



GABLES
GOOD GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE
Newsletter



ONLINE AT GGG-NEWS.WIX.COM/GGG-NEWS# • **SEPTEMBER 2014**
1825 PONCE DE LEON BLVD., BOX #448, CORAL GABLES, FL 33134 | 305-975-8158

IS THERE A CRIME PROBLEM IN CORAL GABLES?

Thursday, September 11, at 11 AM
(time certain) there will be a City Commission meeting at City Hall to discuss the crime problem in the Gables.

According to a Sept. 5 **Miami Herald** article, Gables residents are upset about recent crimes, saying police are not doing enough. On Sept. 2nd, more than 150 people gathered for a crime watch meeting at the Coral Gables Public Library. Recent cases include:

► On May 22, Carlos Bardosano's Cadiz Avenue home was broken into during broad daylight. Over \$600,000 worth of watches were stolen.

► On Aug. 11, police responded to a home invasion on Navarre Avenue, where a robber stole more than \$147,000 worth of jewelry and cash. The thief rode a bicycle (the homeowner had noticed him circling while she was watering her plants) up the driveway and forced her inside.

► On Sept. 2, the home of Freddy Balsera was broken into and \$60K+ in personal items were stolen.

► A robbery on Sept. 8, at the home of Anne Leidel (mother of former Mayor Don Slesnick). She came home to a blaring alarm and police cars in the yard. Sentimental jewelry she had more than 72 years was stolen, but she credits the police with a fast response time that scared off the thieves.

At least two city commissioners are also concerned, claiming that the stats being provided by the police department "don't match the phone calls and complaints received." **"My phone doesn't lie,"** Commissioner Vince Lago said. **"I get calls every day."** Lago blamed former city manager Pat Salerno for the current state of the police department. The city

manager resigned earlier this year, and the City is seeking a replacement. While the city manager was in office, public access to police reports were taken offline, requiring residents to call in, making it hard to get a police report.

GGG feels the citizens of Coral Gables deserve to have open access to all information regarding their safety in Coral Gables. We need to have transparent government. The age of hiding statistics should now be over. These important issues should be considered in the selection of our next City Manager and Police Chief. (UPDATE: Police Chief Weiner resigned effective Sept. 11th).

According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Coral Gables' property crime rate is slightly above the national average. According to the U.S. Census, the median household income is about \$85,000 or nearly triple the \$30,000 of neighboring Miami, which could be a motivating factor for criminals to choose Coral Gables. In a recent GGG Facebook post by burglary victim Freddy Balsera, he found that "Last year there were 391 burglaries according to FDLE" (more than one burglary per day). "Our crime rate per 100,000 residents was 4,735. That is higher than **Miami-Dade Co.** (4,051), **Hialeah** (3,187) and **Hialeah Gardens** (3,823). The city of **Doral**, which has a similar population to Coral Gables, had 196 burglaries last year." 391 is a shocking number! It's critically important for citizens remain alert so criminals cannot continue to victimize us. Everyone should contact the City Commission or Police to make our voices heard.

"GIVE A BUCK" TO THE PIGGY BANK CAMPAIGN

On Sept. 9 the **Coral Gables Community Foundation** Fund Holders, Board Members, and Merrick Society Members gathered at **Swine Southern Table & Bar** for the launch of a new fundraising initiative: the **Piggy Bank Campaign**. Decorated



by Gables High art students, the piggy banks will be on display at local businesses to raise money for various causes, including:

Give a Buck Fund **Books & Books**

Jerry Santeiro Community Fund **John Martin's Pub**

CGI Merchants Group Fund **Tarpon Bend**

Symphonettes Fund **Whip 'n Dip Ice Cream Shoppe**

Bike Walk Coral Gables Fund **No Boundaries**

PARKnership Fund **Snow's Jewelers**

Perrin Fund **AmTrust Bank**

Coral Gables Rotary Fund **J. Bolado Clothiers**

There will also be piggy banks at **Frenchie's Diner, Curves N' Waves, Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza, i.Design, Montica Jewelry, The Local Craft Food & Drink**, and a traveling pig at **Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce** events.

CHAMBER BREAKFAST

The **Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce** breakfast next Thursday, Sept. 18th features the "State of the City" address by the Mayor. This event is sponsored by the Junior Orange Bowl Committee. RSVP to Erica Simons at 305.446.1657.



LOCAL PROMOTIONS, HONORS, AND MILESTONES

Here are a few of the latest local job changes, hires, promotions, and other milestones . . .

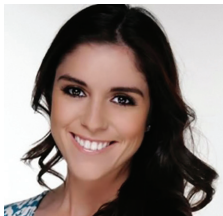


Karelia "Kare" Martinez Carbonell was presented with the Junior League of Miami's **Visionary Award** for her work with taking the **JLM Foundation** to a whole new level of excellence.

David Duckenfield, current president of Balsaera Communications, has been appointed **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs** at the **US Department of State**. He now leads the State Department's public liaison and domestic outreach efforts in seeking to broaden understanding of American values by communicating with global audiences.



Congratulations to **Cristina Mas** on her new position as head of Marketing and External Affairs for **Pointe Group Advisors**, where she is "working on their social media and community relations". She also serves on the **Coral Gables Museum Board**.



Congratulations to **University of Miami Baseball** Head Coach **Jim Morris** whose contract has been extended 3 years to 2018. Coach Morris has led Miami to 21 straight trips to the NCAA tournament, and to the ACC regular season title this year.

(photo source: worldnow.com)



Fans of **Caffee Abbracci** and Chef/Owner **Nino Pernetti** helped celebrate their 25th anniversary on Sunday, July 6th. Visited by celebrities



from **Sean Connery** to **Enrique Iglesias**, Caffee Abbracci regularly hosts local politicians, and even presidents. Congratulations to Nino, **Chef Mauro**, and staff for their enduring excellence!

Emmy Award winning news anchor and reporter **Michele Reese** has joined public relations firm **Kreps DeMaria** as a Senior Account Executive.



History Miami received a special proclamation from Miami-Dade County School Board recognizing the American Sabor bilingual exhibition and related programming. Accepting on behalf of



History Miami are Museum Director/COO **Stuart A. Chase**, and **Cecilia "Ceci" Dubon Slesnick**, Vice President, Education. On the right is Miami-Dade County School Board Member **Raquel Regalado** (District 6).

John W. Kozyak, founding partner of **Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton** and co-chair of their bankruptcy practice, has been appointed Chair of the **National Parkinson Foundation**. He is working to increase awareness



and hope for those with Parkinson's Disease.

Congratulations to **Art Torno**, who was selected as the recipient of the 2014 **Greater Miami Aviation Association (GMAA) Juan Trippe Award**. Juan Trippe founded **Pan American World Airways** in Miami in 1927, and is one of the "fathers" of commercial aviation. Art is being recognized for his contributions to the growth of our local aviation industry. The award will be presented at the GMAA gala on October 11, 2014 at the **Trump Doral**. (Pictured here with GGG President Jeannett Slesnick)



Governor Rick Scott announced the reappointment of **Ellen Uguccioni** to the Florida Historical Commission. Ellen is a retired preservation officer for the **City of Coral Gables** and an adjunct professor at **University of Miami**.



(Pictured on the left receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award from Florida Historic Preservation Trust with immediate past president Leslee Keys.)



University of Miami President Donna Shalala plans to step down in 2015, ending a tenure that began in 2001, and in which she raised the school's profile and \$1.4 billion dollars, and guided the Athletic Department through an important transition to the **Atlantic Coast Conference**.

CONTROLLED CHOICE: ARE YOU ABLE TO CHOOSE YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?

Controlled Open Enrollment Schools (aka Controlled Choice Schools) offer parents in Miami-Dade County an opportunity to indicate their preference as to which school their pre-K to 5th grade child will be assigned. The Controlled Choice Schools for Coral Gables are:

**Coral Gables Preparatory Academy
George Washington Carver Elementary
Sunset Elementary**

Each of these schools offers an enhanced curriculum focused on a specified academic theme. In order to be eligible to attend the desired school, students must reside within the designated boundary. Proof of address is required at the time of application. The application period begins March 15th, annually. Applications are

available at each school office and must be submitted at the school. Student assignment is determined by computerized random selection twice yearly, in May and July, based on seat availability per school and grade level. Also, the following weighted factors (such as proximity to the school) are considered:

- Siblings (living together) with proximity
- Siblings with no proximity;
- Proximity with no siblings; or
- No siblings or proximity.

All parents who apply through this process will receive a school assignment via a letter in the U.S. mail, notifying them of their child(ren)'s school assignment.

For more info, visit yourchoicemiami.org.

MIAMI BACH SOCIETY CONCERT SEASON BEGINS

On Sunday, Sept. 28, at 4 PM the Miami Bach Society opens its 2014-15 concert season at **St. Philip's Episcopal Church** (1142 Andalusia Ave.) featuring the return of noted New York-based period instrument ensemble, REBEL. Named after the innovative French Baroque composer **Jean-Féry Rebel** (1666-1747), the group was hailed by the **New York Times** as "Sophisticated and Beguiling" and praised for their highly expressive and provocative approach to the Baroque repertoire.

Tickets are \$30. Students 18 and under are free. Tickets: 305-669-1376 | miamibachsociety.org.



MIRACLE MILE & GIRALDA AVENUE STREETSCAPE FUNDING APPROVED

On August 26th, the City Commission voted to approve the funding formula for the **Miracle Mile/Giralda Avenue Streetscape Project**. A vision 7 years in the making, the financing of this \$18+ million-dollar beautification will be split 50/50 between the City and property owners (who have 20 years to pay). The 50% paid by property owners will be split: 35 % for properties fronting Miracle Mile and 15% for properties fronting Giralda Avenue. Also, parking rates

will be going up 25 to 50 cents an hour. Designs are still being finalized but improvements will include wider sidewalks (160 on-street spaces are being lost), better lighting, benches, kiosks, tree grates, better signage, more "welcoming" connections to parking garages, and permanent, covered valet stations providing shelter on rainy days. To compensate for the lost on-street parking, an additional 400 spaces will be created in the parking garage behind the Miracle Theater (now 300, soon to be 700).



FAIRCHILD AROID SOCIETY EVENT

The International Aroid Society (IAS) Show and Sale will be hosted at **Fairchild Tropic Botanical Garden** on September 20-21st. These beautiful plants are in the Philodendron or Jack-in-the-pulpit family. Join in the excitement of a weekend plant sale, plant auction, banquet and dinner speaker. This year's speaker is **Felipe Cardona**, one of the most experienced aroid researchers in Colombia. www.aroid.org/show/

TROLLEY GARAGE DISPUTE SETTLED

The dispute over the trolley garage at 3320 S Douglas Road, Coral Gables, whose construction was found to be in violation of **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, is coming to a close. In the resolution of the case of *City of Coral Gables, Florida v. Astor Trolley, LLC and Merrick Manor, LLC* (FTA Complaint No. 2013-0131), the City of Coral Gables is going to sell land at 301 Altara Avenue (the site of the present trolley depot with a parcel of empty land behind) to developer **Henry Torres' The Astor Cos.** for \$3.9M.



The City will then lease the property back (for 8 months to a year for \$1) and continue to use the current trolley garage until the groundbreaking on Torres' planned condo high-rise called "**Merrick Manor**." The Merrick Manor is to include a 500 sq. ft. police substation across from Coral Gables High School in an 8 to 13-story building. The City is looking into building a combined trolley/fire station at the site of the current fire/fueling station known as the "Riviera Fire Station" at 525 S. Dixie Highway, at a cost of \$5M.

FREE ADULT HEALTH FAIR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

An Adult Health Fair presented in partnership with **Doctors Hospital/Baptist Health South Florida** and **The Palace at Coral Gables** will be held on 9/17, 10 AM-1 PM at the Youth Center, 405 University Dr. The first 100 participants will receive free flu shots. Lunch will be provided by The Palace. Free & open to the public/No reservations required. For more info., call 305-460-5622.



MIAMI INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL AT GABLES CINEMA

Enjoy Miami premieres of new films from around the world, parties, hands-on workshops, meet-the-filmmakers events, and more!
Friday to Sunday, October 17 to 19.

Coral Gables Art Cinema

Tickets at movietickets.com or call:
786.385.9689 | 250 ARAGON AVENUE
gablescinema.com @GablesCinema



CITY MANAGER ANNOUNCEMENT EXPECTED

Colin Baeziner and Associates, the search firm hired by the city has narrowed the list of 16 finalists for the job down to 5. There is a reception to meet the candidates on Friday 9/12 and the interviews will be held on Saturday.

James Beach, Deputy Commissioner & Chief Financial Officer at **City of Atlanta** since 2010.

Pieter Bockweg, Executive Director of City of Miami's **Omni District CRA** (Community Redevelopment Agency).

Yvonne Soler McKinley, Executive Director of the **Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba** since Jan. 2013, and former Doral City Manager.

Arthur Noriega, Chief Executive Officer at **Miami Parking Authority**.

Alex Rey, Town Manager, **Miami Lakes**.

JUNIOR ORANGE BOWL QUEEN AND COURT

Meet the 2014-2015 JOB Queen and Court. From L to R below: Princess **Isabella Morales**, Queen **Emma Gillian**, Princess **Rebekah Gadea**, and Little Sister **Gwendolyn Odin**. They will preside over 15 events including the "Route 66" themed parade (Sunday Nov. 30th). For tickets: call 305-662-1210 or email jobc@jrorangebowl.org.

"MURDER BALLAD" AT ACTORS' PLAYHOUSE

Book & Lyrics by **Julia Jordan**

Music & Lyrics by **Juliana Nash**

October 8-November 2, 2014

A hit off-Broadway just last season! A Lower East Side Bar and a love triangle gone wrong. "A hot and sticky rock opera . . . of illicit love, lust and betrayal" - **Variety**

Actors' Playhouse At The Miracle Theatre

305.444.9293 | 280 MIRACLE MILE

actorsplayhouse.org @APMiracle

CORAL ROCK LECTURE

Join the **Historic Preservation Assoc. of Coral Gables** and the **Coral Gables Museum** for an educational lecture "Coral Rock: Preserving, Restoring and Maintaining Coral Gables Coral Rock Homes" on Tues., 9/23, 6-8 PM at the Museum, 285 Aragon Avenue. The event is free for HPACG & Museum members. Cost for nonmembers is \$10. RSVP to mail@historiccoralgables.org.

HOW TO JOIN GGG

To join GGG, send a letter to:

Gables Good Government

1825 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Box #448

Coral Gables, FL 33134

or email us at info@slesnick.net.

ANNUAL DUES

\$50 Member (household)

\$250 Sponsor/Advertiser

\$500 Donor

\$1,000 Corporate Donor



GGG was organized to support issues and causes that preserve and improve the quality of life in Coral Gables and promote the effective and efficient management of its government.

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