



# INSIDE HILLCREST

CONNECTING NEIGHBORS TO NEIGHBORS

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## JUNE INSIDE HILLCREST

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### FAKE FUR

Years ago, I had a boyfriend whose son had cerebral palsy, so he had a handicap placard in his car. When we would go out, he would want to park in a handicap space because it was close. I would refuse to get out of the car until he moved it. I believe that the Good Lord should give people who misuse handicap placards for their own convenience a valid reason to need one. Now we have people bringing in fraudulent paperwork for ESA animals. I don't even mind that; if you need a pet so badly that you have to lie about why, in my mind you qualify for an ESA animal. But at least abide by the condo rules governing pets so you aren't imposing on your neighbors. Board members with phony "ESA" animals are the first to abuse the privilege. See page 4 to find out what you can do to expose them.

### UPDATE ON THE PARK ROAD DEVELOPMENT AND JUNE HLC MEETING

The Hillcrest community was invited to meet with the developers of the Park Road project on Tuesday, June 4, 2024. Notes from that meeting as well as notes from the June 6, 2024 HLC meeting are in this issue, thanks to our IH reporter, Steve Schneider.

### MEET AL POLLOCK, CANDIDATE FOR BROWARD SHERIFF

Many of you met Al at the last HLC meeting. He was introduced to me years ago by a couple of building presidents who spoke highly of him. Most of his family members have either served our country and/or are police officers. Learn more about him on page 5.

### NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS - by Steve Schneider

For the second time in six months, a weekend stretch turned into a humdinger of a weekend for the people who live in Hillcrest 24.

The first attention-grabbing event occurred over the New Year's weekend. That was when a broken water main left resident of the 10-story, 194-unit condo building without water.

But now that we are in summer, with hot temperatures and humidity a daily reality, the water

cooler tower for the air conditioning systems broke late Friday afternoon. Specifically, the fan that cools the water that goes from the roof down into the individual air conditioner units broke.

And being a weekend, like back in January, it was impossible to get immediate satisfaction.

Like last time, **District 6 Commission Idelma Quintana** was contacted. She reached out to City staff again to see if the City could help the building find the parts needed to get everybody cooled down again. As of Monday afternoon, Hillcrest 24 leaders, Quintana and City officials were still working.

So were a number of people in Hillcrest 24 and neighboring Hillcrest 23.

In the Hillcrest spirit of neighbors helping neighbors, **Ernie Sciarra, president of Hillcrest 23**, with a background in construction, provided guidance to his counterpart, **Michelle Delvecchio, Hillcrest 24 president**. And both building presidents unleashed their resident "Angel" squads to check on residents, especially seniors.

**Marcia Skupeika**, a registered nurse who lives in Hillcrest 23, is the leader of the Hillcrest Angels. "We're here," she said. And **Amy Britton**, one of her angels who lives in Hillcrest 24 went door to door to check on the people who needed special attention.

**Update:** As of 1:30 pm on Tuesday, June 11th, the cooling tower was fixed, and the building is cooling off!

### HILLCREST 25 DOES IT AGAIN

Hillcrest 25 continues to be in the forefront of buildings who go out of their way to keep their unit owners informed. Not only do they hold monthly board meetings so that their residents feel included and up to date, but they also go out of their way to educate them about issues that can help them with condo living. The board invited **Marty Kiar, Broward County**

**Property Appraiser** to their June board meeting to answer questions about property taxes, exemptions, etc. Steve Schneider was invited to cover that meeting on page 6.

### TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL - A global movement to end the injustice of corruption.

Meanwhile, here at home... In my twenty-five years in Hillcrest, I can say unequivocally that any president that suddenly stops holding regular board meetings with their unit owners is usually doing something dishonest or underhanded. There are too many issues that come up for a competent board not to meet regularly and vote properly - at a noticed meeting with the unit owners. That is TRANSPARENCY LOCALLY.

### ANY MEETING WITH A QUORUM OF THE BOARD MUST BE OPEN TO UNIT OWNERS except for two exceptions. ALL BOARD MEETINGS MUST BE POSTED IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE - NO EXCEPTIONS.

Running a building is a team effort. Any president that is a true leader will start by creating a strong, united, inclusive team. Step one is to learn each board member's strengths and skills so they can be successful in their assigned area. Unit owners who are willing to help and have skills that can be useful should be appointed to the by-law mandated committees.

It still amazes me that with the number of brand-new board members this year and all the problems facing our buildings between the safety inspections, insurance and reserve issues, etc. that we have so many new presidents who don't bother attending HLC meetings. Going it alone when you have never done the job before is never a good idea. Why would a new president totally ignore the Hillcrest Preferred Vendor list and brag that they can find someone cheaper...well... anyone with a business background can answer that one.

"A key to effective leadership is the ability to define outcomes, but then helps individuals put their talents to use to get there. The best leaders know their people and are more aware of those people's strengths than they are of their weaknesses. Great leaders aren't blind to their own or other's weaknesses; they just know that their competitive edge lies within their strengths."

One more time; "A smart person is not one who knows all the answers but one that knows where to find them".



Continued from Pg. 1

## REAL ESTATE NEWS

Many of you have been asking about the new laws affecting Real Estate commissions so please see this month's Real Estate Article on page 10 for more information.

In short, starting on August 17, 2024, MLS will no longer list buyer agent commissions. Sellers have three options: offer buyer agent compensation, consider offers that include it, or refuse it. Buyers need to understand and potentially include agent compensation in their offers. This change aims to address issues like cancelled or no-show showings often linked to unqualified buyers from internet leads.

Buyer agents must now pre-qualify clients to avoid wasted time and unethical practices. They will use Buyer Broker Agreements to outline commissions, ensuring transparency. Sellers can choose to offer commissions as a strategy and will receive a copy of the Buyer Broker Agreement with offers, allowing them to adjust their contribution.

This shift aims to promote integrity and professionalism in real estate, reducing the number of unqualified agents. It levels the playing field by not disclosing commission amounts to buyer agents upfront, potentially weeding out dishonest agents. Accurate pricing in a fluctuating market remains crucial, considering active, pending, and expired listings alongside market trends. See page 9 for more information.

## ESA FRAUD AND PENALTIES - by Cindy Abraham

I am a big supporter of ESA animals. I truly believe that people who live alone do better when they have something to care for and get affection in return. But I have no patience for those with fake ESA animals. How can you tell if someone's ESA animal is fake? Only a person who was dishonest and entitled would refuse to respect the building rules regarding pets. ESA animals are not considered pets so these people can refuse to abide by the rules.

In our building, owners must hand carry their pet through the service entrance. This minimizes the dander that triggers allergies, like mine. I am allergic to dander from cats and dogs, not the fur, so the so-called non-allergenic animals don't work for me since all have dander. According to the testing, I am also allergic to horses and cows. I actually had to give up my dream of becoming a rancher. Kidding.

Unfortunately, we have board members in Hillcrest who, because of their position, feel that their animals should not have to honor the rules set up for pets although for years owners with ESA animals had no problems with the pet rules. Now we have dogs allowed to run up and down the hallways, dogs with obvious emotional problems of their allowed free rein in the common areas and others that poop on the lobby floor. I will say that since they relaxed the rules in some buildings, few ESA owners have taken advantage. Most still respect their neighbors enough to continue to adhere to the pet rules.

**It is getting out of hand, and I urge EVERY building to revisit the paperwork on file for ESA animals and crack down on those with fraudulent paperwork.**

The Florida Senate unanimously passed a bill targeting people who misrepresent their need for an emotional support animal in housing like condominiums and rental buildings. A person who "falsifies written documentation" or "otherwise knowingly and willfully misrepresents" as having a disability or disability-related need for an emotional support animal commits a second-degree misdemeanor, punishable by up to sixty (60) days in jail and/or a \$500 fine. As an additional penalty, violators of the bill will have to perform 30 hours of community service for "an organization that serves persons with disabilities or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court."

While the bill includes language that is consistent with federal law in forbidding housing providers (like Condominiums, HOA's, and Rental Buildings) from discriminating against people who have a legitimate need for an emotional support animal, it seeks to crack down on what many see as abuse of the system. In announcing the bill's passage, Florida Senator, Kevin Rader of Boca Raton, stated that people should not be permitted to submit "phony baloney psychological papers," which can be obtained online for less than \$100, to falsely claim that their pet is an emotional support animal.

This new legislation highlights the importance of submitting proper and reliable information in support of a request for accommodation for an emotional support animal. Getting it right the first time will

be key to avoiding further demands and delays by your landlord or condominium association. Before the passage of this bill, submitting an inexpensive online certification to support a request to keep an emotional support animal was a surefire way to have your request delayed or denied. Under the new legislation, doing so exposes pet owners who misrepresent their need for a comfort pet (emotional support animal) to the possibility of criminal prosecution and jail time.

The bill also states that, unless otherwise prohibited by federal law, rule, or regulation, a housing provider may:

Prohibit an emotional support animal if such animal poses a direct threat to the safety or health of others or poses a direct threat of physical damage to the property of other which cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation.

Request written documentation prepared by a health care practitioner which verifies that the person has a disability or a disability related need and has been under the practitioner's care or treatment for such disability or need, and the animal provides support to alleviate one or more identified symptoms or effects of the person's disability or disability-related need.

Require proof of compliance with state and local requirements for licensing and vaccination of an emotional support animal.

## NEWS FROM THE BROWARD STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

### Broward State Attorney warns about email scam

Scammers are always looking for ways to separate people from their money.

In recent days, an email phishing scam that uses the name of **Broward State Attorney Harold F. Pryor** has been reported to our office.

The fraud attempt works like this – an individual receives an email from someone claiming to be the State Attorney. The scammer claims the victim has "absconded" with company funds and tries to pressure them into responding to arrange "repayment." The goal of the scam is to try to trick individuals into responding and providing information that could be used to defraud them.

Broward State Attorney Harold F. Pryor said: "I am alerting anyone who receives an email that claims to be from me or one of our staff members demanding money – this is a scam and a fraud. The State Attorney's Office will never demand money or personal information in this manner."

If you receive this type of email, please do not respond to it. Please report it to your local law enforcement agency.

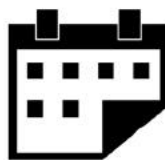
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## JUNE 6, 2024, HLC MEETING – by Steve Schneider

The meeting started with introductions. Of course, our own **District 6 Commissioner, Idelma Quintana** was in attendance and was thanked for her continuing support for the Hillcrest community. Attendees also got to meet **Colonel Al Pollock**, who is running for **Broward County Sheriff**.

Because there were several presenters, **Cindy Abraham, Secretary of the Hillcrest Leadership Council**, advised attendees to hold their questions until after the meeting because the subject matter would have different questions and concerns depending on the individual buildings. Presenters would stay after the meeting and representatives from each building would be able to speak with them one-on-one.

Condo Associations are still having a difficult time navigating the Florida insurance market, experts said at the June 6 meeting of the Hillcrest Leadership Council. But things are improving. The meeting was held at Clubhouse 2 on Hillcrest Court.

**Dante Frettoloso and Jon Moller, from Brown & Brown Insurance and Nick Sledge and Brad Lubin from Franklin Hamilton Insurance** addressed the audience of Hillcrest building leaders. Each company currently work with several Hillcrest buildings. They act as Agents of Record, going out into the insurance market to find the best coverage at the lowest possible cost, they said. Both company agents said some insurance companies are returning to the Florida market, and that new “insurance products” are available.

What’s more, Brown & Brown and Franklin Hamilton will conduct a free insurance audit for Hillcrest Associations to help them understand if they have the right coverage or need to change it. If things are fine, these insurance brokers won’t ask for our business. But they are available to represent us if building leaders trust them and feel they can get the Association better coverage.

You can reach Brown & Brown representatives by contacting **Dante Frettoloso** at (954) 825-7217 or [dante.frettoloso@bbrown.com](mailto:dante.frettoloso@bbrown.com) or **Jon Moller** at (561) 289-6790 or [jon.moller@bbrown.com](mailto:jon.moller@bbrown.com).

You can reach Franklin Hamilton representatives by contacting **Nick Sledge** at (813) 310-4049, [nsledge@fhinsure.com](mailto:nsledge@fhinsure.com) or **Brad Lubin** at (561) 287-9834, [blubin@fhinsure.com](mailto:blubin@fhinsure.com).

Hillcrest leaders also heard from **Lou Silver, from Mortgage Solutions**. He has worked in the reverse mortgage industry for more than 40 years. Lou is available to answer questions that building Directors and residents may have about how a reverse mortgage may help some unit owners who are struggling financially. He can also help the buildings learn how to make sure their buildings qualify for reverse mortgages. You can reach him at (954) 895-5801 or [lousilver8@aol.com](mailto:lousilver8@aol.com).

The insurance brokers and Silver, the senior marketing director for Mortgage Solutions, also stayed after the meeting to answer questions from building leaders on a one-to-one basis.

In other matters of local interest, District 6 Commissioner Idelma Quintana briefed the audience on plans to build a mixed-use development adjacent to Hillcrest on Park Road and Pembroke Road. Inside Hillcrest is running an article on this issue this month on page 7. You can contact our City Hall representative with questions and comments at [iquintana@hollywoodfl.org](mailto:iquintana@hollywoodfl.org).

Fortunately, **Hollywood Police Officer John Guzman** reported no incidents of major crime in Hillcrest last month. But he encouraged building Board members from Hillcrest 8, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 20 and 24 to complete a trespass affidavit with HPD. Once the affidavit is filled out, the department will give the buildings No Trespassing signs to place at major entrance points. The signed affidavits give HPD authority to remove people who don’t belong on condo property without contacting Association leaders.

Hillcrest leaders also met **Captain Eric Lombardi**, from the City of Hollywood Fire Department.

And Hillcrest residents were given an update on our Hollywood on-demand-service similar to Uber. Right now, the service is free if you use the app or the kiosks that were placed in the lobby of Hillcrest 23. The van service runs during the week from 7 am to 6 pm, said **Mark L. Johnson, Project Manager** with the Hollywood Department of Development Services. He added weekend routes start at 11 am and run through 7 pm. These west side vans also go to the beach on the weekend, he said. You can contact him at (954) 921-3991 or [mljohnson@hollywoodfl.org](mailto:mljohnson@hollywoodfl.org).

**Antonique Johnson, Mobility Coordinator (Shuttle, Circuit)** was also in attendance to talk about the City’s Community Shuttle program. She can be reached at (954) 921-3263 or you can email her at [ajohnson@hollywoodfl.org](mailto:ajohnson@hollywoodfl.org).

The Circuit team was here in full force to meet with the Hillcrest leaders and answer any questions, including **Bob McClure Broward Markets Manager, Philip Toister Hollywood Supervisor / SoFlo AD Sales, and Travis Lindahl - McCullough Fleet Leader - Lead Driver Ambassador**. For questions, email [soflasales@ridecircuit.com](mailto:soflasales@ridecircuit.com) or go to [www.ridecircuit.com](http://www.ridecircuit.com).

Or a Hillcrest resident can help you learn about the van service. You can reach out to **David Hillebert**, Hillcrest 23 at [dhofrev1412@protonmail.com](mailto:dhofrev1412@protonmail.com). David arrived at the HLC meeting on the shuttle!

**Mark Johnson** added more good news when he announced Hollywood plans to roll out a community shuttle by fall. It will operate on a fixed-route schedule, he said. The City has already installed three new bus stops around Hillcrest and plans to add benches later. The service starts at 9 am and runs every hour. Yellow signs saying Community Bus Stop tell riders where to wait for the shuttle.

**The July meeting of the Hillcrest Leadership Council will be held on July 11, 2024, at 6 p.m. at Clubhouse 2 on Hillcrest Court.**



**MARK JOHNSON**

Senior Project Manager,  
City of Hollywood,  
Department of Engineering,  
Transportation and Mobility

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**MEET ALVIN "AL" POLLOCK, CANDIDATE FOR BROWARD COUNTY SHERIFF**

*- by Steve Schneider*



**Retired Col. Al Pollock** says it's important for the Broward Sheriff's Office to serve and protect the community. But he adds an important word to his mantra. The former Marine notes that integrity is required to deliver quality service.

And the word integrity jumps out in light of press reports about Gregory Tony, the person Pollock plans to replace as sheriff. They are opposing each other in the Aug. 20 Democratic Primary. The winner will likely be the next sheriff; Broward is an overwhelmingly Democratic county.

That's why a May 20 report by investigative reporter Dan Christensen, in the Florida Bulldog, rings a bell. It says, "Broward Sheriff Gregory Tony violated a state law regarding the state's 'minimum qualifications' to be a law enforcement officer by failing to maintain 'good moral character,' but shouldn't lose his license to be a cop, a state administrative judge ruled today."

Instead, the judge recommended "that Tony receive a 'written reprimand, an 18-month period of probationary status and a requirement that (he) complete Commission-approved ethics training."

The report continued, "Tony was accused of submitting eight applications for a driver's license between 2002 and February 1, 2019 -- a month after he was sworn in -- when he falsely answered "no" when questioned if his driving privilege had ever been revoked, suspended and denied in any other state. Tony's license had been previously suspended in Pennsylvania."

Calling for integrity in the Sheriff's Office, Pollock notes that "The spectrum of services and support provided by BSO affects schools,

neighborhoods, roads, traffic, the legal system, airports, the seaport, mental and health care services...Most importantly, it affects you and your family."

Pollock retired from BSO after more than 30 years of service. He says that experience, and his "love for our community" will help him deliver for Broward residents. Pollock's platform includes a call for more training for deputies, more training on how to protect schools and creation of a unit to protect seniors from abuse. The South Florida native joined BSO in 1977 as only one of a few African American deputies at that time. He remembers growing up, listening to how people in his community viewed law enforcement officers, which is why he says building trust is so important.

With trust in mind, Pollock advocates developing more programs in BSO to work with young people. Among other things, he wants to create programs "with fire-rescue to provide free swimming lessons, visit schools to teach children about home fire safety, and provide free CPR classes in neighborhood community centers." The retired BSO Colonel's focus on children also rings a bell in light of this information about the man he wants to replace.

State law enforcement agents started a sweeping investigation into Sheriff Tony "six days after Florida Bulldog exclusively reported in May 2020 that as a 14-year-old in Philadelphia in 1993 Tony shot and killed a young man. Tony was charged with murder, but was acquitted in juvenile court," according to journalist Christensen.

Tony did not disclose the killing to Gov. Ron DeSantis before DeSantis appointed him to replace Sheriff Scott Israel who was in charge during the Parkland school massacre.

Says Pollock, "I will restore BSO's integrity."

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Political advertisement paid for and approved by Al Pollock, Democrat for Broward County Sheriff.

# HILLCREST 25 MEETING WITH MARTY KIAR, BROWARD COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

– by Steve Schneider



A pilot program to protect homeowners from fraud was started by **Broward County Property Appraiser Marty Kiar**. But now it is spreading across the state, according to Kiar, who spoke June 6 at the Hillcrest 25 Board meeting which was held in the lobby.

Kiar said smart people with criminal souls and minds find ways to steal the property of homeowners by entering fraudulent deeds. It is easy enough

to do this, he said, because county Recorder offices only act in a ministerial capacity, which means they accept the paperwork that is given them.

But now, thanks to the Broward pilot project, homeowners can sign up to get notified right away if a change to their deed is entered with the county. The homeowners can get text messages, emails and regular mail notices.

Kiar said the notices are sent right after the deed is filed so the homeowner will know what has happened and can contact authorities if they did not make a change to their deed. This is very helpful, he said, because the real estate thieves need time to hatch their plots once they record the fake deed.

Among other things, they move into empty housing, or rent them out, or take out mortgages or even try to sell them.

His office, working with the Broward County Sheriff, and Broward States Attorney have conducted numerous investigations. These investigations have led to arrests, convictions and long sentences for offenders, Kiar said.

He noted his office also added staff to focus on this growing problem.

You can learn more about this and other services his office offers at [bcpa.net](http://bcpa.net).



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## JUNE 4, 2024, MEETING WITH DEVELOPERS - by Steve Schneider

A mixed-use development project adjacent to the southeast corner of Hillcrest was conceived in 2018 but is moving forward now, stalled by the Covid-19 pandemic and required investigation of the land that contains substances that earned the site a brownfield designation.

That's what Hillcrest residents learned June 4 when developers provided updated information about the city-owned property that sits between Park Road and Pembroke Road. The meeting was held in Clubhouse 2 on Hillcrest Court. More than 30 residents listened to the presentation and asked questions that ranged from expressions of curiosity to skepticism to downright opposition.

**District 6 Commissioner Idelma Quintana** attended the meeting, listening to the give-and-take session. Two other declared candidates for Hollywood offices also were there. Jamil Richards is seeking to topple Quintana. Eduardo Flores also declared his intention to run for mayor.

Significantly, the initial proposal called for 315 market-rate rental apartments to go along with 80,000 square feet of retail space and land reserved for Hollywood to handle tasks related to public works and fueling of city vehicles. One question is whether the original proposal state "315 units" or "at least 315 units"?

The developer's current plan is seeking the approval of 620 multifamily units, with a reduced retail space presence of 25,000 square feet, along with all the other necessary governmental approvals to move forward with the proposed project. The city is holding meetings now to decide whether to approve the updated proposal.

The units would be rented at market rate, according to **Eric Metz, Principal for Park Road Development LLC** and **Louis Birdman, Principal Owner at BRD Real Estate Development**. He added his company would likely develop the residential component of the project in two phases of 300 units per phase. And while the developers will market the units as rentals, that is subject to change as the market changes, said Birdman. At some unspecified time, it is possible Park Road Development LLC would move to convert the units to condos depending on real estate market conditions.

The mixed-use project is near the Orangebrook Golf and Country Club, where the city and private developers plan to remake the golf course, add a hotel and 750 units of apartments in three tower buildings near I-95 and Pembroke Road.

The brownfield site designation and traffic issues were two main concerns voiced by Hillcrest residents.

But the developers said traffic studies will be commissioned by the city and the developers. And the city will compare the two reports to make sure the "scientific studies" reach the right conclusions for Hillcrest residents, Birdman said.

He also sought to reassure people about the contamination found at the site. Birdman said the worst part of the problem resides around the middle of the property. Therefore, the housing units will be constructed to the north, moving west closer to Hillcrest. The housing units also will be staged in such a way as to hide a parking garage. And the retail portion of the project will go up near Park Road and Pembroke Road with the city public works location nestled between the retail and residential space. Park space with trees is planned as well.

Based on the project's diligence work completed by the developer, Birdman said they will be able to remove some of the debris and manage the balance of contaminants through a variety of mechanisms. Those mechanisms include putting soil, structures, and engineering controls over the contaminated site, with all buildings being constructed on piles.

What kind of substances were found? Arsenic from the former Hillcrest golf course, ash from solid waste previously historically incinerated at the site, and various types of solid waste and organic materials, such as leaves and yard clipping, that were compressed over the years.

Sounding an optimistic note, Birdman said contaminants did not leech into the underground water. He added developers will deal with above-ground accumulation of water by collecting it into a large "tub" where it will

be cleaned and then moved by pipes to another location on the site where it will be protected. However, the substances dumped in the ground over the years and traffic questions continued to concern Hillcrest leaders after the meeting.

Said **Steven Hurtig, President of Hillcrest 25**, located adjacent to the proposed construction site: "I see NO upside for Hillcrest residents," he wrote in an email after the meeting. "The only winners are the City of Hollywood (more tax revenue) and the developer (positive rental income or the sale of the project to some large entity at a handsome profit.)"

Hurtig, who also is a state-licensed property manager, continued, "Hillcrest assumes the risk of a Brownfield miscalculation, increased traffic, commotion and new security issues. The previously bought and paid for traffic reports did not take into account the high speed of the additional Pulte traffic (from Parkview at Hillcrest). Due to drivers in high performance vehicles driving at reckless speeds. It has become extremely dangerous entering Hillcrest Drive from our parking lot. We continue to have very close near misses."

Mark Roth, VP of Hillcrest 26 and a longtime Hillcrest leader and retired attorney offered a succinct evaluation. "They can't be certain," said the current building vice-president. "It's about manipulating current residents." He continued, "Packing the contaminants are not removal. If not removed, they are still there and a possible hazard. One must be prepared for unforeseen events."

Whatever the truth, it is clear the builders will spend lots of money to try to deal with the brownfield -- providing the city approves the deal. A Sun Sentinel article at the time the process started said it would cost between \$5 and \$10 million to clean the ground. But at the Hillcrest meeting, developers said it will cost them at least \$10 to \$15 million to deal with the brownfield, and probably more. The brownfield designation was issued in 2011.

This is what **Susannah Bryan, the Sun Sentinel reporter**, wrote: "Park Road Development LLC, ranked number one by city staff...initially wanted the land for free. The developers are now offering to pay either \$1 million or \$3 million, depending on whether Hollywood leases the public works compound currently on the site. They anticipate spending \$10 million on cleanup."

That was several years ago. But the developers have an agreement with the City that was approved in 2020 to purchase the property for \$2.2M with the developer assuming all costs and liabilities associated with the remediation that is now estimated to be \$15-20 million.

And Metz insists, "The remediation of the site, at no cost to the City, will provide a public benefit to all of the residents of the City and Hollywood and the greater Hillcrest community."

You can let Commissioner Quintana know your thoughts on this issue by emailing her at her City Hall address: [Iquintana@hollywoodfl.org](mailto:Iquintana@hollywoodfl.org).



### PARK ROAD DEVELOPMENT

Hollywood, Florida

Principal Investment and Development

Partnership with BRD Development & Collarnele Partners

- 30-acre brownfield site
- 300+ multifamily units
- +/- 70,000SF of neighborhood retail
- Revitalization of city public works facility



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



Greetings Hillcrest Residents,

Summer is here! School is out, vacations are planned, and the beaches are filled with families looking to make the most of our home. This first month of summer should be a time of celebration and fun. But in a contentious year for our country, this month should also mark a period of reflection. June 6th marked the 60th anniversary of D-Day, where thousands of American and Allied troops laid down their lives to protect our democracy and essential freedoms. June 19th will mark Juneteenth, the day when the last slaves in Texas received official notice of their freedom. We are proud that Juneteenth is now an officially Broward County holiday as well as a federal celebration. Of course, we are also coming up on the Fourth of July – an opportunity to celebrate all our country represents and holds dear, even as our history has so often been imperfect. Taken together, these events and celebrations remind us of how fortunate we are to have our freedoms and our democracy. At a time when those institutions and ideas can feel strained, I hope this month can be a time for us to reflect and work together as we move into summer and prepare for the events of this year. I look forward to sharing this time and this summer with my friends in Hillcrest.

### Hurricane Season

Hurricane season is officially here! The season began on June 1st, and forecasters are predicting an active season this year. The very warm weather and hot water in both the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico are creating conditions that could lead to particularly powerful storms. Hillcrest residents know that hurricane season is a time to prepare. This includes making an evacuation plan if you are in a flood zone. The April 2023 flood event was a stark reminder of the danger we face even in non-coastal areas due to rainfall and rising seasons. Hurricane season also means preparing your home with supplies and shelter. I encourage you to check our Broward County's Hurricane Preparedness Guide. If you are in

need of extra assistance, please go to <https://www.broward.org/Registry/Pages/default.aspx> to sign up for the Vulnerable Population Registry.

### Solid Waste

The past month has seen Broward County take some of the most significant steps on solid waste and recycling in many years. Our Solid Waste and Recyclable Materials Processing Authority, which I co-chair, has formally hired and brought on its first Executive Director, Todd Storti. Todd is a longtime leader in the industry with a specific background in environmental solutions and sustainability. In addition, the Authority has formally hired a Master Plan consultant. The Master Plan will be a guiding blueprint to allow us to actually implement the solutions necessary to reduce waste and increase recycling. This plan will include facilities recommendations and a major educational component. We also received our Waste Characterization Study, which examined all of the waste stream in Broward County in order to provide the data needed to determine what kind of system we need moving forward. This report was filled with fascinating tidbits – including that 34% of waste was compostable, and another 30%+ was recyclable! We can go a very long way towards reducing and reusing our waste, and this study provides the data needed to move forward.

### Contact Us

Our District office is conveniently located within the lobby of the Hollywood Branch of the Broward County Public Library at 2600 Hollywood Blvd, next to Hollywood City Hall. My District office staff is available to you from 10 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Friday. My staff is also working from my office in Fort Lauderdale and from other locations within our District. The Fort Lauderdale office is open for your convenience Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call 954-357-7006/7790, or email me at [bfurr@broward.org](mailto:bfurr@broward.org).

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## INTERVIEW WITH CATHERIN "CAT" UDEN, CANDIDATE FOR HOLLYWOOD MAYOR - by Steve Schneider

**Catherine "Cat" Uden** says she is running a grassroots campaign to unseat **Mayor Josh Levy**, the two-term incumbent seeking a final term. This effort is taking her across Hollywood, from Lawn Acres and Hillcrest to Liberia and Parkside, as well as Hollywood Lakes and Hollywood Hills.

To learn more about community needs, Cat is knocking on doors after work during the week, and also on weekends. If you want to volunteer, you can reach her at: (954) 261-5438 or [cuden33019@gmail.com](mailto:cuden33019@gmail.com).

In her second Inside Hillcrest interview, Cat discusses how much new housing we need and what type of housing can meet the needs of workers. She also explains her governing philosophy.

In the third and final interview next month, the candidate for Hollywood mayor will answer your questions. Please send them to: [info@insidehillcrest.com](mailto:info@insidehillcrest.com). Election Day is November 5.

**1- In the 2023 State of the City address, Josh said we need to see 500 housing units constructed every year to keep pace. Do you agree? And how would you handle this apparent necessary growth differently than the mayor deals with it?**

Residents are concerned about how population growth will affect quality of life and how much population growth is sustainable. Hollywood's infrastructure is suffering, saltwater infiltration is affecting South Florida's fresh water supply, and traffic is a nightmare. We have trains that run north and south, but that doesn't solve east/west transportation issues. Our state legislature does not allow local municipalities to manage our solid waste properly, our landfills are reaching capacity, and the county is burning garbage. We need smart growth that respects existing residents and takes environmental sustainability into consideration. Residents are also concerned about how 500 units per year would affect our hospitals, traffic, our ability to provide fire rescue and police response, and our ability to evacuate in a hurricane. I've heard Josh make the claim that we need to "compete" with Fort Lauderdale and other cities for growth. Fort Lauderdale's City Hall went underwater, traffic is unbearable, and there is often sewage in the streets and canals. Instead of competing for percentage of population growth, I'd like to compete to be smarter and more sustainable. I'd like to compete for quality of life. The price of insurance and the number of weather-related disasters may end up forcing many to leave the state. Adding 500 units per year would require very careful planning.

**2- You worked for 15 years as a Broward County teacher. What can you do if elected mayor to make our schools work even better for students and parents? And what are the limits to your power?**

We have some good public schools here in Hollywood, and we should promote their programs and accomplishments so that parents aren't afraid to send their kids to public school. Our home values also increase when we support our public schools and help them succeed. My sons went to great public elementary and K-8 schools in Hollywood and then attended our neighborhood public high school, South Broward. We are extremely satisfied with the experience at South Broward, which offers unique programs and classes. I will work with neighborhood schools and PTAs to make sure Hollywood schools are safe and attractive, and that they receive the tools and programs needed for success. Attracting and retaining teachers is a challenge, so the city should look into programs to assist our Hollywood teachers with housing.

**3- It's said that politics is the art of the possible, which suggests compromise, negotiation and consensus are sometimes part of the job. What do you think of this statement? And why?**

Compromise, negotiation, and consensus are necessary, and I deal a lot with this when passing legislation. Amendments and concessions are made in order to pass a bill. Our elected officials, city staff, partners, developers, and residents all need to realize this. I believe that serving as mayor is a public service, representing the whole community, and that includes being accessible, open, transparent, and honest. Because I view

the position of mayor as a public servant, my job will be to represent the public. I start from a different perspective. I would be negotiating, compromising, and forming a consensus built on the people of Hollywood who want to maintain Hollywood's unique character and ensure its future quality of life.

**4- At a Hollywood City Commission meeting last year, Commissioner Adam Gruber said we have a housing affordability crisis in Hollywood, as well as throughout the Sunshine State. Do you agree? And what can you do as Mayor to deal with this pressing problem?**

Hudson Village is a new affordable housing building just south of the circle downtown. We also have the University Station project downtown and the Pinnacle project on 441. With the new Live Local Act, it is likely that developers will be able to take advantage of tax breaks, incentives, and reduction of regulations in order to purchase and develop commercial and industrial properties in Hollywood to create mixed use, higher density high rises with affordable units. Local governments will be unable to deny many or most of these projects because of the new state law. Broward County officials are getting ready to approve a new 10-year plan for affordable housing. One idea calls for expiring CRA's (Community Redevelopment Agency) to use some undesignated and unspent tax-increment financing money to go toward affordable housing projects. The tax-increment financing money, commonly known as "TIF," is money set aside for improvement projects within a CRA zone as property values in a redevelopment area rise. We should work to find ways to house current residents, Hollywood teachers, and Hollywood staff/first responders.

**5- You mentioned the "Live Local Act" state law in your last answer. Part of the law promotes creation of "affordable housing" in exchange for relaxation of government regulation. What are the potential consequences for Hollywood residents?**

The state's Live Local Act currently only applies to commercial or industrial properties. I am very concerned with the extent to which it interferes with our ability to manage city planning. Currently, it allows developers to build to the height of the tallest building within a 1-mile radius as long as the project meets the affordability requirements. Already, a developer is attempting to use the Live Local Act on Hollywood beach. Along with other residents, I seriously question how "affordable" the units on the beach will be, and I feel the barrier island is an inappropriate location for new high rises. Because of the new Live Local Act and how it may allow high density skyscrapers on our commercial properties, we need to reevaluate our planning, zoning, and master plans in order to provide balance and plan sustainably for the future. We also need to be very careful how this development and population growth will affect city services and staff, particularly public safety. I strongly urge residents to vote me into office so that I can involve you in the process, keep you informed, empower you, and advocate for balance.

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



Cindy Abraham



Brian Gaiefsky

The Hollywood Real Estate market experienced a 6%+ increase in property values in 2023. Interest rates are declining a bit making home buying more affordable.

**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:**

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Text – Cindy - 954-895-1617 Brian – 954-415-5323



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### WHAT IS GOING ON WITH REAL ESTATE COMMISSIONS? - by *Cindy Abraham*

Starting on August 17, 2024., cooperative compensation (buyer agent commissions) will no longer be listed in the MLS. Sellers will have three options: 1) continue to offer compensation to the buyer's agent, 2) entertain an offer that includes buyer agent compensation, or 3) refuse to offer any compensation. This will require buyers to be more proactive in understanding their agent's compensation and potentially including it in their offer.

This is a good thing. I may have mentioned in previous articles that one very negative aspect of today's market, is that suddenly we are being hit with an oddly high number of cancelled showings – or worse, no-shows. Some buyer agents would tell us that their “buyer” isn't answering their calls!

Finally, Brian started asking the agents where they are finding their buyers. The answer was that they were buying buyer leads from Internet websites. Turns out that when people were perusing these websites to look at properties, their contact info was captured and sold to agents desperate for business. What really blew my mind was that oftentimes when the agent requested the showing, they had not even met the “buyers”! So essentially, they were showing a complete stranger multiple properties without knowing if they can even afford them.

We are even leery of “direct buyers”. These are folks who call us directly on our listings. I can tell you that historically, we ended up working with less than 10% of these people. Why would a qualified buyer not have their own agent to represent their interests? That made no sense unless you knew, like we did that they probably were not qualified and were hoping that the list agent would be blinded by \$\$\$, and do what they could to make it work, thinking they would get both sides of the commission. Ugh.

I believe the new law regarding commissions will actually benefit the industry. Buyer agents now must have a consultation with buyers to qualify them before showing properties. This is to avoid wasted time and no-shows from unqualified buyers. Agents who don't follow this rule risk violating ethics standards and not getting paid. Their buyers will be required to sign a Buyer Broker Agreement. In this agreement, commissions will be addressed.

By no longer posting buyer commissions in the MLS, this will also eliminate the agents who screen out commissions lower than 3% which is a HUGE ethics violation. I am not going to say that we were thrilled when we are showing buyers properties with reduced commissions but that was not a consideration if the property fit our buyer's needs and budgets. That is called integrity. (Plus, I believe in Karma...).

HOWEVER, don't be surprised if the BUYERS screen out properties where the seller is not contributing to the commission. This is NOT illegal or unethical.

So, for sellers, they have a choice. Commissions will become just another strategy. In the past, the seller paid the entire commission to their selling agent who split it with the buyer agent. Going forward, the seller will still pay their listing agent a commission, but it will be up to them if they want to offer anything to the buyer agent. The selling agent will receive a copy of the Buyer Broker Agreement WITH the offer. Here is where it gets interesting:

Suppose the buyer agent has a Buyer Broker agreement with their buyer for a portion or all of the standard 3% commission. Example: If the seller offers let's say 2% to the buyer agent, and buyer agent also have a buyer broker agreement that says the buyer will pay the agent 2%, that agreement must be sent to the seller at the time of the offer. At that time, the seller has the option of changing the commission to the buyer agent by adding a clause in the offer reducing their contribution to 1%.

Having to include the Buyer Broker agreement with the offer will also justify any mention of commission in the offer. In the case of the above, the offer may say, “Seller will contribute 1% toward buyer agent's commission.” Buyer Broker agreements could also say: “Buyer will pay buyer agent the difference between what the seller is offering up to 3%.” I am hoping that this will create a paradigm where successful, experienced buyer agents are the norm. If ever there was an industry in desperate need to “thin the herd”, it is real estate. Going forward, the buyer or seller with the worst agent will have a lot to lose.

Continued from Pg. 10

Sellers will not be permitted to tell buyer agents the amount, if any, of the commission that the seller is offering. This will go a long way to leveling the playing field and hopefully, encourage dishonest and inept agents to find another line of work.

Pricing in a shifting market is always a challenge. In a balanced or buyer's market, pricing based solely on historical comps may not be effective. Sellers and their agents should also consider active, pending, and expired listings to price competitively and get properties sold. Using an appraiser can provide helpful insights, but the market trends should be the primary driver of pricing.

**PARKVIEW AT HILLCREST MAY 2024**



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

**MAY 2024 HILLCREST STATE OF THE MARKET**  
by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams Realty Professionals A Team Florida



We saw a bit of a bump in showings during May. There are currently 60 active listings; 11 went under contract and 11 closed. The highest 2-bedroom sale was ours at 282K and the highest 1/1/1 sale was also ours at 199K.

Ironically, the sellers of the 2 highest corner sales had contacted us. Sometimes people will call us just to get an expert opinion knowing they are planning on listing with someone else. This would really annoy me if they were not up front about it, but these two were. The first one, I advised that the comps supported 315K because of the level of remodel and the view; but also, her birthday was 5/31 so... sometimes providence steps in. It sold for 310K. The second highest we studied the comps and advised that 275K was the number, but that starting higher could be wise due to other factors. The agent listed and sold it for 275K in 2 weeks.

There was only one closed rental during May although one of ours closed the first week of June and another went under contract. There are five available condo rentals in Hillcrest right now ranging from \$1800 to \$2500. All are 2-bedroom units except one, a small furnished 1/1/1 listed for \$2500 that has been on the market for 145 days. Again, every month that a rental sits on the market costs our clients a full month's rent. We urge landlords to properly ready the unit before listing; complete any necessary repairs, repaint, etc. This will impact the list price in a positive way, so they can end up getting more money with less time on the market.

I was surprised to see that only two townhomes went under contract during May. The good news is that both were on the market less than a month. We are down to 12 listings, with two going under contract during May and three closings. Two townhomes and one single-family home closed. One townhome and the single-family home were waterfront. Check out the list prices vs. the sales prices below. Buyers know value and are willing to pay what a home/townhome is worth, whether it is higher or lower.

There are now 14 active listings, ranging from \$5,399.00 for a 1421SF townhome to 1, 599,000 for a 5/2/1 2659 SF waterfront single-family home. Seven of the fourteen are in triple digits for Days on Market.

There are also 14 available rentals. You can get a 1421 SF 3/2/1 townhome for \$3500 per month up to a 2501 SF 5/3 home on the water listed at \$6000 per month.

Anytime you read these market reports and have questions, please give us a call. We are here for our neighbors whether you are planning to sell, rent, or just want to monitor the market. We can put you on auto-notification for the properties in your area so you can see what is being listed and/or sold in real time.

Changing markets require adaptive strategies. And we have them. We can navigate just about everything a shifting market can throw at us. Whether you are buying, selling, or renting, give us a call at 8-HILLCREST. We are always here to help.

**HILLCREST CLOSED SALES DURING MAY**

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
27	C-3850 Washington #116	1344	2/2	315,000	310,000	68
25	3800 Washington #620	1296	2/2	295,000	282,000	36
27	C-3850 Hillcrest Dr #1101	1600	2/2	275,000	275,000	14
25	C-3800 Hillcrest Dr #1001	1344	2/2	250,000	240,000	206
26	C-4001 Hillcrest Dr #301	1344	2/2	235,000	225,000	108
23	C-4330 Hillcrest Dr #110	1312	2/2	225,000	215,000	16
24	4400 Hillcrest Dr #1014	1132	2/2	225,000	200,000	68
4	C-1000 Hillcrest Ct. #111	961	2/2	218,000	218,000	73
26	4001 Hillcrest Dr. #1015	994	1/1/1	199,000	199,000	27
4	1000 Hillcrest Ct. #201	744	1/1/1	145,000	130,000	144
9	1101 Hillcrest Ct. #108	672	1/1/0	144,900	13,000	33

**HILLCREST CLOSED RENTALS DURING MAY**

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
19	901 Hillcrest Dr. #315	1150	2/2	2,200	2,200	65

**MAY PENDING AND CLOSED SALES**

ADDRESS	SF	B/B	LIST PRICE	SALES PRICE	DOM	WTRFT
T-1575 Greenway Drive	1824	3/2/1	729,900	pending	18	Yes
T-1280 Eucalyptus Dr	1499	3/2/1	545,000	pending	12	No
T-5012 Greenway Dr	1769	3/2/1	750,000	676,000	41	Yes
S-1476 Pongam Terr	1918	3/2/0	750,000	775,000	102	Yes
T-1240 Eucalyptus	1421	3/2/1	550,000	525,000	57	No

**MAY RENTALS**

ADDRESS	SF	B/B	LIST PRICE	SALES PRICE	DOM	FURN
T-5040 Eucalyptus	1421	3/2/1	4000	pending	54	No
T-3944 Poinciana Ln	1421	3/2/1	3600	3600	53	Yes
S-1101 Banyan Dr	1768	3/2/0	3650	3650	37	No
T-5040 Eucalyptus	1881	3/2/1	4700	4700	112	Yes

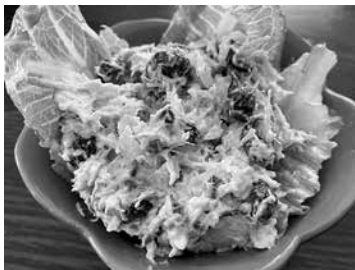
# June Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham



How to turn a 16 oz. container of Aldi Cranberry Almond Chicken Salad into 2 ½ lbs. of the best chicken salad you have ever had! I make this every single week and we never tire of it. Whether we make a sandwich with a few slices of apple or serve it on crackers (or on apple slices), it is so good. It makes a great afternoon snack or something (healthy) to grab when you are hungry and in a hurry.

**CHEATER CHICKEN SALAD - (makes 40 oz.)**

- In a large bowl, mix together:
- One 16 oz. container Aldi's Cranberry Almond Chicken Salad
- Two 12.5 oz. cans chicken breast meat, drained (but leave it moist)
- 1/3 cup shredded carrots (or chopped carrots)
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- 2 finely chopped scallions (white & green parts)
- ¼ cup 50% less-sugar raisins
- ¼ cup toasted slivered almonds (less expensive at Aldi)
- 2 TBS plain or honey glazed sunflower seeds (optional)



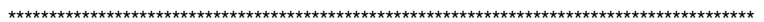
Place veggies in big bowl, add canned chicken and mash the chunks, season to taste. Add Aldi's chicken salad and raisins. Mix well. Add slivered almonds (& sunflower seeds if using) and gently mix them in. I use the same container to store - I save the one from the last batch, so I have two. It will fill both to the very top. Refrigerate so the ingredients "get happy" and serve.

Cost: Adding up the cost of all ingredients, total comes to about \$13.00 which is about \$5.25 per pound. Aldi canned white meat chicken is the least expensive (and low on sodium) unless Publix has a BOGO. And Aldi slivered almonds (which you need to toast) are also cheaper. I buy the 20oz. bag of 50% less sugar raisins (at Publix) because we go through so much.

And here is what happens to the Nutrition Facts: One container of Cranberry Almond Chicken Salad, (per 1/3 cup serving) has: 22g fat, 3.5g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 310 mg sodium, 13g carbs, 1g fiber, 8g sugar and 7g protein.

Once you have added all the other ingredients, 1/3 cup now has about 14g fat, 2g saturated fat, 18 mg cholesterol, 180g sodium, 8g carbs, 2g fiber, 9g sugar, and 14g protein.

Give or take. But adding so many more healthy but flavorful ingredients really kicks it up a notch. If I leave some broth in the canned chicken, it is usually moist enough, so I rarely add more mayo, but it doesn't hurt. A couple TBS isn't going to affect the fat content that much. The point is, make it delicious for your taste. If you like more mayo or salt, do it.



As long as you already have the cranberries, here is a good one. Fast and easy too.

**CHOPS WITH FETA AND CRANBERRIES (you can use pork or lamb)**

If you are using pork chops, about ½ "thick is best. And of course, never be afraid to substitute. I used crumbled goat cheese one time, and it was very good. Same with the vinegar. The recipe called for red wine, but I prefer apple cider. And of course, dried cherries would work too.

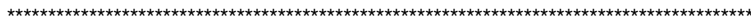
- ¼ cup EVOO
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 1 TBS chopped fresh thyme or ½ TBS dried
- 4 lamb or pork chops

- ½ cup dried 50% less sugar cranberries
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- ½ cup light red wine
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 2 TBS brown sugar
- 3 TBS butter.
- 1 tsp corn starch dissolved in 2 tsp water
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese

Preheat oven to 400. Combine oil, garlic, thyme, salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Rub it all over chops.

Combine cranberries, vinegar, wine, broth, and sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat a large skillet on medium-high, add olive oil until shimmering. Brown chops on both sides. Reduce heat to medium low. Pour contents of bowl over chops. Cook chops for another 10 minutes (depending on thickness), turning once, until they are cooked through. Stir in dissolved corn starch and butter. Top chops with crumbled feta and cover for about 5 minutes until cheese is melted. Plate chops and top with pan sauce. Serve.



I can't say I am a big arugula fan, but I happened to have some. Otherwise, I would use spinach or even kale. To me prosciutto takes the place of salt in recipes, and it tastes way better. Full disclosure: more often than not, I add some protein like chicken meat or turkey sausage to pasta recipes. We all know there is no substitute for garlic! And I love recipes that make their own sauce.

**GARLICKY PENNE WITH WHITE BEANS, ARUGULA, PROSCIUTTO**

- 3 oz. penne
- 2 slices prosciutto
- 4 thinly sliced garlic cloves
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 can white cannellini beans
- 1/3 cup chopped oil-packed sun dried tomatoes
- 2 cups baby arugula
- ¼ cup shredded parmesan

Cook pasta until pliable but firm. Drain pasta and set aside, reserving 2 cups pasta water.



Heat 1 TBS oil over medium heat until shimmering. Add prosciutto and cook until crispy, about 5 minutes, flipping occasionally. Transfer to paper towel-lined plate and let cool slightly. Break into large pieces; set aside.

Reduce heat to medium-low. Add 3 TBS oil to the pan and add garlic. Cook until pale golden, about 3 minutes. Add pasta, red pepper flakes and 1 cup pasta water to pan and boil over medium-high heat. Cook stirring often, until water is mostly absorbed but still pools slightly in bottom of pot.

Stir in beans and tomatoes and cook until heated through, about 30 seconds. Let pasta sit off heat for 2 minutes. Adjust consistency with remaining reserved cooking water as needed. Add arugula and stir until it just starts to wilt, about 15 seconds.

Serve topped with prosciutto and shredded parmesan.



# Hello Neighbor!



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**MAURA MCCARTHY BULMAN, CANDIDATE FOR BROWARD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

*- by Steve Schneider*



**Maura McCarthy Bulman**, the only candidate who has lived in District 1 for more than 9 months and the only candidate with children attending our District 1 public schools is passionate about our school system.

The Broward County School Board came close last month to shutting three schools in the sprawling county. All but two of the three schools targeted for closure were in our area — an elementary school in Hollywood, and a middle school in Dania Beach.

However, citing an election year, and the need for more data, the School Board put off its decision pending more review. The drive to shut schools is happening because of declining attendance in our traditional public schools, which means the state gives our school system less money with which to fund education. Instead, some of that money now goes to for-profit Charter Schools, religious schools and parents who educate their children at home.

This competition, which won't go away, is a driving force behind Maura McCarthy Bulman's campaign to get elected to represent District 1 on the School Board. The longtime local resident, a parent of four children who attend our public schools, says she is the only candidate invested

in our community and devoted to our District 1 public schools. She is running against incumbent Daniel Foganholi and John Christopher Canter in the Aug. 20th election. The candidate who wins 50% plus one vote wins outright in August. Otherwise, the top two vote getters challenge each other in the Nov. 5. General Election. District 1 covers all of Hollywood and Hallandale, and includes West Park, Pembroke Park and parts of Dania, Miramar, and Pembroke Pines.

McCarthy Bulman doesn't pull her punches when addressing the challenges at hand.

"Yes, there are attendance issues that lead to financial problems," she says. But the mother of four and local attorney adds, "There are solutions. The School Board needs to communicate better with parents and the community. We need to let people know about all the successes in our school system. And we need to do this regularly." For example, her son is a junior at South Broward High School on U.S. 1 in Hollywood. "And he has friends who have been accepted to attend MIT, Notre Dame and various military academies."

Better communication is just one way in which McCarthy Bulman wants to help grow the public school system. She adds, "Our public schools are the heart of our community, we need a strong representative for District 1 on the school board who is invested in our community and will fight to protect our local public schools, our neighborhoods and advocate for the interests of the people of District 1. This election is personal to me - I have lived in Hollywood for nearly 20 years, my business is in Hollywood and my four children go to public schools in Hollywood.

You can learn more about Maura, donate, and volunteer at [mauraforbroward.com](http://mauraforbroward.com).

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## RAIN – Submitted by Etta Stevens



*On the next rainy day, imagine the rain washing away and cleansing your emotional body.*

There are times when we might feel the need to wash away all of our troubles and call forth freshness into our lives. Since perhaps the most cleansing substance on this earth is water, we can think of the joy rain brings as an energetic bath, rejuvenating our minds, bodies, and souls. Just being able to spend a few moments every time it rains to become aware of the healing powers water brings to us can renew us in so many ways. As we do this, we will find that the more we appreciate the universe's gift to us in the form of rain, the more we can see that a gentle rain shower is a strong reflective tool that can cleanse our entire being.

The next time it rains might be a good chance to experience the rain through all your senses, allowing you to truly understand just how truly important each and every drop of water is. First, take a few minutes to look outside and notice how each individual raindrop seems to come down in a continual stream. By noticing this you can contemplate how it takes many small accomplishments to create the whole of your existence, for nothing exists in isolation. Then you might wish to focus your attention on the sound of the rainfall, letting the sounds of drops penetrate into the innermost recesses of yourself. Listening in this way may bring you a greater sense of connection with nature and the world around you, knowing that the sounds you hear are an integral part of not just the physical sustenance you require but also nourish your spirit as well.

Consciously using our senses to feel nature's healing energy as it comes to us in the form of rain is an act of internal cleansing. Just as the rain physically washes over the earth and rinses out any impurities and imperfections, so it also bathes our spirit in the joy that comes from knowing that we are in fact one with the world around us. We are all brothers and sisters, as one with this world and God. It does not matter what you call God. He has many names, SHIVA, HAHSEM, HIGHER POWER, OR HIGHER SELF. Just be sure to treat our God with respect and regard.

When new challenges and opportunities show up in our lives, we may diagnose ourselves as feeling scared when what we really feel is excited. Often, we have not been taught how to welcome the thrill of a new opportunity, and so we opt to back off, indulging our anxiety instead of awakening our courage. One way to inspire ourselves to embrace the opportunities that come our way is to look more deeply into our feelings and see that butterflies in our stomach or a rapidly beating heart are not necessarily a sign that we are afraid. Those very same feelings can be translated as excitement, curiosity, passion, and even love.

There is nothing wrong with being afraid if we do not let it stop us from doing the things that excite us. Most of us assume that brave people are fearless, but the truth is that they are simply more comfortable with fear because they face it on a regular basis. The more we do this, the more we feel excitement in the face of challenges rather than anxiety. The more we cultivate our ability to move forward instead of backing off, the more we trust ourselves to be able to handle the new opportunity, whether it's a new job, an exciting move, or a relationship. When we feel our fear, we can

remind ourselves that maybe we are just excited. We can assure ourselves that this opportunity has come our way because we are meant to take it.

Framing things just a little differently can dramatically shift our mental state from one of resistance to one of openness. We can practice this new way of seeing things by saying aloud: I am really excited about this job interview. I am really looking forward to going on a date with this amazing person. I am excited to have the opportunity to do something I have never done before. As we do this, we will feel our energy shift from fear, which paralyzes, to excitement, which empowers us to direct all that energy in the service of moving forward, growing, and learning. As spiritual beings, we realize we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same spiritual Father, God. Transformation of the self and the world comes from keeping God's company; when I change, the world changes. When we do this, we feel very good knowing God is helping us, and with great love, appreciate what God has helped us to achieve.

Meditation fills us with these positive 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. In our teachings, He teaches us that obstacles are only a test, to succeed we must preserve and continue to move forward in life. God is full of those qualities and powers and never loses them ever, unlike us, who need to fill ourselves constantly when we lose our way. Nonviolence is the spiritual way to peace and compassion. The early morning is the best time to meditate and also before bed if you can.

**MEDITATION IS THE ONLY WAY TO BRING UP YOUR CONNECTION TO YOUR HIGHER POWER AND COMBINE YOUR ETERNAL GIFTS OF LOVE, PEACE, HAPPINESS, WISDOM, PERSEVERANCE, AND TRUE FRIENDSHIP.**

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