about the difference in the Clinton-Trump vote, which was about three million more votes for Clinton, but I’m not.

You see, Trump got about 60 million votes and won, but that 60 million number is only 25 percent of the adult population of the United States. So 25 percent of the adults in America actually elected the president. Pretty sad.

How do we get more people to vote in this country? I don’t know, but it’s something we seriously need to do. More about that in a future column (or columns).

How did Trump get to the top? Not any normal way. He did it by starring on a reality TV show, screaming “You’re fired!” and running against 16 and this is what they got.

Contributor BT votes and won, but that 60 million was elected with a minority of the voters), it worked great. They just wanted change, no matter what they got.

Spicer has a long history of playing fast and loose with the facts, and getting mad when he is not believed, going all the way back to his college days. As a member of the Connecticut College student government in 1993, he introduced a piece of legislation regarding smoking on campus. When the student newspaper reported on the measure, his name was spelled “Sean Sphincter.” Spicer went ballistic and made a federal case of the error. To say the least, he was not well liked in college — and not much better now.

Then we have Kellyanne Conway, a top Trump advisor, who offered maybe the best comment of the entire presidential election. After Spicer made his ridiculous comments about crowd size, Conway defended him, saying he was giving us “alternative facts.” She did not actually define what is an “alternative fact.”

Conway has been a master defender of Trump from the first day of his run for the presidency, and to her credit, she never let the facts get in the way of a good story. I’m not sure that she actually knows what a fact is, but she’s adept at talking for hours without ever uttering a single truism. That’s really hard to do.

And one last Trump selection for his cabinet. How about Betsy DeVos for secretary of education? It’s not that she is well-educated (middle of the road), experienced (none), but she is anti-science, climate denying, evolution rejecting, and anti-intellectual.

She tweeted recently to Trump that for someone who wants to be the secretary of education, she should know the difference between “historical” and “historic.” Apparently she does not.

However, she has one redeeming value that few others have — she has married into a family that is worth $10 billion. They own one the largest pyramid-scheme companies in the world: Amway. And they give generously to the Republican Party.

Are we to expect Trump’s cabinet to be 25 percent military, 25 percent career government officials, and 50 percent campaign donors? Could be. This could end up being the new normal.

And we even have one of our own from South Florida (sort of) in Reince Priebus. He became Trump’s chief of staff, mostly by attrition. Everybody who was considered for the job went away for one reason or another.

The last man standing turned out to be Priebus, who went the University of Miami Law School some 20 years ago. Priebus could be the man for the job, but he needs to stop whining. He sounds like a ten-year-old who just had his Pokémon taken away because of a bad report card. By all accounts, he did well at UM Law, but he’s still a whiner.

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February. So cold, so barren, so dark. So...so...somewhere else is what BizBuzz is describing, obviously. Right now, Miami is the envy of our fellow Americans, even as far south as north Florida. Is it the weather? The flowers? The many attractions we alone enjoy?

For starters, we have the Miami International Map Fair, which returns to HistoryMiami (101 W. Flagler St., 305-375-1492), February 3-5, for its 24th year at the museum. This is the largest map fair in the Western Hemisphere and attracts the cartographically inclined from all around the world. Daily admission is $20 for the general public, $15 for members, and $10 for students. Visit historymiami.org/mapfair for a list of events and lectures.

Attention! You’ll need a local map if you’re planning on attending this year’s Original Miami Beach Antique Show (miamibeachantiqueshow.com). Due to ongoing renovations at the Miami Beach Convention Center, the show is dropping “Beach” from its name this year and moving operations to the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition Center (10901 SW 24th St.). Cost is only $20 for all four days, February 10-13, but you’ll probably spend a small fortune on the many wonderful items you find from the hundreds of dealers gathered.

The Dana Fortune exhibition “The Technicolor Beyond” is closing February 11 at Design Sublime Gallery (7201 NE 4th Ave., Miami, 305-834-8201), so catch it before it’s gone. But two shows will replace it! A reception for the group exhibition “walls UNKNOWN” will take place from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. February 16. On February 25, also from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the gallery will host a reception for Vincente Fabre & Lizbeth Lindstrom’s “Hyperbole and Perception” show. Can’t make the parties? The gallery is open regularly from 1:00 to 6:00 Tuesdays through Fridays, and from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturdays.

Fandango! is a popular quartet from Chicago that performs an intriguing mix of Latin, Spanish, Sephardic, Balkan, and classical music. The group — composed of Eugenia Moliner (flute), Desiree Ruhrstrat (violin), Denis Azabagic (guitar), and David Cunliffe (cello) — will perform here as part of Saint Martha’s Yamaha Concert Series. Expect to hear compositions from Vivaldi and Boccherini, as well as modern twists on old folk melodies. The performance is at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, February 26, at Barry University’s Broad Performing Arts Center (11300 NE 2nd Ave., 800-595-4849). Tickets are only $10 or $20, and include a reception with the musicians.

About 2500 patients visited the Pelican Harbor Seabird Station (1279 NE 79th St., 305-751-9840) in 2016, an increase of 27 percent over the previous year for the non-profit institution. Unfortunately, it meant staff had to turn away some non-native wildlife that otherwise would have been treated. But BT readers can still help! Even modest donations of cash or time could mean an extra nesting season for an endangered bird, so that small gift could really be important. Consider buying tickets ($125) now for the station’s yearly gala in April, or become a sponsor. Visit pelicanharbor.org for details.

Speaking of nests, since 1994, husband-and-wife real estate team Enrique Garcia and Ines Hegedus-Garcia have offered residential and commercial clients an array of services and support that have earned them a loyal following. They recently let BizBuzz know they’ve updated their website Miamism.com and want BT readers to check out the latest architectural news and advice geared to our unique market.

Tony Cho, president of Metro 1 Properties (120 NE 27th St., 305-909-6775), has a few interesting properties currently for lease or rent, particularly in the Wynwood district. Imagine running a restaurant next to Wynwood Walls and then driving a few blocks to your elegant home in Buena Vista. That dream could be your reality with just a phone call.

Congratulations to Willis Wilson & Associates (7460 NE 5th Ave.), which is welcoming to the team Rafael Gutierrez

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BizBuzz
Continued from page 18

(305-610-6199) and his 17 years of experience in Miami and Miami Beach real estate. See their ad for this month’s featured properties, and call Rafael, Bill Willis (305-790-5249), or Donald Wilson (305-335-5722) for more information.

Looking to update an old or new home inexpensively? Farrey’s Lighting and Bath (1850 NE 146th St., 305-947-5451 and 3000 SW 28th Ln., 305-445-2244) is holding a furniture sale at both its showrooms. Floor samples will be marked up to 50 percent off. Quantities are limited, and all sales are final.

As always, BizBuzz likes to remind BT readers that it’s better to shell out a few bucks for sound legal advice up front than to take a chance and end up paying a lot more money to fix a preventable problem later. Donald Kahn and son David at Green and Kahn Law Firm (317 71st St., Miami Beach, 305-865-4311) are the local experts in real estate law, but they can also help you with other legal matters, such as trusts, wills, or guardianship issues. Give them a call today.

Independent inspections are highly recommended. Carl Burkhardt is a licensed real estate inspector who can provide a fast turnaround on reports for home, condo, commercial, and other properties through his company Certified Inspection Services (954-682-1888, inspectorone01@gmail.com). During February, Carl is offering a 10% discount on inspection costs for military, law enforcement, and first-time buyers if you mention the BT when you schedule an appointment.

Should mold be found during an inspection or if you’re simply tired of eau de mildew permeating your environment, call new advertiser Miami Mold Specialist (305-763-8070) for an appointment. Owner Moty Katz has 25 years of experience both here and in New York. The company has a six-point inspection service that will find even the sneakiest of molds in your home (or your boat). Once technicians have determined the severity of the problem, they can begin the removal process. Remember, mold isn’t just a nuisance. Certain molds are toxic, and they are certainly disastrous if you’re selling your home.

Clutter is a problem that can exacerbate your mold and mildew problems. Too many unread books. Too many unworn clothes. It’s a picture that’s all too familiar in many Miami homes. Virginia Brown, founder of MiamiNeat (305-632-2576, Virginia@MiamiNeat.com) has a gentle solution. Using her residential organizing skills, Virginia strives to help homeowners figure out how to better manage their surroundings. She says not only do clients feel less stress, but they also gain positive energies in the process. Start lightly with just the garage, or be bold and go for a full makeover. It’s your choice.

Speaking of makeovers, Valentine’s Day is just around the corner, so it’s time to primp and preen. If dolling up for the big night is what you need, visit Hannah & Her Scissors (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-8426) to brighten up your hairdo and nails or to get a proper facial or waxing. Proprietress Hannah Lasky is a creative force on your locks and on canvas. Ladies, men, boys, and girls, drop in for a haircut, and walk out with one of her original artworks!

Over at GNC, pick up the vitamins, supplements, diet aids, energy products, and other nutritional products that will help you feel vital on Valentine’s Day — or any other day. Check the BT ad for a $10 coupon that’s good at these three GNC stores owned by Lenny and Annette Fassler: Publix Biscayne Center (1786 Biscayne Blvd., 305-371-1822), Shops@Midtown (3401 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-6377), or 127th Street Center (12880 Biscayne Blvd. 305-893-6806).

Want to feel more centered before the big night? 2 Be Healthy Holistic Health Services (4858 NE 2nd Ave., 305-538-8998) provides several rejuvenating services, including reflexology, acupuncture, facial rejuvenation, Eastern and Western herbs, massage, Bodytalk, and more. All at affordable prices. But what’s more affordable than free? On February 9, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., the center hosts a networking mixer in collaboration with the Miami Holistic Chamber of Commerce. You’ll get to enjoy complimentary demos and an informative lecture from staff.

BT readers thinking ahead to a fit and toned body for summer should call Breathe Pilates (715 NE 79th St., 786-801-9860), which is offering a couple of introductory promotions: five group equipment (reformer or springboard) classes at only $95 or three private-instructor sessions for $180. If you’re worried about hurting yourself with a strange, new exercise regimen, the studio’s certified trainers...
specialize in working with clients who are rehabilitating injuries, and the classes are small to encourage safe, guided instruction.

Dr. Valeria Soltanik of Soltanik Dental (2999 NE 191st St., 305-466-2334) wants to help you improve your smile. During February, the doctor is offering $500 off orthodontics, whether it’s traditional braces or Invisalign. The consultation is free, but remember to mention Biscayne Times when you make the appointment. Even if your teeth are straight, consider making a visit to ensure they’re healthy.

With your teeth squared away, it’s time to talk about delicious food! Consider booking a Valentine’s meal at new advertiser Ferraro’s Kitchen (1099 NE 79th St., 786-534-2136), where you’ll receive a complimentary glass of prosecco and strawberry on February 14. Owner Igor Ferraro (formerly of La Bottega) is a native of Venice, Italy, where he began his hospitality journey under the tutelage of his vintner father. After several successes in Italy, Ferraro is now serving up classic Italian fare here.

Chef Rolf Fellhauer at Tuna’s Seafood Restaurant (17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-0630) is also cooking up a lovely Valentine’s Day menu for only $75 per person. See the ad this month for details. Chef Rolf also let BizBuzz know about several other February specials. For only $19.99 at the bar only, order a New York strip steak with herb butter sauce and fries. Moscow Mules are $5 on Mondays; Ketel One drinks are $4 on Thursdays, which is poker night at the restaurant. Also, happy hour runs from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., and again at 11:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. every day.

While Soyka Restaurant (5556 NE 4th Ct., 305-759-3117) may be an obvious choice for a romantic Valentine’s date, the restaurant wants to remind readers that brunch runs from noon to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Also happy hour is from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Sunday. Right up the street, Mark Soyka’s Café Royal (5808 NE 4th Ct., 786-953-7850) is open for brunch every Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Just as some folks prefer denim to silk, they might prefer gingham to linen when it comes to dining. Fortunately, East Side Pizza (731 NE 79th St., 305-758-5351) is offering a deal to satisfy lovers who want a casual Valentine’s Day meal. Mention their BT ad and get half off an entrée or large pizza when you purchase one of the same at full price. This special is only available on February 14.

A really successful Valentine’s Day could end with a marriage proposal and a trip to J Paper (1033 Kane Concord, Bay Harbor Islands, 305-864-2950) for wedding invites. More than just a stationery store, J Paper also offers great gift ideas for home and office, and a large assortment of clothing and other needs for your baby.

If you’re an old hand at Valentine’s Day and have a bunch of little ones to prove it, POD 22 (8101 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 102, 305-456-4791) is running a special that will make you and them happy. Book a party in February, and receive a $75 credit toward extras such as piñatas, face painting, custom theme decorations, custom theme cupcakes and cake, party favors, an in-house party production crew, entertainment, and more. Call for details. Restrictions apply.

Are your children a bit older? The Cushman School (592 NE 60th St., 305-757-1966) has been operating since 1924, making it one of the oldest and most respected learning institutions in the region, but it never had a high school — until now. The new school, located down the street at 4700 Biscayne Blvd., will feature an innovative curriculum that focuses on technology and the arts. Administrators are now accepting applications from prospective ninth- and tenth-graders; however, the number of students in each grade is capped, so don’t delay filling out those forms. Visit Cushmanschool.org for details.

Monsignor Edward Pace High School (15600 NW 32nd Ave., 305-623-PACE, ext. 342) is also accepting applications for its 2017-2018 school year. Call to find out about placement tests and transferring records. First, though, comes the fifth annual Spartan Arts Boot Camp on Saturday, February 4, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. It’s a day of participating in the arts for any student in the fifth through eighth grades. Classes offered include drawing, dancing, sculpture, theater, and music. It’s only a $10 donation, which includes lunch.

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Taking Flight

More rescues than ever, more cramped than ever, more interest than ever — Pelican Harbor Seabird Station finally is getting a new home

By Janet Goodman

Photos by Silvia Ros
On a powder-blue-sky morning in December, just 73 degrees along Biscayne Bay, one of South Florida’s most moving rituals is about to begin: the release back into nature of a wild animal treated for multiple injuries. This creature, a brown pelican, had been brought to the Pelican Harbor Seabird Station, on the 79th Street Causeway in Miami, for treatment of a wing injury and torn beak pouch. An X-ray revealed an ingested metal fishhook as well. After 49 days of doctoring and rehabilitation at the clinic, it was pronounced ready for release.

One would expect the bird to race from its transport crate once the volunteer had swung wide the gate, but this patient merely hopped out onto the coastal rocks and preened its feathers, in no great hurry for freedom. After several minutes, it lifted off into the air, soaring east before circling north and landing on a jetty not 70 yards away.

It’s enough to give goosebumps to the uninitiated, but for the staff at Pelican Harbor Seabird Station (PHSS), it’s just another busy day of saving lives. Located on the eastern edge of Pelican Harbor Marina, about half a mile north of Bird Key and just 400 yards south of Pelican Island in Biscayne Bay, the rehab center has been rescuing, treating, and releasing thousands of seabirds, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds, mammals, and reptiles — most of them native to Florida — for the past 37 years. The non-profit 501(c)(3) wildlife rehabilitation center started out treating only pelicans but has slowly grown to handle more than 300 different species since 1980, with 153 species in 2016 alone.

According to the center’s 2016 annual report, last year the hospital admitted 2551 rescues, including 564 seabirds and shorebirds, and 534 songbirds. Brown pelicans (pictured) topped the list at 143.

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pelicans (which were taken off the Endangered Species List in 2009, but which are facing a crisis again on the West Coast of the United States) topped the seabird-intake list, at 143, followed by 108 laughing gulls. The Northern mockingbird, our state bird, led the songbird category, at 124. Some patients, many of them mammals such as gray squirrels and Virginia opossums, came to the center as orphaned babies. But the heart of PHSS has always been with pelicans, as reflected in the organization’s name and logo.

Exotics, such as Muscovy ducks, are brought to the hospital by area residents, but due to limited resources, space, and an emphasis on native species, these animals can’t remain there long. They’re triaged and treated up to three days.

No rabies vector mammals, such as raccoons and foxes, are accepted at this time, unless the PHSS board of directors votes to obtain the needed permits, which seems unlikely, given the limited staff and the small size of the rehab center. The 900-square-foot building houses a reception area, administrative offices, and a clinic that doubles as a laundry, kitchen, and bathroom. Outside are six large and five small enclosures.

When an injured or sick animal is found, it is transported to the facility, either by the PHSS ambulance or by a Good Samaritan. It’s examined and stabilized in the clinic, usually by Yaritza Acosta, a five-year veteran who is the center’s wildlife rehabilitation manager. Veterinarian Beth Hirschfeld is called in for serious injuries and surgery. Each animal receives an ID band showing the date it was rescued and the order in which it was admitted.

After treatment, the animals remain inside the clinic for monitoring in a recovery cage until they are well enough to be moved to one of the outdoor enclosures.

Charleen Trimble, in the newly created position of education and outreach coordinator, takes the BT on a tour of PHSS in early December 2016. “Notice the slats on the enclosures for the birds that are planned for release,” she says. “This is not a zoo, but a rehab facility.”

Only a small window is cut away in the slats for viewing. Privacy is essential for the birds’ progress because it lessens stress. At feeding time, pools within the enclosures are filled with fish, often Atlantic thread herring (six fish per feeding for each pelican), to ensure as little human contact as possible. Once a week, the pools are stocked with live fish to exercise the birds’ hunting abilities.

Some enclosures house permanent residents. These are animals that have recovered sufficiently but couldn’t survive in the wild. They’re hand-fed and relatively tame; some are nesting, and some are used as animal ambassadors in area schools. Only the permanent residents get names. Pepe is a brown pelican trained to participate in educational events; Shere Khan (the name comes from the Jungle Book stories) is an Eastern screech owl whose eye injury prevents his release.

On this particular day, most of the birds at the facility are brown pelicans, but one white pelican stands out from the rest. Trimble explains that this female was flown in by Delta Airlines in October. She was found on an Iowa lake with a wing injury and a foot infection called bumblefoot. PHSS hopes to release the bird somewhere in the Keys when it fully recovers.

Coordinating the white pelican rescue was Carla Zepeda, hired as the facility’s rescue, release, and volunteer coordinator in January 2016. With a degree in biology from FIU and a minor in wildlife conservation, she served as a
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in wildlife conservation, she served as a PHSS intern for the three previous years. Prior to that she worked with chickens on a Mexico cattle ranch, worked with parrots and other wildlife, and did a stint at the Florida Keys Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center in Tavernier.

Her favorite part of the job, says Zepeda, is the rescue itself. Without that intervention, the injured or sick animal would perish. Rescue tallies increased 28 percent in 2016 — with 560 more patients than in 2015 — with an overall release rate at 42 percent; the brown pelican release rate was 65 percent. (The “release” rate refers to animals released back into the wild; some are transferred, some are euthanized, and some remain at the center as permanent residents.) Animals at the facility for treatment are given up to 180 days for assessing outcomes, and sometimes more.

Stan Saffan, known to many as Captain Stan, owns and operates Therapy-IV, a charter fleet of two 58-foot sportfisherman boats at Haulover Marina. Every week he sees pelicans with hook injuries and fishing line entanglements; either he and his crew or someone from PHSS rescues these birds and gets them to the clinic for treatment.

Saffan has a genuine affection for the animals. “Pelicans are a fisherman’s best friends,” he explains. “They show you where the bait fish are, and that shows you where the big fish are.” Pelicans recognize his boats and follow them out to the ocean on fishing trips, to the thrill of his customers. He also finds them to be reliable barometers for forecasting big storms days in advance; they leave Haulover until storms blow over.

And every single Monday of the past 25 years, Saffan has sent in at least a $25 donation to PHSS. He promotes the wildlife hospital to his clients and colleagues, has helped secure corporate gifts, and every year donates a fishing trip for the PHSS fundraising auction.

The ocean-side pier at Haulover was a main source of seabird injuries before Hurricane Andrew destroyed it in 1992. Since then, fishing is only allowed along Baker’s Haulover Cut, and the pelicans run into hooks and tackle as they swoop up fish. Bait-cutting stations along the charter boat marina are frequented by dozens of hungry pelicans and gulls trying to steal catch-of-the-day snapper and mackerel in ice chests and leaving their marks on boat docks and decks. Crews fend off the bandits with water sprayed from hoses, throw fish scraps for them out into the bay, and keep a couple of animal carriers on hand for birds in need of help.

According to Zepeda, the PHSS rescue, release, and volunteer coordinator, South Florida marinas are where most seabirds are injured.

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$1899. OR ABOUT A PENNY PER COMPLIMENT.
There’s no such thing as a typical day for Zepeda, who coordinates relief efforts for seabirds. In the spring and summer, she says, “We had eight animals brought in, and I haven’t yet gone on a rescue in the PHSS ambulance. Yesterday,” she continues, “we rescued a pelican from our own sidewalk. It went for my head,” she tells Acosta, and with its talons under control, she places it on its back inside a box, slips on the lid, and safely weighs the bird, which has gained 15 grams from the previous day. It is given medicine comes out when the bird eliminates.

On a second tour of the facility, wildlife rehabilitation manager Acosta tells the BT that seabirds are automatically X-rayed for fishhooks when they come in. She displays a bin brimming with the year’s booty: metal hooks, large plastic lures, BB pellets, and monofilament (plastic fishing lines). Some staff and interns have been trained by veterinarians to remove internal hooks by using one of two procedures. The first, a manual procedure, involves anesthetizing the bird and, if it is a pelican, reaching into the beak and down the throat, feeling for, and retrieving the hook. The second is a “cotton fish” procedure that requires the bird to be fed a dead fish stuffed with cotton. The cotton snare the internal hook and later comes out when the bird eliminates.

Catching the patients in their enclosures and giving them daily exams and treatments is an acquired skill that takes practice, patience, courage, and self-confidence. Wearing leather gloves, Zepeda walks through the clinic’s back door, gripping a juvenile red-shouldered hawk. “It went for my head,” she tells Acosta, and with its talons under control, she places it on its back inside a box, slips on the lid, and safely weighs the bird, which has gained 15 grams from the previous day. It is given medicine and then, with long tweezers, is force-fed bite-size pieces of a white mouse.

Four days earlier, a meal of a poisoned rat had nearly killed the hawk before it was rescued. Acosta knows...
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the signs of rat poisoning: dehydration, swollen lower eyelids, breathing trouble, and paralysis. Constant fluids have been administered as part of its emergency treatment, and activated charcoal to absorb the poison and let it safely pass through its system.

The next patient is a belted kingfisher, found five days earlier hanging from a tree, entangled in hook and tackle. Its right wing was injured, but he’s now active and flying. Acosta warns that this species generally does poorly in captivity, and even though his weight has stabilized, PHSS is administering fluids and supplementing his diet with a liquid fish-eater formula.

Among the other rescues treated this morning are a nestling gray squirrel with head wounds and a quite vocal great blue heron, a juvenile with a dislocated shoulder that was found in Pinecrest five days before.

“The biggest obstacle in rehabbing an animal is that sometimes it’s hard to know what’s going on, since they can’t talk to you,” explains Acosta. “If it’s not an obvious problem, we have to do a lot of testing, reaching out to other resources to see what they’ve experienced. At Pelican Harbor, for the most part, if an animal needs it, we don’t get a no — we get a ‘do what you can for the animal.’”

One time the center needed to send a razorbill to North Carolina; the public immediately donated the funds needed to send him there. Acosta smiles. “It’s really great when that happens.”

Acosta graduated from Lees-McRae College in North Carolina with a degree in biology and courses in wildlife rehabilitation. She interned at the college’s Blue Ridge Wildlife Institute, which uses RaptorMed software to keep track of its treated animals. Acosta suggested that PHSS use the computer program, and it has become a staple of journaling healthcare here since 2015.

“RaptorMed has been a big help,” says Acosta. “For people to see exactly what’s going on with an animal, how it’s being treated, and what we do, that makes them feel better.”

Under executive director Christopher Boykin, 2016 revenues of $494,000 are up 63 percent from 2013, plus PHSS earned “Top-Rated” 2016 status by GreatNonprofits.
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February 2017
Biscayne Times • www.BiscayneTimes.com
People who find wildlife in distress want to help, but sometimes they can do more harm than good, warns Zepeda. A simple act of giving water or food to a wild animal can cause further harm. “Never force anything,” she advises, “because it can go down the wrong way, or the food is the improper diet. That makes our job harder [when the animal comes to PHSS] because we have to correct that, then correct the injury or malnutrition.”

Despite the immense rewards, Acosta says, there can be tough moments, even though the staff tries to keep an emotional distance from the animals they’re rehabilitating for release. “Sometimes you’ll have animals here that you think are doing fine, and they just die suddenly,” she explains. “That can be pretty tough to take. You wonder, ‘Did I do something wrong? Did I miss something?’ The job is sometimes emotionally and mentally draining.”

For Zepeda, baby bird and baby mammal seasons are the most challenging times. “Parents often do the best job at raising their young. When all these orphaned animals come in, we become substitutes, and for them to grow up without parental care is hard. It’s tough because it breaks my heart.”

Pelican Harbor Seabird Station was founded in 1980, when Harry and Darlene Kelton started living on a houseboat in the marina not far from the place the facility is located today. They immediately began to notice injured pelicans swimming in Biscayne Bay. Darlene worked for nearby WSVN-TV, and Harry was a mechanical engineer. Neither of them had a biology background, but they’d catch wounded pelicans and unhook them. Thirty-seven years later, Harry Kelton jokes that the evolution of the wildlife hospital was a hobby that got out of control.

To help them in their rescue efforts, the Pelican Harbor Yacht Club, which had been leasing its site from the county, for a dollar a year, since the 1940s, put up a small shelter structure on its land, with posts sunk into the ground and a roof over it, but no walls. When the Keltons had to keep a bird overnight, they wrapped a roll of cyclone fence around the shelter to create an enclosure.

A year later a contractor built a second pen adjacent to the post structure, and that’s where they operated until the marina was rebuilt in 1990. Sometimes the Keltons’ bathroom on board their houseboat became a third area for pelican rehab.

In 1981 the Keltons established PHSS as a non-profit corporation; they and their son, Robert, served as the first board members. “By that time,” says Harry in a phone interview with the BT, “we were taking in quite a few pelicans a year. At first we only counted pelicans — we didn’t count the gulls, terns, and other birds that people brought to us. I was chief gofer, pelican feeder, and rehabilitator.”

The facility’s first major challenge came in 1989. “The county sent letters to all 24 boat owners with boat slips, telling us they were going to rebuild the marina and please remove your boats,” says Harry, who is now 90 and serves on the board as secretary. “Three of us lived on houseboats,” he adds. “So I started talking to some county commissioners, invited them in, showed them what we were doing, and got a lot of support.”

(Those commissioners were Harvey
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Taking Flight
Continued from page 34

Ruvin and Sherman Wynn. Ruvin eventually joined the PHSS board of directors in 1996 and remains on the board today.)

It was during this time that Pelican Harbor Yacht Club was moved to a month-to-month lease and then ultimately forced to move out. Harry Kelton went to a county commission meeting to advocate for keeping his seabird facility on the site. At first the commission offered PHSS a small slice of land on the west side of the county, next to Animal Services. But with the help of Commissioners Ruvin and Wynn, the county decided to allow the center to continue its operations at the marina on the east end of the island.

The commission also offered to build a 900-square-foot building for PHSS on the marina site, which is Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces (PROS) property and lease it to the center for $25 a month for 20 years with a ten-year extension (it expires in 2020). According to Michael Ruiz, assistant director of Miami-Dade County Parks, “Per the lease, PROS assumes electric, water, sewage, and waste-collection expenses at approximately $6000 per year.” (Current executive director Christopher Boykin tells the BT that the county commission is about to vote on a 35-to-50-year lease extension.)

Over the years, PHSS has grown in many ways. In just the past five years, according to wildlife rehabilitation manager Acosta, the facility has been transferring out fewer animals to different locations. “We’ve evolved into accepting more than just seabirds, learning how to treat different things, making our range bigger,” she says. “We do more outreach and education, getting our name out there. We’re more accommodating to groups, and the reception room is more welcoming. We have more help now, in terms of staff, especially with the big influx of animals we’ve gotten. Our vets have taught us to do different procedures — every day it seems we’re learning something new, how to treat a certain animal or certain case.”

In 2016 orphaned animals at PHSS numbered 253 opossums and 127 gray squirrels. Fifty-four Eastern screech owls were raised, compared to only ten in 2015. But Kelton is quick to point out that being located on just three-tenths of an acre, compared to five acres for some other wildlife centers, limits the focus to mainly seabirds and shorebirds.

Boykin notes that PHSS staff has grown to four full-time and five part-time employees. And the number of volunteers has also grown, to more than 40, ranging from two to six volunteers working daily.

“They help to free up the staff to do their jobs,” says Zepeda. Volunteers maintain the outside enclosures, feed the animals, answer phones, participate in outreach and education events, and even do light construction and maintenance work around the compound.

Donor sponsorship is helping the organization’s expansion. The Batchelor...
Foundation awarded PHSS a $70,000 matching challenge grant in 2016. The center’s own “Adopt a Bird” sponsorship allows donors to choose specific funding levels and bird species to help. *(Biscayne Times)* is a sponsor as well.

In 2015, 33 percent of center’s revenue came from corporate and foundation sponsorship, while 51 percent came from individual donations.

Fundraising events in 2015, such as the Annual Holiday Fish Drive and the Pelican Party Gala held in April at the Miami Shores Country Club, brought in 12 percent. Program fees and sales of promotional items make up remainder.

According to executive director Boykin, the 2016 gala raised $137,000, generating almost 25 percent of the center’s funding for that year, and is the most successful fundraiser to date.

Over the years, the board of directors has grown to 11 members. Besides Ruvin and Kelton, current members include North Miami Councilwoman Carol Keys, two veterinarians, educators, lawyers, and PHSS volunteers. The newest board member is Kathryn Comer, an assistant professor of English at Barry University who joined the board in the fall of 2016 and continues to volunteer at the center.

Longstanding board member Dr. Jim McCoy retired from his own practice at Bayshore Veterinary Clinic in North Miami Beach in 2013 and was elected board president that year. PHSS founder Harry Kelton says he met McCoy in 1991, after taking a pelican with a pouch tear to a vet who’d administered too much anesthetic, resulting in the bird’s death.

“Jim McCoy said if we brought in pelicans after 6:00 p.m., he’d work on them for only the cost of expenses,” says Kelton. “He worked for free up until he retired.”

The position of executive director was created in 2001 by then board president Wendy Fox, who served until her death at age 54 from cancer in August 2011. She’d started as a volunteer in 1993 and was brought on to the board in 1999. Kelton recounts how she followed in his footsteps as a person who could do it all.

“At my pushing, she became an employee, feeding and handling birds, then she became a director,” he says.

“Wendy was my pick for all time. My wife and I started backing out when we saw how well she was taking hold.”

Wendy’s son, Brian, joined the board in 2007 and was elected president in June 2011. When his mother passed away later that summer, Brian became the next executive director. Under his leadership, the center developed an internship program for high school and college students, and recent graduates pursuing careers in wildlife-related sciences. (The main focus is animal care, but other internships are now available. The program has since grown to between 8 and 12 interns.)

By November 2012, however, the 28-year-old biologist had resigned his position. Fox did not return phone and e-mail requests for an interview. According to Kelton, “Brian was fresh out of college. Some people choose one direction, some people choose another.”

Fox is now a senior environmental specialist with Hi-Crush Proppants, which produces sand for fracking, in Blair, Wisconsin. During his brief stint as PHSS executive director, he hired experienced wildlife rehabilitator and another Lees-McRae College graduate, Jessica Cline, who became the interim executive director in June 2013. She left to marry her college sweetheart in North Carolina in 2014, says Kelton.

The 2003 death of Darlene Kelton, Harry’s wife, was the beginning of a decade of leadership changes at PHSS. But things finally seemed to stabilize with the hiring of Boykin in 2014. His background includes a B.A. in biology from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg and work experience with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves, followed by a decade with the department’s Coral Reef Conservation Program.

Under Boykin’s direction, 2016 revenues of $494,000 are up 63 percent from 2013. PHSS has maintained a Gold-level GuideStar nonprofit profile, with a commitment to transparency, and earned a “Top-Rated” 2016 status by GreatNonprofits.

Boykin says he feels strongly about fair employment compensation. “When I started, one of our wildlife rehabbers with a B.A. degree was making minimum wage,” he recalls. “She’s responsible for the life or death of countless animals, suffers from compassion fatigue, and lives in one of the most expensive cities in the country. These people do it because they care. It’s clearly not for the compensation.”

Now most of the full-time staff has salaries in the low thirties, but Boykin sees that as still under-compensated. With the recent uptick of donations and animals coming into PHSS, the future is looking better than ever for staff, as well as animals.

More staff, volunteers, and funding couldn’t come at a better time. Groundbreaking is expected to begin this year on a new 1911-square-foot PHSS facility.

Kelton recalls that the dream of a larger building began in 2008. “James E. Lockwood Jr., a long-time PHSS supporter, passed away, leaving an estate to be distributed to unnamed animal charities,” he explains. “The executor, also a supporter, named PHSS as beneficiary of $500,000, restricted to the purpose of a new building. We’ve been planning the building ever since.”

(Bequests can come through the Pelican Seabird Foundation.)

With then executive director Wendy Fox at the helm, PHSS began planning a two-story building with a parapet-style roof, but the design was later changed to a single-level floor plan under Cline’s directorship.

“We decided we didn’t want a flat roof with a wall around the sides of it because pelicans would nest up there,” remembers Kelton. “The nesting sticks they’d bring would clog roof drains and gutters, causing flooding. For another thing, when you build a two-story...
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building, it better be larger than 1200 square feet stacked on top of 1200 square feet, because you have a stairway at both ends of the building and a stairwell takes away from usable space. Then you have to have a handicap elevator. That's another expense. Maintenance fees on elevators are not cheap.”

Then just as building plans were in the process of being approved by the City of Miami and county permits were being granted, architect Steven Schwortz passed away from pancreatic cancer. Boykin describes him as a lifelong friend to PHSS; he’d designed the center’s current building.

“He worked on the [new design] literally up until the time of his passing,” says Boykin. “Although the building will be named after James E. Lockwood, we’re dedicating a plaque to Steven Schwortz in the Education Center.”

“We’re now in the market for an architect to finish up the corrections,” says Kelton. “The dry-run through building permits produced a bunch of comments. We have to adjust and go back through with corrected plans.”

Kelton says he’s happy with the design for the new facility, particularly the added space. “We’re just so crowded here. During a busy time, people are crawling over each other. We need the space.”

Plans call for a large treatment room and separate rooms for surgery, X-ray, large and small bird cages, isolation, food storage/food prep, laundry, a staff lounge, men’s and women’s bathrooms, a reception/education area, and three administrative offices. It will be a state-of-the-art wildlife hospital, double in size from the old facility, from three rooms and one bath to 12 rooms and two baths.

The old building will be torn down first and a 500-square-foot trailer set up approximately 75 feet away. Construction will take about a year. “I dread it,” says Kelton, “but it’s worth it.”

“Building a new facility on the tip of a narrow peninsula, surrounded by water on three sides, is no simple feat, and it’s not cheap.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Taking Flight
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Boykin: “Building a new facility on the tip of a narrow peninsula, surrounded by water on three sides, is no simple feat, and it’s not cheap.”

Intern Doug Giraldo releases a rehabilitated double-crested cormorant back to Biscayne Bay.

...to help with equipment for the new facility, as well as ‘sponsoring’ a room to ensure we have adequate funds and don’t exhaust all our revenues.”

PHSS is also hoping to modify the existing outdoor animal enclosures, and add new structures.

A wraparound boardwalk is planned for the future site. Boykin explains that a Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) grant will be submitted by Pelican Harbor Marina, which is a Miami-Dade County park, to cover the costs. “We are writing it and working in partnership with county staff at the marina and grants office to submit it.”

He adds, “We’re also working on our black banding permits and hope to have them in early 2017.” Upon release, the animal’s intake band is removed and will then be replaced with a black ID band. “This will allow us to determine if we’re treating 400 individual pelicans or 100 pelicans four times a year.”

Did Kelton ever envision the facility lasting 37 years?

“No, ma’am” he answers. He only wanted to help a pelican in need. “I just saw a poor pelican with fish hooks and wondered, what am I going to do about it?”

He’s actually considering real retirement.

“I do think PHSS is in good hands today,” he concludes. “It’s where my heart is, but I’m starting to talk about one of these days moving up to North Carolina, where my son lives on three acres with a couple of horses and chickens. Maybe next year...or early the year after.”

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Linked Parks for Little River
An idea floats for passive greenspace

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

While adults are making speeches beneath a blue tent, four kids standing on a seawall spot a large manatee gently drifting, submerged in the brackish waterway known as Little River. As the kids point and snap pictures, another manatee appears. And then another. And another.

Such was the scene on a somewhat rainy Saturday, January 14, during the official dedication of recent improvements at Manatee Bend Park, located at 457 NE 77th Street Rd. within the City of Miami’s Upper Eastside neighborhood of North Palm Grove. Those improvements include a restored seawall and a brand-new kayak/canoe launch. Future improvements for Manatee Bend may include security lighting and a new sidewalk.

“Manatee Bend has been a real positive thing for our neighborhood,” says Eileen Bottari, a member of the City of Miami’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and a North Palm Grove homeowner. “It’s just benches and wildlife and trees, and no locked gates or fences.”

City officials and activists at the dedication reminisced about how Manatee Bend went from a 1.2-acre stretch of waterfront land slated for development to a passive park where adults relax, children play, and manatees

Continued on page 48

Could Be a Code Breaker
Miami Shores village manager appears to flout strict yard rule

By Francisco Alvarado
BT Contributor

In Miami Shores, violating the village code of ordinances can come with a hefty price. That is, unless you’re the village’s top bureaucrat. Then you only have to worry about anonymous residents snitching to a local news publication, instead of the village’s code enforcement officers.

Late last year, Biscayne Times received an unsigned letter, sprinkled with typos, that started off by highlighting a village ordinance restricting vegetable gardens to backyards only. That law had sparked a pitched legal battle last summer over the village forcing homeowners Hermine Ricketts and Tom Carroll to rip out an organic vegetable garden the couple had been cultivating in their front yard for 17 years.

That same ordinance also requires homeowners to have a minimum of two trees on their property’s “green space.” To wit: Division 17 — Landscaping, Section 536 — Design Standards: “All green space shall be planted with grass, sod or living ground cover and a minimum of two trees.”

The next line in the anonymous letter reads: “The house below is 230 NE 100 Street and the required trees are noticeably absent.” Below that is an aerial photo of a cream-colored residence in Miami Shores with a boat and a truck parked in a rear driveway.

“Why was this house not cited under the same codes as Hermine Rickets [sic] and Tom Carroll [sic],” it is because it is the home of Miami Shore [sic] Village Manager [sic], Tom Benton,” the letter asks. “Obviously the rules do not apply to Mr. Benton.”

The unknown correspondent concludes by stating, “Name withheld to prevent harassment by MSV.”

The anonymous source was only half right. There are no trees in the property’s front yard. But there does appear to be one skinny palm tree (probably an Alexander palm) in the backyard of the three-bedroom house Benton purchased in 1982.

Jutting out of the grass, the palm rises like a stiff appendage alongside a fence abutting the property next door, which has a more lush tree canopy.

In most Miami-Dade municipalities, such a minor violation would likely go unnoticed. But diminutive Miami Shores, population 10,800, is known for its ultra-fussy rules and regulations.

Benton’s alleged infraction and the anonymous complaint it spawned reveal deep divisions among neighbors who insist that local laws ensure the village doesn’t lose its pristine, hometown USA

Continued on page 45
This Land Is Your Land — Or Should Be
Miami City Commission votes to end special city-developer partnerships

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

The fate of a controversial 1.3 million-square-foot real estate project near Legion Park in Miami’s Upper Eastside is in question after the passage of a resolution aimed at curtailing the City of Miami’s support of private developers who seek zoning variances.

The resolution, passed unanimously by the Miami City Commission on January 26, directs city manager Daniel Alfonso to prepare an amendment to the city’s Miami 21 zoning code that would bar the city from becoming a sponsor, or co-applicant, on behalf of a developer seeking a Special Area Plan (SAP). Under Miami 21, a SAP allows developers to obtain significant zoning changes, including additional building rights, if approved by the Miami City Commission.

“The city being a co-applicant creates a conflict of interest,” says Commissioner Frances Suarez, a candidate for Miami mayor, who sponsored the resolution. “We’re supposed to be the policing agency, to make [proposed projects] better, to approve or deny them. If the city is a co-applicant, they are a conspirator in the development process.”

Suarez’s resolution is being hailed by Upper Eastside activists who fear that four high-rise buildings a developer wants to construct adjacent to Legion Park, at Biscayne Boulevard and NE 66th Street, will ruin the area’s scale and historic character, increase traffic congestion, and destroy the tranquil atmosphere of the park.

“We’re extremely pleased and grateful to Commissioner Suarez for introducing this resolution,” says Deborah Stander, a board member of the MiMo Biscayne Association and a Belle Meade resident. “I’m hopeful that this is the first step for curbing some of the potential deficiencies in our current zoning ordinances.”

But the developer’s attorney insists that such an amendment to the city’s
zoning law won’t kill her client’s plans to build near the park. “No, the ‘Legion District’ is not dead,” says Iris Escarra, a lawyer with Greenberg Traurig, in an e-mail to the BT. “We look forward to continue to work with the city on the best, most community-friendly approach to developing these sites once a broader decision on how to continue with or modify the current SAP process is made.”

A team of developers, led by Brian Pearl, controls 7.3 acres that include more than a dozen empty apartment buildings and the former site of American Legion Post 29. (For more on why those apartment buildings are empty, see “Upper Eastside Renters Feel the Squeeze,” April 2016.) This is where Pearl and his partners want to build 713 residential units and at least 40,000 square feet of retail in buildings as tall as 176 feet.

The current zoning for that land allows only 526 residential units and 2400 square feet of retail in buildings as tall as 176 feet.

The current zoning for that land allows only 526 residential units and 2400 square feet of retail in buildings as tall as 176 feet.

Pearl has told the BT that he is willing to negotiate other benefits and specifics of the so-called Legion District Special Area Plan with neighboring residents. He also insists that a SAP will give the project’s architects, the international firm Stantec, more flexibility to create an aesthetically pleasing community that, Pearl claims, will cast fewer shadows than what could be built under existing zoning.

It was an offer that Francisco Garcia, Miami’s planning director, believes was worthy of consideration, though he has often emphasized that the Legion District SAP has a long vetting process ahead.

If Miami officials did accept the Legion developers’ offer, it wouldn’t be the first time a public park was part of the deal. The Chetrit Group owned only 6.2 acres of land by the Miami River. Yet in exchange for a promise to contribute $20 million toward infrastructure improvements and to a workforce housing fund, the city allowed Chetrit to include acreage from neighboring José Martí Park in its Miami River SAP.

The Chetrit Group deal was approved in October 2015, even though there isn’t any language in the Miami 21 zoning code that explicitly allows city officials to apply parkland toward the nine-acre SAP threshold.

“There’s nothing in the code that precludes someone from doing that [including parkland],” explains David Snow, a City of Miami planner. “It just says nine acres in size.”

Sometimes a SAP doesn’t even require nine acres. The Miami City Commission waived that requirement in 2013 for Andy Hellinger’s 8.1-acre River Landing SAP at 1480 NW North River Dr.

Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, co-founder of the acclaimed Miami-based planning and design firm DPZ Partners, played a major role in creating the Miami 21 zoning code. She says nine acres was established as the requirement for a SAP because it gives developers enough room to “move things around” in their master-planned community on land they control.

“You can add a street to make a block smaller in the designated district,” Plater-Zyberk explains, “or you can push around parking.”

Such latitude has enabled the construction of renowned mega-projects in the City of Miami, such as the redevelopment of the Miami Design District and the construction of the 5.4 million-square-foot Brickell City Centre.

And more SAPs are coming. The city recently approved the 25-acre, 9.7 million-square-foot Mana Wynwood SAP. In Little Haiti, city planners are examining SAPs for the 25-acre Miami Jewish Health Systems at Douglas Gardens; the 22-acre Design Place (soon...
feel, and those who scoff at overzealous enforcement that stands in the way of amenities ranging from a front-yard vegetable garden to dog grooming services.

“I’m almost 100 percent sure that whoever sent the letter had a bad experience,” says Miami Shores resident and Biscayne Times correspondent John Ise. “They were probably fined or told they can’t do something they wanted to do, so they’re taking it out on the village manager.”

While he understands the Miami Shores bureaucracy’s strict adherence to the code, he says that at times the rules and regulations can border on the absurd, frustrating some residents in the extreme.

“Per the code, you must have two trees on your property,” Ise notes. “Well, what exactly does that mean? Can it be tiny six-inch saplings you can purchase at Home Depot? Or does it have to be a fully grown tree? It just becomes a complete fool’s errand to try to define all these things.”

For Regina Vlasek, owner of Jolly Mutt, dealing with Miami Shores government has stalled her plans to move her business to a new storefront. Even though she operated her dog pampering business at the same location (212 NE 98th St.) for 17 years, the village code didn’t explicitly allow for such an enterprise.

Since signing the lease on her new place last June, Vlasek has had to seek a variance from the planning and zoning appeals board. Yet she still hasn’t been able to reopen because of what she describes as bureaucratic red tape. “I learned the hard way after I made the decision to move that if it wasn’t listed in the code, it wasn’t allowed,” Vlasek says. “The departments go by the letter of the law.”

Still, Vlasek says, Benton has been gracious in helping her resolve her situation. “He hasn’t really been the problem,” she says. “Although the rules are pretty hard in Miami Shores, they protect us from looking like North Miami.”

Hermine Ricketts, the homeowner whose ongoing skirmish with Miami Shores code enforcement over her organic vegetable garden garnered national attention, says she isn’t surprised that someone anonymously ratted out Benton. Ricketts and her husband are appealing a Miami-Dade Circuit judge’s ruling in August 2016 upholding the village’s right to regulate their front yard.

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Regina Vlasek of Jolly Mutt: “Although the rules are pretty hard in Miami Shores, they protect us from looking like North Miami.”
to be renamed Eastside Ridge); and a 15-acre site assembled by Bob Zangrillo and Tony Cho that includes the former Magic City Trailer Park. None of these pending SAPs, however, includes the city as a co-applicant or “borrows” acreage from adjacent city parks.

Plater-Zyberk is skeptical of Brian Pearl’s desire to include Legion Park in his project’s Special Area Plan. “I think it’s incorrect using the park as part of the acreage,” she says. “Because the point of the SAP was to try to include some things into the city that it doesn’t already have, including benefits like additional park space, additional affordable housing, or additional civic space.”

There wasn’t significant opposition to parkland being counted toward the Miami River SAP. But the same can’t be said for the Legion District SAP. Hundreds of people, mainly Upper Eastside residents, have expressed strong views against granting any zoning increase on private lands near Legion Park.

Those feelings boiled over on January 18, during a meeting held at Legion Park’s community center. The meeting room was packed, standing room only. According to a head count done by Upper Eastside activist Peter Ehrlich, at least 275 people were in attendance.

The gathering, organized by the office of Miami City Commissioner Keon Hardemon, was meant to give Pearl’s team a chance to present their case for a project that’s substantially larger than current zoning allows. Planning director Garcia was also present to explain the SAP application process, and also to obtain input from the community.

Input was forthcoming — in a big way. A number of Upper Eastside residents loudly voiced their disgust at the idea of upzoning private property next to their beloved park. The possibility of the city itself lobbying on behalf of the developer only made matters worse.

Using architectural renderings, Pearl attempted to compare what current zoning allowed (blocky and unappealing) to Stantec’s polished high-rise design. Audience members booed noisily and shouted down Pearl. (Pearl’s publicist declined to provide the BT with copies of the rendering showing what current zoning allowed.)

Residents at the meeting taunted city officials, especially James McQueen, Hardemon’s chief of staff, when he tried to limit comments from the public to five minutes. “You get five minutes! We get an hour!” one woman yelled, later adding: “What’s the percentage of the kickback for this project? I want to know! We want to know!”

Someone in the crowd demanded to know why Hardemon, whose district includes Legion Park, was late to the meeting while Commissioner Frances Suarez and Commissioner Frank Carollo made it there on time.

McQueen replied, “Did you see the traffic, ma’am?”

That prompted derisive laughter and more taunts: “You want to triple the traffic!” “You’re the reason we have so much traffic, goddamn it!” “What are you going to do with all the cars?”

“Do you see the traffic, ma’am?”

That prompted derisive laughter and more taunts: “You want to triple the traffic!” “You’re the reason we have so much traffic, goddamn it!” “What are you going to do with all the cars?”

“You have got to be one of the rudest groups of people I have seen,” an exasperated Francisco Garcia said at one point during the meeting. (Garcia later apologized to Deborah Stander for his tone during the meeting. Stander, in turn, apologized to Garcia for some of the heckling by her neighbors.)

To Commissioner Suarez (son of former Miami mayor and current county Commissioner Xavier Suarez), the crowd’s open hostility carried a clear message: It was a bad idea for the city to partner with private developers who are applying for a SAP — especially when it involves a public park.

“The public’s land is everybody’s land,” Suarez tells the BT, “and there’s a sense that a private developer shouldn’t be able to use public land for a private application.”
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and birds (especially ducks) congregate.

Among those present at the event was Spencer Crowley, an attorney who serves as Miami-Dade County’s representative on the commission of the Florida Inland Navigation District, or FIND, a state board funded by property taxes and tasked with enhancing waterways for recreation along Florida’s Atlantic coast.

It was thanks to Crowley that FIND allocated $442,000 for the City of Miami to help the municipality buy the land, rebuild the seawall, and create the new paddlers’ launch.

But Crowley sees Manatee Bend as just the beginning. He hopes that additional recreational spots will be created along the winding Little River waterway in the Upper Eastside area and the evolving Little River neighborhood.

“There’s a concept floating around among some people to create a linear park along the Little River,” Crowley says. “Some of the property is not going to be able to be acquired, but some of it is available for redevelopment.”

Most of the property east of the Florida East Coast railroad tracks along Little River’s west bank is privately owned. One parcel of 4.6 acres runs from NE 79th Street to NE 83rd Court 4147202132137876. Crowley contends that this long and narrow strip of land could be purchased by means of a grant from FIND and revenue from a city trust fund dedicated to obtaining public land along the waterfront.

Daniel Alfonso, Miami’s city manager, thinks that’s a possibility. “This is the rail corridor; it’s not buildable,” Alfonso tells the BT. “There’s a certain amount of mangroves, too. It’s not developable. But we can build a boardwalk. There are things that can be done [to make it a park], but we have to acquire the land.”

The current owner of that land is Global Fund Investments, a company specialized in redeveloping and managing shopping centers.

Global Fund Investments obtained that waterfront property as part of a larger land transaction. In March 2013, Global bought the Biscayne Plaza Shopping Center at 79th Street and Biscayne Boulevard, as well as adjoining property, from Edward Easton and Allen Greenwald, for $12 million. In all, 18 acres of land changed hands.

Doron Valero, managing partner of Global, says his company invested another $5 million transforming Biscayne Plaza into the Shops of Midpoint Miami, a commercial plaza catering primarily to the lower-income neighborhoods west of the railroad tracks, but also to the gentrifying middle-class areas east of Biscayne Boulevard.

Global also placed fencing around a vacant parking lot just west of the shopping center and an adjacent pedestrian bridge arching over the river. “It’s been fenced off for the past four years,” Valero says. “There were a lot of homeless people on the bridge. We needed to lock it up. Nothing is happening on that part. Not yet.”

Except for some vehicle barricades, most of Global’s land on the west bank of the river, abutting the railroad tracks, is essentially open.

Back in 2013, Valero told the BT he was talking to the Trust for Public Land about turning the riverfront land Global controls into a park. (See “Biscayne Plaza, Meet Your New Boss,” May 2013.)

Valero now tells the BT that he was also talking with Florida East Coast Railroad and the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority “a few years ago.”
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Suarez says he was increasingly skeptical of the current SAP process even before the confrontational community meeting at Legion Park. “I’m seeing significant pushback from residents because of traffic congestion issues,” Suarez continues. “There needs to be serious reforms to SAPs. Now they are kind of like a blank check.”

Elvis Cruz, a veteran Morningside activist, agrees. “I don’t know if the proposed legislation will be in time to affect the Legion SAP,” he says, “but at the very least it sends a strong message that there are conscientious commissioners who do not believe the city should be a co-applicant with private developers and then also sit in judgment of that application. It’s essentially a conflict of interest, and does not pass the smell test.” As for the property adjacent to Legion Park: “It should be downzoned, not upzoned.”

Mayor Tomás Regalado has also criticized the proposed Legion District SAP and told Upper Eastside activists in mid-February that if the city commission approves a co-application with Pearl and his partners, he will veto it. (Regalado did not return an e-mail from the BT by deadline.) But Commissioner Keon Hardemon isn’t sure he’s ready to give up on the possibility of a city partnership with Pearl or other property owners who can’t meet the nine-acre Special Area Plan minimum, but who want to create SAPs in his district, which includes Little Haiti, Overtown, Wynwood, the Design District, and about half the Upper Eastside.

During the January 26 city commission meeting, Hardemon argued that by partnering with a developer in a SAP, the city’s planning department can craft a project that is an asset to the surrounding area. “What I’m afraid of is losing a positive effect in relation to how that project is built next to the park,” he said. Hardemon ultimately voted with his colleagues for amending Miami 21.

Suarez expects a draft of the ordinance to be heard by the Planning Zoning and Appeals Board sometime in February. The PZA Board is scheduled to meet on February 1 and February 15. After the board rules, the amending ordinance will be voted on twice by the Miami City Commission, in two separate sessions.

Suarez doubts that Pearl’s team will be able to pursue a SAP that includes Legion Park prior to the city commission’s vote on the amendment to Miami 21. “It would be hard for me to imagine that the planning director would agree to be a co-applicant with the developer when the mayor said he would veto it and the commission [unanimously] passed a resolution,” Suarez says.

Deborah Stander, though, isn’t letting down her guard. “I don’t want to count chickens before they hatch,” she says. “We’ll see what the commission decides, but we are very happy about this because it’s a big first step toward addressing this issue.”

Hardemon, meanwhile, isn’t done trying to collect input. He’s scheduling yet another meeting about the development project at Legion Park’s community center sometime this month, says Kiara Garland, community affairs liaison and public information officer. “The developers will not be in attendance,” Garland adds. “This meeting is between the commissioner and residents.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Some 275 people attended the raucous, confrontational meeting at the Legion Park community center.

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Models showing Legion Park projects allowed under current zoning (near side) and what an SAP design would look like (far side).
“There was a lot of talk about a train station in that same location,” Valero says. “We’re kind of on hold until we know what the train plans are.”

The South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, the agency that oversees Tri-Rail, does aspire to create passenger train stations along the FEC railroad tracks up and down the Biscayne Corridor. However, before plans for a “Tri-Rail Coastal Link” can progress, the connection to the existing Tri-Rail system in western Miami-Dade must be established at the FEC’s massive MiamiCentral project in downtown Miami. “Until we get into MiamiCentral station, everything is pretty much on hold,” says Bonnie Arnold, spokeswoman for the Regional Transportation Authority.

Valero is still open to the idea of a park forged from his land. “I think at the end of the day that land would fit a park,” he says. “The question is, how do you do it? With the city, the county, or the state? Or do you do it private? There are a lot of ways to skin a cat.”

Back in March 2012, the City of Miami approved a resolution to buy the riverfront land from the shopping center’s previous owners, Easton and Greenwald, for no more than $730,000 so that it could be turned into a park. That effort ultimately fizzled.

The land that would become Manatee Bend almost didn’t become a park either. In 2004, Robert Gray, a former Washington, D.C., public relations executive, bought the land along Little River for $2 million. Gray demolished the houses that once

Parks for Little River

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“...on hold.”

Proposed Parkland

Proposed new parkland upriver from Manatee Bend: Perhaps a willing seller with the city as buyer.

Continued on page 53

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Community News: **BISCAYNE CORRIDOR**

The couple sued Miami Shores after they were ordered, in the summer of 2013, to tear out their beds of homegrown okra, kale, lettuce, onions, spinach, Asian cabbage, and more — up to 75 varieties of vegetables. They were threatened with fines of up to $50 a day.

“Some people display their frustration in a quiet manner,” Ricketts says. “Others take [the village] to court.”

Ricketts believes the letter to **Biscayne Times** was sent anonymously because many people in Miami Shores have a fear of local government officials. “If they weren’t afraid, they would come out publicly,” she says. “We have to stop being afraid. Government is supposed to work for us.”

So why hasn’t Benton been cited or fined for breaking the same rules that have been enforced against Ricketts and Carroll and others? That, unfortunately, remains a mystery. The village manager did not respond to four phone messages and two e-mails requesting comment.

**Biscayne Times** reporters twice visited Benton’s home, confirming there is only one tree on the property, that lonely palm in the backyard. Maybe the tall shrubs lining the residence’s front exterior walls qualify as trees. Or is it possible that Benton was lucky enough to be granted an exemption when the ordinance was passed by the village council?

Miami Shores Mayor Alice Burch seems more concerned about giving credence to a “silly complaint” filed by a “cowardly, anonymous” tipster than addressing whether Benton should be held accountable for his property not being up to code.

“I feel like I am taking an elevator to a very low level,” she says. “To openly accuse somebody without confronting them is a terrible thing to do.”

Burch praises Benton as a consummate professional who has dedicated his life to Miami Shores. “This is a person whose experience and expertise you can’t top,” she says. “We have very strong code enforcement, and it shows. There isn’t a place I go where people don’t praise Miami Shores, how beautifully kept the village is and how pleasant it is.”

**BT** correspondent John Ise concurs with Burch that the village manager is often an unfair target of residents’ wrath, but also that Benton should adhere to the code, even if he’s exempt. “Tom Benton gets kicked around a lot,” he says. “But him being the village manager, he should have two trees, even if he is grandfathered in. Just do it to keep the peace and set the example.”

**Feedback:** letters@biscaynetimes.com
stood there and submitted plans to build a low-rise condominium.

Then the real estate market crashed. In December 2009, Gray sold the property to Skip Van Cel for $285,000 in cash. Van Cel, the former publisher of Biscayne Times, dubbed the land “Manatee Bend” because of the manatees that congregated in the adjacent water, and offered to sell the land to the city for $635,000 so it could be made into a park.

After months of haggling, Miami bought Manatee Bend from Van Cel for $590,000 in April 2011. To make the purchase, the city utilized $117,000 from FIND and $473,000 from the city’s Biscayne Bay/Miami River Land Acquisition Fund.

By the time the park opened in August 2013, the city still hadn’t used an additional $325,000 from FIND to rebuild the seawall and add a kayak launch. Bottari claims that the delay was caused by the city forgetting to budget $42,000 in administrative costs for the seawall. “So the city just kept back-burning the project,” she explains. “When I found out why they had put it on the back burner, I talked to Marc.”

Marc Sarnoff, the area’s city commissioner at the time, pushed Miami officials to start the seawall project, Bottari says.

Former commissioner Sarnoff arrived at the seawall and kayak dedication on a motorcycle with Pieter Bockweg, former director of the Omni Community Redevelopment Agency. At the event, Sarnoff was credited with supporting the quest to create Manatee Bend Park. Sarnoff, though, insisted the park wouldn’t have happened without Van Cel and Sarnoff’s chief of staff, Ron Nelson, putting the matter on his radar. (Neither Van Cel nor Nelson attended the January 14 dedication.)

Now Crowley, a downtown Miami resident, aims to put the idea of creating a larger Little River Park on everyone’s radar. Such a park, Crowley argues, would be an enhancement for the lives of human, manatees, and other native lifeforms.

“This is a natural tributary to Biscayne Bay,” Crowley says. “If you go back and look at the old pictures of Little River, you see that it was completely dense groves on both sides. I mean, this was a productive habitat.

“Of course, that habitat has now been taken away, for the most part,” Crowley continues. “So the idea is to help bring back some of the life to the Little River through living-life-type shoreline projects that create additional mangrove habitats on the shores and bring in additional fish, bring in additional recreational opportunities, and clean it up a little bit for the manatees. Because even though the manatees are using it, it could be a lot better and a lot more productive.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Push Back the Sea
A landscaper fights to save water one garden at a time

By Mark Sell
BT Contributor

Meet Howard Tonkin, landscaper with a message.

He runs a business with a mission: to postpone or prevent Miami-Dade’s slide into the sea by reverting to native plants, one garden, one yard, one city at a time.

“The Earth is the patient,” says Tonkin, “Fossil fuels are the disease. Trees are the cure.”

Tonkin, age 46, started his business, Urban Habitat (website: thinkbeyondthehedge.com) from his house on the canal side of Griffing Boulevard, north of 125th Street, five years ago. He left behind his nightclub job and show biz ambitions to sell native plants from Legion Park at 66th Street and Biscayne Boulevard every Saturday.

He still does that, but he’s also built more than 200 projects around the county, mostly from North Miami to Miami Shores, digging 12-foot holes in backyards with a backhoe, moving boulders, sometimes by hand, and planting habitats for butterflies, birds, and bees, so freshwater can go straight into the aquifer — where the salt water keeps rising — instead of into drains that lead to Biscayne Bay.

He often shows up at North Miami’s city council meetings — a trim, bearded gent with an Australian accent, waxing eloquent on the environment — where he can inspire, provoke, or annoy. A few months back, Mayor Smith Joseph threatened to call in the police to remove him from a council meeting when he tried to chime in on a presentation from a University of Florida scientist about a pesticide (scientist: safe for humans. Tonkin: nope).

While Tonkin is neither a scientist nor a holder of certifications, he has fans in high places. North Miami Councilwoman Carol Keys got the city to commission Tonkin’s $5000 landscaping project at Keystone Boulevard and Bayshore Drive in Keystone Point. He used 59 native species, of which 19 are endangered and two are extremely endangered.

“I took a leap of faith with Howard, and we’re lucky to have him,” says Keys. “I went to see a lot of Howard’s projects and was just awed — not just by the beauty, but by the sustainability. If everyone would follow in these footsteps, we could mitigate flooding.”

While Tonkin was showing the BT the Keystone triangle last month, a neighbor walking his dog stopped to ask, “Can you make it look good?”

That prompted Tonkin into a discourse about native species and climate change, and how the new
pl plantings would indeed flourish with greater color once the spring rains come.

"See, that’s the mindset I have to work with," Tonkin says, referring to our accustomed habits of being satisfied with the green, trimmed lawns, neat hedges, rioting impatiens, and seasonal plantings encouraged by codes and ordinances from Miami Shores to Coral Gables and beyond.

"Lawns and golf courses are consuming 60 percent of our drinking water," Tonkin says. "This is a black hole of resources."

But Tonkin knows he can't affect behavioral change with doomsday scenarios.

“We have to present sea level change issues in a way that doesn’t terrify people,” he says. That means starting by growing plant species closer to the water and putting more native plants, not grass, in your lawn. It also means encouraging your city government to permit more native plantings in yards, and restoring permeable (gravel) driveways that are currently banned — anything to keep rainwater on your property, rather than going down the drain.

Tonkin is partial to low-maintenance native plants and lignum vitae, podocarpus, and Dade County pine, whose numbers have been decimated (some say by 98 percent) by residential developers and by Hurricane Andrew. Yet as much as Tonkin does not wish to terrify, the urgency in his voice is real.

He points to flood maps, showing trouble ahead for Keystone Point, Sans Souci, Belle Meade, Morningside, Bay Point, and much of the inland 2800-acre-plus Arch Creek basin from 135th Street to the Biscayne Canal. It’s there that the Urban Land Institute has declared at least 78 properties prone to repetitive flooding from rising tides or even suitable for demolition and reclamation as sloughs.

In notably better shape, he says, is the SoLeMia area, built over nearly 200 acres more than 11 feet above Biscayne Boulevard and 151st Street, atop a landfill; and the FEC railroad track on the ridge, eight feet above sea level.

"There are big changes coming that people don’t want to talk about," Tonkin says. "The water doesn’t care about the lines on the map, how rich or poor you are, or whether you care about climate change or not."

The afternoon that Donald Trump took office, climate-change references disappeared from the White House website. Meanwhile, the wire services were reporting on scientists’ observations that an Antarctic ice sheet bigger than Delaware cracked another six miles in three weeks, up from 11 miles January 1, and that 2016 was the third consecutive hottest year on record.

A few months before, carbon levels in the atmosphere passed 400 parts per million, perhaps permanently.

Anyone can see water levels along the Biscayne Canal around Griffing Boulevard and 128th Street, the pent-up Biscayne Canal floodgate near the ninth hole at the Miami Shores Country Club golf course, or Arch Creek around 128th Street and NE 16th Avenue, where half-century-old sandbags guard the houses below road level from flooding.

If the sea has risen nearly six inches since the no-name storm of October 2000, which dumped 15 to 19 inches of rain in 36 hours on Miami-Dade, what will happen next time?

Still, there is progress. The City of North Miami, like a growing number of other cities, has its own sustainability administrator and an evolving policy. Although much of the city lies in a floodplain, crisscrossed by the Biscayne Canal, Arch Creek, Little Arch Creek, and the Oleta River, it has identified and bought out houses that are prone to repeated flooding and has converted the lots into freshwater green spaces.

North Miami homeowners get a 25 percent discount on flood insurance, thanks the city’s top rating for its efforts. Chief county resilience officer Jim Murley, who initiated an Urban Land Institute study of the Arch Creek Basin, says that every municipality should engage with the network of governmental agencies, from the county to the Department of Transportation to the South Florida Water Management District, which is responsible for the Biscayne Canal and its floodgate.

For his part, Tonkin is developing his next public-access project: a mini park with benches to be lined with Dade County pine, on the south side of Villa Maria Nursing Center, along 125th Street in North Miami.

"These trees should have been planted 20 years ago,” says Tonkin. “They produce so much oxygen.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Information Saturation
Put those crime reports in perspective

By John Ise
BT Contributor

In late October 2016, video cameras captured an armed robbery near the Miami Shores Starbucks in broad daylight. The assailant robbed a local resident of $30,000 worth of jewelry, credit cards, and cash. That same month, outside the same Starbucks, Mayor Alice Burch was the victim of a high-profile purse snatching.

In November there was the terrible home invasion of a Miami Shores resident who was himself taken at gunpoint to a local ATM and forced to withdraw cash from his account.

Perusing the e-mail/text advisories and alerts from Miami Shores Police, residents can read a new crime report/advisory every couple of days.

Luckily, almost all of these crimes are resolved with apprehension of the guilty parties. In response to the holiday uptick in criminal activity, our Miami Shores Police activated an increased patrolling presence, the addition of officers, and extended hours for all officers. In addition, there is some consideration of installing closed-circuit television cameras throughout the Village.

The police department has made a concerted effort to establish a more regular stream of communication with residents via the text/e-mail system whereby Miami Shores residents can receive alerts about criminal activity and incidents.

The police are also using social media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter, and NextDoor, to keep residents in the loop. And Police Chief Kevin Lystad has been hosting monthly “Chief Chat” coffee socials at the country club and on Facebook for residents who wish to bring up their questions and concerns directly with him on policing efforts.

But with every criminal incident in the Village now being broadcast via text, e-mail, and various social media platforms, some people are beginning to…well…freak out. When I look on Facebook and NextDoor, I can understand that there’s a growing villager sense we are under siege and that Miami Shores has become a dangerous community. More than one resident has declared the intent to move out of the Village because of safety concerns.

The trauma of being a victim of crime is real, jarring, and should never be dismissed. About 18 years ago, I was carjacked by a gang in Port-au-Prince, on my way to the airport to pick up medicine for a children’s hospital. Afterward, I admit, I had the darkest fantasies of how I could seek revenge on the perpetrators. The saying that “a conservative is a liberal who’s been mugged” carries a certain primal truth.
(Although it’s also said that a liberal is a conservative who’s been arrested.)

But emotions and empathy aside, I urge residents to gain a proper perspective. Make yourself some herbal tea, practice meditative breathing, and chill out!

The long-term crime statistics for Miami Shores provide us with a much healthier dose of perspective, and even some relative optimism. In 2002, for example, Miami Shores had 145 burglaries, compared to 99 in 2016. In 2002 there were 41 robberies, as opposed to 27 last year. Continuing, there were 478 incidents of theft in 2002 whereas we had 351 last year.

Overall, the crime index in 2002, according to the statistics website City-data.com, was 550, compared to 394 in 2014 (a higher number means more crime of a variety of tracked categories; the U.S. average was 288 in 2014.)

Zooming outward, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, “the national crime rate today is about half what it was at its height in 1991. Violent crime has fallen by 51 percent since 1991, and property crime by 43 percent. In 2013 the violent crime rate was the lowest since 1970. And this holds true for unreported crimes, as well. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, since 1993 the rate of violent crime has declined from 79.8 to 23.2 victimizations per 1000 people.

So why now do we feel unsafe and under siege? Local TV news devotes more time to crime stories than any other forms of news programming. Switch on Channel 7 news, and chances are you’ll find Belkys Nerey yammering away on some sensationalized “if-it-bleeds-it-leads” crime story, replete with swooping graphics backed by a dramatic soundtrack.

The panic that grips you watching the streams of these crime segments will shortly be replaced with the sensation of your brain cells dying. The late Jason Ditton, a pioneer in criminology, found that 45 percent of crimes reported in the media involve sex or gratuitous violence, even though sex and violence factor into only three percent of all crime.

Enter social media, of course, and now we receive a steady stream of crime alerts and news on our smart phones — and in turn we broadcast these occurrences via Facebook, Nextdoor, Twitter, e-mail, and whatever other networks we have.

With the populous demanding more information from our local police on all crime occurring and in turn the amplification of that information, it’s no wonder so many of us are freaking out and crawling into the fetal position.

Mayor Alice Burch, a victim of the earlier described robbery, bluntly says, “People are having difficulty handling the quantity of information...giving the impression we are under attack.”

Now, none of this is to suggest we should be blissfully ignorant to the real threat that crime poses. After all, we do live in Miami, one of those sunny places for shady people.

A recent Village newsletter called for residents to initiate a Neighborhood Watch in which people would be trained to observe and report suspicious activity. But more important, it connects neighbors to one another.

The title of political economist Francis Fukuyama’s book Trust: The Social Virtues and The Creation of Prosperity captures a missing ingredient in modern life. We trust our institutions and one another less and less. Polling shows only a third of respondents feel they can “trust most people.” This hurts, as our psychological well-being is dependent upon trusting relationships. If neighborhood watch or block parties or informal get-togethers begin to build those connections, a predictive by-product may be we look out for one another and deter crime.

The late writer and urban activist Jane Jacobs wrote that in order for neighborhoods to be safe, “there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street.” Neighborhood Watch may be a piece of that, but it’s not enough.

Pulling away from the isolating, anti-social glare of a high-tech screen that warps our perception of reality, and replacing it with real interactions via walking your dog, chatting with your neighbors, playing with your kids — that will provide a safer community, not to mention a healthier outlook on life.

To fight crime, don’t lose your marbles. Be vigilant and informed, and remain adamantly unafraid.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
High-Rise Activism
New Brickell group wants to bring advocacy to a vertical community

By Eleazar David Meléndez
BT Contributor

A world traveler who also happens to be a fan of iconic towers, Brickell resident Bill Fitch says he’s particularly fond of the work of Pritzker Prize-winning architect I.M. Pei. Yet while he’s read about and visited many of Pei’s modernist, cubist-style buildings around the globe, Fitch admits it took him a while to find out that the 47-story Miami Tower, which dominates the view from the north-facing balcony of his Brickell apartment, was actually designed by Pei’s firm.

It wasn’t until very recently that Fitch heard of the lavish past of the colorful skyscraper, which had been originally named after banner tenant CenTrust Savings & Loan, then Bank of America, and currently TotalBank. Its interior included a sky lobby with a reflecting pool, gold-plated executive bathroom sinks, Baccarat chandeliers, Persian rugs, and a marble-and-brass grand staircase so enormous it had to be lowered into the building’s penthouse suite via helicopter.

Fitch’s wife, Ann-Rhea, says she sees that same dynamic all the time in Miami, a strange mental warp that somehow blinds people here to the history of things that might be quite literally in front of them. Citing demographic research that points to the high number of Miamians born outside the city or region, she mentions how commonplace it is for people to be shocked to find out Miami does indeed have cultural institutions.

“An astounding number of people who live here right now have never been here before,” she says. “I’ve had people tell me, ‘You’re going to the opera? There’s an opera in Miami?’ and meanwhile FGO [Florida Grand Opera] has been here for decades.”

Rather than lamenting that lack of awareness, Ann-Rhea and Bill are counting on it for what they describe as their next adventure in community organizing, a project known so far as Forward Miami. A veteran of dealing with homeowner associations and activist groups, Bill Fitch served as vice president of the umbrella group Brickell Homeowners’ Association until just last month. He’s counting on many great ideas for making public engagement interesting in Brickell. There’s just too much hiding in plain sight, just waiting to be discovered by residents.

He cites initiatives to improve pedestrian and cycling experiences, make creative use of urban open spaces, and promote art in public places, all of which are already the topic of cocktail
parties and imaginative urban planners. “This stuff has been here, but the people haven’t,” he says. “The changeover [in Brickell’s resident mix] has been such that the population doesn’t really know what’s here and what’s possible.”

It’s certainly a hopeful sentiment, although it does face some significant social barriers that make community organizing and advocacy difficult in high-rise communities. Most of the work in that regard has for years centered around the homeowner associations in individual buildings, with those groups sometimes banding together to magnify the power of their individual voices. It’s one thing to chase down public works officials and badger them to fix cracked sidewalks, or to lobby state bureaucrats to lower speed limits, or to haggle with city commissioners over proposed swale planting projects. Getting people to engage and mobilize on gauzy, aspirational ideas like pedestrian safety, on the other hand, is a completely different matter.

Yet Fitch’s Forward Miami initiative comes admittedly at an inflection point in the history of the neighborhood. His former colleagues at the Brickell Homeowners’ Association are as powerful as they’ve ever been, buoyed by the increased engagement from owners in the buildings they represent.

Across the river to the north, two umbrella homeowner association groups, the Downtown Neighbors Alliance and the Biscayne Homeowners’ Association, have seen leadership turnarounds in the past two years that have transformed those groups into powerful advocates and conveners. The usual discussion at meetings of fixing roads and dealing with construction trash has increasingly been balanced, across all three groups, with higher-level conversations on issues like how to ensure that families have access to education resources throughout the urban core.

Meanwhile, millennial-led organizations with a wider city and regional focus have set the bar for doing community organizing that’s meaningful, high-minded, and fun. A board member of one such group, Engage Miami, was present at the initial meeting for Forward Miami held during the Martin Luther King Memorial weekend. Over bagels and coffee on a beautiful January morning, a handful of Brickellites and invited guests discussed ideas for the group to take on.

Annette Collazo, a teacher who has worked as a community organizer for both political campaign and activist causes, says that in other communities, including her hometown of Hialeah, she has seen a hunger, and sometimes unexpected acceptance, for the kind of thinking that Forward Miami is pushing. “It might just have to do with the political atmosphere and a tone that’s coming down from the national level,” says Collazo. “This resurgent sense that we have to become active in our communities again.”

But how do you create that community feeling and organize in a place like Brickell, where apartment-dwellers come and go, sometimes without ever meeting their neighbors, and where so much of the population essentially just got there? “Well that’s the question, right?” she shoots back. “In a philosophical sense, the idea of community is something very mutable — people are part of their building community, but they’re also part of their ethnic community or their work community. Maybe they see Brickell as a temporary home, but nonetheless, a temporary home can still be a place to foster a sense of community. That might be the trick.”

Collazo says the small group that gathered to kick off the organization is already off to a good start, in terms of mobilizing individual talent and reaching out to the local activist community. With contacts in the management of many buildings in Brickell, they also have some resources other community organizers would envy. “Everything is within these buildings, with the gym and the pool, so it’s possible to revolve around that, and that could be the best way to establish a connection to that community,” she says.

“We’ve traveled all over the world,” says Bill Fitch, “and we’ve seen phenomenal things in other cities. We were in Barcelona, where they shut down the main highway on the weekends and hand it over to pedestrians and bicycles. That’s the kind of big idea we’re looking for.” Ann-Rhea adds, “We want to be a source, almost as a think tank, to bring positive ideas and project them out to other sources who have the ability to affect change.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Bow to the Truth Teller
We must learn to embrace our weirdness

By Jay Beskin
BT Contributor

Several months ago our inimitable hometown treasure, Dave Barry, published a wonderful little book titled *Best. State. Ever.: A Florida Man Defends His Homeland*. The premise of his work is that the State of Florida has an odd penchant for attracting the weirdest news stories in the country.

He offers various theories why this might be the case, including the notion that eccentric or violent people whose antics are expelled elsewhere work their way down the Eastern shoreline until they reach the end of the road on our doorstep. Theories aside, the factual contention itself arrests our attention.

Are we really living in the home of the freaky and the land of the brainless? Or has Dave just taken a few offbeat stories of the sort that could appear in any city in any state, clumped them together without context, and extrapolated from there an imaginary idiosyncrasy?

Is it possible, my friends, that Florida is no more and no less quirky than the other 49 states in our great Union?

At the end of 2016, I was none too sure Dave was on to something. Our big news here last year involved the Zika virus, which came and expanded, then shrank and disappeared. Nothing too terribly exotic or of epidemic proportions. A fair amount of early hype, then the thing ran its course. Both the public and private sectors did their jobs. And although some residents did scatter for a bit, especially those considering pregnancy in the near term, most have trudged back home.

We also had some kerfuffle about Debbie Wasserman Schultz; the occasional Casey Anthony or George Zimmerman sighting; Mario Rubio running for president and his humiliation by Trump, his retirement from politics, then his reenlistment, then his run (again) for U.S. Senator, then his win; and the passing of Janet Reno. Nothing too crazy. And so 2016 ended with my dropping a large grain of salt into Dave Barry’s theory and stirring lightly.

Well, perhaps I spoke too soon. We are hardly one month into 2017, and the news has broken that the State of Florida has contracted for the services of two snake charmers from India.
Yes, our state has decided to go the “full Monty” in our battle against the python. Florida has always been a natural habitat for snakes in the grass, but in past years they were mostly busy with Ponzi schemes and fake insurance claims. Now we have a flourishing population of pythons, concentrated in the South Florida area but believed to be moving toward Naples.

Their “means of introduction” is not known, but most locals believe the snakes got loose when a breeder’s facility was damaged in Hurricane Andrew back in August 1992. Almost a quarter century later, we are still dealing with this problem.

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The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is on the case, not to praise these killers of roamin’ mammals, but to bury them. They are trying to conserve the victimized creatures whose populations are being decimated by these predators.

Critics of interventionist government like to say we shouldn’t be picking winners and losers in the business environment, but in the environment business, we must do just that. Mammals good, snakes bad, with apologies to PETA.

So far, this story about whacking these terrible bullies of the wild is not so terribly wacky. The problem is that conventional means, while not quite exhausted, haven’t held much promise of eventual victory. We kill a few hundred a year, including the 106 in one record month last year. But this is still limited to (the merest) containment of the population, not its elimination.

Finally, in a sort of bureaucratic desperation, the Fish and Wildlife folks have dispensed with all the psychics, shamans, and faith healers, going straight to the source: Indian snake charmers. They have hired Masi Sadaiyan and Vadivel Gopal to sing the python lullaby.

Sure enough, in their first two weeks on the job, they caught 14 snakes, an average of one a day. That tells me they know what they’re doing, and in small towns with a small problem, these guys may be just the ticket. But I suspect the serious infestation over millions of acres in South Florida is not going to be eradicated by two guys catching one snake a day.

Still, the comedic potential is vast. A Three Stooges episode, with our heroes accompanying the snake charmers as they scour the countryside, would be a sure winner. In truth, these are not the old-style charmers, who trained their animals to follows a stick with their eyes as if hypnotized. These guys hunt the snakes for the purpose of getting rid of them. They do sing to the snakes, which scientists deride because they say snakes have no ear for music. Who knows?

The most important part of the story is not the question of whether this is an effective method or whether taxpayer money should be expended for the benefit of one snake death per day. It is the fact that Dave Barry has been vindicated. We are a nutty state with our weakness and our strengths, our vice and our virtue, our shortcomings and our long suit. We are where you can cruise the beach or take a cruise away from the port. We are where you can come to seriously overhaul your lifestyle, or you can come to hang out at Haulover. If you have time to burn and a high pain threshold, you can get in your car and drive (or try to drive) up Biscayne Boulevard from the Aventura city limits to the Broward County line.

Thank you, Dave Barry, for identifying our weakness and our strength, our vice and our virtue, our shortcomings and our long suit. We come here from New York and Chicago and everywhere else, but once we arrive, we’re never anything but Floridians. Best. State. Ever. Do not let any snake in the grass tell you otherwise.

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From the Seeds of Original Sin
Many South Florida plants arrived with the slave trade

By Anne Tschida
BT Arts Editor

Miami is a unique mélange created not just of people from diverse lands, but what has traveled with them. Consider, for example, the wide array of plants that flourish in this climate. Many of them originated in Africa, which should give you a clue about how they relate to our history.

That journey from Africa to the Americas is the ethnobotanical basis for “Liquid Knowledges,” an art exhibition and exploration project, part of the “Borderless Caribbean Series” at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex. The show features galleries with gorgeous images and detailed descriptions of plants and fruits, including narratives of their complex transport from Africa. It also includes a group show of artists associated with the Caribbean and a special solo show from Onajide Shabaka, with artworks focused on botany.

In all, it’s a history tour filled with trauma, violence, and some surprisingly positive outcomes.

Much of the scholarship comes from Brown University, examples of which form the introduction in the main gallery, in the section “Plants in the Gardens of the Enslaved.” When Europeans arrived in the New World, they made landfall on the island of Hispaniola. Their advent resulted in the decimation of indigenous populations and ecologies, and Africans were kidnapped or sold into slave labor and sent to the colonized islands.

The slave trade proceeded along a triangulated route known as the Middle Passage. European ships offloaded goods in Africa, filled the same ships with slaves bound for the Caribbean and the Americas, then returned to Europe filled again with goods.

This is where “Liquid Knowledges” begins. It was expedient to pick up local foodstuffs for the ocean crossings. “Many ship captains purchased large quantities of African-grown provisions all along the West African coast to feed the captives,” read the introductory notes. “In this way, plantation owners found out which young saplings, root tubers, or cuttings could be brought over live aboard ships and grown on the plantation.”

The people imprisoned on those slave ships also hid seeds and kernels — not just for food, but for medicinal or ritual purposes, or even as beauty accessories. When planted on this side of the Atlantic by both owners and slaves — in the latter case, in small plots on
doorsteps or remote hillsides—they became integral parts of the fabric of life. Although not well documented until recently, the cuisines, rituals, and medicines made from African plants formed the basis of Caribbean cultural traditions that can be found in Florida as well.

For the most part, the imported fruits and vegetables were rich in nutrients, and were sometimes the sole source of nutrition on a plantation; yet they had numerous other uses too.

Take, for instance, pigeon peas. By the 1600s, this protein-heavy legume, likely of Congolese origin, could be found across the Caribbean (and later, in the southern United States) as the main ingredient in soups and stews. But it was also a good crop-rotation plant as a counter to soil-depleting crops, such as maize. And it could be made into eye drops.

Okra was cultivated in Nigeria and became a staple in dishes across the Americas (the Bantu word for okra is debated as one of two etymological bases for the Louisianan gumbo). Okra is also prepared as an offering to orishas and other spirit gods.

Or how about ackee, a fruit ubiquitous in West Africa? Rich in vitamin C, it has become part of the national dish of Jamaica when combined with salt fish, and is popular in Florida. And in both places, it is used as an ornamental tree in gardens.

Thus the exhibit’s name: knowledge of the benefits of these plants migrated from one culture and continent to another via a liquid voyage. But their adaptations were also fluid. And they became the sustaining elements to an oppressed people on the same passage.

The section called “The Magic Garden” features works from local artists. Haitian-born Edouard Duval Carrié, artistic director of the program that produces the “Borderless Caribbean Series,” offers a large portrait of a supernatural figure made of bright tropical flora. The painting by Havana-born Sinuhé Vega combines ritualistic traditions with bishops in red robes surrounding a chalice filled with red island fruit. Cuban-born José Bedia has a large painting depicting in rust tones a pirate raid on another ship on a treacherous watery journey. Like the other works on view, they reflect the often conflicted origins of the region’s identity.

In the neighboring building that houses several studios and is part of the complex, Cuban-born artist Sinuhé Vega entwines religious symbols that collided in the New World.

Onajide Shabaka explores Caribbean history through the imagery of plants and people who made the Middle Passage.

artist Onajide Shabaka is exhibiting a quiet garden, _Antillean Lacunae: a litany of the botanical_. Shabaka’s practice has always emanated from what he describes as his “walks,” where he observes the minutia of the landscape and later re-creates it in drawings, watercolors, and sculptural pieces made from native materials. All of the works here are related to the African-origin plants of Florida. Some are drawn from photographs snapped while walking, created from a mix of paint and dirt; one is crafted from cotton. Shabaka says he found that white fluffy stuff, so tightly woven into the story of slavery in the Deep South, alongside a nearby gas station.

How did it get there? Maybe, suggests Shabaka, the way rice came to America and became a major plantation engine—at least according to legend. To illustrate, he’s included a series of black silhouettes, one a woman with braided hair. The story goes that an African woman had rice in her hair when she was captured, and it came ashore with her. Who knows, muses Shabaka, a cotton seed could have been in the hair of someone…or on the back of a truck in Little Haiti?

Shabaka’s own distant relatives were forced to toil the fields of the Carolinas, before leaving on their own journeys, some migrating to Chicago, others to the area around Port St. Lucie. Several works here are made on old envelopes, with the postmarks still clear, documenting those movements. He’s planning a trip to Suriname, in South America, to witness traditional rice rituals with clear lineage from West Africa, where it has been cultivated for 3000 years.

There’s so much to soak up in these exhibits—and you will look at your neighborhood blooms differently, knowing some of their histories and the reasons why they planted here.


Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Culture: GALLERIES + MUSEUMS

WYNWOOD GALLERY WALK & DESIGN DISTRICT ART + DESIGN NIGHT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2017

GALLERIES

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786-442-8280
www.andgallery.net
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ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS
2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-393-0220
www.alejandrarvonhartz.net
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ART BASTION
2085 NW 2nd Ave., Suite #104, Miami Beach
305-606-4597
www.artbastion.com
Contact gallery for exhibition information

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX
561 NW 32nd St., Miami
305-576-2686
www.b bakehouse.com
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BILL BRADY GALLERY
7140 NW Miami Ct., Miami Beach
786-357-0568
www.billbradygallery.com
Through March 25:

“Paintings” by Luisa Basnuevo

“Comus” by Francie Bishop Good

February 11 through March 25:

“Kcho and Diago: Early Works” with Alexis Leyva Machado (Kcho) and Juan Roberto Diago
Reception February 11, 4 to 9 p.m.

PLACEHOLDER GALLERY
350 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-675-0698
www.placeholderart.org
Contact gallery for exhibition information

PRIMAR Y
15 NE 39th St., Miami
954-296-1675
www.primaryprojects.com
Contact gallery for exhibition information

CURATOR’S VOICE ART PROJECTS
12425 NE 13th Ave. #5, North Miami
305-976-4656
www.curatorsvoice.com
Contact gallery for exhibition information

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY
2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-486-7248
www.davidcastillogallery.com
February 8 through March 25:

“Fabric of Survival” by Esther Nisenthal Krinitz

February 16 through 19:

“Natural Curiosity: An Intimate History” by Judy Cotton

February 18 through March 25:

“Rebus + Diversions” by Maria Martínez-Cañas

February 1 through 25:

“Let’s Live Here” by Michael Conrads

February 8 through March 25:

“Material Catch” by Dominique Labauvie

February 12 through March 4:

“Sanctuaries” by Luisa Basnuevo

February 14 through March 31:

“The Power of Perception: Man Lives, as Others Think” with Alexis Leyva Machado (Kcho) and Juan Roberto Diago
Reception February 11, 4 to 9 p.m.

ROBERT FONTAINE GALLERY
2121 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-397-8530
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NW 2nd Avenue between 25th and 26th streets
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www.thewynwoodwalls.com
Ongoing:
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YELEEN GALLERY
294 NW 54th St., Miami
954-235-4706
www.yeelenart.com
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MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)
1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-954-3380
www.cifo.org
Through March 12:
"You Are Part of It" with selections from the Ella Fontanilla-Cisneros Collection

DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION
23 NE 41st St., Miami
305-567-6112
www.delacruzcollection.org
Through November 15:
"Progressive Praxis" with various artists

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART NORTH MIAMI
770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
Contact gallery for exhibition information

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART NORTH MIAMI
1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-377-1140
www.mcanorthmiami.org
February 24 through August 27:
"Four Centuries of Prints from Rembrandt to Picasso: Drs. Walter and Mildred Padow Collection" with various artists

PEÑEZ ART MUSEUM MIAMI
1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-375-3000
www.pammm.org
February 24 through August 27:
John Akomfrah: Tropikos
Through March 19:
"Form into Action" by Julio Le Parc
Through April 23:
"Kwassa Kwassa" by SUPERFLEX
Through April 30:
"S-281913" by Sarah Oppenheimer

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION
591 NW 27th St., Miami
305-576-1051
www.margulieswarehouse.com
Through April 29:
"Paintings 1983-2012" by Janis Kounellis

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION
95 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-0690
www.rfc.museum
Through February 4:
"Video Art in Latin America: Selections from Brazil" curated by the Getty Research Institute
Through August 25:
"High Anxiety: New Acquisitions" with various artists
"New Shamans/Novos Xamãs: Brazilian Artists" with various artists

THE NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION
2100 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-377-1140
www.youngarts.org
February 24 through August 27:
"An Exhibition of Works by 2017 YoungArts Miami Winners" with various artists

THE WOLFSONIAN-FLI
1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
305-535-2622
www.wolfsonian.org
Through April 9:
"Pioneer of American Art Nouveau" by William H. Bradley
Through April 16:
"The Pursuit of Abstraction" with various artists

Compiled by Melissa Wallen
Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to art@biscaynetimes.com

On view

THOMAS BAYRLE

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February 2017

Melissa’s Pick
"Form Into Action" surveys the prodigious oeuvre of Julio Le Parc, a founding member of the kinetic art cooperative, Groupe de Recherche d’Art Visuel, and vanguard of the Op Art movement. Featuring 100 works produced between 1958 and 2013, this exhibition reveals Le Parc’s curious pursuit of dynamic movement materialized through optical phenomena and mechanical engineering. Immersive installations, participatory kinetic sculptures, paintings, and studies reveal simple forms that eclipse traversing beams of light, orbit on the surface of picture planes, and cast viewers into perceptual gymnastics with a broadening sense of wonder. True to Le Parc’s intent, empower your own sense of play by experiencing this bewitching labyrinth of oscillating geometric abstraction and color. — Melissa Wallen


Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami
770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
Contact gallery for exhibition information

GIRL’S CLUB COLLECTION
117 NE 2nd St., Fort Lauderdale
305-829-9151
www.girlsclubcollection.org
Through February 25: "Pink Noise: Flexing the Frequency" with various artists

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
10975 SW 17th St., Miami
305-576-6112
www.delacruzcollection.org
Through February 25: "Pink Noise: Flexing the Frequency" with various artists

MIAMI CENTER FOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
100 NE 1st Ave., Miami
305-448-7488
www.miamicad.org
Contact gallery for exhibition information

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART + DESIGN
770 NW 27th Ave., Miami
305-917-4000
www.mdc.edu/museum
February 11 through May 21:
"Recent Acquisitions + Highlights II" with various artists

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART NORTH MIAMI
770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
Contact gallery for exhibition information

NSU ART MUSEUM FORT LAUDERDALE
1 E. Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale
954-525-5500
www.nsuartmuseum.org
February 12 through June 18:
"Under the Elders’ Gaze" by Sean Cavanaugh

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION
95 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-0690
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Through February 4:
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Through August 25:
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"An Exhibition of Works by 2017 YoungArts Miami Winners" with various artists.

THE WOLFSONIAN-FLI
1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
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Through April 9:
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**Map Fair Brings Vintage Finds**

At the 24th annual Miami International Map Fair, billed as the largest in the Western Hemisphere, you’ll find rare and antique maps, atlases, and books from international dealers. There’ll also be interactive digital map demonstrations and panel discussions by map experts. Presented by HistoryMiami, the event opens to the public Saturday, February 4, from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., and goes through Sunday, February 5, from noon until 5:00 p.m., at the HistoryMiami Museum (101 W. Flagler St., Miami). HMM members: $15; non-members: $20; students: $10. www.historymiami.org.

**Live Jazz at the Spanish Monastery**

A soulful evening awaits during Jazz at the Monastery, where you’ll hear the steel drum sounds of Doug Walker, melodies from pianist Herman Whitfield III, and the soothing voice of Maryel Epps, who has performed alongside greats like Patti Labelle and David Bowie, and opened for Labelle and David Bowie, and opened for the Monastery live music, and kite-flying competitions. Bring your own kite or purchase one at the park (10800 Collins Ave.). This free event features complimentary paper kite building classes for kids, food trucks, live music, and kite-flying competitions. Parking: $7. www.skywardkites.com.

**Kite Festival: A Perfect Family Event in Haulover**

It’s a bird, it’s a plane, it’s… a Superman kite flying high in the sky during the 25th annual Kite Day at Haulover Park! During this family-fun event, hosted by Skyward Kites and Miami-Dade Parks on Saturday, February 18, and Sunday, February 19, from noon to 5:00 p.m., expect to see hundreds of colorful kites of all shapes and sizes, including a 100-foot-long flying squid. Bring your own kite or purchase one at the park (10800 Collins Ave.). This free event features complimentary paper kite building classes for kids, food trucks, live music, and kite-flying competitions. Parking: $7. www.skywardkites.com.

**A Concert Celebrating the Fans**

During the inaugural GroundUP Music Festival, held at the North Beach Bandshell (7275 Collins Ave., Miami Beach) from Friday, February 10, through Sunday, February 12, there’ll be film screenings, music panels, scavenger hunts, and musician meet-and-greets. This Rhythm Foundation event, created by the bandleader of the Grammy award-winning jazz + funk + world + soul + pop ensemble Snarky Puppy, features an international roster of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Grammy award-winning performers, spanning all music genres. Event time: 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. both days. Cost: $85 per day, or $225 for all three days. www.rhythmfoundation.com.

**Art Wynwood Spotlights Local Art**

Miami’s favorite winter art fair, Art Wynwood, returns for the sixth year of showcasing works from local and international contemporary artists, muralists, and street artists. Stop by the Art Wynwood Pavilion (3001 NE 1st Ave.) to get your art fix during Presidents’ Day Weekend from Thursday, February 16, through Sunday, February 20. Tickets: $15 for students, seniors, and groups of ten or more; $25 for a GA one-day pass. Fair hours: 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday through Sunday. Monday: 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. VIP Preview will be held on Thursday, February 16. www.artwynwood.com.

**Virginia Key GrassRoots Festival Highlights Local Bands**

Donna the Buffalo and other local bands will perform during the sixth annual Virginia Key GrassRoots Festival of Music and Dance on Sunday, February 26, starting at 2:00 p.m., at Virginia Key Beach Park (4020 Virginia Beach Dr., Virginia Key). There’ll be free yoga, a beer garden, arts and craft vendors, and a Vinyl Lounge with deejays spinning between music sets until midnight. During GrassRoots Live, from Wednesday, February 22, through Saturday, February 25, Miami bands will be performing at popular local venues like the Wynwood Yard. Sunday ticket: $10. All-access ticket to the Sunday event and GrassRoots Live events: $35. To see a list of venues and the lineup, visit www.virginiakeygrassroots.com.

**Did You Know Vaclav Havel Was a Playwright Too?**

See the acclaimed play Audience and Protest, written in 1978 by the late Vaclav Havel, one-time dissident and former president of the Czech Republic, at Miami Theater Center’s SandBox Theater (9816 NE 2nd Ave., Miami Shores), in collaboration with Mad Cat Theatre Company. The performance, about Havel’s alter ego who sets out to renounce the Communist regime, is divided into two short one-act plays, and directed by Mad Cat Theatre founder Paul Granfield. Please send information and images to calendar@biscaynetimes.com.

**Next Generation of Artists Show Their Works**

Founded 36 years ago, the National YoungArts Foundation was created to recognize talented young artists (ages 15 through 18) and help them grow in their chosen artistic fields. During YoungArts Miami, you’ll see the finished works of some of the top young artists in the nation, chosen from among thousands of applicants. Events will take place at the YoungArts Campus (2100 Biscayne Blvd.) and other venues, including the 1935-era Colony Theatre in Miami Beach, from Tuesday, February 21, through Sunday, February 26. From visual art to performance pieces, there’s something for everyone. Tickets: $15. Check www.youngarts.org for a list of venues, and times of exhibitions and performances.

Compiled by BT contributor Caitlin Granfield.
Miami’s Torch of Friendship
A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul S. George
Special to the BT

Bayfront Park’s Torch of Friendship — which is seen here under construction with a fetching view of Biscayne Bay in the background — has been a downtown landmark since 1960.

Erected by the City of Miami between August and October of 1960, the monument underlines the Magic City’s “perpetual friendship” with Latin American countries, as well as with those in the West Indies.

The monument’s creation came on the heels of a longstanding desire to position Miami as a gateway to the Americas.

Even before Miami was incorporated, Julia Tuttle, its future “mother,” reportedly told a friend that she believed this settlement would become a nexus of the Americas.

A Pan American movement, with Miami as the critical link, was manifest in statesman and politician William Jennings Bryan’s call, in the early 1900s, for a university by that name, out of which emerged the University of Miami in the mid-1920s.

In 1933, a Beaux Arts-inspired plan for redeveloping the site of Henry M. Flagler’s recently razed Royal Palm Hotel in downtown Miami with a Pan American Exhibition Center came to naught.

Fifteen years later, a proposed Pan American Convention Hall and Exposition Center on the same site met with a similar fate.

Finally, with the construction of the Torch of Friendship, the Magic City had its monument to underline its close links to other parts of the hemisphere.

The monument’s creation came at a propitious time, for these ties had grown significantly stronger following the influx of thousands of Cubans fleeing the tyranny of Fidel Castro.

The next edition of “Picture Story” will examine further Miami’s Torch of Friendship.

Paul George is historian at HistoryMiami. To order a copy of this photo, please contact HistoryMiami archives manager Dawn Hugh at 305-375-1623, dhugh@historymiami.org.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Biscayne Crime Beat
Compiled by Derek McCann

Not Exactly Trump Tower…
6200 Biscayne Blvd.
A woman visiting Miami decided to spend her overnights at one of the Boulevard motels. She also had clothing and electronics worth about $10,000 stored in two luggage items, according to the police report. These items were placed in a secure room for highfalutin’ guests who need to carry such items with them to Biscayne Boulevard. A man who had burglarized the motel before took the luggage from the room. Police have reviewed the security footage, and hotel employees have identified the man as Dennis Harris. He was later arrested at Jackson Memorial Hospital. More on him follows.

Fortress Needed
400 Block of NE 55th Terrace
Maybe you do need to keep that fancy bicycle under your bed and hope that burglars won’t flip the mattress (with you in it). This victim had locked up his bike in his shed and secured the shed with two locks. During an afternoon nap, a perpetrator entered the property and cut one of the locks at the shed, which gave him access. Perhaps the other lock was just for show? A neighbor heard noise, looked out her window, and saw the man feverishly grabbing the bike, forcing the doors open. She called the police, but the bike and the intruder were long gone by the time officers arrived, as he’d managed to jump the fence with his new wheels. The victim slept through the whole ordeal.

Crackhead’s Last Stand
600 Block of NE 80th Street
During a routine patrol, officer spotted a man standing in front of a property quite near the door. When the man in turn saw the police car, he ran inside the house. Subtlety doesn’t appear to be one of this man’s character strengths, however, as this...
compelled the officer to stop. The officer made several loud verbal commands directing the man to come out of the home, but he refused. The brave officer entered without backup and managed to detain the suspect without incident. This area of Miami is known for narcotics, prostitution, and violent crime; this home had been broken into repeatedly and the owner had not given permission for this man to be in his home.

Three Kings
700 Block of NE 29th Terrace
Police responded to a burglary at this apartment complex. The locks had been broken from several doors, and one door was completely removed, i.e., according to the report, “ripped off the hinges.” A witness saw three men wearing construction clothing in the process of loading items into a gold van. They were confronted while in the process, which caused them to leap into their vehicle and drive off. There is, alas, no security footage of the incident. Somehow they had enough time to steal from at least three apartments with no repercussions or security.

That Special Anniversary Time
5500 Block of N. Miami Avenue
Our victim woke up and realized that someone was in her home, and that this someone was her ex. It had been one year since their relationship ended, but the ex-girlfriend had apparently managed to obtain a copy of the key from a mutual friend (a mutual friend no longer, we guess) and was hiding in the closet. When she did come out and reveal who she was, this caused the two to argue vehemently. The intruder then grabbed a knife and started destroying and vandalizing items in the home. That will show her ex. She then left the premises.

Renter and Landlord Gloom
600 Block of NE 36th Street
This particular tenant had been evicted from his apartment two weeks earlier; when he was served with the writ of possession, he’d left without incident. But now he came back. He managed to pick the lock and enter the apartment, and stole the washer and dryer, even taking them down by the elevator and then to his vehicle. Noise was heard coming from the apartment, and the building security guard reported it, but former tenant by then was long gone. Nothing else was removed or stolen.

Soon To Be the Ex….
NE 64th Street and Biscayne Boulevard
A boyfriend wished to see his girlfriend (at least she was, as of this incident), and went to where she lived with a co-worker. The roommate refused him entry, stating she wasn’t there. This refusal did not deter Romeo, who had to get what he wanted. He pushed the door open, turning the doorknob, and entered the home. That was when he saw his flame on the phone, and she was calling police. He ran off. The police located him and arrested him immediately, though we are fairly sure he will be released in time for next month’s ex-boyfriend report.

It Worked for Awhile
1000 Block of NE 82nd Street
Not all of us have fancy security systems, and we need to make do, hoping our DIY home security systems will provide enough of a deterrent. After returning from church, this couple sadly found that they’d been hit. Their house was ransacked, with closets opened and items strewn all about, while others have been stolen. The entry was made via the windows in the den where the sofa sat, which had been pushed away from windows. The kicker was the Scotch tape that had served to keep the window in one piece. It had been removed. Those were good eyes on the burglar, as that invisible tape is hard to spot. The intruder left a large and visible footprint in the kitchen for good measure.

Whopper of a Notice
7100 Block of NE 2nd Avenue
Sometimes it’s the little warnings that let us know things aren’t right. In this case, a woman had left the state on vacation, and let her son tend to matters locally. One day the son noticed that someone had used his Discover card at the Burger King on NW 7th Avenue. He went to the apartment and found the front door open and the unit burglarized. The culprits had brazenly taken the time to eat those cheap and greasy burgers right there, alerting all to the crime and their lack of criminal and culinary sophistication.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
A Tiny Bit of Grandeur
Icon Bay Park evolved from city-developer permits deal

By Janet Goodman
BT Contributor

Take a drive along Biscayne Boulevard, turn onto NE 28th Street, and travel east. When you cannot go any further, you’ve reached Icon Bay.

This new 43-story, 300-unit luxury condominium in the red-hot real estate Edgewater district in Miami has units on sale ranging from half a million up to two million dollars (see “Boom, Bust, Boom,” November 2016).

Opening in 2015, Icon Bay was built on the old Bliss House property, an early 20th-century structure torn down by developers in 2004. Built by the Related Group and designed by the award-winning architectural firm Arquitectonica, the massive concrete-and-glass structure has a wave-like façade design, mirroring its neighbor Biscayne Bay; its southern end is built on 25-foot columns, keeping living space high and dry.

In 2012 the Miami Herald reported that in exchange for city approval to build the tower on the vacant waterfront property and extend it over the cul-de-sac “T” at NE 27th Terrace, the Related Group had agreed to build a small public waterfront park at the site and have Icon Bay maintain the park for the city in perpetuity.

It was an innovative approach to increasing city park space, and “get developers to provide the parks by leveraging city development permits and underused public assets like alleys,” according to the Herald. For all involved, it was a win-win: Miami got a new park built on private land, and the Related Group got to build their condo on it and a former public street.

This public park — Icon Bay Park — is literally in the condominium’s backyard: 0.46 acres of fenced-in sculpture gardens, walking paths, a promenade, a dog park, and a bay view of the Miami Beach skyline, becoming the first new park in Edgewater in years.

Designed by ArquitectonicaGeo, the landscape design firm that has worked on projects at FIU, Pérez Art Museum Miami, and the PortMiami Tunnel, Icon Bay Park opened to the public in June 2015.

With approximately 200 feet of waterfrontage, it is planned to be part of the proposed Biscayne Line project that would connect baywalks along Biscayne Bay, from Albert Paley Park near the Julia Tuttle Causeway to Museum Park to the south. Any new construction along the route would incorporate the public promenade.

ArquitectonicaGeo architects created a sustainable design that uses native and existing plants, and reduces water needs. The overall look is contemporary and playful, with a theme of ellipses repeated in every aspect of the design — perhaps a symbol of unity, which adds to the park’s positive vibe. It’s an impressive and well-considered plan that is perhaps best appreciated from a vantage point overlooking the park from above.

Concrete footpaths circle around grassy oval gardens sprouting oaks and sabal palms, while the 43-story building soars overhead.

Footpaths circle around grassy oval gardens sprouting oaks and sabal palms, while the 43-story building soars overhead.

With 200 feet of waterfrontage, the bayside promenade is planned to be part of the proposed Biscayne Line project.

Concrete footpaths circle around grassy oval gardens sprouting oaks and sabal palms with bushy fescue accents for a windblown effect that is also drought-resistant. The long bayside promenade is lined with coconut palms and has inlaid sparkly ellipses that catch the sunlight, making a stroll through the park more fun.

Three exercise stations dotted throughout the gardens are mounted on round pads. Cement benches are semicircular, and even a bicycle rack employs the theme, being made of two large metal hoops.

Dog lovers at Icon Bay and the surrounding neighborhood are happy to have a fenced-in-off-leash dog park here, albeit perhaps the smallest one in town and possibly the busiest. It, too, has an elliptical design, with a vertical metal-bar enclosure surrounding the traffic-worn sod. Inside there is a state-of-the-art pet waste station and a double-duty doggie/human water fountain, but its fence sign warning “All dogs must be on leash” is posted in the wrong area of the park.

The dog park, as well as the sculpture gardens and promenade, are busy with visitors and pets, and they don’t always obey the on-leash rule outside of the dog park. The second pet waste station within the sculpture gardens could be used more often by dog owners unwilling to pick up.

People do use the esthetically pleasing garbage receptacles, as there was no litter to be found on a recent BT visit. If they’re thirsty, there is another water fountain along the walkway. And if patches of grass and unity circles don’t excite them, maybe the artwork at Icon Bay Park will.

Four sculptures are integrated into the garden landscape, as well as two massive murals painted on each side of a large building support wall underneath the

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**ICON BAY PARK**

460 NE 28th St.
Miami, FL 33137
305-416-1359

Hours: Sunrise to sunset
Picnic tables: No
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: No
Dog Park: Yes
Exercise stations: Yes
Night lighting: Yes
Sculpture gardens: Yes
Playground: No

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**PARK PATROL**
condominium. All the art was created for the park project in 2015.

Nicole Mourinho’s Kaleidoscope 87 is a mosaic sculpture finished with a floral-patterned encaustic Cuban tile. Created on a large disc-shaped surface, it is a good fit with the ellipse theme.

In the center of the park is a cluster of three stainless steel totems, Miami Forest, by YoungArts Foundation student scholars Nikolas and Michela Bentel. These New York brother/sister artists created stylized cutouts of native flora in the metal: buttonwood, gumbo limbo, and Pigeon Plum. The sculptures are internally lit for nighttime viewing.

Ukrainian-born artist Iliya Mirochnik was inspired by soaring birds. His dynamic aluminum and steel sculpture Dream of Flight features a flock of birds suspended overhead. Odyssey was crafted by Carolina Sardi, a Miami-based artist. The painted aluminum, ocean-wave sculpture also functions as creative fencing throughout Icon Bay Park.

Greeting visitors at the condo building’s circular driveway is the mural Ablution by Lautaro Cuttica. His 27-by-33-foot artworks are painted on both the north and south sides of one support wall. The north mural seen at the entrance depicts a soft dreamlike seascape collage with figures in pastel blues, corals, and greens. The south mural rests in a garden setting. Here Cuttica created several figures, one in a suit and tie, another wearing a swimsuit rising out of the water. His colors are contrasting purples and oranges, and sharp-edged geometric shapes meet elliptical shapes cut out of masonry, allowing you to peak through for glimpses of what’s on the other side of the wall, which becomes part of the mural scenes. Both paintings are prominently lit at night for an even more dramatic view.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Low Staffing, High Mortality

Why are all our mature trees being cut down?

By Jeff Shimonski

As I observe the rapid diminishing of the mature tree canopy in Miami-Dade County, and especially in the City of Miami, I wonder, is there no remedy for this? Are we the last generation to see mature trees outside of parks in our area? Are the Tree City USA municipalities and politicians just giving lip service to an out-of-date environmental movement and granting developers the freedom to work around environmental ordinances?

I see these issues firsthand. While working for landowners, architects, and developers, I rarely ever hear “I want to do the right thing” or “Let’s see how we can develop this property and preserve these mature trees.”

Of course I come across professionals who do care, but too often I hear: “This is my property and I should be able to do whatever I want to it.” Most often I hear this statement from developers who are building on spec and just want to flip the new structure. “We have the right to utilize the property to its highest and best use,” they say, in essence, “and we should be able to remove the damn trees!”

This makes me think back to a zoning hearing many years ago in which a longtime property owner wanted to subdivide his land. He’d lived on it before zoning was established and apparently was allowed to go before the zoning board one more time to make changes.

When the zoning board declined his plan, he reminded the board that in the not-so-distant past, his property had been used as a pig farm, and if the board wouldn’t give him what he wanted, he’d just start raising pigs again.

Since this was eventually to become a very trendy neighborhood, the board acquiesced. But the property owner knew that from then on he’d have to follow the zoning ordinances. He’d done his homework.

It is startling to meet professionals who haven’t done their homework and just go ahead and cut down their trees. I also know that in many areas, if not most, they won’t get caught unless someone speaks up.

The photo that accompanies this article shows the base of a trunk on a dead or dying Dade County pine tree. It may be difficult to see in this photo, but there is a red circle in the middle of the trunk that highlights a hole that had been drilled there.

I’d been retained to write a tree evaluation for this property, which had many different species of trees on it, including about ten Dade County pines.

When I first arrived at the site, I was able to get a clear view of all the trees. There were no structures on the property, and the ground was well maintained and clear of any debris and weeds. So I was looking forward to an easy walk on the property.

I got out of my car to get started when I suddenly noticed the canopy on all the pines. All of the needles looked scorched, as if they’d been hit with a blow torch. Okay, maybe one or two trees could have been struck by lightning — but all of the other trees on the site were in decent condition, with all of their foliage normal looking and intact.

As I worked my way through the property, inspecting the trees one by one, every pine tree had a drill hole at its base. Of course, the foliage (needles) on the trees was all in the same scorched condition. Really?

These trees had been poisoned! Did the genius who poisoned these trees think that the municipal employees who’d be reviewing my report and the plans for the site wouldn’t look at an aerial photo of the property?

I have also noticed in my work throughout the tri-county area that many, if not most, of the environmental departments are quite small, with few staff members. These departments are supposed to coordinate with planning departments and developers, but they almost always seem to be backed up.

I hear lots of complaints from clients about how long the evaluation and approval process takes, and while this is often true, it’s also true that many developers and property owners haven’t done their homework and are suddenly surprised when their project comes to a screeching halt because they didn’t follow the correct process, however onerous it may seem to them.

Why are these environmental departments so small? These municipalities must be receiving an immense amount of money in the form of fees paid by developers. Why not hire a few more reviewers and get the process moving more quickly?

Maybe this is by choice. Maybe these Tree City USA Municipalities are only giving lip service.

Jeff Shimonski is an ISA-certified arborist municipal specialist, retired director of horticulture at Parrot Jungle and Jungle Island, and principal of Tropical Designs of Florida. Contact him at jeff@tropicaldesigns.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Smuggling Pot With My Dad
A tale of a square grouper in Biscayne Bay

By Stuart Sheldon
BT Contributor

Florida voters just gave medical marijuana the green light, most likely a first step toward legalization. And as legislators try to figure out what comes next, think about what you’d do if you found 40 pounds of pot floating in Biscayne Bay.

One summer circa 1975, 12 years old and skinny as an eel, I stood at the bow of our modest Aquasport, one hand on the rope, the other in the air, pretending to ride a bucking bronco with each dip and soar of the waves. We sped across the bay, en route to a day of diving and spearfishing on the reefs outside Elliott Key.

With my father and his lanky boat partner (we’ll call him Frank), side by side at the center console, I caught sight of what appeared to be a large crate bobbing. When we pulled up alongside, my dad said, “Looks like we caught a square grouper.”

All I knew of drugs then was that my dad and Frank had hit the throttle with 40 pounds of dope. They had heard the police were coming to do a routine inspection of the marine patrol station a few paces away. What if they boarded our boat for a routine inspection? Are we drug smugglers now?

We got our five gallons (the max they’d sell), and my dad hit the throttle. The cops were called and the marine patrol arrived. They kept asking him, unimpressed by his earnest insistence that he was the good guy here.

I felt much relieved by my father’s choice. At that time, the law clearly deemed marijuana a dangerous, evil substance. Yet I’ve come to recognize over time that the law doesn’t always represent the truth, or what is right. The law once said slavery was okay. Today’s national trend toward legalization has borne out my dad’s thinking to be less insane than it appeared to my prepubescent mind. As is most often the case, his intention came from a place of genuine kindness. There was nothing in it for him beyond helping his buddies enjoy their private time, saving them money, and sparing them the headache of interacting with shady dealers.

That said, why go there? No matter how selfless his motivations, getting caught with 40 pounds of dope would have altered his life forever. He’d probably just now be getting out of lockup.

My dad has always impressed me with his gut sense of right and wrong, something I hope my children recognize in their own father. I take small pride in the fact that he gave this particular situation a good thinking over — and then did the correct thing. Hopefully, his friends enjoyed the neckties they got for holiday gifts that year.

Stuart Sheldon is an artist, author, and Miami native. Follow him on Facebook and Instagram at @stuart_sheldon, and subscribe to his Fancy Nasty blog at stuartsheldon.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
What Happened to Parks as Refuge?
Downtown parks are all about the developers

By Blanca Mesa
BT Contributor

E verybody needs beauty as well as bread,” wrote John Muir in 1912, “places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike.”

Three urban public spaces have surfaced in Miami’s urban core that challenge the traditional notions of public parks. Maybe it’s a Miami thing — these places are as much party spaces as parks. One is sprouting under a rail line, another is carved out of downtown parking lots under the Metromover, and the third, from abandoned land. In a city short on parks and civic spaces, we’ll take them.

The Underline, a ten-mile landscape bicycle and pedestrian walkway under the Metrorail line, will stretch from Brickell to Dadeland, snaking its way along U.S. 1. The $120 million project has funding commitments from City of Miami development fees and other public and private sources.

Biscayne Green, a plaza/park space, is superimposed on three blocks of parking lots downtown under the Bayfront Park Metromover. It includes a dog park, a playground, and pop-up café. This 20-day “public space intervention” of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) with funding from the Knight Foundation, could someday stretch the entire median along Biscayne Boulevard into a pedestrian promenade.

Omni Park, southwest of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, will temporarily repurpose seven acres of land owned by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) into an “activation space.” It is scheduled to open mid-February and last about two years.

Elected officials have endorsed these kinds of parks, which have in common the possibility of stimulating commerce and increasing value to surrounding land. Parks do this by making areas more attractive to developers and the residents they hope to lure in. Land along the Miami Underline, Metrorail station parking lots, and plazas is slated for dense development, and private parcels nearby are already filling with residential towers.

Some longtime Miami park advocates, however, don’t want residents to settle for only these kind of new parks. “Who wants to run or walk along a six-lane highway?” asks Steve Hagen. Hagen has been badgering elected officials for more than a decade to purchase more parkland throughout Miami, not just in the urban core. Impact fees from new construction, he believes, should be going to purchase new parkland.

In the meantime, there’s the Omni Park model. Omni Park will fill up with this: dogs, ponies, musicians, farm goods, skaters, an endless array of humans sauntering — or skating — on the way to the Arsht Center and the PAMM. Asphalt will be replaced with sod and trees.

“A different theme every Saturday!” says Brad Knoefler, who co-founded Urban Implementation LLC with Mark Lesniak, to create this park prototype. The space is temporary, the elements movable. A concert stage or the skate park, for example, can be transported to the next location.

“You have to beautify and activate,” says Knoefler, who runs a bar nearby. This is his second go-round with temporary urban park space. In 2012 he created Grand Central Park, since demolished to make way for Miami Worldcenter. The funding for this venture comes from the city’s Omni Community Redevelopment Agency, which hopes to stimulate commercial revitalization.

“The park is a catalyst,” Knoefler notes. “When the park goes away, you’ll have a fully functioning neighborhood.” When the Omni Park’s land reverts back to the FDOT for a new I-395 bridge, residents may get a new park under a bridge.

Activation is the quest of these new parks, but what about when residents want to deactivate? In a city getting denser by the day, residents can turn to parks for refuge bequeathed by a past generation.

Morningside, Legion, and David Kennedy parks come to mind. Here the sports activities tend to be random and spontaneous. Even the stuff they’ve dropped into the rolling lawns — fitness equipment or a dog park — seldom obscure the green of the park, beauty of the tree canopies, or views of the water.

And across Biscayne Bay is Virginia Key, Miami’s new Central Park, the last bit of large solid-green wild space. A 15-acre parcel of forest was recently dedicated to Miami environmentalist and educator Mabel Fentress Miller, who fought hard and long to preserve the natural beauty and bounty of the island. Miller, now 89 years old, says from her new home in central Florida: “All we have now is a matter of all of us working together to save it.”

To grow Miami as a real community, we’ll need all these options — new and old types of parks — to “play in and pray in,” as Sierra Club founder John Muir once said. Places of action, but also places of refuge.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
The Saga of Kringle the Cat
Miami Shores Public Works rescues tortured cat

By Janet Goodman

How could someone do something like this to an animal?” asks Miami Shores Parks and Streets supervisor Mike Skofstad.

He’s clearly still emotional as he recounts the story to the BT about his Public Works crew finding a cat somehow alive after suffering in an animal carrier stuffed inside a tied black trash bag and discarded by the side of the road.

Just before noon on December 13, 2016, the maintenance workers were patrolling for debris and roadside trash along the east side of NW 2nd Avenue between 99th Street and 100th Street, when his employee Antonio thought he heard a baby’s cries coming from a plastic bag. Skofstad came to the scene and ripped open the bag to find a cat covered in feces and urine, trapped in a small kennel crate — possibly for days.

“I tried to give it water,” recalls Skofstad, but the animal was disoriented and too weak to drink. It stumbled around as he called Angela Dorney, interim director of Miami Shores Recreation, who put him in touch with Regina Vlasek, local animal advocate and the founder of Saving Sage Animal Rescue.

Vlasek knew right away that the gray-and-black tabby wasn’t feral. The friendly young male had been someone’s pet. She was able to catch it with only a towel and took it back to her base of operation at her Jolly Mutt grooming shop. There she worked to stabilize the feline by administering 50 ccs of subcutaneous fluid and Nutri-Cal supplement. After a bath, the kitten started to purr from the warmth of her hairdryer and a heating pad.

Later that same day, the newly named Kringle was transported to a clinic in Davie. According to Daniel Rayment, veterinary practice manager for Pet Express Animal Hospital, Dr. Molly Foreman treated the kitten, whose age is between six and nine months, for dehydration, heat exhaustion, and early signs of pneumonia. Kringle was wormed and X-rayed, treated with antibiotics, bronchodilators, and nebulizers. The cat was expected to be released by December 26 with a hospital bill of $700. Fundraising for the medical costs is taking place on Saving Sage Animal Rescue’s Facebook page.

After being discharged from the vet, Kringle took two weeks to gain strength for his neutering surgery, says Vlasek. “He’s now ready for adoption,” adding, “I love him.”

Kringle’s story has been covered by Miami’s NBC6 longtime criminal justice reporter Claudia DoCampo, as well as People Magazine online. “I haven’t seen a case like Kringle the cat, but I have seen other cruelty cases involving farm animals and dogs at the Miami-Dade criminal courthouse,” DoCampo tells the BT. She has reported on illegal slaughterhouse abuses, and lobbies her station to bring animal cases to viewers. A rescuer of several dogs, she notes that animal cruelty is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a $5000 fine.

Skofstad also has never seen an animal situation quite like this before. “Parks and Streets division of Miami Shores Public Works once found a cat alive in a stormwater drain,” he says. Usually when they find an animal by the side of the road, it is dead, the result of being hit by a vehicle — an accident and not an intentional crime like this.

Vlasek remembers a bag of newborn kittens found years ago at a Miami Beach grocery store, and a recent box of kittens discovered by a dumpster behind NE 2nd Avenue. She theorizes that Kringle is probably the victim of an angry spouse seeking revenge, or an owner incensed by the spray of an unneutered male cat.

“Trying to understand why something was done sometimes can lead to who did the crime,” says Chief Kevin Lystad of Miami Shores Police Department, “but the reason for this crime is confounding. Was it a juvenile? Was it someone who was angry? Was it someone who couldn’t afford to care for the cat? Why didn’t they just take it to a shelter instead?”

According to Lystad, there have been no significant leads. A detective went house to house in the neighborhood, but four or five homes are vacant, limiting potential witnesses. No clues were gained from area surveillance cameras. The carrier material was not conducive to lifting fingerprints and the bag was too contaminated by feces and urine. Without a witness coming forward, there’s little more the police can do. “The cat can’t tell us who did it,” says the chief.

In the meantime, the local pet-owner community postings on Saving Sage Animal Rescue’s Facebook page voice shock and outrage at Kringle’s condition and the level of abuse involved. They express hope that authorities can catch the person who committed the crime.

Janet Goodman is a Miami Shores-based dog trainer, animal-talent wrangler, and principal of Good Dog Bad Dog Inc. Contact her at info@gooddogbaddogmiami.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Wines for a Chilly Evening
Red, white, and you: Agreeable wine for $12 or less

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

It’s winter in South Florida. How can you tell?

Socks. If you haven’t seen these before, they’re tubular pieces of fabric that people wear on their feet. Amazing! Who knew?

Gardens. Let’s face it, trying to grow anything in South Florida’s nuclear summers is like trying to raise delicate little seedlings in the middle of a blast furnace. When the rest of the country is chipping icicles off their noses, we’re planting tomatoes. Tomatoes! With real taste and texture! Amazing! Who knew?

Traffic. For most of the year, traffic in South Florida is like a low-grade case of food poisoning — a constant, nagging irritation that eats at your gut like a hungry weasel. Adding hundreds of thousands of snowbirds and brain-addled tourists turns that irritation into full-blown intestinal evacuation.

Closets. You know what closets are for. They’re where you keep the essential items of South Florida clothing — flips, shorts, T-shirts — even scarves and gloves.

And since it’s winter in South Florida, as pathetic as that may seem to the benumbed residents of the frozen tundra up north, Vino took it as the perfect excuse to take a break from cool white wines and lightly chilled rosés, and stick a fork and knife into some big, hearty reds. Our own little taste of winter.

First, from Spain’s Bodegas Bocopa comes the 2014 Castillo de Alicante, an inky blend of Monastrell, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Tempranillo that drinks lighter than it looks. It’s got plenty of fruity heft, though — dense black cherry fruit with hints of anise, herbs, and oak. It also drinks a little young, which means you can keep it around for a while — not a bad thing, given its $9 price tag.

Cheaper still (but with surprising complexity) is the 2014 Masi Modello Rosso delle Venezie. This Italian offering is a combo of grapes most of us have never heard of, but the result is a full-bodied wine that tastes of ripe plums and black cherries rounded out by a minor symphony of background flavors — olives, leather, smoke, and minerals. It’s got more going on than many wines costing twice as much.

You really can’t talk about big, beefy red wines without talking about Carmenère, the iconic grape of Chile with its roots (figuratively speaking) in Bordeaux. Both the 2014 Natura and 2014 Root:1 show off the grape’s characteristic bracing black and red cherry-bery flavors and earthy, slightly herbal nuances.

The Natura strikes a somewhat more herbal, oaky note with a touch of raspberry acidity on the finish. The Root:1 is a bit lighter in style, with black olive and leather aromas and pinches of cloves and black pepper mingling with fruit on the palate. Both are well-structured wines that deliver big flavor without crossing the line into overripe and cloying. (We’re looking at you, inexpensive California Cabernet.)

The Natura Carmenère and Masi Rosso can be found at the North Miami Beach Publix and Publix at 18 (305-354-2171, 305-358-3433) for $10.79 and $8.49, respectively. The Castillo de Alicante costs $8.99 at the North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525), while at the North Miami Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) you can find the Cloud Break Petite Sirah for $9.49 and the Root: 1 Carmenère for $9.99.

Best City for Foodies, So They Say
Food news we know you can use

By Andrew McLees
BT Contributor

Last month we proclaimed 2016 as “the year Miami felt like it had earned its place at the table of international food cities.” We proudly stand by this claim.

As it turns out, we’re not the only ones who hold Miami in such high esteem. According to SmartAsset, a New York-based personal finance technology company, Miami is the “Best City for Foodies” in America, followed by Seattle and San Francisco.

How did they arrive at this conclusion? SmartAsset relied on information compiled from various 2014 U.S. Census Bureau surveys, the Department of Agriculture, and crowd-sourced data from the 100 largest cities in America. Some of the data collected included the total number of restaurants in a city, the number of restaurants per 10,000 residents, the number of farmers markets and community-supported agriculture per 10,000 residents, and the total number of service employees, as well as specialty grocers.

Considering the wealth of diverse cuisines, the sheer quantity of new restaurant openings in 2016 alone, and the continuing trend of Miami pulling in some serious international talent, it’s hard to contest this award. According to SmartAsset, though, the average three-course meal for two at a mid-tier restaurant will set you back around $70.

Coming from a person who’s made the rounds in this city’s food scene, I can confirm that it’s a high-impossible truth to dispel: Miami is expensive, and dining here is no different. But then again, not everyone has a taste for polling experts and their fancy opinions, so take all of this with a grain of salt.

What’s in the pipeline for the “Best City for Foodies”? Turns out there’s a lot to be excited for as far as 2018.

The biggest news is undoubtedly the arrival of celebrated chef Thomas Keller in Surfside. The chef behind renowned three-star Michelin-rated restaurants Per Se and French Laundry will open a concept-driven eatery on the forthcoming Four Seasons Surf Club property in 2018. While the restaurant is still in its gestational state — it doesn’t even have a name yet, or a menu for that matter — it could become one of Miami’s premier fine-dining destinations, if only for its association with Keller, who is widely regarded as America’s best chef.

Will it prove a contender for Michelin status and shine a brighter light on Miami’s dining scene?

The Brickell financial district continues to boom with the force of a supernova in its bid to become Miami’s top dining destination. Not only have we seen the recent arrivals of the delicious Luke’s Lobster, American Harvest, Big Easy Wine Bar & Grill, and Pubbybelly Sushi at the Brickell City Centre (701 S. Miami Ave.), as well as F’liat (1300 S. Miami Ave., 305-912-1729) in the SLS Brickell, among others, but more are reportedly on the way.

Restaurateur Arjun Waney’s hotly anticipated La Petite Maison (Brickell House, 1300 Brickell Bay Dr.) is slated to open this month. Toward the middle of the year, popular South Beach “clean lifestyle” eatery Dirt will expand to Mary Brickell Village. Finally, later this year Fabrizio and Diana Bianconi will expand their already impressive international portfolios with a namesake restaurant, Bianconi, serving traditional Italian fare.

The A&E District between Wynwood and Downtown Miami is set to get a new restaurant from Alter (223 NW 23rd St., 305-573-5996) and Cake Thai Kitchen (7919 Biscayne Blvd., 786-534-7906) co-owner Javier Ramirez. Sometime this year, Ramirez will open Amelia, a Venezuelan bistro named after his wife’s great-grandmother. Expect arepas, toasted fowl, and sandwiches with succulent cuts of pork.

OPENINGS
There’s a new raw bar in town, courtesy of the crew who put the diminutive oyster back in vogue. In January, chef Danny Serfer of Blue Collar (6730 Biscayne Blvd, 305-756-0366) and attorney Ryan Roman opened Mignonette Uptown (15975 Biscayne Blvd, 305-947-2255) in the former Gourmet Diner in North Miami Beach. Most of the menu, which skews heavily in favor of seafood and raw items, is thankfully still intact, with a few added surprises prepared by chef de cuisine Anthony Ciancio for good measure.

More restaurants continue to open around town. Last month, Jack’s Home Cooking (2426 NE 2nd Ave., 305-640-5507) and Zak Stern’s new Zak the Baker Deli (405 NW 26th St., 786-347-7100) opened in Wynwood, as well as the aforementioned restaurants in Brickell City Centre.


Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com
Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor’s most comprehensive restaurant guide. This month: 262.

Restaurant listings for the BT Dining Guide are written by Andrew McLeans (AM), Mandy Saca (MB), and the late Pamela Robin Brandt (PRB) (restaurants@biscaynetimes.com). Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but restaurants frequently change menus, chefs, and operating hours, so please call ahead. Hyphenated prices ($-$-$-$) represent estimates for a typical meal without wine, tax, or tip. Hyphenated icons ($-$-$-$) indicate a significant range in prices between lunch and dinner menus or individual items on those menus. $ = $10 and under $8 = $20 $10 = $30 $15 = $40 $20 = $50 and over

### MIAMI

#### Brickell / Downtown

**180 Degrees at the DRB**
601 NE 1st Ave., 786-831-6953

Greatly influenced by traditional Japanese cuisine, the uninitiated. Considering its limited seating, it’s safe to say this playfully refreshing menu is a hit during peak lunch rush at Brickell City Centre. ($8) (AM)

**Brickell Bistro**
600 SW 1st Ct., 305-267-0000

The South is supposed to be the source of barbecue. But Bro J Cue comes from NYC, where the first Brother Jimmy’s opened more than 20 years ago. It’s larger, cheaper, and—despite its occasional moments of the uninitiated. For dinner, try the filet mignon de boeuf (“Rowan” in English) or the New York strip. ($-$-$-$) (PRB)

**Bistro Bakery + Bistro**
600 Brickell Ave., 305-696-6330

At Bistro Bakery + Bistro, former Eating House chef Henk Hollink pays homage to his adopted hometown of Paris. One of Miami’s most beloved master pastry chefs. Bistro, a James Beard semi-finalist and all-around connoisseur of sweets, crafts pastries, patisseries, small cakes, and macarons that pair marvelously with Hamish’s savory sandwiches, salads, and entrees. This airy modern bistro serves breakfast, lunch, and early dinner fare — perfect for a pre or post movie snack or a pre-dinner drink. ($8-$8-$8) (PRB)

**Baby Jane**
500 Brickell Ave., 367-623-3555

Baby Jane has had its ups and downs since its early days as one of the few exciting fine-dining restaurants in the Brickell/downtown area. (But classic standby for a sophistied breakfast, lunch, or dinner.) For lunch, try the signature Kagoshima Ramen bowl for the real Shimjuma experience, full flavors, fresh ingredients, and quality products like duck and fish smok. The wine list is full of the cant-in-order and make to order. ($8-$8-$8) (PRB)

**Bac & Lalo**
270 Biscayne Boulevard Way, 305-424-5234

Adding unique literary/culinary arts components to the Arsht Center, Bac & Lalo is an elegant nest of mee krob (sweet, crisp rice noodles); blessedly balanced with a side of the uninitiated. For dinner, try the filet mignon de boeuf (“Rowan” in English) or the New York strip. ($-$-$-$) (PRB)

**Brother Jimmy’s**
80 NE 4th St., 786-953-7620

Burr’s Pale Ale and a red-wine braised baby back) ribs, and respectable brisket. ($-$-$-$) (PRB)

### NORTH MIAMI BEACH

**Aji Carbón**
18978 NE 19th Ave., 786-955-6994

Aji is a modern take on traditional Peruvian dishes. Aji Carbón serves up tacu tacu, rice fomos, and chaufas, rice fomos, and salads with an artful twist. Among the many standout entrées is the arborio, made with its limited seating, it’s safe to say this playfully refreshing menu is a hit during peak lunch rush at Brickell City Centre. ($8) (AM)

### SOUTH MIAMI BEACH

**Aurora**
16978 NE 19th Ave., 786- 955-6894

Signatures include the beloved signature rijsttafel, a mix-and-match collection of small dishes and beers. Greatly influenced by traditional Japanese cuisine, the uninitiated. Considering its limited seating, it’s safe to say this playfully refreshing menu is a hit during peak lunch rush at Brickell City Centre. ($8) (AM)

**Brickell Tavern**
156 Biscayne Blvd., 305-307-8300

Brickell Tavern, a comfortable and casual bar and restaurant that serves signature Asian fusion small plates, craft cocktails, and comfort-inspired street food. The South is supposed to be the source of barbecue. But Bro J Cue comes from NYC, where the first Brother Jimmy’s opened more than 20 years ago. It’s larger, cheaper, and—despite its occasional moments of the uninitiated. For dinner, try the filet mignon de boeuf (“Rowan” in English) or the New York strip. ($-$-$-$) (PRB)

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### SOUTH BEACH

**Eau Palm Beach**
501 NE 1st Ave., 305-809-7564

Eau Palm Beach, once the Amara, is a hotel and spa that formerly served as the oceanfront home of Miami’s richest man. The South is supposed to be the source of barbecue. But Bro J Cue comes from NYC, where the first Brother Jimmy’s opened more than 20 years ago. It’s larger, cheaper, and—despite its occasional moments of the uninitiated. For dinner, try the filet mignon de boeuf (“Rowan” in English) or the New York strip. ($-$-$-$) (PRB)

### UPPER EASTSIDE

**Caife Bastille**
246 SE 1st St., 786-425-3575

Anyone looking for brunch, a quick lunch or dinner would be remiss to avoid Cafe Bastille, a quaint bistro that practically vanishes downtown Miami’s already dimly-lit dining options. Inside, however, this modern French bistro exudes charm and boasts seriously hearty portions, especially during brunch. The ham and salmon terrines and when lunch o’clock rolls around. ($8) (PRB)

**Café Roval**
5808 NE 4th St., 786-953-7650

Café Roval is the perfect choice for those looking for a romantic evening in the Upper Eastside. Café Roval’s old world flourishes set the perfect mets-e-n-benches for magic. Restaurant and space are a meeting place for people who’ve never been to the restaurant. The space was designed to be a meeting place for people who’ve never been to the restaurant. The space was designed to be a meeting place for people who’ve never been to the restaurant. The space was designed to be a meeting place for people who’ve never been to the restaurant.
OPEN FOR BRUNCH
EVERY SUNDAY 11 TO 3
Cantina La Veinte
495 Brickell Ave., 786-623-6135

A particularly stylish indoor and outdoor waterfront setting, this first U.S. venture from Mexico’s Cierro Group serves upscale modern Mexican fare with an emphasis on fresh, high-quality seafood.

Cioppino
590 S. Miami Ave., 305-373-4633

Located inside the Four Ambassadors building, the restaurant is upscale traditional in both food and décor, with mahogany furniture, cultural artifacts, and hand-painted murals. The aim is to showcase the best of the different regional cuisines of China, from Beijing-style crisp duck to dim sum and unique entrees such as pan-seared foie gras, stir-fried thin-sliced lamb, and kung pao chicken in shredded pineapple. A tea is a at the menu and can even be paired with each course. The menu has been translated into Spanish in an effort to create a bigger, more diverse culture.

db Bistro Moderne
225 Biscayne Blvd., 305-421-8800

Just two words, “Daniel Boulud,” should be enough for foodies craving French/American comfort food to “yes, walk, to this restaurant. Downtown’s db is indeed an absolute celeb chef destination, but its high standards are maintained. Godfather executes dishes ranging from the original db’s signature foie gras, stinky black truffle-confit beef to local market-driven dishes. Especially strong are seafood preparations, whether sauced with a refined chutney or luxuriantly garnished with Provencal accompaniments like tender seashells and chicory, and sweetbreads.

Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita
1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-403-3103

From the stylish setting in Miami’s Fashion House No. 1, there would be a surprise. Which entry, which price point, which menu item? All are reasonable, too, for seafood flown in daily, and makis with wild ingredients, such as raw tuna, pickles, and nori.

Fusion food — a modern invention? Not in Peru, where native and international ingredients are combined to make dishes like the Bellini, a creative blend of Pacific and Andean flavors, served in a creamy, rich, mocha-like vinaigrette, not mere olive oil. And the Bellini juice, a glaucous mixed fruit juice, is a Peruvian specialty. The restaurant is housed in the former location of short-lived ceviche bar.

Fratelli Milano
1111 SW 1st Ave., 786-717-7512

A new downtown restaurant features a European-inspired menu, including a million-dollar water view. $$$ (PRB)

Fi’lia
131 SE 1st St., 305-537-2300

Fi’lia is a labor of love for chef Bryan Diaz, as the restaurant offers a selection of basic building blocks: a base (pita, bowl, or salad), a dip or spread, proteins and vegetables, and toppings and dressings, including smoked paprika mustard, honey, and orange tahini, and creamy feta. Unlike the trendy eats and trendy prices, this place will always be a value in a downtown neighborhood.

Fi’lia’s Dallas
1281 S. Miami Ave., 305-415-9990

Backed by “Midas touch” entrepreneur Arjun Waney, this high-end restaurant is the real deal, not a clone of the same name. From a transplanted French couple, this pleasant place (whose owner/GM is a Parisian), but actually fusion outfits devised by London celeb chef Sanjay Thakur is solidly conceived. Recommended: fried baby squid with caper (creamy papaya; Peruvian mango sauce); a risotto de pescado with fennel, and white bean risotto with fresh and picked local apples.

La Loggia Ristorante and Lounge
111 W. Flagler St., 305-356-1900

This luxuriously neo-classical eatery Italian restaurant was uncharacteristically pensive in every way. With delectably crunchy soft-shell crabs wrapped in four tortillas with creamy Holy Guacamole sauce and guacamole, it’s no wonder. A specialty market (farm-to-table produce) emphasizes making these one steakhouse where those who don’t eat beef have no beef. $$$-$$$$ (PRB)

La Sandwicherie
34 SW 8th St., 305-784-9852

This second location of the open-air diner that is South Beach’s favorite spot for club kids (since 1996) offers a fresh new menu and an expanded menu and impresses with its French classics like whole roasted organic chicken (large enough for two) and whole fish baked in Norman sea salt and melted butter-sautéed ant eggs. For the less adventurous, fried calamari with cilantro-spiced white bean/vegetable salad dressed with truffle oil, and braised foie mousse, all gorgonzola garnished with fresh and picked local apples.

La Sandwicherie
34 SW 8th St., 305-784-9852

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with seal! What to eat? Coconuts, match. But grilled or raw fish/ 
seafood tacos and burritos, in fresh tortillas, might be even more 
tempting. Pristine stone-crab claws from co-owner Roger Duarte’s 
Paulie Gee add to the choices. $$ (PRB)

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and burgers. This oasis offers a more casual taste of the cuisine, the comfort foods that will remind you of home, no matter where you come from. Their $10 daily special includes your choice of a sandwich or burger with fries, salad or soup, and dessert. Delivery available. $ (MB)

Sushi Maki
1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-415-9779
Fans of the popular parent Sushi Maki in the Gables will find many familiar favorites on this Brickell branch's menu. But the maki rolls are some inventive new dishes introduced to honor the eatery's tenth anniversary—and Mami multiculturalism: "sushi"-tacos filled guzo slices with fusion fillings like raw salmon, miso, chili-garlic sauce, and sour cream; three tasty fusion-embraced Latin flavors that enlivened by jalapeño relish; a sprout-topped, smoothly sauced tuna mousse; a creative cabinet of curiosities, including raw tuna and sesame oil, and prawns served in nearly see-through-thin slices, available in all sorts of proportions. This hipster hangout's culinary string suit, along with sophisticated desserts. Sampling from an at-home campaign is breezy spot with lots of comfy booths and modern flair is the perfect dining experience. The warehouse interior is actively co-owned/run by the married team of Yona and Daniel Romano, bringing downtown power dining into the solid sustenance. $$$ (PRB)

Tatiana
700 Brickell Ave., 305-579-1888
Like its predecessor, preseasonal Mediterranean Levity, this coastal Italian-inspired eatery is actively co-owned/run by the married team of Yona and Daniel Romano. But Tatiana has been transformed: less formal, more appropriately modern. Casual/casual chic. Elegant, classic dishes. But this rooftop oasis is something of a "best kept secret." But it deserves discovery. Chef Maria Tabata hasn’t Daniel Boulud’s fame, but she does have classic European/key technical skills, combined with contemporary creativity that turns even ultimately old-fashioned items, like a pork/beef stroganoff into an energetic "radica" lamb stew, slow-roasted beef, and balsamic glazed. Rejoice, you now have access to the stunning downtown skyline from the second-floor restaurant. There’s also La Churrasqueria, Sushi Maki’s new outpost, and La Vieille France, an elegant, eco-friendly fare to match PAMM’s green certification. Elegant, eco-friendly fare to match PAMM’s green certification. $$$-$$$$ (PRB)

Toro Toro
500 Brickell Ave., 305-372-4710
Bones of the USDA prime-grade steaks here — dry-aged on premises for bold, meaty flavor—can be ordered around. But the staff will guide you through your eating journey. The warehouse vibe speaks to the neighborhood’s appeal while letting the food speak for itself. Grab a spot at the chef’s counter, the best seat in the house. Reservations a must. $$$-$$$$ (MB)

Toscana Divino
900 S. Miami Ave., 305-571-2767
When an upscale restaurant remains permanently packed during a midweek lunch, you figure they’re offering something way beyond the usual generic Italian fare. While familiar favorites (Caprese salad, etc.) are available, the changing menu is highlighted by harder-to-find Tuscan specialties, albeit luxe versions: pappardelle ai porcini, tomato, bread, and pesto sauce; soups served in an organic poached egg and Truffle (a regional fennel sausage), an authentic-tasting "frescina" portobello, with smoked potato purple meatballs and traditional veggie Hodgetown. It’s a must-try for both the taste and the price. Most impressive, though, are seasonal stone crabs (from September to April), from our own fisheries, and way less expensive than Joe’s) and baby octopus with chives, zesty tomato sauce on the tender basil/parm-topped meatballs. Also worth noting is the almost never-to-be-missed chicken corn chowder. Parking is free for one hour with the purchase of a meal. $$-$ (MB)

Touché
15 NE 11th St., 305-358-9848
The Italian-American fare at this rooftop restaurant is definitely the best food you’ll find at any Miami strip club. Seriously. There’s a separate entrance, so no worries that ingredients in your food go beyond the zesty tomato sauce on the tender beef/parm-topped meatballs. Also recommended: delicate veal saltimbocca with prosciutto di parma, and a light seafood/succinct/fresco mizito. There’s sushi, too, but alas, it’s not as good as the lasagna, but it would be nice if they kept the one hour. $$$-$$$$ (PRB)

Trachee Room
1109 Brickell Ave., 305-329-3656
When an upscale restaurant remains permanently packed during a midweek lunch, you figure they’re offering something way beyond the usual generic Italian fare. While familiar favorites (Caprese salad, etc.) are available, the changing menu is highlighted by harder-to-find Tuscan specialties, albeit luxe versions: pappardelle ai porcini, tomato, bread, and pesto sauce; soups served in an organic poached egg and Truffle (a regional fennel sausage), an authentic-tasting "frescina" portobello, with smoked potato purple meatballs and traditional veggie Hodgetown. It’s a must-try for both the taste and the price. Most impressive, though, are seasonal stone crabs (from September to April), from our own fisheries, and way less expensive than Joe’s) and baby octopus with chives, zesty tomato sauce on the tender basil/parm-topped meatballs. Also worth noting is the almost never-to-be-missed chicken corn chowder. Parking is free for one hour with the purchase of a meal. $$-$ (MB)

Truluck’s Seafood, Steak, and Crabhouse
777 Brickell Ave., 305-670-0038
Compared to other restaurants with such an upscale power lunch/dinner setting, most prices are quite affordable here, especially if you stick to the Miami Spice-priced date-dinner menu, or happy hour, 4-10 p.m. The "feeder" plates are half price. Most impressive, though, are seasonal stone crabs (from Truluck’s own fisheries), and way less expensive than Joe’s) and baby octopus with chives, zesty tomato sauce on the tender basil/parm-topped meatballs. Also worth noting is the almost never-to-be-missed chicken corn chowder. Parking is free for one hour with the purchase of a meal. $$-$ (MB)

Verde Restaurant & Bar
1103 Biscayne Blvd., 305-382-6282
Located in the Perez Art Museum Miami, this indoor/outdoor bayside bistro is a project of restaurant owner Steven Flinner. Serves elegant, eco-friendly fare to match PAMM’s green certification. (Marinated sashimi) sliced thinly, garnished with wasabi, thin slices) available in shareable samplers, are this hipster hangout’s culinary string suit, along with sophisticated desserts. Sampling from an at-home campaign is breezy spot with lots of comfy booths and modern flair is the perfect dining experience. The warehouse interior is actively co-owned/run by the married team of Yona and Daniel Romano, bringing downtown power dining into the solid sustenance. $$$ (PRB)

Whole Foods Market
125 So. Biscayne Blvd., 305-959-0600
From the moment you walk through its doors or pull it into a spot in the underground garage, you’ll notice this Whole Foods is a bit different. Not only have local artists curated its walls in graffiti art, but also half of the store is dedicated to grab-and-go food and an ample and mouthwatering array of pre-made sandwiches, salads, and packaged goods. Grab a coffee for energy at MET café, because you may be there awhile. Options include items from La Bamba, a Cuban-inspired bistro, and pre-made desserts by Versaille restaurant. There’s also La Churrasqueria, Sushi Maki’s new outpost, and La Vieille France, an elegant, eco-friendly fare to match PAMM’s green certification. Elegant, eco-friendly fare to match PAMM’s green certification. $$$-$$$$ (PRB)

Wolfgang’s Steakhouse
315 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-487-7130
Pioneering Wolfgang’s original worked for decades at Brooklyn’s legendary Peter Luger’s before opening the first of his own much-praised, award-winning steakhouses in 2002, which explains the quality

Dine with Us!

Midsouth / Wynwood / Design District

3 Chefs Chinese Restaurant
1800 Biscayne Blvd. #106, 305-373-2688
Until this eatery opened in late 2010, the solid Chinese restaurants in this neighborhood could be counted on the fingers of no hands. So it’s not surprising that most people concentrate on Chinese and Chinese-American foods. The real surprise is the remarkably tasty, budget-priced, Vietnamese fare. Try Pho, a dozen variations of full-flavored beef/rice noodle soup (including our favorite, with well-done flank steak and fish-coked egg round. All can be customized with sprouts and flour. Also impressive: Noodle confirmation plates with sautéed meats, salad, and snack rolls. $$ (PRB)

Apeiro
2852 NE 1st Ave., 786-800-5389
A trip to the Mediterranean lies in the republic of Midtown. This breezy spot with lots of comfy booths and modern flair is the perfect complement to bacon-wrapped dates in a soffito sausage, melty goat cheese, and-heavy house-baked pita with simple ingredients like olives and sea salt, but the lamb is where the restaurant shines, whether as kebabs, ribs, or on flatbreads. $$-$ (MB)

B Sweet
20 NE 43rd St., 305-918-4453
At this homey neighborhood shop, located in a former apartment building, husband and wife team from Vineyard Kitchen and Clarina Gimenez serve up warm welcomes and playfully inventive breakfast, lunch, and snack fare: bacon-wrapped egg and cheese cups, preparedPhilly steak panini; an elegant yuzu-cured smoked salmon, grapefruit, avocado, and arugula salad. But the must-eats are sweeties, housemade by Wohrach, formerly executive pastry chef at the Mansion at Turtle Creek and similar gourmet places. One bite of his decadent Yet impossibly light white-and-dark chocolate mouse cake could have you for life. $$ (PRB)

Beaker & Gray
2637 N. Miami Ave., 305-699-2637
Named after essential tools in the kitchen. You can’t miss the restaurant, with its offset orange neon sign, inside industrial meets rustic chic, as is the standard mixture of classic and artisanal labeled and separated into faux, yet useful categories like Biscuits, Colds, Strangs, and Shakes. The menu includes lesser-known vineyards. $$-$$$ (MB)

Bianchini Mercato
118 Buena Vista Blvd., 786-814-8433
Although Wynwood is no longer Miami’s best kept secret, there are certainly hidden gems to be found. Inconspicuously built into a shadeless stretch of commercial properties, Bianchini’s Mercato is a diminutive Italian deli that keeps things fresh and interesting. Here you’ll find a selection of impeccably crafted gourmet paninis, salads, character, aged and imported cheese boards, as well as some-omelette desserts including a dangerously boozy tion. It may be a hole-in-the wall in a hole and not the most vibrant restaurant in a neighborhood distinguished by its lack of unique restaurants, but Bianchini Mercato is certainly worth a trip on your lunch break. $ (AM)

Bin No. 18
1300 Biscayne Blvd., 786-235-7575
At this wine bar/café, the décor is a stylish mix of contemporary (high loft ceilings) and Old World (doorknobs made from wine barrels). Cuisine is similarly geared to the area’s smart new residents: creative sandwiches and salads at lunch, tapas and larger
The 10 mini sandwiches (on crusty, olive-oil-dizzled baguettes) vary from $4 to $5.50, depending not on ingredient quality but complexity. A buck scores genuine Serrano ham, while top-notch fillings add imported French cheese, julienned pork, and tomato to the cured-ham slides. Other options revolve around pastrami, smoked salmon, shrimp, and similar elegant stuff. There’s cheap draft beer, too, plus nonsandwich sauces. $ (PRB)

Coca Y Toro
2300 NW 2nd Ave., 305-573-8228
If you go to the affordable Mexican street-food joint expecting one of today’s many fast-casual, highlyitive tacos/fourrito chains, where the attraction is mainly just that they’re fresh, you’ll be pleasantly surprised. Here tortillas are handmade and fillings are either genuinely traditional (like carnitas/pibil) or delightfully original — and sometimes satisfyingly weird, like duck with enough skin and fat to scandalize all the health-obsessed places. There are flatbread vegetarian fillings, too, like mushroom/huitlacoche with cotija cheese; daily changes for dinner, and beer and margaritas. $-$ (PRB)

Crumbl on Parchment
3930 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-9444
Though located in a difficult spot (the Melin Building’s central atrium, invisible from the street), Michelle Bernstein’s bakery/café packs ’em in, partly due to Bernstein’s mom Martha, who makes impossible old-school cakes: German chocolate with walnuts, lemon curd with butterscotch frosting, etc. Lunch fare includes inspired sandwiches like seared rare tuna with spicy Asian pickles and kimchi slaw. And for morning people, the savoy chicken sausage, melted cheddar, kale, and snail sandwich on cheddar will convince you that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. $-$ (PRB)

The Cheese Course
3451 NE 1st Ave. 786-220-6681
Not so much a restaurant as an artisanal cheese shop with complimentary prepared foods, this place’s soft-skinned cheese component nevertheless becomes an instant hit; impeccable ingredients and inspired combinations make even the simplest salads and sandwiches unique — like bacon and egg, layered with hand-crafted cheese, roasted red peppers, avocado, and chipotle Mayo. Cheese patterns are exceptional, and customized to flavor preference from mild to bold, and accompanied by appropriate fruits, veggies, nuts, olives, prepared spreads, and breads. $ (PRB)

Cypress Tavern
3620 NW 2nd Ave., 305-576-7874
This boar and bear head on wood panelled walls, the crystal chandeliers, and old Florida photography are still there, as are favorite Michael Schwartz menu items like the oozy-gooey French onion soup, fresh and local beef and salad, and the famous Cyprus Burger served with “Thrice Cooked Fries.” But the ambiance as a whole feels lighter and brighter. Cypress has ditched its former dining service for a more laid-back neighborhood feel. Everything is the same, one, and yet, everything is different. $-$ (MB)

Dr. Smood
2230 NW 2nd Ave.
This large windows and corner location will draw you in, but the comfortable and expansive minimalist interior with Carrara marble, walnut wood, and hotel-like seating will keep you. While their motto is “smart food for a good mood” in the form of smookey’s, smoozy’s, and organic live juices, the menu also includes coffee, soups, salads, sandwiches, spreads like cacao mushroom tahini and seasonal berry jam, and non-traditional desserts with flour, grain, and dairy-free meals. The most of its items can be grabbed-to-go, but expect to wait in line. $-$ (MB)

The Daily Creative Foods Co.
2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4535
While the food-focused contemporary’s casual café offers — sandwiches, salads, soups, breakfast food, and pastries, plus coffee and fruit drinks — a creative comfort food experience, the place’s signature sandwiches are offered named after national and local newspapers, including Biscayne Times, giving diners something to chat about. Sandwiches and salads can also be do-yourself projects, with an unusually wide choice of main ingredients, garnishes, breads, and condiments for the creative minded. $-$ (MB)

Eat Greek
2917 Biscayne Blvd., 786-536-9334
This minimalist, modern-looking casual eatery serves some satisfyingly evocative food. Top picks are the pita plates or sandwiches, featuring fabulously fluffy flatbread and an unusually large variety of generally portioned fillings, from particularly succulent gyros (vertically roasted lamb slices) to klikopites (Greek sausage), kouzina chicken (balsamic glazed) or grilled veggie. The rest of the menu ranges from some pricey entries to affordable and delicious Greek fries, showered with feta cheese clusters. $-$-$ (PRB)

Elia
140 NE 39th St. 786-534-8177
Located off of the Design District’s upscale Palm Court, this sun-filled, airy café with pops of sea foam and blonde maple, is Michael Schwartz’s newest eatery, inspired by his Daughter, Elia. A breakfast and lunch spot, it focuses on simplicity with perfectly honed sandwiches, salads, and pastries. Offering only eight seats indoors, the majority of the seating is outdoors under large café umbrellas providing an excellent view of the courtyard. $-$-$ (PRB)

Enrique’s Sandwich Shop
186 NE 29th St., 305-573-4333
This Cuban breakfast/lunch old-timer actually serves more than sandwiches (including mammoth daily specials) — and since reopening after a fire, does so in a cleanly renovated homey spot. But many hardcore Miami fans never get past the shop’s ordering window, and outdoors really is the best place to manage Enrique’s mammothized mammoth masterpieces: pan con lech, or -wich filled with sautéed onions, melted cheese, and potato sticks; tomatos make the fats and calories sing. Apparently just fresh orange juice or café con leche, and you’ll never want anything else, except maybe a bib. $ (PRB)

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Firemen Derek’s Bake Shop & Café
2818 N. Miami Ave., 786-449-2511
As a genuine City of Miami firefighter, Derek Kaplan puts fires out, but since age 15 he’s also been lighting fires — in his oven. The decades of baking experience shows in both his locally award-winning signature pies, especially Key lime and salted caramel “crack,” and in crafting produce-based seasonal selections. For full, balanced (i.e., all-pro) breakfasts and lunches, there are also savory options like mac ’n’ cheese, or satisfyingly rich, totally non-sissy quickies. $–$$ (PRB)

The Gang
3500 N. Miami Ave., 305-570-9430
Conceived by a well-traveled expat pair from Bucharest (and their all-purpose gang of friends), this moonshiner has a Wynwood-appropriate combination of gallery/grunge décor and food self-described as “Asian fusion.” Actually, far from the LaMer-American sushi and small plates the term usually means in Miami, dishes are distinctively flavored with variously lighted/brightened ultra- fresh interpretations of fare from numerous East Asian destinations — Thai, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, Taiwanese, Romanian touches (like mamaliga, polenta-like peasant porridge fancied with feta goat), and even elaborately elegant continental desserts heighten the quirky fun. $$$ (PRB)

Gigi
3470 N. Miami Ave., 305-873-1520
As befits its location in artful, working-class Wynwood, Gigi has minimalistic modern décor, accompanied with contemporary Asian infused comfort food at surprisingly low prices. From the open, up-cycling and food bar to steaming bun, steam bun, steamed buns, grilled goodies, and raw items, highlights include pillowy light week-long specials, and possible the best BLT. Featuring Asian bun “toast,” thick pork belly slices rather than bacon, and housemade pickles. There’s $2 beer, too. $$–$$$ (PRB)

GK Bistronomique
218 NW 25th St., 786-477-5155
First and foremost a seafood restaurant with nautical style and aqua tones throughout, GKB and its chef, Rafael Perez, add global flavors like sunny Cornish hen, lamb, and foie gras to Peruvian classics like ceviches, tiraditos, and anticuchos. Refreshing cocktails like the Chilcano — ginger, lime juice, bitters, and Pisco — highlight a simple Pisco selection, while an indoor/outdoor bar and terrace courtyard offer a great respite from the Miami heat. $$$ (MB)

Harry’s Pizzeria
3918 N. Miami Ave., 786-275-4963
In this nimmest space (formerly Pizza Volante) are many key components of Michael’s Genuine Food & Drink: two blocks east — local/sustainable produce and artisan products; wood-oven cooking — homemade everyday (including the ketchup accompanying chicken-fried chicken); custard-inside potential flair, a circa 1995 Michael Schwartz signature sauce from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crusted pizzas range from classic Margherita to pies with house-made smoked, brick-oven & flavorful as the Chilcano — ginger, lime juice, bitters, and Pisco — highlight a simple Pisco selection, while an indoor/outdoor bar and terrace courtyard offer a great respite from the Miami heat. $$$ (MB)

Jimmy’s Kitchen
2700 N. Miami Ave., #5, 305-573-1505
As well as a pool to South Beach for what many consider Miami’s best classic Puerto Rican rotisserie fried green plantains mashed with fresh garlic, olive oil, and pork cracklings, surrounded by chicken or shrimp in zesty criollo sauce). This new location is bigger extensive wine/beer choices and laid-back live music. No cover, no cocktail bar, or shrimp in zesty criollo sauce). This new location is bigger extensive wine/beer choices and laid-back live music. No cover, no

Latteria Italiana
33103 NE 1st Ave, #101-2, 786-778-4362
Huto, charming décor meets authentic Italian food from the foodie region of EmiliaRomagna. The small menu of piadine (Italian flatbreads) and classic entrées like lasagna sticks to its roots. But since age 15 he’s also been lighting fires — in his oven. The decades of baking experience shows in both his locally award-winning signature pies, especially Key lime and salted caramel “crack,” and in crafting produce-based seasonal selections. For full, balanced (i.e., all-pro) breakfasts and lunches, there are also savory options like mac ’n’ cheese, or satisfyingly rich, totally non-sissy quickies. $–$$ (PRB)

Midtown Oyster Bar
2201 NE 1st Ave. #103-1, 786-220-2070
From the team behind midtown’s Salumeria 104, Graspa Group & chef/co-owner Angelo Masarin, this is a New England-themed oyster bar, with a European-style all-day breakfast through-dinner hangout. Featuring the best locally sourced products and organic foods, the fare created by chef Gail Godbout (ex/Yardbird and Esotsa) is simple — sandwiches, salads, pastas/ desserts — but as the name says, “miam” (pronounced “mehmeh”), French slang for “yummy.” Deliciously crusted quiche, accompanied by salad, are highly recommendable. To drink: craft beers and wine plus local etoile coffee. An integrated mini-mar features artisan foods, plus gift items. $$ (PRB)

Mikuni
2750 NW 3rd Ave. #121, 786-703-1451
It’s hard to miss the striking striped Wynwood Building housing this indoor/outdoor café, intended as a European-style all-day breakfast through-dinner hangout. Featuring the best locally sourced products and organic foods, the fare created by chef Gail Godbout (ex/Yardbird and Esotsa) is simple — sandwiches, salads, pastas/ desserts — but as the name says, “miam” (pronounced “mehmeh”), French slang for “yummy.” Deliciously crusted quiche, accompanied by salad, are highly recommendable. To drink: craft beers and wine plus local etoile coffee. An integrated mini-mar features artisan foods, plus gift items. $$ (PRB)

Michael’s Genuine Food and Drink
120 NE 40th St., 305-573-5560
An instant smash hit, this tiny neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz offers down-to-earth fare food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (tongue-tingling spicy whale with whipped sesame, celery salt, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: devilled eggs, homemade potato chips with parmesan onion dip, or a whole wood-fired roasted chicken. There’s also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael’s Guarnas also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. $$$–$$$$ (PRB)

Mignonne
210 N. 37th St., 305-374-4635
From Day One this Old Florida/New Orleans fusion bar, from Blue Collar’s chef/owner Danny Serfer and food blogger Ryan Roman, received myraid raves for its cuisine and informed service. Al manner of oysters (roughly six superb selections available raw daily, and cooked choices including subtly brandy-sauced oysters Berniere) plus other superior seafood and Blue Collar’s famous veggie creations — even a
**Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS**

**Mike's at Veneta**
555 NE 15th St., 305-374-6732
This family-owned Italian pub, on the posh deck of the Veneta condo, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hangout for local journalists and others who appreciate honest cheap eats and drinks. Regulars know daily specials are the way to go. Depending on the day, fish, chicken, or toast with turkey and all the trimmings are all prepared fresh. Big burgers and steak dinners are always good. A limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, risotto, and salad till 3:00 a.m. $$-$$$ (PRB)

**Morgans Restaurant**
28 NE 1st St., 305-573-9787
Housed in a beautifully refurbished 1930s private home, Morgans serves eclectic, sometimes internationally influenced contemporary American cuisine cleverly arranged to attract your taste buds. The most outstanding, open kitchen is so often described as evocative of a Prohibition-era speakeasy; ambiance here is more formal than the latter, as three kitchens — normal, raw, and sushi — accommodate changing installations, and its own name make it clear the art component is a serious working gallery. Hardworking chef/owner Rocco Carulli demonstrates a locals orientation with prices discounted. $$-$$$ (PRB)

**NOA Café**
2721 NW 2nd Ave., 305-573-2557
Originally just a catering company, tiny NOA (initials of Israeli-born chef/owner Adi Ruh's three daughters) gradually became a "best kept secret" lunch spot for its budget-friendly fresh food, sandwiches, plus perfectly dressed full-mean Mediterranean salads. The cute Edgewater oasis now serves dinner, too. Highly recommended: the big, beautiful Middle Eastern mezze platter (with fattoush, baba ghanoush, lentil tabbouleh, and yogurt-studded pita). That (with an unusual tarator lemongrass/orange piqaladil sauce, either enough for two or share to over-try. $$-$$$ (PRB)

**Palatino**
3000 NW 2nd Ave., 786-360-5200
When longtime favorite Jamican joint Clyde's fell victim to gentrification, few expected to find similar worldly dishes in a luxuriously modern environment. The menu showcases the creative possibilities of vege-ran and vegan food, offering light, interactive dishes such as kimchi dumplings with ginger and garlic, banana leaf lasamas, various cheese boards with hummus/cheddar crackers, and heirloom grain salads. Naturally, the bar is stocked with an array of high-quality vegan wines. This is quintessential guiltless dining. $$-$$$ (AV)

**Plant Food + Wine**
105 NE 24th St., 305-814-3636
Named after a 19th-century whaling and whites compound known as the Sacred Space, this vegetarian-friendly oasis helmed by chef and philanthropist Matthew Kenney serves sumptuous plant-based fare in a luxuriously modern environment. The menu showcases the creative possibilities of vegan and raw food, offering light, interactive dishes such as kimchi dumplings with ginger and garlic, banana leaf lasamas, various cheese boards with hummus/cheddar crackers, and heirloom grain salads. Naturally, the bar is stocked with an array of high-quality vegan wines.

**Prohib**
2800 N. Miami Ave., 305-456-9548
Behind this Wynwood warehouse façade you'll find pure Southern roadhouse, and the backyard patio is an even more relaxing place to kick back with beer, blues music, and barbecue from pit master Myron Mixon. Oddly, considering Mixon's many BBQ championships, this is kid-friendly and dog-friendly, too. $$-$$$ (PRB)

**Sabor a Peru**
3451 NE 1st Ave. #104, 305-424-9588
Opened many years before ceviches became a staple on every Miami hipster bar menu, this formerly tiny family-run Peruvian place serves food that's traditional, not trendy. That includes simple, rustic food that's tasty and affordable. Sabor's strong suit — and it has not only survived but thrived (as a recent expansion attests) — is its cooled-down, always fresh, flavorful, and served in prodigious portions. Our personal favorite: jalea (a delicately breaded, crispy mix of tender marinated fish and shellfish, with yucca and corn onion sauce) one order feeds at least three diners. Note: Open for big breakfasts, as well as lunch/dinner. $$-$$$ (PRB)

**Sakaya Kitchen**
2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245
The first stateside offshoot of a popular Venezuelan mini chain, this urban Mexican purse gets healthy-conscious, made-fresh daily fare similar in concept to same fast-casual competitor. There are indeed differences here, notably Pan-Latin options: black beans as well as rice, deliciously crunchy curried tortillas available as a side or as the base for a uniquely tasty take on normal nachos. Other pluses include weekday happy hours with two-for-one beers — and free parking. $-$$ (PRB)

**Salsa Fiesta**
2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245
Recently just a catering company, tiny NOA (initials of Israeli-born chef/owner Adi Ruh's three daughters) gradually became a "best kept secret" lunch spot for its budget-friendly fresh food, sandwiches, plus perfectly dressed full-mean Mediterranean salads. The cute Edgewater oasis now serves dinner, too. Highly recommended: the big, beautiful Middle Eastern mezze platter (with fattoush, baba ghanoush, lentil tabbouleh, and yogurt-studded pita). That (with an unusual tarator lemongrass/orange piqaladil sauce, either enough for two or share to over-try. $$-$$$ (PRB)

**Shokudo World Resource Café**
4740 NE 2nd Ave., 305-788-7782
At former Lincoln Road rootin’ tootin’ saloon, Shokudo's café was better known for people-watching than for its standard sushi/Thai menu. But so the new name signifies, this institution is reinventing. The indoor/outdoor space is charming, but creative takes on popular pan-Asian street foods are the real draw. Travel from Japan and Thailand through Korea, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, and beyond via light housemade momo, curried Thai red curry, and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more fusion of both, largely owing to signature sauces (many based on Thai menu. But so the new name signifies, this institution is reinventing. The indoor/outdoor space is charming, but creative takes on popular pan-Asian street foods are the real draw. Travel from Japan and Thailand through Korea, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, and beyond via light housemade momo, curried Thai red curry, and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more fusion of both, largely owing to signature sauces (many based on
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Peru's chilly/crummy acocado-tahini emulsion with Japanese soy sauce that are applied to sushi rolls and ceviche bowls alike. Additionally there are some popular Peruvian fusion cooked dishes like Chifa (Peruvian-Chinese) lomo saltado, served traditionally, as an entrée, or creatively in spring rolls. To add to the fun, accompany your meal with a cocktail from Miami's only pisco bar. $-$$ (PRB)

Thea Pizzeria-Café
1931 NW 7th Ave., 305-777-3777
Just over the border from artsy Wynwood, this ultra-cool café (whose crispy veggies, savory soup to finish. $$-$$$ (PRB) outdoor artists, but it's the interior that grabs you. Colorful and dog? They do that, too. $$ (MB)

Tony Chan's Water Club
2737 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-374-8888
The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, looks too stingy to serve anything but patio-friendly Americanized Chinese food. However, the American dining down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail. Moist sea bass, fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three parts against the newbie pack, especially since exec chef Frank Crupi has finally opened, and rather quietly — which has an upside. It's easier to get a table here (and to park, thanks to the free lot on 68th Street) than at Lincoln Road or Brickell. This, along with the venue's relatively large, open-air adjacent outdoor area, contributes to a more relaxed neighborhood-focused vibe. The fun menu of global comfort food is the same (ranging from a creamy-centered cheese soufflé through savory Asian specialties and, at breakfast, fluffy omelets/maffles panckled and prepared to keep well. $-$-$ (PRB)

Bar Mei
6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-5558
Just east of Liza Meli's defunct Ouzo's Taverna, this similarly rustic-festive tapas and wine/bar market has an extensive, mostly small-plates menu including all of Ouzo's Greatest Greek Hits (refreshing light and lemony tzatziki, melon carp roe spread, amazingly succulent grilled fresh sardines, her mom's lemon cake, more); plus more broadly Mediterranean creations like an Italian-inspired grana padano, finely topped crostini and flatbread, cheese/charcuterie boards. The bouquet wine selection focuses on unusual (sometimes virtually unknown, and unavailable elsewhere in town) Mediterranean varietals from family-owned vineyards. $$-$-$-$ (PRB)

Blue Collar
6730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-0366
Like its predecessor in this space (Michael Belasco's American Noodle Bar), this working-class-themed eatery is helmed by a former fine-dining chef, Daniel Serfer; a Chef Allen's vet who now crafts casual, creative fare at prices all can afford. Dishes are eclectic. The roughly dozen veggie dishes alone range from curried cauliflower purée to maduros to thin cheese-rolled asparagus. Shrimp and grits compete with any in Charleston; pork and beans, topped with a perfectly Rudy-fired egg, beats Boston's best. $$-$-$-$ (PRB)

Antidami
5500 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-5751
With brick-oven pizzerias popping up all over town these past few years, it's difficult to remember the dark days when this part of Mark Suya's 55th Street Station complex was mainland Miami's sole source of open-flame cooked pies. But the pizzas still hold up against the newcomers, especially since exec chef Frank Crupi has opened the ante with unique-to-Miami offerings like a white tomato-free) New Haven clam pie. Also available: salami, panini, and a tasty meatball appetizer with ricotta. There's a respectable wine and beer list, too. ($-$-$ $-$ (PRB)

Antica Mare
7919 NW 53rd St., 305-398-1001
If only all Italian restaurants were like this. Let's start with the view. Located just above the entrance to the former Andy Lecompte Hotel, Street Caucausa, it offers some of the best views across the water to unobstructed North Beach. Sit outside if you have the choice. The expansive indoor dining room isn't nearly as inviting, either, with floor-to-ceiling glass doors. The menu is a delicious trek through the Tuscan region of Italy, including the self-proclaimed "best octopus in the world" with anguilla, perfectly sauced homemade pastas, and large secondis. Dessert is light, so there's always room. $$$-$-$ (PRB)

Balans Biscayne
6789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-534-9195
It's been a long time coming, but Balans finally arrived. The space is big enough to host Miami's third venue finally opened, and rather quirky — which has an upside. It's easier to get a table here and is due in large part to the free lot on Lincoln Street than at Lincoln Road or Brickell. This, along with the venue's relatively large, open-air adjacent outdoor area, contributes to a more relaxed neighborhood-focused vibe. The fun menu of global comfort food is the same (ranging from a creamy-centered cheese soufflé through savory Asian specialties and, at breakfast, fluffy omelets/maffles panckled and prepared to keep well. $-$-$-$ (PRB)

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Boteo
916 NE 7th St., 305-757-7735
This strip of 79th Street is rapidly becoming a cool alt-culture enclave thanks to inviting hangouts like this rustic indoor/outdoor Brazilian restaurant and bar. Especially bustling on Sundays, when the fenced-in beer lawn brings in the day's throng of free-spirited twenty-somethings. $$-$-$-$ (PRB)

Choices Vegan Café
646 NE 7th Ave., 305-830-8352
Vegan food (including vegetarian, but dairy-free) can be a hard sell. But not Choices' 100% plant-based breakfast/lunch/dinner dishes, even though their menu does veer toward the relatively pricey. Especially recommended: hefty wraps (enclosed in varied grain tortillas or, more commonly, in leafy collard leaves), featuring a variety of flavorful mock-meat patties plus fresh veggies, enhanced with globally inspired sauces and additions like savory say chohort. Desserts like raw chocolate mousse cake taste satisfyingly sweet. To drink: smoothies, or go with organic beers and wines. $$-$-$-$ (PRB)

Dogma Grill
7030 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3433
Since opening, this hip dog-friendly patio (asial letters intended) joint has had several owners and menu changes. Currently it's in a "Blob"-st shpe. Main draw remains 100% beef dogs with numerous regionally inspired toppings combos (our favorite: the elaborate, authentic Chicago), but vegetarians can again enjoy the original menu's veggie franks, absent for several years, topped identically. More recent adds worth sampling are regional specialty sandwiches, like New Orleans shrimp po'boys. And though there's no indoor seating, current owner Diego Villamand has expanded the outdoor area and spruced up its landscaping for better insulation from Boulevard traffic, making picnicking more pleasant. $$ (PRB)

East Side Pizza
721 NE 7th St., 305-575-5351
Mmmmm... sure. But a pizza menu with carrot ginger soup? Similarly, many Italian-American pizzerias offer emilou like sausages and meatballs, but East Side also has pumpkin ravioli in brown butter/bage sauce, milky mushroom ravioli, and other surprisingly upscale choices, including imported Peroni beer. As for the pizza, they are classic pies, available whole or by the slice, made with fresh plum tomato sauce and Grande mozzarella (considered the top American pizza cheese). Best seating for eating is at the sheltered outdoor picnic tables. $$-$-$-$ (PRB)

Fiorito
5555 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-2899
While owner Max and Christian Alvarado's description of their eatery as "a little Argentinean shack" is as charming as the brothers themselves, it conveys neither the place's cool warmth nor the food's exciting elegance. Dosogi are authentically Argentine, but far from standard steakhouse stuff. Chef Christian's background at popular Argentinian restaurant 2711 in the Brazilian-themed BarMeli finally opened, and rather quietly — which has an upside. It's easier to get a table here (and to park, thanks to the free lot on 68th Street) than at Lincoln Road or Brickell. This, along with the venue's relatively large, open-air adjacent outdoor area, contributes to a more relaxed neighborhood-focused vibe. The fun menu of global comfort food is the same (ranging from a creamy-centered cheese soufflé through savory Asian specialties and, at breakfast, fluffy omelets/maffles panckled and prepared to keep well. $-$-$-$ (PRB)

Flavorish Market
6783 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8787
As Zabar's reflects Manhattan's Upper Westside neighborhood, the smaller space in Little River is geared toward the Upper Eastside lifestyle. The carefully curated ranges include wines across all categories, beers and cures meats and cheeses, cokkbooks, kitchen utensils, more, but highlights are locally produced fare. Miami's famed ravioli; Roc's tropical ice cream; chef/restaurateur Ken Lyon's prepared foods, including on-premises breakfasting, lunching, and coffee/pastry breaks. $-$-$-$ (PRB)
Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Firito Taco
1071 NE 79th St., 305-793-6767
Needled between Taps 79 and Royal Bavarian Schnitzel House, this low-key taco shack features two sections—one for eating and one for playing bocce. The menu is limited to ten overstuffed tacos (two per order), quesadillas, dessert like churros and paletas, and floor-to-ceiling fridges of iced cold beer. The most popular tacos are the same al pastor with tomato, onion, cheese, garlic chili aioli, and cilantro and the Tinga Club with chicken, avocado cream, bacon, tomato, queso, red onion, and cilantro. $8 (MB)

Ironside Pizza
7580 NE 4th Ct., 305-531-5055
From the team behind Bricks' upscale Toscano Dine, this casual indoor/outdoor pizzeria (hidden inside Little River's artistic Ironside complex) offers the signatures of its predecessor, Ironside Pizzeria—an award-winning Neapolitan pizza, mouthwatering wood-fired crusts; vegetarian; vegan and gluten-free toppings. But the expanded menu, including impeccable cured meat options, is a vast improvement. Especially recommended housemade pepperoni, inaka Calabrese (palms spread); the Regina pizza with prosciutto-crumbs, buffalo mozzarella, perfectly ripe tomatoes, and arugula inimitable stuffed pizza rolls; an unusual carrot-salt with pine nuts and mint silvers. $$ (PRB)

Jimmy's East Side Diner
7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3092
Open for more than 30 years and still regularly packed with locals, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: breakfast at any hour the place is open—though that's only through mid-afternoon. Menus highlight include pecorino waffles, biscuits with sausage gravy, and eggs any style, from old-school western smorgasbord to trendy frittatas. Among sides, truly crispy hash browns are neighborhood legend, with creamy grits a satisfying second. For those with a better taste, hot, open-faced turkey sandwiches feature the real deal, not-gelatinous turkey roll. $ (MB)

Loba
7420 Biscayne Blvd., 786-636-6692
As suggested by its comic gastro-pub's interactive literary ambiance (think shelves filled with paperback), the concept of young financial analyst turned restaurantur Lea Sanchez is to encourage creativity, including creating Miami's unique culture-agriculture through food created by a staff including experienced chefs, FIU culinary students, and her mom Loba, former owner of the traditional family-run Piatto chain. Needless to say, the menu is eclectic, ranging from South American (the Pabellon, a bandeja paisa-inspired sampler plate) to modernized Old South (Mambo Fried Chicken with crispy kale and local honey). Boredom? Impossible. $-$$ (PRB)

Lo De Lea
7001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-456-3218
In Casa Toscana's former space, this cute, contemporary parillada restaurant provides Italian staples, plus superb salumi and the magnificent addition to the neighborhood. Seared Maine scallops with piquillo pepper sauce, parsnip, and squid ink, and Pinch Salad with brassica greens, shaved veggies, ruffa vinaigrettes, served on stoneware plates. Simple items like eight-ounce flat iron steak and organic half chicken are classic standards done right. A unique wine list takes a departure from the typical Chardonnays and Malbecs. There's also a great brunch, including brisket sliders, stuffed French toast, and eggs benedict. $$$ (AM)

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus
1885 NE 7th St., 305-754-8002
With Christmas lights perpetually twinkling and party noises emanating from the pub behind the bar, this German restaurant is owner Alex Roth's one-man reinvention project, transforming a formerly unwlking stretch of 79th street one pils at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (的教学, a hearty meat/pork bauernbraten, spicy garlicwurst) with homemade mustard and catupu, savory yet near-greaseless potato pancakes and, naturally, schnitzel, a choice of delicate pounded pork, chicken, or veal patties served with a half-dozen different sauces. $-$$-$ (PRB)

Siam Rice
7941 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-0516
You'll find the most beloved Thai and Japanese restaurants here, and prices for curries and noodle dishes (all customizable regarding choice of protein, preparation, and heat level) especially good at lunch. But don't overlook somewhat pricier specialties like a deep-fried yet near-greaseless boneless duck with veggies in red curry sauce. There's also an unusually extensive list of salads, some with fusion touches, like a prawn/shrimp/doba salad featuring traditional Thai flavors (yogurt chilies, fish sauce, lime) and Japanese green tea noodles. $-$$ (PRB)

Sushi Siam
5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117
Since opening in 1999, Mark Soya's namesake restaurant has often been credited with sparking the Upper Eastside's revival, providing the neighborhood's first comfortably gourmet gathering place—and, simply but satisfyingly comfortable folk food. Old fans needn't fret: the signature Omnium ramen remains, but much of the menu, like the neighborhood, is more sophisticated, with fare ranging from shareable snacks (Fried Brussels sprouts with pecans and pomegranate, smoked salmon/dill roasted eggs) and salads (mango/quinoa with almonds) to hearty modern comfort dishes (slow-roasted short ribs with balsamic/fig reduction). $-$-$ (PRB)

Ms. Cheezious
7418 Biscayne Blvd., 305-989-4019
This brick-and-mortar location of Miami's most awarded food truck fried an expanded menu, featuring favorites like mac n' cheese, but what you'll mostly want is just the grilled cheese. What makes it a masterpiece: “Just grilled cheese” sandwiches are what your mom made. Here you'll find curving fried cuts of the Fresh Fries (Southwestern classic corn chip/cheese/jalapeno/cheese on brioche, served on a soundboard in a Bago bag), or the Croquette Maniak (ham croquettes, tasso ham, Brie cheese, bolognese). A welcome expansion: the spacious backyard, featuring lawn chairs and sizable shade trees, is definitely a more relaxed dining area than a hot sidewalk. $ (MB)

Moshi Moshi
7332 Biscayne Blvd., 786-290-9404
This offshoot of Brickell's Moshi Moshi is a cross between a sushi bar and an okaya (Japanese tapas bar). Even more striking than the hip decor is the food's unusually upscale quality. Sushi ranges from pristine individual nigiri to over-the-top maki rolls. Tapas are intriguing, the arabiki sausage, a sweet-savory pork frankfurter sausage, rare in restaurants even in Japan; they're popular Japanese cooking-items, and rice-based plates like Japanese curry (richer than Indian) satisfy even the biggest appetites. $-$ (PRB)

Ni Dos, Caffe & Mozzarella Bar
7291 Biscayne Blvd., 305-502-1022
Don't let this little cafe's cutesy awkward strip-mail location, or its informal interior, fool you. The warm welcome is authentically Italian, as are cleverly crafted antipasti, simple but flavorful pastas, and homemade pastries from rasamone breadsticks to fruttioppo dessert tortillas that will transport your taste buds to Tuscany. And the housemade mozzarella or burrata cheeses—truly mild elevated to royalty—will transport you to heaven. A small market area provides Italian staples, plus superb salami and the magnificent riso, to go. $-$ (MB)

Organic Bites
7010 Biscayne Blvd., 786-642-9654
Too often healthy eating is associated with deprivation, but not at this breakfast/lunch/dinner bistro. Co-owners Andria and Earl Reid's concept is to offer people-friendly dishes that are 100% chemical-free (OMO/organic), not on calorie-counting. The ingenious international comfort food menu of avocado, tofu, Andes Basler chef Gonzalo Costa does include vegetarian/vegan dishes but ranges for beyond descriptively delectable-smelling egg Florentine (with tomato and avocado Hollandaise), Portuguese bacalhau cakes with black-eyed pea salsa; big juicy certified organic burgers with smoked trout mozzarella on onion-brioche buns, with sweet potato fries. To accompany: fresh juices or organic wines. Ambiance is fondly, prices, atypical of many organic eateries, are parent-friendly. $$ (PRB)

Pinch
2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-631-2018
Small bites, big impact, hence the name. Pinch, Chef-partners Rene Reyes and John Gallo have fun with a freestyle menu incorporating the cuisines of Asia, Italy, and Spain for an eclectic mix that is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. Spanish Mariscos seafood withou sauce, parson, and squid ink, and Pinch Salad with brassica greens, shaved veggies, ruffa vinaigrettes, are served on stoneware plates. Simple items like eight-ounce flat iron steak and organic half chicken are classic standards done right. A unique wine list takes a departure from the typical Chardonnays and Malbecs. There's also a great brunch, including brisket sliders, stuffed French toast, and eggs benedict. $$$ (AM)

Phuc Yea
7200 Biscayne Blvd.
When renowned pop-up Phuc Yea quietly folded back in 2011, restaurateurs Ani Matlaidishvili and Cesar Zapata refused to let their innovative “Viet-Cajun” cuisine become another Miami memory. Fast forward several years and patience has undoubtedly paid off. Phuc Yea is back, sporting a seawany new permanent home and a menu that not only expands upon what improves what the restaurant did right the first time. The new multi-story restaurant is effortlessly hip, featuring neon signs and weathered rustic wood furniture throughout. The menu leans toward smaller tapas-style plates, which are sure to intrigue Miami's gourmands, but make up for diminutive portion sizes with flavor for days. The signature Cajun wakas are superb, while the smaller plates such as the fragrant leek mustard appetizer, and the stover “Broken Rice” — saucy cornbread polenta served over short grain rice — are great for sampling when friends or family join in on the fun. If you order dessert, opt for the extremely popular broad pudding, or the mung bean pudding if you're feeling adventurous. $$$ (AM)

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus
1085 NE 7th St., 305-754-8002
This offspring of South Beach old-timer Moshi Moshi is a cross between a sushi bar and an okaya (Japanese tapas bar). Even more striking than the hip decor is the food's unusually upscale quality. Sushi ranges from pristine individual nigiri to over-the-top maki rolls; an unusual carciofi salad with pine nuts and mint slivers. $$ (PRB)

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Vagabond Kitchen & Bar
7301 Biscayne Blvd., 786-409-5635

It’s safe to say that Miami’s dining scene is growing at a rapid pace. Many old favorites are closing their doors to make way for new establishments. But there are many more restaurant openings than closings. In this issue, we’re focusing on a new entry, Cane á Sucre, to New York style bagels, lox, and bagel bar, complete with a deli for sandwiches and wraps. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and brunch are offered seven days a week. It’s located in the Design District near the Miami Design District, which is the perfect location for a delicious brunch. Breakfast includes eggs benedict, bagel and lox combinations, and many more breakfast options. Lunch and dinner menu items include Grilled Salmon, Grilled Shrimp, and Grilled Chicken. The bar offers a variety of alcoholic drinks, Including wine and beer. Cane á Sucre is open daily from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM.

Cafe Prima Pasta
418 7th St., 305-472-0106

A new addition to the Brickell neighborhood, Cafe Prima Pasta is a great spot for a quick lunch or dinner. The menu includes a variety of pasta dishes, as well as salads and sandwiches. The pasta is made fresh daily, and the dishes are cooked to order. The restaurant’s decor is modern and sleek, with comfortable seating for those who wish to eat in. Take-out and delivery options are also available.

Miami Shores Country Club
10000 Biscayne Blvd., 305-795-2363

The Miami Shores Country Club is a great place to enjoy a meal with family or friends. The restaurant is located on the 18th hole of the country club’s championship golf course. The menu includes a variety of dishes, including steak, chicken, and seafood. The restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and reservations are recommended.

Bakogu & Co.
12452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435

Bakogu & Co. is a popular restaurant in the heart of Miami. The menu includes a variety of sushi rolls, sashimi, and other Japanese dishes. The restaurant is known for its fresh ingredients and creative presentation. The atmosphere is lively and inviting, with a modern decor.

Alaska Coffee Roasting Co.
13130 Biscayne Blvd., 786-532-4254

Alaska Coffee Roasting Co. is a small coffee shop located in the center of Miami. The shop is known for its wide variety of coffee and espresso drinks, as well as its selection of pastries and delectable sandwiches. The atmosphere is warm and inviting, with a cozy seating area.

North Miami

Cafa Luna
7801 NE 163rd St., 305-830-5048

Cafa Luna is a Miami Beach restaurant that serves delicious Cuban cuisine. The menu includes a variety of dishes, such as ropa vieja, Cuban sandwiches, and guava flan. The restaurant is located in the heart of Miami Beach, near the ocean. The atmosphere is lively and relaxing, with a tropical vibe.

Capitan Jim’s Seafood
12900 W Dixie Hwy., 305-892-2812

Capitan Jim’s Seafood is a seafood restaurant located in the heart of Miami. The menu includes a variety of dishes, such as fresh fish, shrimp, and crab. The atmosphere is relaxed and casual, with a focus on fresh and delicious seafood.

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Swiss Cafe & Grill 12127 NE 163st., 305-947-3338

Though O’Sana’s mainstay remains the fresh ceviche, its new menu, which includes many Latin American flavors, is a welcome addition. It’s just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters – a caviar Wolf – that are packed most weekend nights. So even the place’s biggest negative – its lack of a path in the atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures faster turnover. Chef-owner Lily Tso is typically in the kitchen, crafting guacamole and pupusas, flavorful beef and chicken dishes (served with beans, rice, and corn tortillas), and many Vietnamese classics. The menu is humongous. $$-$$$ (PRB)

Lutong Pinoy Filipino Cuisine 305 NE 6th Ave., 786-727-6778

For the adventurous epicurean of Asian persuasion, Lutong Pinoy offers a deep dive into authentic Filipino cuisine, an otherwise unremarkable territory to a great majority of South Florida’s bi- and tri-ethnics. Influenced by Malay-Indonesian, Indonesian, Chinese, Spanish, and American cuisines, Lutong Pinoy crafts plates showcasing ingredients indigenous to the Philippines, and the Sinigang na Hipon (shrimp in sour soup) is a vintage favorite. For many, however, the main event is the halo-halo, a popular Filipino dessert made with shaved ice and evaporated milk, topped with a mélange of ingredients, including sweet red and white beans, bananas, coconut, sweet potato, cocomelle, and maras. The boodle fight platter is piled high with an assortment of rice, and vegetables on a bed of bananas. Finally, there’s a massive Halo-Halo dessert platter that is sure to please your ears with its Highway home run. When testing it, remember to keep your mind and stomach wide open. $$ (AM)

Merkado 31 by Cho’lo’s 1217 NE 162nd St., 305-947-3328

Merkado 31 is a welcome update to the Peruvian spot formerly known as Cho’lo’s Ceviche & Grill. Apart from its sassy new digs, there’s a new menu, including an entire section called Merkado Green, aimed at healthy eaters, vegetarians, and vegans – the chicha morada is a must. But if you’re looking for something a little more traditional, the pêche fruit sauces, grilled cauli, sweet potato, and cilantro-lime rice are delectable. The hook is a small area between the kitchen and the bar – a nifty trick. Open till 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., Steve’s has, since 1974, been a beloved spot in the neighborhood. $-$$ (PRB)

O’Lima 1301 SE 12th Ave., 786-717-6788

In the 1980s, Empire became the Chinese chain that swallowed McDonalds in its tracks. Today, that scene is reversed, as Cholo’s Ceviche & Grill. Apart from its sassy new digs, there’s a new menu, including an entire section called Merkado Green, aimed at healthy eaters, vegetarians, and vegans – the chicha morada is a must. But if you’re looking for something a little more traditional, the pêche fruit sauces, grilled cauli, sweet potato, and cilantro-lime rice are delectable. The hook is a small area between the kitchen and the bar – a nifty trick. Open till 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., Steve’s has, since 1974, been a beloved spot in the neighborhood. $-$$ (PRB)

Panyi Thai 520 NE 167th St., 305-856-5866

Unlike authentic Chinese cuisine, there’s no shortage of genuine Thai food in and around Miami. But Panyi’s chef-owner, a Bangkok native, offers regional and not rice dishes found elsewhere. The food at Panyi’s is usually packed with ingredients, including sweet red and white beans, bananas, coconut, sweet potato, cocomelle, and maras. The boodle fight platter is piled high with an assortment of rice, and vegetables on a bed of bananas. Finally, there’s a massive Halo-Halo dessert platter that is sure to please your ears with its Highway home run. When testing it, remember to keep your mind and stomach wide open. $$ (AM)

3099 NE 163rd St., 786-520-3120

Science confirms that eating an exclusively plant-based vegan diet is unequivocally the healthiest and most eco-friendly lifestyle around. Unfortunately, Miami has very few restaurants that offer a vegan-friendly menu. For those who want to try something new, we’ve compiled a list of the best vegan-friendly restaurants in Miami. From a casual cafe to a gourmet restaurant, we’ve got you covered. Whether you’re looking for a quick bite or a more leisurely dining experience, we’ve got you covered. So, let’s get started.

El Gran Inka 1818 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-6006

What does it take to be the most eco-friendly, health-conscious, and authentic Peruvian restaurant in Miami? According to El Gran Inka, being an authentic Peruvian restaurant means offering a variety of dishes that reflect the diverse culinary traditions of Peru. The menu at El Gran Inka features a range of dishes that reflect the diverse culinary traditions of Peru, including ceviche, lomo saltado, and causa. The restaurant’s emphasis on authenticity is reflected in the dishes it offers, which are inspired by the region’s rich cultural heritage.

Matsuhisa's “new style sashimi” (slightly surface-seared by drizzles of hot olive oil) is one of the dishes that the restaurant is known for. The sashimi is served with a variety of sauces, such as wasabi, ginger, and soy sauce. The restaurant’s commitment to sustainability is evident in its use of locally sourced ingredients and its focus on reducing waste. The restaurant’s effort to reduce waste is also reflected in its use of recycled materials, such as recycled paper for its menus.

There’s a delicious selection of ceviche, lomo saltado, and causa at El Gran Inka. The sashimi is served with a variety of sauces, such as wasabi, ginger, and soy sauce. The restaurant’s commitment to sustainability is evident in its use of locally sourced ingredients and its focus on reducing waste. The restaurant’s effort to reduce waste is also reflected in its use of recycled materials, such as recycled paper for its menus.
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Laurenzo’s is an Award Winning Wine Shop
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Laurenzo’s is a Custom Butcher Shop
Our meat department features a wonderful selection of fresh cuts of veal, pork, lamb and beef. Fresh chicken and turkey are our specialty, along with homemade Italian sausage and semi-prepared, ready-to-cook meats that have been expertly marinated, stuffed or lightly breaded for your enjoyment.

Australian Lamb Racks For Lamb Chops Reg 15.99 lb

Laurenzo’s is an Old-Fashioned Deli & Caterer
Featuring our own fresh, homemade salads, antipasto items, and some cooked deli meats. We also feature Boars Head products and many low fat, low sodium, low cholesterol cold cuts and cheese. We make our own handmade fresh mozzarella. Ask our our catering list for your next home or office party.

REGGIANO PARMIGIANO CHEESE AGED 30 MONTHS Reg 29.99 lb

Laurenzo’s is a Fresh Seafood Shop
South Florida’s finest and freshest seafood, six days a week. Some fin fish and shell fish on Sunday.

COLOSSAL MADAGASCAR HEAD on 6-8 COUNT SHRIMP Reg 32.99 lb

Laurenzo’s is an In-Store Sidewalk Café
Since 1969, when we put together a couple of tables and chairs for the men to have espresso and talk while the ladies shopped, our café has grown into serving delicious soups, salads, pasta, pizza, specials of the day, espresso, cappuccino, Gelato and homemade Italian ice. A fun spot in the middle of our store!

Homemade Lasagna or Eggplant Parm 8.99 lb

Laurenzo’s is a Scratch Bakery
We bake fresh Italian breads and rolls daily. See our display of old-fashioned pastries, cookies, cakes and pies. Featuring Baresi Focaccia and stuffed pepperoni and mozzarella bread. Wedding cakes have also been a long time specialty.

Laurenzo’s is a Farmer’s Market
Across the parking lot is our 6,000 square foot old-fashioned produce market with the world’s freshest, high quality fruits and vegetables. We feature fresh herbs and spices along with organic produce and exotic local and imported specialties. Cold fresh juices and drinks too!

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