

Never Fear, the Upper Eastsiders Are Here

Terrific article by Erik Bojnansky about the results of the 2010 Census: “Who We Are” (July 2011). Yes, we Upper Eastside folks are a “fearless” bunch, as historian Paul George pointed out. We protect our turf. And Jeff Morr of Majestic Properties is correct in predicting that property values will steadily increase. We are “as good as gold.”

I do have to disagree with Tony Cho of Metro 1 Properties. There is a big difference between development/redevelopment and preservation, restoration, and revitalization. Why a handful of folks who are not residents, who are “commercial property” owners not “business” owners, continue to clamor for higher building heights and predict doomsday scenarios for the MiMo District if that doesn’t happen, is beyond me. I can point out a number of thriving business districts throughout the nation that are made up of only one- or two-story buildings.

The problem with Biscayne Boulevard is this: It isn’t pedestrian friendly.

Unfortunately, the group that helped plan the roadway improvements with FDOT, long before the Boulevard was historically designated, decided that center islands and parallel parking would not be in the mix.

I commend the small-business owners who have invested in the Boulevard and the residents who fight to preserve the integrity of our neighborhoods and the MiMo District. And I long for the day that the District is extended to the city limits at NE 87th Street.

Revitalization doesn’t happen overnight, especially in a down economy like this one. But good things will come. Look at South Beach.

Yes, we Upper East Side folks are indeed a “fearless” bunch.

Jack Spirk
Upper Eastside Preservation Coalition

Shorecrest

Four Palm Trees Out of Five: That Park Is Going Platinum!

I very much enjoyed Jim W. Harper's "Park Patrol" review of Maurice Gibb Memorial Park in Miami Beach ("A Harmonious Place," July 2011). I have been living in Miami for more than seven years and had never seen, or even heard of, that park. Although I was not around when the Bee Gees were in style, I would like to visit this waterfront hideaway in remembrance of this Rock and Roll Hall of Fame pop star.

I found the mosaic contributed to Maurice interesting. I would have never guessed that the yellow, red, and blue pieces of glass signified peace, love, and tranquility. I also thought the carved piece of granite disguising "Mo's" name was quite creative.

The view of the bay from the seawall looks impressive as well. This park certainly seems like somewhere my lover and I can get away, relax, and enjoy the beautiful bay.

Since Harper is probably the only park critic in the nation, I will take his word for it and believe that this park deserves four palm trees out of five. By the pictures and description, I am convinced this is somewhere I would like to visit.

Thank you, *Biscayne Times*.

Sofia Galiano
North Miami

Role Reversals? Mr. Mom Thinks It's Great

I am writing in regards to Crystal Brewe's "Kids and the City" column titled "Daddy's Home!" (July 2011). I think it was so well told.

I am a stay-at-home dad after more than 20 years working in kitchens, of which more than 15 years were as a chef at high-end restaurants and hotels. My wife and I have two kids, one eight years old and the other seven months.

For years I had been in a kitchen, sometimes six days a week, 12 hours a day, and I remember not being around much for the first three years of my daughter's life. It was hard.

Today the roles have been reversed. My wife started her company seven years ago, an interior design firm, and it has skyrocketed. Now she's running a great company, doing big things in Miami, is a co-chair at MOCA, flies to China, and builds homes in the Caribbean, in New York and here in Miami.

Me? I'm making breakfast, doing food shopping, laundry, cleaning the house, and helping with homework. I take my daughter to golf lessons and golf tournaments in Boca Raton and West Palm Beach every other weekend, and run to the mall with my son strapped to me.

I am trying to work on a book, but did I mention the diapers, the parks, the morning strolls, and trying to fit in the gym?

Dinner is ready by 7:30 p.m., though sometimes mommy is late because of her work. Now she's bringing in the bucks -- more than I was making. How funny is that?

Crystal's article was great, and it needed to be told. Kudos to all the stay-at-home dads, and many thanks to all the working moms.

Jean Sebastien
Miami

Do They Charge by the Hour for Minutes?

In the July issue of *Biscayne Times*, you published a letter from Biscayne Park Village Commissioner Bob Anderson (“Hours and Hours of Minutes”), responding to a column by *BT* correspondent Gaspar González concerning the minutes of our village commission meetings (“A Matter of Minutes,” June 2011).

Anderson raises three critical issues. First he points out that not all municipalities use verbatim minutes, which are what González and his sponsors claim they want. So although González frames his argument as a complaint about Biscayne Park, is he really complaining about all municipalities that don’t keep records the way he claims he would prefer?

Anderson points out that some municipalities don’t use verbatim minutes. Some do, and some don’t. Does this mean we’re simply talking about a matter of style and what’s possible for a municipality, not some sense of what is a “correct” approach?

Anderson’s second critical point is that González, who very regularly writes in a complaining and accusatory way about Anderson, has never spoken to him. Anderson is one of González’s “neighbors” in a very small municipality. Anderson is a commissioner who represents all residents. (Commissioners are all elected at-large.)

Commissioner Anderson is remarkably available, and regularly urges residents to be in touch with him about any village-related matter on their minds. González presents himself, through the *BT*, as a reporter. How is it possible that he has never contacted Anderson? Even I’ve told González to talk to Anderson. And to Commissioner Al Childress. And to Mayor Roxanna Ross. Not a word between González and any of them. But the accusations just keep on coming.

Finally, Anderson talks about the cost of the minutes González claims he wants. González frames this as a matter of good government. Anderson cites costs that are prohibitive for a very small and very financially limited community.

There's an opportunity here, and a precedent has been set. If a certain village "improvement" is recognized and desired by a small group of residents, and the village can't afford to pay for it, those residents can, out of civic pride and sense of responsibility, pay for it themselves and make it a gift to the village. In my experience with just such an approach, they should feel free to show their generosity, which will be gratefully acknowledged and accepted.

Fred Jonas
Biscayne Park

Skateboards and Hookers Are Like Oil and Water

Seriously? A skate park would attract crime and vandals ("No Halfpipes, No Ally Oops, No Skid-Lids, No Nothing," June 2011)? Has *BT* writer Erik Bojnansky even been in that area? There are two hookers and two drug dealers on the corner of NE 2nd Avenue and 18th Street. I know because I live there.

If anything, a skate park would *deter* crime as a result of heavy traffic. Is Aventura Mall the epicenter of crime? Is Dadeland the highest-rated place for crime? If there were a skate park, maybe city cops would finally patrol that area and hence reduce crime. Come on, man!

Here's a quote from an earlier *BT* article about our proposed skate park ("Skateboards and Synagogues Are Like Oil and Water," March 2011): "We don't want it to be built there,' according to Stanley Tate, a successful South Florida developer, veteran political player, and past president of Temple Israel, which is located on NE 19th Street in Miami's Midtown neighborhood. 'If we have to, we will bring a large number of people. We have some of the oldest membership in Dade County. We are well respected. I don't think the city commission wants to get involved in that kind of controversy.'"

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Yet in your latest article Tate says: “He [skate-park advocate Seth Levy] has accused me of things that he made up out of thin air,’ Tate says. ‘He thought that I had political influence here. It’s silly. I never get involved in City of Miami politics. I don’t even live in the city.’”

That sounds like *politics!*

Santiago Sanz
Miami