

# Inside Hillcrest

– Connecting Neighbors to Neighbors –



APRIL 2021

HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA

VOLUME 15 • ISSUE 4

## APRIL INSIDE HILLCREST

### SPECIAL PULL-OUT REAL ESTATE SECTION IN THIS ISSUE. PAGES 7-14.

They say that women are much better at handling pain than men. I am not sure who “they” are but I beg to differ. I am the world’s biggest baby when it comes to pain. I remember a doctor telling me “your pain threshold is zilch”. In fact, in the late 70’s when natural childbirth was “the right thing to do” to the point of ridicule and shame if one opted not to go that route, I did not care. I am a “knock me out at conception and wake me when it’s potty-trained” kind of gal. So, when I heard that there were folks out there that are afraid to get the COVID-19 vaccine because of the needle part – I totally get it. But I swear to you – this is not your momma’s vaccine. I promise that it is quick and painless so PLEASE take advantage of the opportunity to get the vaccine as soon as you can.

If you are not on our email list, you did not get the notifications about the COVID-19 vaccine. A few weeks ago, we sent out a notice that they were closing Hillcrest Drive by building 25 for repairs. Last week we sent out links for the Johnson & Johnson one dose vaccine that were available at Broward College April 9th and April 11th. When you subscribe to Inside Hillcrest you will not only get a copy of the paper every month via email you also get notifications whenever something affects our community – good or bad. Just write us at [Inside.Hillcrest@comcast.net](mailto:Inside.Hillcrest@comcast.net) and we will add you to our subscriber list.

### WHEN IS A BOARD MEETING NOT A BOARD MEETING?

Interesting article on page 15 about what constitutes a meeting of the board. We all know that any time a quorum of board members get together it is defined as a meeting and that notice must be posted ahead of time. But what do the new statutes say? You may be surprised. Of course, a board with integrity would never use a loophole to get around the law...but they can.

### THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO...

...all things Real Estate. From advice for home/condo buyers, sellers and renters to a list of the best people to call to do work in your home. So many of us are taking a long hard look at our surroundings. **Keller Williams A Team Florida’s motto is LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE.** In 2020, a lot of people realized they

don’t love where they live and either want to make a change to their home/condo or move. It is a seller’s market out there right now and any type of real estate related trades are super busy. I took me over 3 months to get my appliances delivered! I ordered in mid-June and the delivery date was September 8! We couldn’t find a dishwasher for one of listings in time for the closing and had to give a credit to the buyer. Finding painters, handymen, plumbers, electricians, etc. is tough right now. Of course, we can always rely on **Executive Plumbing** and **Mike Balan A/C** and we do have our handymen, **Larry and Leonardo** although they are super busy right now. And of course, **Brando Valenzuela** owner of **Florida Tubs** is a loyal Hillcrest vendor so thankfully we can get our tubs, sinks, countertops refinished in a timely manner. We saw an **A-1 Mica** truck outside our condo recently so we know that **Chris Bencivenga** has been remodeling Hillcrest kitchens and baths lately (since our first issue in 2008). All these folks advertise in IH to help support our community. And PLEASE, if you have a problem with one of our preferred vendors, tell them and give them the chance to fix it before complaining to Inside Hillcrest. Everyone makes mistakes but the true test of a good company is how they handle them.

We routinely get calls to Inside Hillcrest for recommendations and when it comes to any other businesses including medical, legal, financial etc., we can help. But now we need YOUR help. If you know any good trades people, please let us know. We need a carpenter and an electrician for starters. On a side note, anyone know a good local dentist? The last three tried to sell me services I did not need and I am over it. Back to beautifying our surroundings and some GREAT NEWS for Hillcresters...(drumroll)...

### CHANGE THE COLOR OF YOUR KITCHEN CONTEST!

If there is one thing that many of us have felt during this past year, it is getting sick and tired of looking at “the same four walls” as many of us

stayed home more ever before. Me? I got new appliances and changed out all my linens and towels just to look at something different. I am a sheet freak; I buy new ones every few months. Why I get tired of looking at something that I usually use with my eyes closed is a mystery. But there is nothing like changing the color of your kitchen to give your place a real boost. Lina and Patrick from **WRAP MY KITCHEN** want to give a FREE kitchen cabinet makeover to a lucky Hillcrest.

When I met Lina and Patrick, they had called Inside Hillcrest to inquire about advertising. The concept intrigued not only me but especially Brian, whose background is kitchen and bath remodeling before he took up Real Estate. Patrick showed us how they can change the color of a kitchen in ONE DAY! However, the rule to advertise is that a business has to be owned or recommended by a Hillcrest resident. When I asked if they had done any work in Hillcrest they said yes and told me the name. Turns out they are our neighbors, **Bundi and Sylvia Blair**. And the best part of that story is that **Wrap My Kitchen** installed their cabinets, but Bundi opted to buy the system and do the countertops himself.

**FUN FACT:** The company started in Canada where 50% of the customers buy the materials and DIY – hence the starting price of \$569.00. Here in the US, most of us have the professionals do the installation. I’m thinking that Bundi may be half Canadian. Turn to page 3 to enter the contest and to see what Sylvia Blair has to say about their experience with **WRAP MY KITCHEN!**

### REAL ESTATE

When I am not cooking or putting Inside Hillcrest together, I am a Keller Williams Real Estate agent. I told this joke before but in today’s market, it is more relevant than ever: A highway patrolman stopped a speeder on I-95. The officer asked, “May I see your Real Estate license please?” The speeder said, “Don’t you mean my driver’s license?” “No”, answered the officer, “not everyone in Florida has one of those.”

Right now, there are 253,168 licensed realtors in Florida and 190,694 homes for sale. The hardest thing about real estate right now is working with rookie or out of town agents. Why someone would choose an unqualified agent or one that does not even live close enough to service their listing makes no sense to me. There are plenty of experienced, professional agents in Hollywood and some right here in Hillcrest.

*Continued on Pg. 2*



Continued from Pg. 1

You do yourself a disservice if you put one of the most expensive assets you own in the hands of the wrong agent.

We can spot a weak agent the minute they answer the phone and so can you. If you are thinking about hiring an agent, look up one of their listings and call them about it. Do they answer the phone PROFESSIONALLY or at least return your call in a timely manner? What do they tell you about the property? Do they bother to find out if you are even qualified to buy it? Too many deals go south because of buyer's who have not been property vetted. Is it the buyer's agent job to qualify their buyer? Of course, but unless we know the buyer agent, we do our own due diligence. One saying in our KW office is: "The smartest agent in the deal ends up doing all the work." And that is OK with us; we want to get to the closing table.

Buyer agents actually look for our name when shopping Hillcrest because they know we will get it done. We know Hillcrest inside and out. On the flip side of that, sometimes it is in our client's best interest if the agent on the other side of the deal isn't that good. When an agent is desperate for a commission, we can usually sell our listings a little higher or get our buyers a deal on the home/condo they want. I believe that our team, **Keller Williams A Team Florida**, are experts in the Hillcrest and Hollywood market. Before you hire just anyone, do your homework. A poor choice can cost you.

As an added bonus, we are including a list of the cities where we work with agents that we know and trust. If you have friends or relatives who live outside South Broward and need a good Realtor, let us know and we can connect you.

**THE HISTORY OF HILLCREST**

Inside this issue (by popular demand) we have reprinted the History of Hillcrest. You may be surprised that Building 1 was not the first built. Buildings 5, 6 and 7 were. And Hillcrest 27 was not the last Hillcrest building. 19 (1989) and 20 (1986) are the newest buildings. Wonder why there are no Buildings 12, 13 or 14. All this and more in this issue!

**Great Things Are Happening All Around Hollywood**

*By Vice-Mayor Linda Sherwood*



In my District 6, Beverly Hills and Hillcrest had a wonderful turnout of residents 60 and older for the Pfizer Covid 19 Vaccine. Both in Beverly Hills and Hillcrest had fantastic volunteers helping people sign up; some even knocking on doors to help residents register. Many residents in both communities do not have computers so the efforts to offer the opportunity to get vaccinated were much appreciated.

We want to thank our newly elected State Representative Marie Woodson for securing close to 1000 first and second doses of the vaccine. We used the Beverly Hills Clubhouse for both communities. I live in Beverly Hills and it was a pleasure for me to help get this project off the ground. In Hillcrest I want to thank Cindy Abraham and her team. In Beverly Hills this could not have taken place without help of Teresa, Andre, Mike, Kay, Marie and Kathleen. The hard work and many hours entailed by our Beverly Hills group was outstanding. If I could give out Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actors, they would win!

In other news, the permit to demolish the old adult video store on the corner of Hollywood Blvd. and 441 was approved. Look for that building coming down and the beautiful modernistic styled WAWA to be built soon. WAWA has agreed to scenic landscaping that will face drivers coming off the Turnpike. This will give those entering Hollywood a lovely welcome.

At our March 17th. Commission Meeting, we approved our staff to enter the city into contract with the Related Group. We have been accepting proposals to refurbish the south side of Hollywood Beach where the old Hollywood Beach Community Center has stood for over 50 years. Related Group submitted one of the best proposals I have seen in the 14 years I have been on this commission.

Their plans include a new 23,000 SF 2- story Community Center. This beautiful glass building will have full view of the ocean. It will house a Library, Exercise Room, Meeting Rooms and an Elaborate Ballroom for events. There will also be a parking garage, restaurant, and some retail shops. A large open gathering place is included as a place to meet up or just sit and relax. The Harry Berry children's park next door will also be refurbished as well as the dunes on the beach. There will be a tall thin glass-enclosed condo next to A1A that has been approved by the neighboring condos because it will not impede their views. Keeping up with the repairs for the old center was a drain on the City so the best part of this whole project is that the building and use of the new center by City of Hollywood residents costs us nothing.

Not only that, but Related Group Inc. pays a yearly \$400,000.00 rental fee to the City. The City also receives a percentage of the new condo sales and rentals as well as all of the parking garage income. Related Group Inc. has also committed to a \$20,000,000.00 contribution to the City of Hollywood that we can use to take care of our parks and other city projects. I can't think of a better deal, can you?



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## FREE KITCHEN CONTEST FOR HILLCRESTERS

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE IN BY APRIL 30, 2021



**YES, one lucky Hillcrest will win a Wrap My Kitchen cabinet makeover just by entering our contest!**

All you have to do is:

1. In 100 words or less, tell us why you would love to change the color of your kitchen.
2. Attach at least 3 pictures of your current kitchen cabinets.
3. For questions call Lina directly at 954-270-8382
4. All entries must be in by April 30, 2021

You can email your info and pictures ATTN LINA to: infoflorida@wrapmykitchen.com. If you do not have email, you can mail your 100 words or less and minimum 3 pictures to:

**Wrap My Kitchen -**  
ATTN: LINA: 1249 Stirling Rd STE 9., Dania Beach, FL 33004.

To see all the available colors, go to: **WrapMyKitchen.com**  
**Sylvia Blair**, Hillcrest 27 tells us about their experience with Wrap My Kitchen:

“We accidentally came across **Wrap My Kitchen** when my husband was receiving therapy on his hand. We noticed Wrap My Kitchen right next door and stopped in. We are so glad we did because we had been talking about re-doing our kitchen but never knew a less expensive option existed. Our kitchen went from dull to fabulous in one day! Patrick and his team are knowledgeable, take the time to let you know what to expect, and most importantly, they make the process easy whether you want professional installation or to do it yourself.

If you want to give your kitchen a facelift without breaking the bank, check out **Wrap My Kitchen**. We think you will like the results. They also do bathrooms!”

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



Greetings Hillcrest Residents,

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, many residents have taken advantage of the resources offered by our Broward County library system. In a time where we need entertainment AND information more than ever, our library system has provided thousands of residents like you with access to up-to-date news, great books and movies, and much more. In honor of National Library Worker Week in

April, it is important that we reflect on all that our library offers us – and how we can continue to access the wonders of the mind through the treasures of a local library.

Broward County Library has just switched to a new circulation system called SirsiDynix. This new circulation system will make it easier for residents to check out books, articles, e-media, and more. Now is a better time than ever to read that book you have always postponed reading, or to check out a famous Oscar-winner you have never seen. Through our InterLibrary Loan department, residents can even check out and order materials that are not owned by Broward County Library – we receive rare books from as far as Hawaii! In addition to tons of great books and e-media, residents can also use the library system to do research. This can be research on a book you are writing, or your family tree, or the history of your city – and so much more! Through our library website, those with a Broward County library card can access dozens of useful databases that provide everything from old magazines to genealogical information. The COVID-19 pandemic has given many of our residents the chance to explore hobbies and do research they never previously had the time for – and the Broward County Library system is here to help. Please to go [broward.org/library](http://broward.org/library) to access all these resources, from the circulation system to our databases.

The library is not only available for adults. It also has wonderful opportunities for your children and grandchildren. In a time of unprecedented challenges for our students, Broward County Libraries has teamed up with Broward County Public Schools to provide access to more resources than ever before. **Through the launch of the Beanstack program, Broward County Library has given all students, particularly younger students, access to a bevy of great books, games, and other resources to help foster a love of reading.** They have also made databases and other resources for research and college applications available to all high school students. This is a wonderful collaboration and opportunity for our students – go to [browardlibrary.beanstack.com](http://browardlibrary.beanstack.com) to learn more and show your family. We hope you take the time to take advantage of all that the library has to offer. There is a world of wonders and discoveries, right at your fingertips!

### Vaccination Update

All Florida residents that are 18 and over are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. All three types of COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective at fighting this virus – please encourage your friends and family to get vaccinated. The more of our residents that receive these vaccines, the sooner life can begin to get back to normal. You can log on to <https://myvaccine.fl.gov> to find a location near you or to pre-register for the next available spot. All adult residents can pre-register or sign-up for a vaccine appointment at one of several locations in

Broward County. You can also learn more through Broward Health or directly through Broward County's website, as well as options like Memorial Healthcare's MyChart feature. Vaccines are also available at Publix, Wal Mart, CVS, and Walgreens – you can call your local pharmacy for appointments or to be added to a disposal list. There are many options to pursue to receive your vaccine, and you can reach out to my office at any time for assistance in getting yourself or your family this life-saving vaccination.

### Contact Us

Our District office is conveniently located in the lobby of the Hollywood Branch of the Broward County Public Library at 2600 Hollywood Blvd, next to Hollywood City Hall. I am pleased to report that it has re-opened and is available to you from 10 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Friday. If you plan a visit, please honor the Covid-19 safety precautions of mask wearing and social distancing. My staff is also working from my office in Fort Lauderdale and from other remote locations within our District. The Fort Lauderdale office is open for your convenience Monday through Friday from 9AM to 5PM. If you would like to schedule an appointment, or you have a great idea, suggestion or an issue that needs my attention, feel free to call me at 954-357-7006/7790 or send me an email at [bfurr@broward.org](mailto:bfurr@broward.org).

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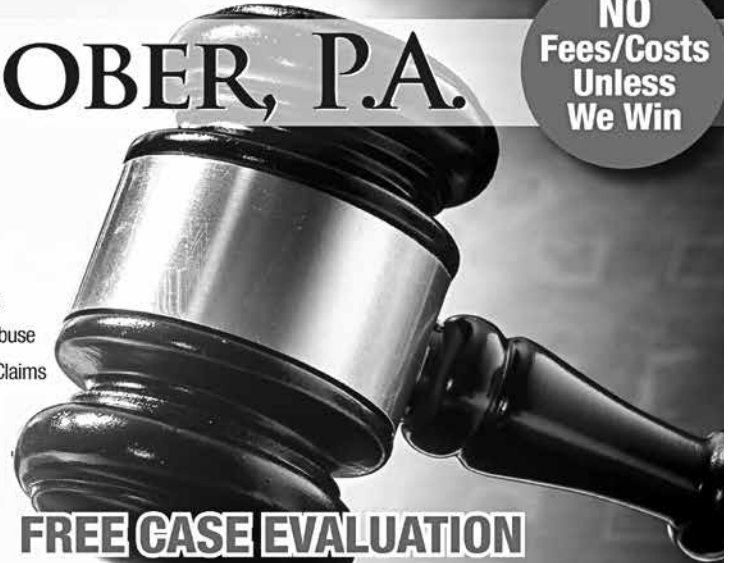
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## April Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham

I made a six mini-cheese/spinach souffles. That's 30 minutes of my life I won't get back. It was an interesting and rather healthy recipe which included 2 egg yolks and 6 egg whites. It was fun to watch them pouf up in the oven. I had never had one before, never made one before and although they say "never say never" I can guarantee I will never make one again. I am sure there are lot of people who like them. Not sure why. Although if you don't eat them right away, they deflate and are great fried in butter for breakfast.

Another recipe that did not make it to this page was a spin on linguini with clam sauce. The spin was adding arugula. Not sure why. I like arugula but not with clam sauce.

BUT the good news is that I found a recipe for chicken tenders that is delicious! We had it twice in one week. I have never even had a plantain chip before (\$1.77 at Aldi's, \$3.00 at Publix). Surprisingly, they make a great coating for tenders which we always keep handy. Tenders are great as a last minute anything, including Chicken Caesar Salad. You can also use them in any recipe that calls for pounded chicken breasts. If you have a favorite sauce, tenders are good with almost anything. We really liked the homemade Mango dipping sauce came with this recipe. It is almost mango season anyway, but I always keep mango chunks in the freezer. If you don't have mango chutney just mash up the mangoes and add some dried cranberries or raisin, a dash of vinegar, ginger and a little chopped garlic and onion just to get by until you do have the chutney. Which you will because I am reprinting my Mango Chutney recipe below also. You're Welcome!

### PLANTAIN CRUSTED CHICKEN TENDERS

Butter flavored cooking spray

1 lb. chicken tenders

2 large eggs

3 cups crushed plantain chips (5-6 oz)

1/3 cup cornstarch

1/4 tsp salt

1. Preheat oven to 425.

Place a wire rack over a rimmed baking sheet (covered with foil for easy cleaning). Use non-stick spray on the rack.

2. You need 3 shallow plates. Put the cornstarch in the first one, whisked eggs in the second one, and the crushed plantains in the third one.

3. Coat the tenders with the cornstarch, dip them in the whisked eggs, shake off the excess and then press both sides down in the crushed plantain chips until coated.



4. Place tenders on the rack, spray with the butter spray and sprinkle with salt.

5. Bake tenders for 20 minutes. Because they are on the rack the underside will get crispy also. Remove from oven and serve with Mango Dipping Sauce.

### MANGO DIPPING SAUCE

1/2 cup mayonnaise

4 TBS mango chutney

1-2 tsp Sriracha

Mix the mayonnaise, chutney and Sriracha in a small bowl. It is even better if you let it sit for a few hours.

Mango season is just around the corner so I am counting on my friends Alan and Cindy Libero, and Al and Maddie Katz who keep me supplied with lots of mangoes. I use gloves to make almost everything but you definitely need them when handling mangoes unless you like orange fingernails. Mango jam is pretty easy. Just cut up the mangoes and cook with a little turbinado sugar, stirring constantly for hours until it is thick. Cook and jar.



For the mango rum, just take all the seeds that still have a lot of mango clinging to them and put them in a bowl. Add 1/4 cup of sugar for every 10 seeds and cover with half water and half rum. Refrigerate for 5 days, squeeze pulp off the seeds into the bowl, discard the seeds, and then strain the liquid (which will be a beautiful mango color) into a large measuring cup so you can easily fill bottles to give away...or not.

As for Mango Chutney, coat a small pork roast, salmon, chicken – it makes almost anything tastes special!

### MANGO CHUTNEY

2 cups sugar

1 cup distilled white vinegar

6 cups mangoes (4-5), peeled and diced (3/4 inch pieces)

1 cup chopped onion

1/2 cup golden raisin

2 TBS crystallized ginger, finely chopped (lasts forever in the fridge)

1 minced garlic clove

1 tsp mustard seeds

1/2 tsp red chili pepper flakes



Combine sugar and vinegar in a pot, bring to a boil and stir until the sugar dissolves. Add the rest of the ingredients, turn down to a simmer and stir occasionally, uncovered until slightly thickened for about 45 minutes to an hour.

## THE HISTORY OF HILLCREST



In 2008, we invited **Herb and Jason Tobin**, son and grandson of Ben Tobin, the developer of the Hillcrest community, to a Hillcrest Leadership Meeting to talk about the history of our Hillcrest Community. Here is what we learned.

In 1945, Ben Tobin Acquired the Hollywood Beach Hotel. In that acquisition (10 acres on the ocean) he acquired the 100 acres Hollywood Beach Country Club in downtown Hollywood as well as the 300 acres of land which is today Hillcrest Condominiums. Twenty-five acres, now Washington Park, they sold to the school board. Ben acquired the property through the U.S. Navy which was used as an officer barracks and training facility during World War II. The original owners were Ed Rosenthal, who also owned the Del Coronado Hotel in San Diego and Edmund Kaufman, one of the brothers who owned Kay Jewelers. In the early 1960's, with the advent of jet travel, Ben Tobin and his son Herb became involved in a process of determining what the best use for the Hillcrest site was.

One idea for the area was a rock pit, which was a very lucrative business in those days. A cemetery was another option. But the Tobin family were always in the people business so the final decision was to build 50+ similar 3-story co-ops that would look like Buildings 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11, called the E-buildings due to their shape.

In the early 60's jet travel cut the commute from New York to Florida from four hours to two. Puerto Rico became the preferred destination so many Florida hotels turned to the convention business. Hillcrest was meant to be a retirement community for people with modest incomes. A lady by the name of Barbara Gompers, who had lived in **Building 21** until she sold her unit to move to an ALF ad many have, was the registered Manager of the Hollywood Beach Hotel. She would travel to country Clubs up north and sell units to groups of members. Prices started at roughly \$6,700 to \$6,900 and hit a high of \$15,000 as demand increased. The Country Club was the center of the community for the new owners. Then as things progressed, it was necessary to build 5 stories to meet demands. The evolution of the buildings in Hillcrest was buyer-driven. The original sales offices were on the site where **Building 15** now stands. 48th Street was the Main entrance. After **Buildings 15, 16 17, and 18** were built, residents indicated they wanted taller buildings with lobbies and security. **Building 21** was the first high-rise ever built on a golf course in Florida. Residents would sell their units and move to the new ones. It was common for someone to have owned a 3-story, move to a 5-story and end up in a high-rise. One bedroom units in building 21 were 994 SF including the balcony, 2 bedroom units were 1296 SF including the balcony and for the first time two rows of corners were called "deluxe" and totaled 1499 SF.

Buildings 1 through 21 were co-ops; this is what New Yorkers knew and were comfortable with buying. **Building 22** was the first condo. It even had a name "Madrid" which is still on the sign out front. A new amenity was added to the now six lines of 1499 SF corner units –

saunas! The day they announced it the Surgeon General came out with a statement that saunas were bad for people with heart conditions...! Only three corner units ended up with saunas.

**Buildings 22, 23 and 24** with the exact floor plan layouts had a steady influx of buyers. **Building 25** was the first 12-story building and started out as a 252 unit building. At this time, so many people were buying more than one unit and combining them, it ended up with 235 including large 1634 SF corner units with double balconies. So when **Building 26** was built, the first – and only- three-bedroom units were built totaling a whopping 2444 SF which included 2 balconies, one off the living room and one adjoining the master bedroom.

Many developers built and sold units with the promise of building a Country Club in the future. The Tobin motto was, "The Promises are on the Premises" so the Country Club was always a part of the community although it was a separate entity that sold memberships. At this time, Florida started instituting the toughest condo laws in the country due to developer mistakes. The Tobin family took heed and historically, our buildings that were well maintained from the beginning have withstood the test of time ... and Hurricane Wilma!

Twenty-four buildings comprise Hillcrest. **Buildings 6, 7 and 8** were built first and faced the 18-hole golf course and are adjacent to the first pool recreation complex building. The number 13 was considered unlucky so there was never a Building 13 in the plan; and of course, no unit number thirteen in any of the buildings. The family held the land destined for Buildings 12 and 14 for a long time. **Building 11** was the only building that did not have Golf Course access and 12 and 14 would have flanked Building 11. The Tobin family sold the land and another developer built Washington Palms.

Herb and Jason then started answering the questions that had been submitted by the members of the Leadership group.

**Building 5** wanted to know about the galvanized piping in the building that was starting to corrode. Herb explained that many of the materials as well as the codes were different back in the sixties. Galvanized pipe is what was used; today we have PVC pipes, which were not available then. He added that they used aluminum wiring when building the Hillcrest Country Club because copper was hard to come by due to the Viet Nam war. Many things would have been done very differently today, but the technology at the time was not as advanced.

Another question was why the elevators in Building 23 seem to run more smoothly than the other buildings. When Building 23 was being built, Westinghouse and Otis were on strike. The Tobin's had to go to Canada to buy a package unit, and once the strikes were over, they went back to their original vendors according to plan. Ironically, the elevators in Building 23 turned out to have the longest life and Hillcrest 23 were the last to have to replace their elevators which they are doing this year. Herb pointed out that elevators remain one of the most important pieces of equipment that need on-going preventative maintenance for safety and liability.

Why were **Buildings 15 and 16** built with only one parking space per unit and no guest parking at all? The demographic at the time were retirees and snowbirds with one car. In many cases, the wife did not drive at all. Also, the codes dictated one space per unit. Today, with the changing demographics, the code changed to 1.5 and sometimes 1.75 spaces per unit in the developments being built today.

Why were **Buildings 19 & 20** built as rental apartments? What not many people know is that these were the last two Hillcrest buildings. When 26 and 27 were being built (both 12 story buildings), they were completely sold out pre-construction with over 200 extra paid deposits meant to roll over to 19 and 20!



*Continued from Pg. 7*

However the market changed. During the Carter years, the prime rate rose to 22% and people got out of the market. So, these buildings were owned and managed as rental apartments by the Tobin Family. They sold all the units to an investor in 2002 that started selling the units to individuals, both investors and residents and both buildings are now condos. Each has a Board of Directors that still allows rentals. Herb Tobin stated that he feels he made two mistakes in the development of Hillcrest. One was not forming a Master Association and the second was that the Country Club should have been structured as an equity club with the owners having that amenity as a part of their unit ownership.

Again, the demographics were changing. The original owners were Country Club people; it was part of their lifestyle. However, in the 80's, the new owners moving in were not into it. Many were still working and did not have the time or the funds to join a Club. The Country Club Corporation of America bought it in the early 80's but soon gave it back due to falling membership. Nat Joseph and Sol Jaffe, who played gin rummy with Ben Tobin, were also partners. Nat Joseph was in the fastener business and Ben was fond of saying that anyone who dealt with "nuts and bolt" had to be crazy. Sol Jaffe lived in Building 26 and owned a dozen car dealerships. Charlie Shannon, the President of Building 26 at the time, also ran the Club. They bought Tobin out and later sold the Club to the Japanese for 9 million dollars. In its heyday, the Country Club offered golf, catering, dining and parties. It was not a Recreation Center. That is why the Playdium was built, to fill that need. The Playdium had pool tables, card rooms, saunas, arts & crafts and a library. Later on, the gym was added. Harry Cott, owner of Cott Beverages lived here in Hillcrest. He too moved several times and ended up in **Building 21**. His hobby was building models, which were displayed for years at the Playdium.

Hillcrest continued to change as more active, working people moved in. The Country Club changed hands several more times with continued lack of interest from the newer residents. Herb addressed other construction issues. Concrete balconies are no longer being built today but were the only option at the time. Cement Craft offered pre-cast concrete balconies formed with steel (untreated at that time). So today, 35 years later we have rebar's that have rusted and swollen over the years; especially if the owners used indoor/outdoor carpet on an open balcony that retained moisture when it rained. The solution today is to re-preserve or replace. Thanks to the 40-year safety inspection, buildings have addressed their structural and electrical issues successfully and to date, all Hillcrest buildings 40+ years old are prepared to pass the inspection.

Why was **Building 21** built with mostly convertible corners rather than the deluxe two-bedroom corners? Again, the buyers drove the changes. When the buyers wanted air-conditioned lobbies and 24/7 security, the high-rises – never a part of the original plan – came to pass. **Buildings 22 through 24** all have the deluxe 2-bedroom corners, while **Building 21** only has them in the units ending with numbers 19 and 20. Roman tubs started in **Building 23**. **Building 22** has a heat exchange unit but the rest of the high-rises have A/C towers on the roof. The sizes of the corners increased in **Buildings 25, 26, and 27** when the market was booming. 21 through 24 have 1499 sq. ft. corners while 25 through 27 have 1634 sq ft corners that include double balconies. **Building 25** does not have a sister building but has the largest number of units. **Building 26** was built with the only 3 bedroom units. When the market changed, building 12-story buildings ceased. The last two buildings, **Buildings 19 and 20** have six stories and eight stories respectively.

Some of the original owners in **Building 25** remember when they had golf course views across the street before 26 and 27 were built. Why? Buildings 26 and 27 were always part of the master plan but the fourth tee was in that area until it the Executive Golf Course was reconfigured according to the master plan. Hillcrest was one of the first communities where the utilities were underground; cable, power, sewer, etc.

A member asked about the area between Hillcrest Drive and Pembroke Road on the west side of Park. This property was always

owned by the City of Hollywood but the Tobin's, as well as some of the Leadership members, remembered that it was originally a City Dump and an incinerator then a landfill. Now it is a collection center and fueling center for City vehicles. The land abutting **Building 25** is also owned by the city and Hillcresters definitely need to stay informed about future plans. The lesson to be learned here is that Hillcrest has always been subject to drastic changes based on the market of the day. Today is no different. We lost the Golf Course, which was sad, even to those of us who don't play.

We have all in one way or another gotten enjoyment out of living in a golf community. The first plan, back in 2009, was to build a 13-story twin condo on the land where the original Country Club sat and town homes across the street. We decided we wanted upscale homes and town homes rather than another high rise building that would be marketed to renters. When the covenant was lifted on the 18-hole golf course, the current plan went into effect with 645 homes/townhomes. Hillcrest is zoned for 300 units and we have 2,355 condos so 645 was the limit of the number of residences that could be built.

Usable park space with walking trails, lakes, tennis courts and a community center were all part of the plan. From Baby Boomers to Millennials, beautiful surroundings that lend themselves to exercise and activity are desirable assets. We have a group of new neighbors who complement the eclectic mix of retirees, young professionals and couples starting families as well as our well-to-do snowbirds.



Part of what has happened over the past few years that has nothing to do with the Parkview project is the addition of a Charter School called Championship Academy on the site that used to be the Playdium. Dr. Frank Gaines is the new principal and he is determined to make Championship Academy an A rated school. In future issues of Inside Hillcrest, we hope to have a page written by the Academy students to keep us updated on how things are going in their world since they are part of our neighborhood.



In one issue we interviewed three Parkview families and introduce them to you in Inside Hillcrest. We look forward to having a Parkview page included in Inside Hillcrest also. Our Hillcrest family has grown over the years and our main goal is the same, to have a beautiful, safe, and happy place to live. As Mario Puzo said, "The strength of a family like the strength of an army, lies in its loyalty to each other."

**Welcome to Hillcrest – the Hidden Jewel in Hollywood!**  
TO BE CONTINUED...!



## What's Happening In The Real Estate Market in Hillcrest and Hollywood?



Cindy Abraham



Brian Gaiefsky

The market for single-family homes has exploded. Right now, homes are at a premium and buyers are paying over list price; either all cash or coming up with the difference between the appraised price and the list price. Bidding wars are common.

**What does this mean to us?** Homes are becoming out of reach for many. The next best thing is a townhome or large condo. As we all know, Hillcrest condos are known for their size and views. And Keller Williams A Team Florida are known as the Hillcrest experts which is why agents shopping Hillcrest look for our listings.

**Looking to buy or sell? Let's talk. Or send us an email or text:**

Chat – [954-964-2559](tel:954-964-2559) - Email – [Info@ATeamFlorida.com](mailto:Info@ATeamFlorida.com)

Text – Cindy - [954-895-1617](tel:954-895-1617) Brian – [954-415-5323](tel:954-415-5323)



[ateamflorida.com](http://ateamflorida.com) [info@ateamflorida.com](mailto:info@ateamflorida.com) **8-HILLCREST (844) 552-7378**

### BRIAN'S DIY CORNER

#### WINDOW PROBLEMS? NOISY STORM SHUTTERS? WE CAN HELP.

One benefit of having a former construction guy on our team, Brian Gaiefsky, is that he knows how to get things fixed for our sellers so that the inspections go smoother. The benefit of having a Hillcrest on our team is that he knows Hillcrest and knows what the inspectors are going to find in many of our aging condos. The most common problems are windows that do not stay up, and broken or rattling pull-down storm shutters.

We had a brisk winter this year and many of us enjoyed opening all of our windows to enjoy the fresh air, right? However, when the time came and many opened their windows they did not stay up. Some of us were creative and come up with a prop up of some sort to keep them open. A better solution would be to have the mechanisms replaced and enjoy the freedom of no hassle and easy opening windows. **Call 8-HILLCREST FOR A REFERRAL AND GET IT DONE.**

Here in Hillcrest many of us also have the aging roll down type aluminum shutters on our balconies which are great when the heavy rains start. However, most were installed many years ago and either need repair or do not work at all. Some constantly rattle when it is windy which can be very annoying – we actually have any easy DIY fix for that. If your storm shutters need repair, **call 8-HILLCREST** and we will come by and show you how to fix it yourself, easily and inexpensively.

### REAL ESTATE AND THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF COLLEGE

Hopefully, we have prepared financially for our children to go off to college. We either set enough money aside over the years or enrolled in Florida Prepaid to help. Ideally, our child gets a scholarship. Sometimes we rely on student loans or other types of financial aid. But there is one avenue that we recommend to our clients whose children will be moving to another city to attend college – **BUY A HOUSE OR CONDO**. Remember that if you are going to be in one place for at least 3-5 years, renting makes no sense. And according to the stats, while it normally takes students 4 years to complete a bachelor's degree, most students are done within 6 years.

In this issue there is a two page list of our referral partners that we worked with. Back in 2007, we met fellow agents from around the country at Keller Williams "Family Reunion" (annual training event) and met several agents that we connected with who seemed to have the same passion for practicing Real Estate the right way – putting our customer's needs before our own. We formed a referral group in case our clients needed a good Realtor outside of our own areas. Since then, we have grown to close to 100 agents; not all are Keller Williams, but all have the same work ethic, level of customer care, professionalism, and negotiation skills that we have and that we admire in others.

Just last month, one of our clients told us his son was heading to FSU (I am a Gator so yes, that hurt a bit...) and his second son would also be going in the next three years. We gave him the contact info of our Tallahassee referral partner. He bought a 2/2 condo for less than 100K so they can rent the second room and defray his housing costs. When the second son gets to college, they can share the condo for a year or so and then rent again the following three or more years. At the end of that time, our client can either keep it as a rental for income or sell it and make a nice profit.

# MEET KELLER WILLIAM'S A TEAM...AGAIN!



## How is the A Team different from other Real Estate agents?

We educate our sellers, buyers and renters BEFORE we start the process. We do nothing without an in-depth personal consultation to learn exactly what they want and then we work as partners with our clients to get it.

## WORKING WITH SELLERS

We know that the biggest mistake sellers make is not investing in the repairs and staging that can make their property sell for top dollar.

AS IS means nothing. Buyers can walk away after the inspection if the seller refuses make or help pay for repairs.

Today's buyers have good credit and income but not a lot of cash to make improvements, so it is well worth it for our sellers to make the property move in ready. For homes, we pay for a professional inspection. For Hillcrest condos, we know what to look for that can derail a deal, so we want to either fix what needs to be fixed or disclose it to the buyers so that it does not become an issue later.

Preparing a home or condo to be shown in its best light takes time. It may be as simple as painting, a good cleaning and adding some colorful plants to the front yard or porch/balcony. AS-IS properties do not fare as well in this market place. Today's buyers need a property that is move-in ready. They are willing to pay a little more up front with a mortgage rather than have to come up with cash to make expensive repairs.

Curb appeal goes further than just the front yard. Staging is more than furniture placement and decorations; smart staging also directs the buyer's eyes toward the most positive features in the property and minimizes the negatives. Staging is one of the cheapest ways to get a good return on investment.

That can be a problem for some sellers. They just don't have the money. If they don't have the money, that's where we come in. We will loan our clients the money to do the repairs to beautify and stage their home/condo, so we can get the highest price possible.

We get reimbursed at closing. Of course, we know which expenses are worth incurring to sell at a higher price. Many times, we are setting a new highest sale for the area which makes us VERY popular with the neighbors who may be planning on selling in the future.

## HILLCREST 2021 MARCH STATE OF THE MARKET

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



## PENDING SALES

Building	Unit #	B/B	SF	List Price	Sold/DOM
2	506	2/2	992	\$170,000	11
27	806	2/2	1164	\$129,999	67
17	C-201	2/2	990	\$112,000	17
25	1216	2/2	1688	\$260,000	37
9	305-06	3/3/1	1519	\$229,900	11
22	218 C	2/2	1132	\$175,900	38
18	-111	2/2	990	\$168,000	63
24	C-520	2/2	1284	\$165,000	68
24	C-319	2/2	1284	\$159,999	28
21	916	2/2	1132	\$159,000	70
2	106	2/2	990	\$152,000	60
21	C-501	2/2	1132	\$129,900	26
26	1012	2/2	1132	\$119,000	25
26	503	1/1/1	884	\$115,000	24
24	208	1/1/1	884	\$107,500	55
27	115	1/1/1	884	\$99,000	77
18	209	1/1/1	770	\$84,500	8

March was the best month yet as the booming housing market effect is trickling down. 17 pending sales and 17 closed sales leaving us with only 38 listings in all of Hillcrest. The larger units will fare well as home buyers are getting priced out of the market and still want to buy.

Hillcrest condos having been built before land became a premium are as large or larger than many homes. Appraisals are still a problem. Buyers are having to come up with more cash to close. Corner unit sales are designated by C and the rental building sales by R.

*Continued on Pg. 11*



Continued from Pg. 10

**CLOSED SALES DURING MARCH** (List price is final list price, price may have been lowered several times)

**CLOSED SALES**

Building	Unit #	B/B	SF	Orig. List	Sale Price	DOM
26	402-4	3/2/1	2,200	\$199,900	\$190,000	128
23	C-301	2/2/1	1,284	\$189,900	\$155,000	24
24	215	2/2	1,132	\$174,900	\$175,000	137
27	908	2/2	1,164	\$169,900	\$162,000	162
8	114	2/2	899	\$147,900	\$140,000	86
11	109	1/1/1	768	\$139,000	\$128,500	68
23	C-900	2/2	1,312	\$139,000	\$129,000	115
26	1008	2/2	1,296	\$135,000	\$130,750	48
17	C-111	2/2/1	992	\$135,000	\$135,000	5
21	511	2/2	1,216	\$124,900	\$120,000	48
15	303	1/1/1	775	\$124,900	\$115,000	26
23	712	2/2	1,132	\$122,000	\$120,000	44
22	1012	2/2	1,132	\$122,000	\$70,000	154
25	607	1 1 1	844	\$119,500	\$110,000	46
11	315	1/1/1	775	\$105,000	\$101,000	5
11	209	1/1/1	775	\$98,900	\$98,900	88
8	107	1/1/0	672	\$89,900	\$85,000	8

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**PARKVIEW AT HILLCREST**



The name of the game is EQUITY. It is amazing how much equity has been built up for homeowners just in the past year. If you are thinking of selling your Parkview home or townhome, give us a call at **8-HILLCREST** or email us at [Info@ATeamFlorida.com](mailto:Info@ATeamFlorida.com) for a current market analysis. The properties below are single family homes unless designated by the letter T for townhomes.

**ACTIVE LISTINGS**

TOWNHOME	B/B	SF	List Price	DOM
1372 Silk Oak Dr	3/2/0	2329	595,000	12
T-1030 Eucalyptus Dr	3/2/1	1497	439,000	22
T-1070 Eucalyptus Dr	3/2/1	1421	425,000	8

**MARCH PENDING SALES**

TOWNHOME	B/B	SF	List Price	DOM
1455 Myrtle Oak Terr	5/3/0	2795	650,000	77
1054 Banyan Drive	3/2/1	1881	565,000	91
4013 Black Olive Ln	3/2/1	1793	479,000	49
T-3944 Mahogany Ln	3/2/1	1728	475,000	8

**MARCH CLOSED SALES**

TOWNHOME	B/B	SF	Final list Price	Sold Price	DOM
3747 Greenway Dr	4/2/1	2802	799,000	775,000	27
4706 Greenway Drive	3/2/1	1998	550,000	560,000	7
4395 Ficus St	3/2/1	2220	599,000	560,000	101
4378 Ficus	4/2/1	2220	575,000	550,000	96
4414 Ficus	3/2/1	1961	534,0555	531,0555	53
T-5100 Eucalyptus Dr	3/2/1	1597	399,000	375,000	89

**PARKVIEW TOWNHOMES RENTED during the month of March:**

TOWNHOME	B/B	SF	Rent/Month	DOM
1383 Silk Oak Dr	4/2/1	2795	4000	47
4023 Black Olive Dr	3/2/1	1768	3050	15
4990 Eucalyptus Dr	3/2/1	1421	2,500	17

Curious as to how much equity you have built up in your Parkview home? Call us at **8-HILLCREST** or email [INFO@ATeamFlorida.com](mailto:INFO@ATeamFlorida.com).



## SELLERS

### PRICING:

Pricing your home or condo? It does make a difference whether it is original, updated or completely remodeled. You need to compare apples to apples. Remodels sell quickly and sometimes over market value; updated properties sell at market value and original properties usually sell a bit below as buyers mentally add up how much it will cost to repair and upgrade everything. Pay attention to what has sold in the past 90 days. Also, look at other similar listings and see how yours compares. Be sure to check HOW LONG these properties have been on the market. If a property has not sold in 90 days, the market has rejected it. If you want to overprice, be sure we are in an ascending market, so that there is a chance that one day the market will catch up to your price. Just be sure the monthly carrying costs are worth it.

**True stories:** In 2011, when the market was down and buyers were scarce, we had a condo listed at 95K. We got an offer almost immediately for 88K. The seller refused saying that he was firm on 95K. 17 months later we got an offer for 93K which he accepted. I calculated that it cost him over \$14,000 to get the extra 5K. After closing, I pointed it out to him. He replied, "It did not! It only cost me \$10,000!"

In December of 2019, I lost a listing because I told the seller that she could not get over 100K for her 1/1/1. She hired a Realtor who listed at \$122,500.00. Thirteen months later, as the market kept rising and she kept lowering, her listing price went down to \$104,000 and it finally sold for \$102,000.

### PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY/STAGING

Preparing your home to sell? If a unit is completely original, it can still be worth painting and cleaning windows and floors/carpets. Not every investment pays off, but the five MUSTS are painting, flooring, windows, cleanliness and odor-free. Painting can be your best investment when selling. It is not a very expensive operation and often you can do it yourself OR use our painters. We will advise you on the least expensive ways to enhance your flooring, and how to get your windows working and sparkling clean. We also have a system that we use to neutralize pet, cooking and smoking odors in your home prior to showing (at no cost to you).

### Disconnect your Emotions and Declutter:

This can be tough but if you can get your mind set that you are staying in a house that will soon belong to someone else, rather than your "home", it will help you come to terms with the business aspect of the home selling process. We will definitely help you stage it to sell for the highest possible price and of course we are there every time a buyer is looking at it so we can point up the best features and answer questions. After years of living in the same place, clutter collects in such a way that may not be evident to the homeowner. However, making the home look spacious with plenty of storage is a big selling point. The kitchen is a good place to start removing clutter. First, take all small appliances in a cabinet or closet and take them out when you use them. Do the same in your bathroom with your toothbrush and other toiletries. You also want to promote an image of plentiful storage space. Pack away EVERYTHING you rarely use so that closets and cabinets look like they can accommodate a lot more "stuff". You will actually be making your move easier because you will have started your packing.

### Negotiations:

Negotiations start at the time of the first offer and continue throughout the process as a result of the inspection and appraisal. The deal killers are usually a result of the inspection or appraisal OR the failure to prepare the proper paperwork and adhere to the deadlines. Listing and selling are the easy part. The real work starts when a contract is executed and that is when a professional Realtor becomes invaluable. When it comes to the inspection, we are rarely surprised with Hillcrest condos. The same issues come up time after time so we know how to proactively diffuse any potential inspection issue. (For homes, we pay for an inspection up front!) For our condos and homes, we have a group of plumbers, painters, roofers, electricians, handymen, landscapers and even a permit/code violation expert if needed. In today's market, for every dollar you invest in your home (according to our recommendations), you will more than get back in the final sales price. In fact, we are so confident in our ability to advise you what needs to be done to get top dollar, we have actually paid the cost for all the work we recommend with the seller paying us back at closing.

**True story:** The most we ever invested in a Hollywood home was \$9,600 after the highest offer we could get was \$325,000. After we loaned them the money to do all the repairs and upgrades, the home sold for \$365,000. The lowest amount we ever invested was in a Hillcrest condo that a client bought and then changed his mind. We encouraged him to invest \$1600.00 for a few repairs and to hire a stager, and the condo sold for \$10,000 more than he paid – six months later!

### THREE REASONS NOT TO HIRE A DISCOUNT BROKER

1. If you were good at your job, why would you take cut in pay?
2. If an agent isn't willing to fight for their own money, why would they fight for yours?
3. "If you think it's expensive to hire a professional, wait until you hire an amateur." – Red Adair

### THE PROCESS

A professional Real Estate agent matters. The services you receive when selling your home can vary greatly from agent to agent. It is important to know that you have options and choices when working with us. We know the key selling points of our neighborhood. We keep a list of local buyer agents and past clients that live in the neighborhood, who can help us find the right buyer for your home. We have a marketing program that constantly advertises your property so we able to attract potential buyers from around the area and around the world. Of course, we take your financial desires, your target moving date and other personal factors into account when pricing and marketing your home or condo. It is about what YOU want. Our job is to be a consultant and to advise you how to get the most money. The better it looks and the better shape it is in, the more money you will get when you sell. We know what is worth investing in and what is not. Do you replace the carpet or just clean it? Is painting necessary? We are the Hillcrest experts and we can make sure you only spend money on repairs or enhancements that will end up putting more money in your pocket.

#### Step 1: The Listing Appointment:

We will go over the market statistics for comparable properties in your area. At the listing appointment, we will advise you as to what needs to be done to get the most bang for your buck. We can get any job done at very reasonable prices. We have a group of plumbers, painters, roofers, electricians, handymen, landscapers and even a permit/code violation expert if needed. In today's market, for every dollar you invest in your home (according to our recommendations), you will more than get back in the final sales price.

#### Step 2: The Listing

You owe it to yourself when you have your home or condo listed, to take the time to view your own listing so you can at least make sure the information is correct. Yes, you can find yourself in trouble if your agent puts in the wrong maintenance fee, misquotes a building rule or even designates the wrong parking space. Look at your listing and compare it to other same-priced listings. Does yours stand out?

#### Step 3: The Showing(s)

Our claim to fame with buyer agents is that Brian is a GREAT show-and-sell agent. He can do a better job of uncovering what is motivating other agent's clients than they can. This is evidenced by how many buyer agents specifically ask for Brian to be there when they call to see one of our listings. He is the master at either selling our listing or very quickly figuring out why it isn't the right one for them and why. This also makes him one of the best buyer agents around.

#### Step 4: The Contract

Now the real work begins. There are many things we do when we get a contract that most other agents do not. This includes qualifying the other agent's buyer, their mortgage company and even their title company. Going into detail will give away too many of our trade secrets but suffice it to say that this step is CRUCIAL for a successful closing.

#### Step 5: The Inspection

Again, Brian's area of expertise. He has remodeled Hillcrest condos from the ground up and knows anything and everything that can come up in an inspection. We have two ways to prevent the inspection from becoming a deal killer.

*Continued on Pg. 13*

## WANT US TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH YOUR HOME OR CONDO IS WORTH?

We can't. The current market dictates the sales prices. What we can tell you is that there are a lot of first time buyers out there right now taking advantage of the still-low interest rates. And the baby-boomer generation, the second largest, is down-sizing and buying second "homes" (condos). This is a great time to sell BUT always remember that the best time to sell is when you want to live somewhere else. Do not let the market of the day tell you otherwise. At A Team Florida, our motto is "Love Where You Live". Money cannot dictate that. There is no reason to move if you are happy where you are. What we CAN tell you is everything you need to know about how to get the most money out of your home or condo if you are ready to sell. We know Hillcrest condos inside and out. We know what the main issues are when it comes to repairs and we can take care of them before we list. However, every home in Hollywood is just a little bit different which is why we pay for an inspection before we put a home on the market so we can prevent the buyer's inspection from killing the deal. When you are ready to interview Realtors for the job of selling your home or condo, call us.

### Renting vs. Buying - The Eternal Real Estate Debate

Owning a home has always been a major part of the American Dream. Just a generation ago, making the final payment of a 30-year mortgage was one of the biggest achievements of adulthood. People put down roots and lived in essentially the same town for their whole life. Today, things are a little different. People move more frequently and over larger distances. In fact, studies show that the average person now moves every 7 years. Younger demographics are also more likely to rent their home for many reasons. Whatever your reason, renting or buying might be best for you. Below are some of the advantages of each!

### The Benefits of Renting

The flexibility that comes from renting a home or condo is obvious. Renters are in a better position to simply pick up and move if an opportunity comes along in a different city. Newcomers who have just relocated to a new area will also find renting first a good idea as they learn about their new community. The no-maintenance lifestyle is appealing for renters. The landlord is typically responsible for maintenance, upkeep, and repairs. For some, removing these concerns is worth the inability to paint a wall blue or build an outdoor kitchen.

**The biggest mistake renters make is not having a game plan to be in a position to buy and start paying their own mortgage rather than their landlord's.**

### When to stop renting

Renters still make up for 36% of property dwellers and the average rate for a rental right now is \$1,617.00. It only makes sense to buy if you plan on staying in the home/condo for at least 3-5 years or more. South Florida tends to beat the national average of rising equity which is about 4.9% year after year vs. our rate of 6.3%. What is going on right now with the rise in single family home prices is an aberration. Home prices have risen too high too fast so we are looking for a correction. When that happens, you need to be ready to buy. Condos are still affordable and will benefit from single-family homes being priced out of reach for many buyers. Buying a condo now is a wise move. Buying SOMETHING right now is better than paying rent.

### Two True A-Team Florida stories

#### My Son

For the younger folks, buying a condo or townhome is a wise decision. The name of the game is equity. I have told the story many times about my 21 year old son who wanted to rent until he saved enough money to buy his dream house, a 3/2 with a pool. What I heard was, "I want to pay my landlord's mortgage until I can get my own." Well, THAT wasn't going to happen to the son of a Realtor. I got him to buy a 1/1 condo for 60K. This was back in 2013. He sold it in 2017 for 95K and had enough to put down on a 2/2/1 townhouse that he bought for 260K. In March 2020, he sold it and with the equity and the low interest rates, he was able to finally buy his dream home, a 3/2/1 with a pool and backyard kitchen/BBQ area for 364K. It took him 8 years, but he did it the right way. Reminds me of an old double-entendre real estate joke: The dad says to his son, "Get a lot while you're young..." Wise advise.

### My Nail Technician

Almost the same story, except she was happy renting her dream home for \$1700 a month back in 2016. Then the landlord informed her that he was raising the rent to \$2100 per month. She and her hubby were pregnant with their third child and that was way too much for them. We found her a 3/2/1 townhome in Sunrise. Their mortgage payment is less than \$1200.00 per month. The last sale in her neighborhood was 90K higher than what they paid so with that equity, they can start looking for the 4/3 she wants for her family of 5.

### WHY SHOULD I BUY?

In today's market, many renters are spending up to twice as much on their rent payments as they would for a mortgage for the same type of property.

- **Equity** - Almost everyone has a monthly housing cost, whether it is a mortgage payment or a rent payment. While renters are paying their landlord's mortgage, home/condo owners are building equity in an asset that can eventually put cash in their pocket at selling or be borrowed against when needed.
- **Tax Benefits\*** - Mortgage interest is still one of the best tax deductions available. The IRS allows home owners to deduct from their gross income certain costs associated with home ownership such as: mortgage interest, property taxes and mortgage insurance. Additionally, when the home is sold, a single seller can take up to \$250,000 of profit free from capital gains tax (a married couple can keep \$500,000) as long as the property is their primary residence.
- **Hedge Against Inflation** - Most mortgages today have fixed monthly payments. This means that the home owner will pay the same amount for housing for the duration of the loan term. Meanwhile the rental market is subject to not only inflationary pressure but the laws of supply and demand. And today, rents are at an all-time high.

Owning vs renting your home is a personal decision. Determining the right situation for you and your family depends on your lifestyle and financial goals and needs. If you have questions or are interested in purchasing, call us at **8-HILLCREST or 844-552-7378**.

*Continued from Pg. 12*

### Step 6: The Appraisal

Appraisers routinely call agents who have closed similar units and ask questions to see what factors affected the final sales price. We have been in Hillcrest so long that appraisers know that if anyone knows how to price right, it is us. In a normal market, this makes us invaluable. However, in this market, because homes have exploded in value, appraisers are gun shy. We are having a very hard time with our home sales appraising and this has carried over into the condo market pre-maturely. I believe we are ready for a bump-up in condo prices but it hasn't happened yet.

### Step 7: Monitoring the deadlines

Missed deadlines can kill a deal. As I said, getting the offer is the easy part, getting it to close is a challenge and an experienced agent is crucial to the process. Every step of contract to close involves a deadline. When we sell a property, we need to stay on top of the buyer agent so that they do not put the contract in jeopardy. We have our own contract to close checklist which we share with the buyer agent to be sure they are aware of every deadline. We leave nothing to chance - from speaking with the buyer's lender to assisting the buyer agent - who may be new - with the proper paperwork. One deadline that is unique to condo and HOA associations is the approval process which is handled differently by each building. This is another reason buyer agents like to work with us, we know how each building handles it.

### Step 8: The Closing

Just before the closing, the buyer will do a "walk-through". This ensures that everything is still in working order, the place is clean and the buyer will be getting all the keys associated with the property. Once the walk-through is complete, the closing takes place. The buyer must WIRE all remaining funds to the title company who will then disperse the funds via wire to the seller. Commissions will be paid out of these funds, mortgage balance (if any), taxes, etc. Because funds are wired, sellers usually get their money within a couple of hours. If it is an afternoon closing, it may be the next day.



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### WHEN IS A MEETING A MEETING? - By Eric Glazer, Esq. - Published March 22, 2021

It's funny how many times over the years, Boards have told me "We weren't having a meeting, we were only talking about the condo" or "We weren't having a meeting, we were in a workshop."

For clarification, let's see how a "meeting" is defined by law.

For a condominium, the Florida Administrative Code says:  
(1)(a) "Meeting of the board of administration" means any gathering of the members of the board of directors, at which a quorum of the members is present, for the purpose of conducting association business.  
(b) "Committee meeting" means any gathering of a group of board members, unit owners, or board members and unit owners appointed by the board or a member of the board to make recommendations to the board regarding the association budget or take action on behalf of the board at which a quorum of the members of that committee is present. For example, a meeting of an executive committee, as defined in section 617.0825, F.S., or as that section may subsequently be renumbered, would be included in this definition as would a meeting of a group charged with developing a proposed budget. So under this Rule, a quorum of the Board gets together and talks about the condo --- it's a meeting that needed to be properly noticed and the unit owners had a right to attend.

The Florida HOA Statutes 720.303(2) says:  
A meeting of the board of directors of an association occurs whenever a quorum of the board gathers to conduct association business. This provision also shall apply to the meetings of any committee or other similar body when a final decision will be made regarding the expenditure of association funds and to meetings of any body vested with the power to approve or disapprove architectural decisions with respect to a specific parcel of residential property owned by a member of the community.

So.....same rule for HOAs ----, a quorum of the Board gets together and talks about the HOA --- it's a meeting that needed to be properly noticed and the unit owners had a right to attend.

Now.....here's the fun part.

As you learned in last week's blog, both the condo statute and the HOA statute say that Board members can communicate by e-mail. So, let's say that tomorrow night you happen to walk past the Board room and there are the 5 directors sitting next to each other on the stage, talking about association matters. You would scream and say they are having an illegal meeting that was not properly noticed - and you would be right.

The Board members promise never to do this again.

The next night you walk past the same room, and again see the Board members sitting next to each other. This time however, they are not saying a word. Each one of them brought their laptops to the room and instead of verbally speaking with each other, they are e-mailing each other. It may be hard to swallow, but suddenly these Board members are not at a "meeting" and are not violating the statute.

What do you think? Good statute or bad statute?

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## 5 KEYS TO CONTINUAL HAPPINESS - SUBMITTED BY ETTA STEVENS

### Stop Running The Race ... Enjoy The Present Moment

Every soul seeks happiness. While happiness itself is searched for its own sake, every other goal - health, beauty, money, or power, is valued, because we expect that it will make us happy. Today, we have made a lot of advancements in the eras of medical science and technology, but when it comes to attaining this blessed and beautiful state of happiness, not much has changed and we could arguably conclude that we have made no progress at all. We often end up feeling that instead of being filled with happiness, we have wasted our precious moments in anxiety and pressure to attain something, which would eventually take us to success, thereby experiencing and achieving happiness. **The visualization of happiness, a very natural state of being to any soul, has become very difficult to experience in the world today because it is dependent on physical attainments and achievements.** As children, we were thrilled and happy naturally. We could share our experiences of such joys in response to simple events like hearing a bird humming or sharing lunch with a friend. **As we become older, we become pressurized to achieve goals like success in education, family, business, and often lose awareness of the reality that it is our fundamental responsibility as a person to first become a joyous being.** If we go against our own nature to be happy, we will never reach anywhere. Each of us has a picture, however vague, of what we would like to accomplish in this life. We aspire for different types of success. It could be money, health, and social relationships. How close we get to attaining that goal becomes the measure for the quality of our own lives. If it remains out of reach, we become resentful. The problem arises when we become so obsessed with it, that we stop deriving joy from the present moment. When this happens, we give up our own chances of contentment.

1. Promise yourself every day that even though the world changes negatively around me, I will remember a beautiful point of spiritual wisdom in my mind always and experience its depth and feel full of happiness and strength, without getting affected by the negative situations that are there in my life.

2. The best gift I can give myself is the blessing that I am a beautiful soul filled with many specialties and I am loved by everyone, including God. Let me bring my specialties in my words and actions and radiate the light of my specialties to others. This is the key to happiness and contentment.

3. The more I progress in life, there will be many challenges in all spheres of my life - mind, body, relationships, and role. Let me bring one quality or one power in every situation of my life for constant happiness. My positive and happy aura has the power to impact negative situations and make them positive.

4. My most beautiful and constant companions in life are I myself and God. The more I connect with them and make them my best friends at every step, the more happiness I will feel inside myself and my face and spiritual personality will radiate happiness to everyone in my home and workplace and everywhere else I go.

5. When I begin the day in the morning, let me remind myself that in the entire day, I will look at other's qualities and not look at their weaknesses. The more I think and talk positively about others, the more I will receive everyone's blessings and experience happiness and lightness.

**The one who is free from expectations is the one who is constantly cheerful.**

**Projection:** Usually I am quick to perceive my own desires and I do realize that desires give sorrow. So I make effort to overcome them. But most often I am not able to recognize my own expectations that I have from people which destroy my own cheer. My expectations from others prevent me from bringing about a positive change in myself.

**Solution:** I need to recognize that each and every individual is unique with his own unique specialties and values. When I recognize this uniqueness, I will not expect people to behave according to what I feel is right but will respect them for what they are. Thus, I am able to be constantly cheerful.

Nothing is bad, nothing is wrong. Everything is as it should be. I am learning to drift with the 'all' and 'everything' of life. The drama in this life is just a part of life. Whatever happens, the good and the bad, is just how it is supposed to happen.

Meditation fills us with these qualities and powers very easily. This is because meditation is a beautiful relationship and connection with the Supreme Source of spiritual energy and power - God. God is full of those qualities and powers and never loses them ever, unlike us, who need to fill ourselves when we lose them.

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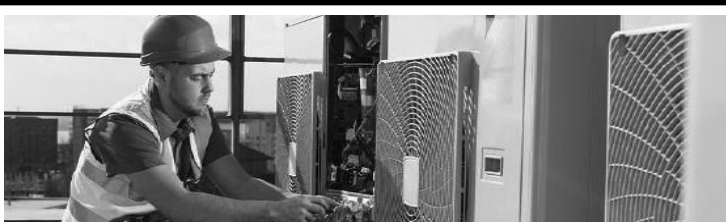
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