

Inside Hillcrest

– Connecting Neighbors to Neighbors –



APRIL 2019

HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA

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APRIL INSIDE HILLCREST

It has been a crazy month. Ever since **Dr. Amir** (page 3) wrote about slips and falls in the last issue, I am hearing more and more stories about slips and falls from residents that have happened since we printed the article. It is crazy. I suggested that in the next issue, she write about pregnancy. I was reminded that her practice is strictly over-55. I know...

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

I know I do a lot of complaining about incompetent real estate agents. My grumbling has extended to lenders and title companies. There are some lenders that if I see their name on an offer, I strongly suggest to the buyer agent they reconsider changing lenders and tell them a horror story or two – they usually find someone else.

The buyer also selects the title company to close the deal and at one time, they were pretty much all alike. All are regulated regarding fees and in Florida, their duty is to the transaction – they work equally to the benefit of the buyer AND the seller. Not anymore; apparently everyone who couldn't get a real estate license opened a title agency instead. Now, I use one attorney to handle all our deals whether we have the buyer or the seller side. What prompted this tirade? (OK, maybe just a little whining on my part...) I just sold a unit to a very nice man whose agent, lender and title company were all ... let's say...challenging. This poor guy hit the Talentless Trifecta. The buyer spoke no English but was meticulous in trying to do his part in spite of the obstacles thrown at him by his "team" – including his agent's lack of ordering an inspection. VERY bad idea. Thankfully, our two new A Team members are as fluent in Spanish as they are in Real Estate and the job got done although it cost the buyer and seller additional money for no reason except bad representation.

Whether you use **Keller Williams A Team** for your real estate needs or not, be sure that you choose wisely when you are looking for a mortgage and again when you select a title company to close your

deal. We have several good choices of lenders, title companies and inspectors; all of whom we met through the Greater Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and were able to confirm with other members that these are the cream of the crop.

If you want to keep track of the sales in YOUR building or neighborhood, email us at info@ateamflorida.com and we can send you a notification every time a property in your area goes on the market or sells, complete with descriptions and pictures. This is valuable information should you ever decide to sell. Knowing your immediate market inside and out will help you price right and prepare your property to get the highest dollar amount. Most of the building presidents are on this list and you should be too.

LAWYERS, LAWYERS, EVERYWHERE...

Not that I am an expert on attorneys, but as a former building president, I had to deal with them. I found that there are attorneys out there with questionable integrity who will do almost anything a board wants to keep their business. I believe they do caution the board that the issue in question is probably a losing cause, but their attitude is to do what the client wants and let it play out while they rack up fees.

I think attorneys should be more forthcoming like Eric Glazer and Peter Bober. I was lucky enough to have had both as our building attorney when I was on the board at Hillcrest 22. They always reminded us we had a fiduciary duty to the building and never let us engage in litigation when a reasonable settlement would cost a lot less. Peter Bober went

on to become a great Mayor for the City of Hollywood. Eric Glazer is one of the most respected Condo attorneys in town and has always been a valuable resource for me when I have questions. If you have questions regarding condo law, listen in on Sunday mornings at 11AM right on your computer. Go to www.850wftl.com.

If your building is racking up legal bills against unit owners find out why. Are building by-laws being violated? Does the issue being litigated have a negative impact on the safety and security of the residents? Is it a winnable case? Don't assume it is because your attorney encourages you to keep spending money. Once a case hits 10K in fees, you need to start paying attention. God forbid you have to pay an assessment to cover foolish lawsuits. Also, be careful that former board members are not being paid for "legal assistance". This can be in the form of a direct payment by the board to a unit owner; as long as the owner is not a board member, it is legal. OR it could be hidden from the owners because the payments come directly from the attorney with the owners being none the wiser. Your board has a fiduciary duty to NOT waste building money to pursue frivolous lawsuits because someone on the board has a personal vendetta. Question #1 should always be, "Is the reason worth the cost?" It is YOUR money and unfortunately there are unscrupulous board members and attorneys who treat it like their own personal piggy bank.

FAIR WARNED IS FAIR ARMED

Bottom line, it is a crazy world out there. Know who you are dealing with. Inside Hillcrest has become a resource for residents looking for honest businesses. No one advertises in IH unless we vet them, or they are a Hillcrest resident. All advertisers are cautioned that any complaint with merit could land them on the front page of Inside Hillcrest and loyal readers have seen it happen. Their company name ends up on our front page with a line through it. If you are new in town or need a type of business for the first time, please email us at inside.hillcrest@comcast.net and we will give you choices that you can trust.



ABOUT RENE SANZ - FIVE STAR PREMIER RESIDENCES

- By Steve Schneider



Rene Sanz

Rene Sanz, along with his mother and father, came to the United States from Cuba in 1986. The then 19-year-old and his parents arrived on friendly shores after negotiating bureaucratic hurdles in the communist dictatorship for six years. Cuban authorities did not take kindly to people who sought permission to leave the sunny island nation, he said. In retaliation, Sanz said, the government fired his parents from their jobs and took away their home. Finally, though, authorities granted them permission to leave.

After arriving in New York, and speaking only Spanish, Sanz turned down a professional baseball contract with the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Philadelphia Phillies. These two National League teams were interested in him because of his background playing second base and shortstop for free in Cuban leagues. "In Cuba," the future executive director of Five Star Premier Residences of Hollywood, said, "Young men either played baseball or boxed. I played baseball, as did my father before me." His father was a pitcher and an infielder.

In a new land, the Pirates and Phillies had offered Sanz a \$50,000 signing bonus. But he rejected the deals because he was making \$400 a week at that time working in a New York City factory. Sanz mistakenly thought the \$50,000 was all the money the teams were offering him. In contrast, he felt he was better off earning \$400 a week way into the future.

Eventually, Sanz learned the signing bonus was "up front" money the teams wanted to pay him to start playing in their minor league systems as he proved himself and tried to work his way up to the majors. He also would have received regular pay, meal money and travel expenses, had he joined one of the minor league teams.

After several years in New York City, Sanz moved to Miami with his parents, who liked the warm temperatures, palm trees and sunny skies here. He got a job at the Barcelona, a Miami Beach hotel, where he worked his way up with the support of Cuban and Jewish mentors. Sanz worked as a housekeeper and bellhop before being promoted to customer relations positions.

During Hurricane Andrew, in August of 1992, the general manager of the hotel, an older Jewish man, told him he could take home as much food and water as he needed. Sanz at that time was living with his parents in a house he bought for them in Kendall, where he still lives. The community was devastated by the massive category 5 storm. He was able to buy the home because someone taught him to save his money while he was working.

Sanz, in particular, credits the advice of an older Cuban man who worked at the Barcelona. "He told me I should try to save two or three dollars out of every \$5 I made," Sanz recalled. Eventually, though, Sanz left the hotel because he was not happy that people he cared for were pushed out when the hotel was purchased by an international company.

A friend told him about a job at an adult community near Miami International Airport. It paid less money, and Sanz said he didn't think he would like the work. But his friend convinced him to try it. His father also suggested he make the change because he was unhappy about the way his friends were treated at the hotel. Sanz took the entry-level job, learned more about adult care facilities and took classes to learn even more.

Today he sits in the office set aside for the executive director Five Star Premier Residences of Hollywood, which meets the housing and living needs of up to about 400 seniors. Two baseball uniforms hang on the wall to the side of his desk. One uniform says "GOODEN," as in Dwight Gooden, who was a young, fastball pitcher for the New York Mets, who won the World Series in 1986. The other frame sports the front side of a Miami Marlins uniform.



MARTY KIAR
BROWARD COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

Report Homestead Exemption Fraud

It is important homeowners only pay their fair share of property taxes. Property owners who file false applications to obtain a Homestead Exemption are causing you to pay more in property taxes each year. Why? Because your various taxing authorities, such as the county, city and school board, must equitably divide the tax burden among all property owners within their jurisdictions in order to provide services such as police, fire, and schools. If someone wrongfully claims Homestead Exemption, someone else must pay more to make up the difference.

In an effort to protect taxpayer dollars, our office is always working to identify homeowners in Broward who are fraudulently claiming a Homestead Exemption on their properties. We work

with local governments, homeowner and civic associations to help identify exemption fraud. We also rely on anonymous phone and mail tips about potential Homestead fraud.

If you know of anyone claiming Homestead Exemption on a property which is not their permanent residence, we urge you to contact our Department of Professional Standards and Compliance at 954.357.6900 or <http://www.bcpa.net/fraudform.asp> and we'll check it out. You are free to provide your contact information or remain completely anonymous when reporting potentially fraudulent activity to our office. Property owners who fraudulently obtain a Homestead Exemption may be back taxed for as many as ten years, plus be required to pay substantial penalty and annual interest (50% of the unpaid taxes for each year and pay interest at a rate of 15% per year).

If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at **954.357.6904** or by email at **martykiar@bcpa.net**.

Marty Kiar
Marty Kiar, CFA





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STATE OF THE COUNTY - County Commissioner Beam Furr - District 6



Greetings Hillcrest Residents,

Broward County has two million human residents. But we human beings are not the only residents who call Broward County home. Broward is home to thousands and thousands of animals, many of whom are our beloved pets. What are we as a County doing to make Broward better for our furry friends? That is a major question on the mind of many Broward residents, and for good reason! Our pets and our animals are part of the Broward family. That's why we need to be taking steps to make sure they receive the best possible care.

With that in mind, Broward County Animal Care and Adoption Division has just published their 2019 – 2021 Strategic Plan. Perhaps the most important thing about this plan is how it came together. This plan was created with extensive community input from the individuals and organizations who dedicate their time and energy to rescuing, caring for and helping to find homes for our furry friends. The collaboration that took place in creating this plan is a reflection that we will only provide the best care via a collective, shared effort. During my time as a Commissioner, I have spoken to many dedicated, passionate advocates who give their time and energy towards supporting our animals. No plan for Broward County would be complete without their input and voice, and we look forward to working with them moving forward.

This plan outlines three years of goals and objective to make Broward County Animal Care among the best in the country. The plan will help us continue our commitment to becoming a “No Kill” Shelter where every animal has a chance to live a long, healthy life. The strategic plan sets an identifiable goal of reducing shelter stays and expanded public outreach to increase adoptions. It also outlines plans to spay and neuter both pets and stray animals in order to reduce the number of homeless cats and dogs on our streets. This plan calls for expansion of our pet foster home program, which will keep volume out of the shelter and promote long-term adoptions. If you want some wonderful company and the chance to help a wonderful animal find a loving home, you should consider fostering a pet! To find out more, send an email to foster@broward.org.

This plan also has metrics in place to ensure that quality of life improves for all animals in the shelter. The plan sets forth a commitment to working with our non-profit rescue partners and providing them resources. Taken together, these ideas will make sure that animals in our shelter are treated better than ever before and have a chance to find a home. We invite you to take a look at <http://www.broward.org/Animal/Documents/ACAD%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY19-FY21.pdf> and let us know your feedback.

Text to 911

I want to take a moment to tell you about an innovative new way to get help in Broward County. This month, Broward County launched our innovative Text to 911, which will allow residents in danger to text 911 for help in situations where a call is not possible.

It is important that if you can call 911, you should still do so – that is still the best way to route calls and get a rapid response. However, Text to 911 is helpful in certain situations, such as when someone is deaf or hard of hearing or in a situation of home invasion or domestic violence where making a call is not possible. If you do have to text 911, make sure to provide your exact location.

Please contact my office if you ever have any questions or concerns. Our District office is located in the lobby of the Hollywood Branch of the Broward County Public Library at 2600 Hollywood Boulevard, next to Hollywood City Hall. It's open for your convenience Monday through Friday from 10 AM to 4 PM. If you would like to schedule an appointment, or if you have a great suggestion, or an issue that needs my attention, feel free to call me at 954-357-7790/7006, or send me an email to bfurr@broward.org.

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COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE MEETING WITH PULTE - *by Steve Schneider*

Within the next few months, Hillcrest and Parkview at Hillcrest residents should see major improvements to the park Pulte is building for the two communities, development officials said at a March 27 meeting of the Hillcrest Compliance Committee.

By about June, fencing panels and posts should be installed around the entire park, which runs about 9,000 linear feet, according to Andrew Maxey, Pulte vice president of land acquisition. The park runs near Hillcrest Drive on the east side of the community and heads west toward Hillcrest Court and 52 Avenue. Pulte will install entrances with punch codes. These codes will probably be changed every three months to maintain security, with building presidents getting the new codes to share with Hillcresters. Maxey added the park will be open from dawn to dusk, and will not be lit. Containers for pet poop will be placed along the walking paths for residents who take their dogs with them.

The developer is also working with a landscaping company, Maxey said, to completely install trees, plants and shrubs, also within the next few months. Additionally, the landscaper will plant grass seeds in time for the upcoming rainy season, which will help the grass grow. He said trees will be trimmed prior to seeding. Pulte is still addressing gardening issues that affect the pool areas by buildings 21 to 25.

Pulte was also pressed about the number of entrances to the park; residents expressed concern there were not enough ways to enter and exit the area, with its winding walkways, bike paths and lakes. Maxey agreed a few additional entrances could be installed. However, he added, people may be confused about entrances Pulte promised to construct. Maxey said numerous plans were shared with the community. But, he added, the site plan attached to the development contract is the one Pulte will consider amending based on discussions with residents.

Pulte will also "look at fixing" concerns about elevation drops in the park that may make it difficult to negotiate at certain points, Maxey said. And he noted the walkways will be patched, not repaved.

People visiting the park can expect to see an additional gazebo, which Pulte plans to place in the main park area behind the schoolyard. The developers are considering whether to provide bocce ball courts in the park area. A playground for children will be built by a gate north of Pembroke Road on 52 Avenue. Pulte will also place benches in bump off areas along the paths.

The advent of warmer temperatures and rain means mosquitos will visit the lakes in the park. Even so, Pulte will not install fountains to move the water, as had been suggested by Hillcrest leaders. Based on experience, Pulte officials said it is best to chemically treat the area for pests and algae. Fountains are not needed, Pulte representatives asserted, because the water in the lakes is already creating enough movement to possibly deter problems. What's more, the summertime explosion of mosquitos is a problem faced throughout South Florida, which means the mosquitos travel from location to location.

Maxey also said Pulte hired professional surveyors to make sure boundaries were properly established between Hillcrest and Parkview at Hillcrest. The issue came up at the meeting when Maxey was questioned about fencing that has been installed

separating the two communities. In certain areas, he said it is possible that sprinklers or other property belonging to Hillcrest were on Parkview at Hillcrest land. He said Pulte would not request that Hillcrest remove its property.

Here is additional information, as reflected in notes taken by Betty Merk of the Hillcrest Compliance Committee:

- Regarding the school playground, the Tobin/Pulte legal transfer of property has not been completed due to title issues, which should be completed in 30 days.
- Easement between buildings 15 and 16 will be deeded to the two buildings.
- The Clubhouse parking lot on Hillcrest Drive, east of the main entrance, is for all to use on a first come/first serve basis with the exception of 11 reserved spots for Building 21.
- The three entrances into Hillcrest from Washington Street will be lit up. No sprinkler system has been planned for the area because plants that don't require a lot of water were picked. Still, Pulte will monitor the trees, shrubs and plants and makes changes if necessary.
- The small clubhouse on Hillcrest Drive now has extra lighting at the BBQ's.

Hillcrest Compliance Committee members present: Gil George, Claude Bernier, Betty Merk, Attending for Pulte: Andrew Maxey and Dave Kanarek. Attending for Castle Group: Millie Whitehead.

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SECOND CHANCES CAN COME AT A HIGH COST

- In My Opinion - By Steve Schneider



Five of our Florida neighbors joined a panel discussion on April 4 to inform us about Amendment 4 and related issues. The amendment became part of the state constitution after 64.5% of voters approved it on Nov. 6. The amendment restores the voting rights of former felons after they complete the terms of their sentence. Supporters of Amendment 4 oftentimes refer to people covered by this amendment as returning citizens, not former felons.

But some Florida legislators insist the amendment is not clear. So, lawmakers are meeting in the state Capitol to write legislation that would explain the meaning of the amendment and the will and intent of the voters who approved it in a landslide. Legislators backing this effort insist the “clarifying” language is necessary before 67 county Supervisor of Elections can be sure they are letting the right people register to vote.

According to estimates, up to 1.4 million returning citizens in Florida will be able to register to vote if the constitutional amendment is implemented without interpretation and guidance by political leaders in Tallahassee. However, this figure may drop dramatically if a bill is passed and forwarded to Ron DeSantis, the Republican governor who won election in November with 49.6% of the vote. DeSantis campaigned against Amendment 4; it is likely he will sign legislation passed by Republican lawmakers who control the legislature.

Our lawmakers are tinkering with the following summary ballot language, which read: “This amendment restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions after they complete all terms of their sentence including parole or probation. The amendment would not apply to those convicted of murder or sexual offenses, who would continue to be permanently barred from voting unless the Governor and Cabinet vote to restore their voting rights on a case by case basis.”

However, press reports indicate legislators may deny residents the right to register to vote if they have not paid a variety of debt they

accumulated going through our criminal justice system. This debt was not imposed by the sentencing judge. Politicians in Tallahassee are also considering ways to clarify, and thus expand, the definition of what crimes are not covered by Amendment 4. For example, the amendment blocks people convicted of murder from registering to vote upon completion of a sentence. Politicians in Tallahassee are debating whether to include attempted murder, among other offenses.

This political drama, with implications for many people who want to participate in democracy, was brought up at the panel discussion which was held at the Hollywood Beach Culture and Community Center. The discussion was sponsored by the Hollywood Democratic Club. It was spearheaded by Ted Victor, a board member who is also a chemistry and biology teacher at McArthur High School.

The panel members also addressed an array of related issues, such as: What does it mean to lose the right to vote? How does one lose the right to vote? How is the right to vote restored? What is the process? Why is it important to vote? Are certain demographics disproportionately affected by losing the right to vote? How can citizens with the restored right to vote help mobilize others to vote? What are the political consequences and implications of not being able to vote?

Through the power of social media, you can watch a video of the conversation unfiltered. You can find it online by going to the Facebook page for the Hollywood Democratic Club and Broward Social Network. You can also Google Mobilizing Renewed Citizens to find a link to the wide-ranging exploration of this topic.

Also, in the days after the April 4 panel discussion, two participants answered questions about the high cost of going to prison. The rest of the article will focus on this because it deals with matters consuming state lawmakers, who insist they have the power to “clarify” what the constitutional amendment means and what voters intended. Ultimately, lawsuits may be filed before true clarity is achieved.

CeCe Espeut is a former US Marine who was incarcerated in prison for two years for her part in a drug conspiracy. In 2012, the Miramar resident was granted a pardon by former Gov. Rick Scott. That pardon gave her back her rights to vote, run for office and serve on a jury.

According to Espeut, the state prison system imposes all kinds of costs on inmates, which are not part of the sentence imposed by a judge. For example, she said, prisoners get charged “every time they need an aspirin” or other medicine. While awaiting trial, an inmate also gets charged up to \$500 for every trip from jail to the courthouse. This fee alone can add thousands of dollars imposed by the state, not a judge.

An author and speaker, Espeut may eventually run for office. If she does, Espeut believes she will be able to represent the needs of returning citizens, among other possible constituents.

Dexter Gunn is another Broward County resident who spoke at the Hollywood Beach panel session. In an interview, he said lawmakers may be trying to clarify some Amendment 4 issues, even as they add more uncertainty to the voter registration process.

For example, he said the state prison system charges inmates a \$5 fee for every “sick call.” Gunn, the former Broward County leader of the Florida Rights and Restoration Coalition, said many prisoners are “indigent and suffer from chronic conditions. So, medical bills pile up.

Continued on Pg. 7

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Continued from Pg. 6



Dexter Gunn

What's more, when people leave state prison, they don't always have a place to live. And landing a job isn't a snap. This reality makes paying off criminal justice debt difficult. Ironically, though, Gunn said former felons find it relatively easy to get hired to drive trucks cross country after getting a CDL. But the state turns over their debt to attorneys who place a lien on their license.

Other types of debt include costs for parole and probation, which may include paying for drug tests and ankle bracelet monitoring, and attorney fees for indigent defendants.

Gunn knows from experience how the state treats people convicted of a felony. He was sentenced to the Florida Department of Corrections in 1991, where he served 20 years for attempted robbery. Today Gunn is president of the nonprofit organization SOARS RESET, Inc. which counsels young people at risk of dropping out of school or being incarcerated. He is also the owner of Legal Documents & Research By D. Gunn which is located in Tamarac.

People who want to learn more, or help, can contact FRRC at (407) 901-3749, or info@floridarrc.org. This organization led the state-wide effort to get Amendment 4 on the ballot and approved.



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April Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham

This is a great time of year to restart your balcony herb garden. I went to Home Depot and got parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme (great song) as well as garlic chives, oregano and a Better Bush tomato plant. Cherry tomatoes work well in balcony pots too.

It is not easy to WOW Boodro, our Ragin' Cajun' chef; I think I only wowed him once, with my Shepherd's Pie recipe. I am proud to say I did it again. This recipe is "off the chain" as they say. The only thing I did not do was use cipollini onions because I didn't know what they were. I found them at Publix after the fact; a small bag is (gulp) \$4.99! But I will definitely use them next time. This recipe is worth it. I thought the onion amounts were too much, so I cut back - don't do that. You will only end up wanting more. You need to marinate the pork for at least 4 hours so do that part in the morning.

I served the pork with blackened carrots (recipe in the last issue) which Boodro praised also. I swear. And for a bonus, Elizabeth, my across the hall neighbor who is as beautiful on inside as she is gorgeous on the outside as well as being an AMAZING cook, brought the coolest appetizers to the dinner party. Her recipe is below.



CARAMELIZED ONION AND MUSTARD PORK ROAST (serves 6)

1/2 cup Dijon mustard
 1/4 cup whole-grain mustard
 1/4 cup dry Sherry
 6 TBS unsalted butter (3 oz.) softened (divided use)
 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
 1 tsp cayenne pepper
 Kosher salt
 A (4 lb.) boneless pork roast (I used two pork tenderloins)
 Canola oil
 2 medium size re onions, cut into 8 wedges each
 1 lb. cipollini onions peeled
 6 large shallots peeled and halved lengthwise
 Black pepper
 1/4 cup dry white wine
 2 TBS dark brown sugar
 4 thyme sprigs plus more for serving

1. Whisk together both mustards, sherry, 2 TBS soft butter, thyme leaves cayenne and 1 tsp salt in a large bowl. Add pork to bowl, turning to coat. Cover and chill at least 4 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 350. Remove pork from marinade and save 3 TBS before discarding the rest. Season pork with salt.
3. Heat 2 TBS canola oil in a large skillet over high. Add pork and cook until browned on all sides, about 4 minutes per side. Remove pork from skillet and set aside. Wipe out skillet.
4. Toss together the onions and shallots with 2 tsp salt, 1/2 tsp black pepper and 2 TBS oil. Add half the onion mixture at a time and cook without stirring until browned on one side - about 2 minutes. Remove onion mixture from skillet and place in bottom of a heavy duty metal roasting pan. Repeat with remaining half of onion mixture.
5. Place a roasting rack over onions in the roasting pan and place pork on top of the rack. Bake in the middle of the preheated oven for an hour if using two pork tenderloins and 90 minutes if using a thicker pork roast.
6. Remove pork from oven and let it rest on a cutting board for at least 20 minutes before slicing. Transfer onions to a large serving plate using a slotted spoon.
7. While the pork is resting, pour the contents of the roasting pan into the skillet and add the wine, brown sugar, thyme sprigs, 3 TBS marinade, remaining 4 TBS butter, 1/2 tsp salt and 1/2 tsp pepper. Stir and cook over medium until butter is melted and mixture is reduced by half. Add any accumulated juices from cutting board and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes and remove from heat.
8. Slice pork into 1/2 inch slices and arrange over roasted onions platter. Garnish with thyme sprigs. Spoon wine sauce over top and serve.

SHRIMP STUFFED TOMATOES

The trick is using firm, round tomatoes to cut them into sturdy "baskets" with a handle. Turn the tomato over so the smooth side is on top and carefully slice around the middle of the tomato, leaving two 1/2 inch pieces intact on each side. Then complete the "handle" by slicing a half moon shape above the sliced part. Scoop out all the flesh and seeds and stuff.

Elizabeth sautéed peeled, deveined shrimp with a dash of Arrabiatta sauce and grated cheese; or just toss shrimp in a little bit of onion, garlic and oil with a dash of basil, red pepper, tomato paste, Italian seasoning, grated cheese and lemon juice. Let cool and fill baskets. As you can imagine, the possibilities are endless.



FIVE STAR PREMIER RESIDENCES - By Steve Schneider



About 400 seniors, including 13 centenarians, live in a senior living community a few miles north of Hillcrest. Inside Hillcrest still delivers every month to our former residents who now live in Five Star. During a recent visit, an 100-year-old resident, wearing a World War II cap, visited with people he knew who live and work at Five Star Premier Residences of Hollywood. He was wearing slacks and looked fit as he talked with people in the main building of the senior living community.

Apartments in the community are comprised of studios and one- and two-bedroom units, and sit on 22 acres of land with four lakes, four huge water fountains and gardens. Employees, many with five to 25 years of experience, usually serve up to 28,000 dinners a month; 40 to 60 a night of which are vegetarian meals. All meals are made from scratch in a large kitchen in the main building, which also houses executive offices, a beauty salon, physical therapy room and apartments for seniors who live independently. Residents select from up to 10 dinner items, which can range from baked grouper to grilled filet mignon or lamb chops and cornish hen. Seniors who live independently dine in a few large, carpeted, dimly lit rooms with a view of a lake and a water fountain.

The community, off of Sheridan Street and North Park Road, opened 32 years ago but became known as Five Star in 2011. The property houses 370 apartments, which consists of independent living, assisted living and memory care units. The three senior populations live on the same campus, clustered in buildings to meet their specific needs. The north and south buildings house seniors who live independently, the west building is home for seniors who seek assisted living and the memory care unit is called the Villa. Residents provide their own furnishings, and sometimes live with a brother, sister, or significant other. Everyone has access to a large outdoor pool that rests between the buildings.

Five Star is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week with security, a concierge, and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) in the assisted living building. Primary care physicians, a cardiologist and podiatrist visit the community regularly, as do a dermatologist, audiologist, psych nurse, physical therapist, lab technicians and hospice specialists. In the assisted living building, there is an LPN on each of the four floors for the 7 am to 3 pm and 3 pm to 11 pm shifts, with an individual LPN covering all floors over night. Five Star also provides two cars and two buses to take residents to the grocery store, shopping mall, bank and doctor appointments, as scheduled.

The staff believes it is important to offer the seniors a variety of recreational options, which include exercise classes, water aerobics, bingo and card games. Residents also participate in art class, horticulture activities, lectures, chorus and trips to movies, theater, casinos and the beach. Visiting hours for friends and family are flexible; however, visitation is limited if the family requests this restriction.

Sometimes pets live with residents. Fish tanks also sit on display in the different common areas of the buildings. A golden doodle, owned by the director of assisted living, sometimes follows her on her rounds, adding an air of hominess to the senior living community.



Most residents eat their meals in the dining room of their building. However, seniors who do not feel well can get their meals brought to their apartments.

People who move into an independent living apartment can expect to pay \$2,700 to \$4,000 a month; while assisted living residents can expect to pay \$3,600 to \$5,000 monthly and memory care housing costs \$4,500 to \$5,500 each month.

The following people provided information for this article: Rene Sanz, Jr, executive director; Carla Lehman, director of assisted living; Jill Aaron, assistant executive director; Lisa Calvet, sales director; Pedro Larrea, director of facilities management; Javier Rios, food and beverage director and David Scism, lifestyle director. **For more information, or to make an appointment for a tour, please call (954) 963-0200.**

REAL ESTATE FOR SELLERS, BUYERS, RENTERS AND INVESTORS

– by *Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams Realty Professionals A Team Florida*

On a recent Market Share Report for condos in Hollywood Central, Keller Williams A Team Florida came in number THREE for listings – our rival was number 2. For sales, we came in at number FIVE, but our closest rival didn't even make the top 25. There is a significant difference between listing a property and selling it.

This is the first in a series of educational articles about Real Estate. We will start with sellers and over the next three months we will walk you through everything a buyer, renter and investor should know about the Real Estate Process.

Selling a condo or home is not as easy as you may be led to believe. It is an absolute fact that a professional realtor who is an expert in your area will net you more money than a family friend or relative who just got a license or a desperate agent who is willing to work for a discounted commission. As we have said before, if your agent is not willing to fight for their own money, do you really think they are going to fight for yours? Step one is hiring the right agent.

STEP ONE

As listing agents, we are careful to stick close to home. We rarely venture outside of South Broward. Occasionally we take listings in Aventura because it is not that far to drive. But because we show our listings EVERY time we get a request, we make sure we are educated about the neighborhood and in the case of a condominium, the buildings by-laws and financials. Hiring an outside agent from Miami or Boca to list your Hollywood home or condo is a hindrance and can be difficult to sell for top dollar. There are statistics to back that up. Find out who specializes in your area and interview several to see who makes you feel the most comfortable and confident in his/her abilities. Find an agent who will tell you the truth, not what you want to hear. Most listings that expire are taken by agents who will say anything to get the listing including taking an over-priced listing because the seller insists on it. If you are one of those sellers, at least put a clause in the listing agreement that if the agent ever asks you to reduce the price, the listing is cancelled – and then hire the agent who was honest with you in the first place. It is estimated that 40% of residential transactions fall apart for one reason or another. Preparation is the best defense against that. At the listing appointment, we will have detailed information and questions about your property. We have a list of all the necessary documents needed to make the transaction go smoothly before you are under contract.

STEP ONE PART TWO

Staging is almost always worth the time and effort; and even money if necessary. Buyers “feel” as well as look at properties. It is said that a buyer knows in the first 15 seconds if they want a property. The strategy is to make the first impression a “WOW” by directing the buyer's eyes to the best features. We recently sold a condo to a client who changed his mind a few months later. Without doing any upgrades, he spent \$1800 in staging and netted 10K more in the sales price! Unless a property is so dated that it isn't worth a new paint job, may be a worthy investment. Fact is, the nicest properties sell the fastest for the most money.

Also, we have a pre-listing checklist. Again, if you fail to prepare you are preparing to fail. For a home, we pay for an inspection up front since the majority of canceled deals are due to inspection issues. We have a team member with a construction background

so we can guide our sellers to make needed repairs and aesthetic changes that will bring in the highest offer or at least educate the seller as to what might be an issue when the buyer hires their inspector. If the repairs are going to substantially add to the seller's profits, we may LEND our sellers the money to get them done and get reimbursed at closing.

At the very least, we disclose any issues in the listing so that the buyer can take them into consideration when making the offer instead of using them as an excuse to walk away from the deal. Ethically, anything major that comes up in an inspection that causes a buyer to cancel a contract MUST be disclosed to other potential buyers when the property is put back on the market.

STEP TWO - MARKETING

The next step is entering your property into the Multiple Listing System so that every agent in the area can see what you have to offer and thanks to the internet, every potential buyer in the world can see it also. The MLS allows multiple pictures and has a limited number of characters for the text. Check and see that the text describes your property in an attractive way. Pictures should be realistic. If an agent is using a cell phone to take pictures, they are probably not the one to hire since it is a zero investment for the agent. Using professional equipment will ensure quality photos. You want potential buyers to know exactly what they are getting. If your property is picture perfect, the pictures should reflect that. If the property has problems like water leaks, broken tiles, etc. the buyer needs to know that too. Never overpromise and underdeliver. It is better for a buyer to say, “Wow, this place is nicer than the pictures” then to say, “Now I know why there weren't many pictures, this place is not for me.” How would you feel if you wasted your time going to see a property because of the pictures and then were disappointed when you got there? And believe me, realtors know which of their peers can be trusted to accurately present a property. Real Estate is a small world and you want your agent to have a good reputation with other agents. We have other marketing strategies that have been proven highly successful depending on the condition and location of the property.

STEP THREE

Showing a property is an art that few agents will ever master. When a potential buyer shows up with an agent who is not familiar with the area, many questions will need to be answered on the spot. That's why you need knowledgeable local experts like us to open every time. We have Spanish speaking agents as well to accommodate the Latin community.

STEP FOUR

The next step is the offer. The normal response time for an offer to be accepted is 48 hours and it is amazing how many times we have to call the other agent to “remind” them to present the offer to their client or remind them to respond to our seller's counter offer – and sometimes show them how.

No offer can be made (or should be accepted) without proof that the buyer has the funds to purchase the property. And this proof must accompany the offer for it to even be considered. Proof consists of “proof of funds” for a cash buyer – a financial statement with the buyer name on it and a dollar amount to cover the purchase price plus closing costs.

Continued on Pg. 15

HILLCREST'S OWN: KELLER WILLIAMS A TEAM FLORIDA

Our goal is to help YOU get top dollar for your home or condo. The better it looks and the better shape it is in, the more money you will get when you sell. We are the Hollywood experts and we can help. As licensed realtors we do what nobody else in the business does; we invest our own time and money to help you prepare your property for sale. We will advise you on what is necessary (and unnecessary) to maximize your profits! If need be, we advance our sellers the funds to do it right; from repairs to staging, showing and marketing, we do what it takes to get top dollar.

Right now, are still in somewhat of a Seller's Market; for homes as well as condos. When our sellers heed our advice, homes sell within 32 days and our condos in less than 47 days. Yes, the market can shift at any time due to economic changes; but when you hire the A Team, you are hiring strategists, not sale people. We are successful because we stay AHEAD of the market fluctuations, we don't chase them.

Today's buyers have very different challenges, so our sales strategies have changed dramatically. Our goal is always to top the last highest comparable sale, and our sellers who listen and take our advice will tell you that we hit our goal every time!



Brian Gaiefsky & Cindy Abraham



DOLORES (LOLA) HERNANDEZ
Keller Williams Realty Professionals
Rental Specialist/Transaction Coordinator



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HILLCREST STATE OF THE MARKET – FIRST QUARTER 2019

– by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams Realty Professionals A Team Florida



Things go in cycles. Last year sales were soft for the one bedrooms or the large 2-bedroom corner units (between 1499 and 1634 SF). Now they are the hottest items on the market. The regular two-bedrooms are a tough sell lately, as are our 3 bedroom units (most are 2,444 SF). You would think our 3 bedroom units would be very popular because they are so much larger than many of the new Parkview homes and offer a great deal for the current influx of Baby Boomer downsizers. I don't have the answers, just the stats. Only 33 closed sales in a three-month period is an unusually low number for Hillcrest condos.

As of this writing, there are 75 units on the market in Hillcrest. 19 are one-bedroom units, 50 are two-bedroom units including 6 corners, and 6 are three-bedroom units.

One bedroom sales from January 1 through March 31: ELEVEN or almost 58% of the active listings.

Regular two bedroom sales from January 1 through March 31: TEN and another EIGHT Corner deluxe two bedroom sales (1499-1634 SF) for a total of 18 or 36%. (Of that 36%, the percentage was 55/45).

One 3-bedroom unit sold out of the 7 on the market and it sold under market value because it was original. Again, original units sell at under market value because the buyers add in the upgrades needed to bring it up to the current values. Upgraded go for market value even if the décor is not exactly what the buyer wants; at least they can move in and make the changes over time. Complete remodels are very popular and can sell significantly over market value. Buyers with cash or a strong mortgage are willing to pay top dollar for perfection.

We hear complaints about maintenance fees from first time condo buyers. What people (especially homeowners) do not understand is why maintenance fees are NOT a negative. If you live in a house, you are paying maintenance fees – they just vary. You have to not only pay your electric, phone and internet like condo owners do, but you pay water/sewer/trash, cable, pest control, lawn and pool service, all major repairs; roof, painting, plumbing, electric, paving, etc. Few homes have 24/7 security like some of our condos.

Condo living can be great for those who are honest, kind and respect their neighbors. Living in a condo community takes compromise and a willingness to adhere to considerate, civilized behavior free of bias and personal agendas. Condo living is even greater when those types of people are on the board.

April 2019 IT Security Tips



BEWARE OF CROOKED BUSINESSES & SCAMMERS

Beware of shady websites, suspicious phone calls and emails that try to get your personal information. They're sophisticated and they've built their business on lies and scams. In a nutshell, these scammers are mimicking legitimate businesses, hoping your guard is down because you trust them. It looks real. In fact, a common tactic with scammers is to pressure you into giving up your personal information by presenting dire consequences if you don't.

Here is an example; a scammer may tell you that you're being audited by the IRS or that your computer has a dangerous virus they can fix if you hand over your personal information.

1. Think It Through: Stop for a minute and think it through. Don't answer any of their questions yet, don't share any information. You still have questions of your own. First, if it's a legitimate company you are already working with, then ask yourself WHY they're asking for information they should already have.

2. Some Clues: Real, honest and legitimate businesses don't use these unsolicited tactics – they know better. If you've received a call or email that you believe to be not legitimate, contact the business it claims to be from. *Don't use the link or phone number provided by whoever contacted you;* instead, contact the company directly using contact information you personally look up on the company's website. If the matter is legitimate, the company will confirm so and help you resolve the issue while making sure your personal information stays safe.

IT TIP OF THE MONTH: How Two-Factor Authentication Protects You! Two-factor authentication (2FA) keeps others from accessing your accounts, although some people feel it's too time consuming. If you're serious about your privacy, then you'll put up with the few extra minutes involved.

How does 2FA work? When you log in to whatever it is you're logging into you will be required to enter a special code that the site texts to your phone. Some services require it each time you log in, other than just when you're using a new device or web browser.

You can lock down your Facebook, Google, Dropbox, Apple ID, Microsoft, Twitter and other accounts with two-factor authentication.

MORE ABOUT 2FA

Two Factor Authentication is an additional layer of protection beyond your password. With millions of people online every day, processing millions of transactions, *how do you prove your identity to websites?*

When you're in front of a bank teller or a bartender, it's simple! You show them your driver's license and you attempt to replicate the same smile you made in that photo twenty-five years ago! But how do you suppose you prove who you are to a website today?

If you were at the ATM outside your bank, your card would be one factor and your pin code would be the second factor. Unfortunately, it's a little trickier online. This is why we use the *two-factor authentication*, which is a method of confirming a user's claimed identity by utilizing a combination of two different components.

Two-factor authentication adds a second level of authentication to an account log-in. When you have to enter only your username and one password, that's considered a single-factor authentication. 2FA requires the user to have two out of three types of credentials before being able to access an account.

The three types are;

- Something you know, such as a PIN, password or a pattern
- Something you have, such as an ATM card, phone, or fob
- Something you are, such as a biometric like a fingerprint or voice print

No one ever said being secure is easy. The bad guys count on you being lax in protecting yourself. Implementing 2FA on accounts will mean it takes a little longer to log in each time on a new device, but it's worth it in the long run to avoid some serious theft, be it of your identity, data, or money.

By now I'm hoping you will click here to follow the step-by-step instructions on how to enable the free security feature, 2FA, which is used to prevent hackers from accessing your accounts, even if they know your password.

At Connections for Business, we take security very seriously. If our clients don't feel safe, then we're not doing our job! If you're a South Florida business with more than 20 employees and workstations, we are offering a FREE Network Infrastructure & Security Analysis. Maintaining the security of your business is a lot tougher than you think and it's even more critical than ever before. At Connections we provide a FREE IT Security Assessment. This audit will help to ensure that proper security measures and controls are integrated into your network. Our assessment will let you know if and where the gaps are in your IT Network and we will offer strategic recommendations to help mitigate risk and protect your data from cyber-attack! And please don't be shy! If you have a question, please contact us and let us know how and when to reach you! Request your free audit today. No obligation required.

Sincerely,

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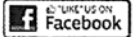
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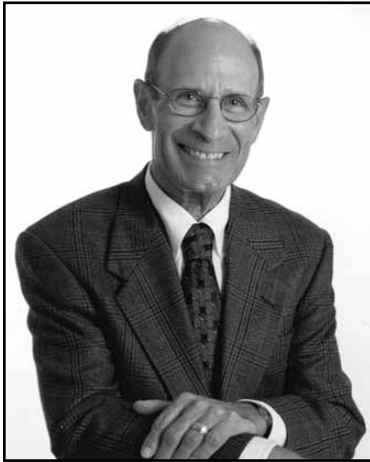
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COMMISSIONER BLATTNER'S SPRING HORIZONS ARTICLE

by Commissioner Dick Blattner



Google has several definitions for the term “embarrassment of riches.” Some say it means too much of a good thing. My version is that good stewardship is necessary to avoid embarrassment.

With the passage of the general obligation bond, the interlocal agreement with the county for affordable housing and the penny sales tax, it looks like we have more opportunities and resources than we ever thought possible.

Many of you have asked when we will see the bulldozers. This is my best guess:

- **Bond projects.** The parks projects could begin later this year. The police station and golf courses will have to go through the regular development process. Permitting could take two to three years.

- **Affordable housing.** Planning is underway, and we could see first time homeowner and rehabilitation activity this year.
- **Surtax.** The first of 709 county-wide submitted projects won't roll out until 2020. Our streets, alleys and sidewalks should be the first ones out of the box.

While there have been other exciting times in Hollywood's long past, two stand out in my mind: 1926, when Joseph Young opened the Hollywood Beach Resort and the 1960's, when we were the fastest growing city in Florida, going from 30,000 to more than 100,000, as Hollywood Hills and Emerald Hills developed.

Now, all the above opportunities are in our hands. They represent probably \$400 million over 30 years. This is a management and organization challenge requiring care to deliver what you asked for. We are not embarrassed by our riches.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ FOOD TIPS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Because I was the Director of Training for Tony Roma restaurants and trained all the new restaurant Kitchen Managers for many years, I learned a lot of cool “tips”. The Kitchen Managers were seasoned chefs, my only responsibility was to be sure they learned to cook Tony Roma's food according to our recipes and methods. If you want to learn a lot about a profession, learn enough to become a trainer. I was a perpetual student and I loved it. “To teach is to learn twice” – Joseph Joubert. “To train is to learn twice as much” – Cindy Abraham.

One of the “tricks” an elderly chef from Kentucky taught me was to cook a steak from frozen. Of course, he could not do that in a Tony Roma's restaurant because that was not in the manual but that is how I have been cooking steaks ever since and not once have I ever had anyone say that it was a good idea. Yes, guests would agree the steak came out great, but it was still wrong. Also, that same chef taught me that if anyone locked me in a freezer to take a frozen steak and jam it in the freezer fan to short it out so I wouldn't die – hey, you never know...

Back to the frozen steak issue - I have finally been vindicated. Cook's Illustrated, a new magazine with tips for home cooks, has a “How to cook a great steak” article. Their tasters “unanimously preferred cooked-from-frozen steaks to their thawed counterparts”. The beauty of this is that I can buy steaks on sale and cook them when I want. I do the same with burgers – make the patties, salt and pepper both sides and freeze. Perfect. I take the frozen steak (about an inch thick and pre-seasoned on both sides with whatever you like; salt & garlic pepper, Montreal Steak Seasoning, etc.) and put it under a pre-heated broiler for about 15 minutes on one side and 10 on the other. I get a

beautifully seared steak and 25 minutes gives me medium rare. In Cook's Illustrated the chef took the frozen steak from the freezer straight to a sizzling hot pan to sear both sides (90 seconds each side) before baking in the oven for 20 minutes. Either way, overcooking the center is prevented. Be sure to let it rest before slicing.

PRESERVING PRODUCE

Ethylene is a natural gas that is released by some fruits and vegetables which speeds up ripening. That is why putting certain items in a paper bag to trap the gas helps them ripen faster like Apricots, Avocados, Mangoes, Melons, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears and Plums BUT they need to go into the fridge once they are ripe because they are high-ethylene producing. Ripe bananas and tomatoes are also high-ethylene but can remain at room temperature when ripe, just keep them away from ethylene -sensitive unripe bananas, cucumbers, eggplant, onions, potatoes, squashes and melons.

Apples and blueberries are high ethylene and should be stored in the fridge but keep them away from ethylene-sensitive produce such as: Berries, Broccoli, Brussel sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Dark leafy greens, Leeks, Lettuce, Green Beans, and Peas.

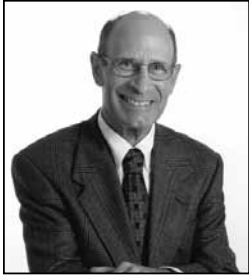
SEVEN TIPS TO MAKE YOUR KITCHEN LIFE EASIER

1. Keep bay leaves in the freezer, it preserves their flavor longer
2. To make easy peel boiled eggs, place eggs in a steamer basket and then lower them into the boiling water. Cover and reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for 13 minutes.

Continued on Pg. 17

APRIL 2019 COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

by Commissioner Dick Blattner



The highlight of March was the passage of the General Obligation Bond. The turnout was low (about 9% of eligible voters), but that's to be expected in a Special Election. Our thinking was that if the issue had been on the November ballot, it would have been placed at the very end of the ballot leaving just a small number of voters who persevered all the way to the end.

COMMISSION ACTIONS

Passed a Resolution authorizing the City to execute an agreement with the County which will allow them to assume responsibility for unsafe structures in Hollywood. This is more efficient, and we expect better and faster results.

Applied for a \$150,000 grant from the Florida Inland Navigation District for Phase One of the Mooring Field project for North and South Lakes. What is this about? Hollywood has no ability to control or police boats docking in these lakes without creating a mooring field. Boaters would be able to tie up, pay a daily fee and be required to abide by regulations for handling waste, etc. It limits the number of boats and, most important, it gives the Police Marine Unit the authority to enforce regulations.

OTHER ACTIONS

- **Accepted** a \$115,000 grant from Homeland Security to enhance public safety and emergency management.
- **Approved** landscaping contracts with three firms to maintain City property in the amount of \$950,000.
- **Approved** an update of our sign regulations. This brings us in compliance with Supreme Court rulings on free speech and also updates physical sign requirements.
- **Passed** an ordinance prohibiting the sale, rent or lease of motorized scooters.
- **Directed** staff to prepare an Ordinance prohibiting the City from doing business with any company on the State of Florida list of companies who support the BDS movement. The State updates this list regularly.
- **Special Commission Meeting** held on the 24th to gather further information on implementing the Interlocal Agreement with the County for Affordable Housing. About a dozen social service agencies who regularly work in that category described ways by which we can leverage their experience.
- **On that track**, I asked collegial support to direct Staff to create a policy requiring any mixed-use development along a Transit Oriented Corridor, such as 441 or Federal Highway, to include an affordable housing component.
- We also received support to review our No Smoking requirements. The State does not allow us to prohibit smoking on the beach or in parks. While we have signs "suggesting" people not smoke, the advent of Vaping has become a significant problem in schools and other public spaces. We agreed to step up and be more aggressive with our signage. Stay tuned.
- Asked for a presentation from Parking about how to address the parking situation at City Hall. I know they have some creative thoughts to solve the shortage in our back yard.

SPECIAL NOTES

- Utility Billing email address changing to utilitybilling@coh.hollywoodfl.org. If you receive your bills electronically, be sure to use this new address so that your payment gets where it is supposed to go.

CALENDAR FOR THE REST OF APRIL

15. 1:30pm - City Hall. TAC and PACO. New projects going through system.
17. 9:00pm City Hall. Fiscal Retreat. First look at projected 2020 Budget 1:00pm - City Hall. Commission Meeting. 5pm Citizen Comments
24. 1:00pm City Hall. Water and Sewer Rate Workshop 3:00pm City Hall. Joint Workshop with Community Development Advisory Board.
26. 11:00am Convention Center. Air & Sea Ports & Tourist/Convention Bureau. Annual reports.

Continued from Pg. 10

If the buyer is financing, we still need proof of funds for the down payment and closing costs as well as a pre-approval letter from a reputable lender stating that the buyer has already been approved for an amount to cover the mortgage.

This is crunch time. Buyers and sellers need to agree on price and terms. Documents must be given to the buyer in a timely manner. Time is of the essence. Both sellers and buyers have deadlines to meet that must be monitored closely, or a deal can not only become null and void, it and may result in a legal issue. Because many agents are new, we end up doing most of the paperwork and monitoring of the deadlines because both are crucial to a smooth closing. There are always needed addendums that many agents are unaware of – Seller's Disclosure, Lead Based Paint addendum for properties built before 1978, Condo or HOA riders, addendums with names like HOPA and FIRPTA.

STEP FIVE – CONTRACT TO CLOSE

Once the offer has been accepted, the clock starts to tick. 3 days to give the buyer the documents regarding the property, timelines for the first and second deposits, 5 days to apply for condo/HOA approval, 5 days for the buyer to give the lender the contract so the mortgage commitment process can start, 10-15 days for the buyer to complete an inspection and resolve any issues.

In the case of a mortgage, the lender will need to conduct an appraisal and negotiations may have to start again if the appraisal comes in less than the contract price. Again, our team is unique in that we are always present for the appraisal to answer any questions the appraiser may have about the property that can affect the value. Finally, if the property is a condo or HOA, the buyer needs a copy of the Association approval to give to the title company in order to close.

If all of this sounds overwhelming, it doesn't have to be when you hire us.

Call A Team Florida with Keller Williams at **8-HILLCREST**

If It's Real Estate, We Do It!

HAPPINESS - DEEPAK CHOPRA (FIRST PRINTED IN OPRAH MAGAZINE)

– Submitted by Etta Stevens

Happiness has never been a simple matter. What makes us happy as children is much simpler than what makes us happy as adults—and grown-up happiness tends to be bittersweet. You may find someone you deeply love, yet there are always compromises in the relationship, along with arguments, disappointments and tough obstacles for both people. In polls, around 80 percent of Americans say that they are happy; but no one has ever discovered what exactly makes someone happy. My idea of happiness might make you miserable, and vice versa.

Let's cut to the most basic questions. Can you be happy every minute of the day? No. Does romantic love guarantee happiness? Does having a baby? No to both questions. Is happiness hard work? Most people find it so. Compared to a person's dream of perfect happiness, these are discouraging answers. But I think the situation contains possibilities and rewards that most of us never suspect. Achieving perfect happiness is possible. It simply requires a major sacrifice: You must give up your assumptions about what will make you happy.

The world's wisdom traditions, from the Indian Vedas to Buddhism and Christianity, have examined human happiness and unhappiness in depth. The points these traditions make do not fit into our Westernized, capitalistic culture and are not what you'd expect:

- Pleasure isn't the same as happiness, and getting more pleasure isn't what will make you happy.
- Unhappiness is rooted in not knowing who you really are.
- Relying on another person's love to make you happy means that they also have the power to take your happiness away. Even the prospect of this is enough to make happiness feel insecure.
- Eternal happiness isn't a matter of finding your way to paradise, but of contacting the bliss that's a fundamental aspect of pure consciousness. To capture such bliss personally requires some lifestyle adaptations.

Let's expand on the last point since the promise of happiness as an inner state—one that nobody can take away from you—depends on what you're willing to do to realize it.

1. **Live close to nature's rhythms and cycles**, especially with regard to getting good sleep and going out into natural beauty on a regular basis.
2. **Reduce external stressors**, making a serious effort to live and work in a positive environment.
3. **Make time every day to relax**. Make time every day to play.
4. **Let your brain experience the quiet inner state that is the gateway to higher consciousness**. Meditation takes you on the

inward path, but there are similar traditions and techniques of prayer, contemplation, self-reflection and Hatha Yoga.

5. **Limit the toxicity of alcohol, tobacco, and adulterated food**. Favor a natural, organic diet whenever possible. Drink pure water; breathe pure air.
6. **Dedicate your primary relationship to mutual happiness**. Work together so that your partner's happiness feels as fulfilling as your own.
7. **Avoid the daily temptations of negativity**, such as gossip, dwelling on bad news, venting our anger and impatience and blaming others.
8. **Take responsibility for your own happiness**.
9. **Aim at the highest kind of happiness**, which is spiritual and devoid of ego.
10. **Enjoy the lifelong project of building a self**, because it is the prospect of a fulfilled self that brings satisfaction even in the face of resistance, obstacles, and setbacks.

Despite the disappointments you've already experienced, happiness is achievable beyond anything you've imagined. The secret is to realize that happiness isn't a mood, it's the most natural way to feel, something we all knew as children. Life becomes more complex as we grow up, but that fact doesn't take away our birthright. It just means that we must apply our awareness, getting past the obstacles that hide the underlying happiness that is always there, waiting to be awakened.

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3. Get an ice bath ready – equal parts cold water and ice. Transfer eggs to ice bath for 15 minutes before peeling.
4. Toast nuts in the microwave instead of the stovetop for more even toasting.
5. Best garlic mashed potatoes – sauté equal amounts of garlic powder and water in the butter before mixing into the mashed potatoes.
6. Before adding sugar sprinkle to a home baked pie crust, brush it with water first.
7. To stop your homemade vinaigrette from emulsifying, add 1 tsp molasses.
8. Canned baked beans can have the same ingredients as homemade. But look to be sure that the sodium content is less than 450 mg and the sugar content is less than 12 g.

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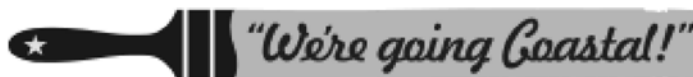


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