

GALT MILE NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GMCA

FEBRUARY 2017



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WHY THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE NEEDS TO FIX THE CONDO SPRINKLER-SYSTEM PROBLEM

Ellyn Setnor Bogdanoff

For more than a decade older high-rise condominiums throughout Florida have been discussing, debating, and exercising their legal rights with regard to sprinkler system retrofitting requirements. In 2003, the Florida Legislature responded by allowing each community to vote to opt out of sprinklers inside their units and the right to opt out of installing an engineered life safety system (ELSS). Many communities missed the opportunity to exercise this right because they were pressured by their local fire marshals to hire life safety engineers and commence installation of a full sprinkler system at a significant cost to the residents.

In 2010, responding to the outcry from the condominium community, as a member of the Florida House I sponsored House Bill 561 to allow associations the right to opt-out of sprinklers in the common areas and reduced the vote requirement from 2/3 to a simple majority. However, as a compromise, the words "engineered life safety system" were removed from the statute because we were assured that an ELSS system was cost effective, and much less intrusive than the installation of a fire sprinkler system. As a result, associations taking an opt-out vote after July 1, 2010 could not opt out of an ELSS.

Now, fast forward to January 2017. Scores of local fire marshals throughout the Sunshine State are knocking on the doors of high-rise condominiums that previously opted out of sprinklers (and some who opted out of both sprinkler systems AND ELSS) and advising them that they must immediately hire life safety engineers and begin to pull permits to install an ELSS. Many of these same officials are telling high-rise condominiums that an ELSS will actually be MORE expensive and more intrusive to install than a full sprinkler system.

Moreover, there is no clear description of what an ELSS system looks like and some are being told that they will need to install a comprehensive fire sprinkler system to "pass the test" so to speak.

In 2010, I responded to the requests of the condominium communities across this state. It was our intent to avoid the exact scenarios we are faced with today. The cost to install an ELSS could be in the millions and the impact to elderly residents living on fixed incomes could be devastating.

Where do we go from here?

The 2017 Legislative Session begins on Tuesday, March 7. Representative George Moraitis (R-Fort Lauderdale) has sponsored HB 653 (Senator Kathleen Passidomo (R-Naples) will sponsor the Senate version) which seeks to address the ELSS problem. This bill would allow older high-rises to opt out of an ELSS and, for those who do not or cannot, provides more time for installation of an ELSS beyond the current 2019 deadline. HB 653 also ad-

resses the confusion that erupted in mid-2016 concerning whether low and mid-rise buildings are required to retrofit and clarifies that they do not. This will be a huge fight against the special interests that profit from this requirement and those that have little evidence that installing an ELSS is necessary for the safety of residents.

It is imperative that our elected officials understand that a promise made must be kept. We promised more than a million Floridians living in older multifamily buildings that were code-compliant at the time they were constructed that they would not have to undergo the financial or operational rigors of retrofitting their buildings. Call it a full sprinkler system, an ELSS, or something else entirely, the fact remains that our condominium residents should not be facing a deadline they thought was in their rear view mirror.

***Former State Sen. Ellyn Setnor Bogdanoff is a shareholder with Becker Poliakoff, a Fort Lauderdale headquartered law firm, and represents a number of condominium associations throughout Florida on the ELSS issue in Tallahassee.**



EDITOR'S COMMENTARY: SPRINKLER/ELSS RETROFIT AMBUSH

Make no mistake; sprinkler lobbyists are playing political hardball. They had no intention of leaving \$billions in projected revenues on the table following passage of the 2010 sprinkler retrofit relief amendment. After six years of failing to convince lawmakers to mandate another mass purchase of sprinkler systems, the Sprinkler Associations devised a plan to circumvent the statutory relief. Once the 2016 legislative session ended on March 11, 2016, a high-ranking official in the Fire Marshals union put the plan in motion.

On March 17, 2016, Boca Raton Fire Marshal David Woodside – current President of the Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association (FFMIA) – petitioned the Florida Office of State Fire Marshal for a response to 3 questions about how high-rise buildings are affected by the Florida Fire Prevention Code (FFPC). As per state law, the responses comprise an official opinion, also known as a Declaratory Statement.

The questions were channeled to Deputy Chief Financial Officer Jay Etheridge. Ironically, the Florida Fire Prevention code doesn't require high rise associations to install an ELSS. It simply provides that associations with an ELSS or an exterior exit access from every dwelling unit needn't install an automatic sprinkler system. Woodside and the sprinkler lobbyists needed Etheridge to officially twist this exemption into a mandate.

Etheridge obligingly crafted an answer that would authorize local fire marshals to deliver \$billions in association funds to the sprinkler industry, despite a glaring lack of any documented safety benefit. In 2010, when Sprinkler lobbyists toured the House floor to ply lawmakers with hypothetical Towering Inferno scenarios, Former Statehouse Representative (and later State Senator) Ellyn Bogdanoff rebutted the melodramatic assaults with official data from State records, imparting, "In 30 years, not one injury resulted from an association's failure to perform a sprinkler retrofit."

Since Fire Marshals are supposed to be public advocates, why are local Fire Marshals in certain jurisdictions ordering associations to immediately retrofit \$multi-million sprinkler systems (as confirmed by Bogdanoff), when the ELSS installation deadline is December 31, 2019? In short, key Fire Marshals are paid by the Sprinkler Associations to move industry product. Consider this:

When Bogdanoff filed her retrofit relief bill in 2010, the Executive Director of the Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association (FFMIA) was veteran Fire Marshal Chuck Akers. Simultaneously, Akers served as Executive Director of the American Fire Sprinkler Association, an industry trade group charged with boosting sprinkler sales.

An FFMIA past President, the late Steven Randall, was also the South Central Regional Manager of the National Fire Sprinkler Association until he retired. FFMIA lifetime member Buddy Dewar is the National Fire Sprinkler Association's Vice President of Regional Operations, and the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association's Lobbyist and Legislative Liaison. In a nutshell, these icons in the Fire Marshal Union make

a bundle selling sprinklers. To exploit the respect naturally afforded the uniform, others serve as window dressing for Sprinkler Association lobbyists "working the floor" in the House or Senate. You do the math.

In contrast with many of his peers, Fort Lauderdale Fire Marshal Jeff Lucas appears fair-minded and forthright. At a meeting with Galt Mile officials, Lucas disagreed with Etheridge's slippery interpretation of the Fire code, observing "I would think if you opt out, then you opt out of all," and suggested that associations pursue this with their State lawmakers.

*Unless this scam is blocked by our lawmakers in Tallahassee, one of the costliest rip-offs in Florida history will parboil the family budgets of association homeowners across the State, including those of more than a million elderly retirees on fixed incomes. On February 6, Statehouse Representative George Moraitis filed House Bill 653 (HB 653), which would enable associations to opt-out of an ELSS retrofit. Florida Senator Kathleen Passidomo filed companion Senate Bill 744 (SB 744) in the other chamber on February 16, 2017. They are working with Ellyn and Association Advocate Donna Berger to beat back this ambush. On the bright side, this isn't their first time at the dance. More to come...**

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EDITOR'S COMMENTARY: Chip LaMarca's FEBRUARY 2017 Newsletter

By Eric Berkowitz

In his January / February 2017 Newsletter, District 4 County Commissioner Chip LaMarca thanks officials in the County's Natural Resources Division for their relentless pursuit of the Segment II beach renourishment, welcomes \$8 million awarded by HUD to fund 19 projects for which ending homelessness is a shared objective, observes that the 2016 Sea Turtle nesting season was earmarked by an unprecedented number of Loggerhead, Green Turtle and Leatherback nests, credits a collaboration among stakeholders in the Broward Water Partnership with new conservation measures, and applauds "Fast Lane", an expedited information check-out feature of the Broward Library's new service model.

DOUBLE-EDGED NESTING STATS

Although applauded by LaMarca, the record 3,567 nests that peppered the Broward coast during the last nesting season doesn't signify a recovery of Florida's five species of Sea Turtle, nor the three federally protected species that predominate Broward's nesting census. The unprecedented 2016 total is due to an explosive jump in Loggerhead nests, which exceeded last year's count by 659 events, and its 5-year annual Broward average by 448 nests. Nesting events tallied by Nova students for the other two species - Leatherbacks and Green Turtles, actually declined compared to 2015, tumbling below their 5-year averages.

While the 27 Leatherback nests were fewer than last year's total of 35, and slightly less than the 33 averaged seasonally in Broward County for the past 5 years, the 137 Green Turtle nests were 151 less than their 288-nest 5-year average, and 326 fewer than their near record 463-nest 2015 output. Sea Turtle Gurus at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) claim that the declines were expected since annual fluctuations are consistent with the cyclic nesting patterns exhibited by Sea Turtles. FWC is optimistic, as long-term trends show an exponential increase in nest numbers since monitoring began.

Local Sea Turtle aficionados are less optimistic than FWC, expressing confusion about the catastrophic failure rate suffered by all three nesting species. While 85 - 90 percent of the Sea Turtle eggs ordinarily yield live hatchlings, only 40% of the eggs hatched in 2016. Evidently, the record-breaking high temperatures that roasted much of the U.S throughout the summer also cooked the eggs. Although Sea Turtle eggs are extremely sensitive to heat, FWC hasn't confirmed that the nests were devastated by the hot and dry weather. FWC spokesperson Katie Purcell announced that the commission plans to examine possible causes for the astronomical failure rate.

NINE-MONTH BLACKOUT

Among the staunchest supporters of protecting the Sea Turtles that share our beach, Galt Mile residents spent \$millions adapting association lighting plans to minimize illumination of nesting habitat - more than any other community in Fort Lauderdale. After 14 years of inconsistent code enforcement and capricious violations, worsening unintended consequences of the City's poorly drafted 2003 Beach Lighting Ordinance have prompted City officials to finally acknowledge how the law fails to balance the needs of people with those of Sea Turtles. A beach lighting policy that forced the entire beach area into darkness for 75% of the year was fatally crippling the economic viability of the City's world-

renowned beach neighborhood, detouring angry tourists to Palm Beach and Daytona, imperiling drivers and pedestrians along A1A and opening serious security and safety breaches in residential coastal communities. In beachfront hotels, management officials annually report complaints by hundreds of visiting tourists that "fear of crossing the street" would preclude their return.

Although equally frightened, locals who live or work in neighborhoods that devolved into Ghost Towns don't have the option of not returning. As observed by Mayor Jack Seiler, "The problem is there's a safety issue down there. It's gotten too dark. As much as I think every one of us has been very involved in trying to protect the sea turtles, you can't do that at the expense of human life. You've got traffic, pedestrian issues, cycling issues." When originally enacted in 2003, Florida Fish & Wildlife officials assured City Commissioners that lighting prohibitions would never impact beachfront residents and merchants, given the FWC policy of disinterring the nests and moving the eggs to a vacant "recipient" beach.

When FWC reversed the policy in 2005, and ruled that the nests must be maintained at their original sites, they advised beachfront homeowners and merchants to affix simple shields on lamps illuminating the beach, which they could order free of charge from the FWC website. A year later, FWC notified Fort Lauderdale code enforcement to violate lamps fitted with the FWC shields, citing them as insufficient, followed by a notice that beaches along with adjacent roadways and neighborhoods should be "blacked out" during the nine-month Sea Turtle nesting season.

HCP: BALANCING THE NEEDS OF SEA TURTLES & PEOPLE

Since consequences of the 2003 ordinance have since mushroomed into significant threats, officials plan to fashion a new policy that promotes Sea Turtle survival without crippling the City or endangering its residents. To that end, City Manager Lee Feldman suggested creating a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), a Federal designation that enables local jurisdictions to mitigate the adverse consequences of protecting a threatened or endangered species. After a recent meeting with consultants experienced in customizing these federal protocols, City officials, environmentalists from Florida Fish and Wildlife, and local stakeholders agreed that an HCP would protect our Sea Turtles while relieving the burden on residents, businesses and visiting tourists.

Sea Turtle nests would be carefully transferred from locations adjacent to busy residential and commercial neighborhoods to uninhabited stretches of beach. Hatchlings wouldn't be distracted by artificial lighting along the otherwise pristine shore, while roadways, shops and homes along the original site could be safely illuminated. Although the permitting process is expected to take several years, it would help guarantee the future of Fort Lauderdale's tourism economy, make A1A safe for drivers and pedestrians, expedite the recovery of protected Sea Turtles and enable residents and visitors to use the city's beaches past sundown.

*If it strikes you that the HCP bears certain similarities to the FWC pre-2005 nesting policy, that's because life is a funny old dog. After 14 years of playing "Where's Waldo" with Code enforcement, and enduring a "Keep Out" beach policy after dark, we may once again be able to enjoy full time access to the most compelling feature of our home - the reason that many of us moved here. More to come...**

Chip LaMarca's

FEBRUARY 2017 Newsletter



largest truck haul project in the State of Florida and possibly in the country. The contractor, Eastman Aggregates, is currently demobilizing from the project area, with final restoration of the Sunrise Boulevard access area by January 13, 2017. I extend my deep personal gratitude to our Broward County staff that worked diligently on this project for years, particularly Division Director Jennifer Jurado, Administrator Nicole Sharp and for many years Eric Myers. I want to also thank the Broward County residents for their patience and understanding of the importance of this project for our community.

\$8 Million in Grants to Assist Homeless Population

Broward County has been continuously working towards ending homelessness. Recently the Broward County Homeless Initiative Partnerships was awarded a grant of more than \$8 million by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the 2016 HUD Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) Program Competition. Several projects will be funded that help fulfill Broward County's goal and objectives in the "A Way Home" Plan to End Homelessness. This award will serve homeless adult and youth clients, including; individuals, families, veterans, those with mental, emotional and physical disabilities, those with substance abuse disorders, mothers and children including pregnant women, those who are "chronically" homeless and those who have co-occurring disorders.

The HUD CoC Program award will fund 18 renewal projects and 1 new CoC Planning project providing Supportive Services, Homeless Management Information System Support, CoC Planning, Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing. The projects provide 690 permanent, 112 rapid rehousing, and 25 transitional beds (827 beds total) with related supportive services to Broward's homeless population. Most importantly, these new funds will create 15 new permanent supportive housing beds for chronically homeless persons in partnership with Broward County Housing Authority and Broward Housing Solutions.

For more information, visit HIP's website and view the "A Way Home" Plan to End Homelessness.

Continued on page 8

Dear Broward County Residents,

I am honored to serve as your county commissioner, representing our coastal communities from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale and all of the amazing communities in between. Here are some recent highlights from around Broward County.

Beach Renourishment Segment II Project Complete

Broward County's first large-scale beach nourishment project utilizing an inland sand source has been successfully completed. As of December 28th, 2016 all sand placement activities for the Segment II Shore Protection Project has been completed. In total, the project placed just under 1,000,000 tons of sand along 4.9 miles of beaches in portions of Pompano Beach, Lauderdale-By-The-Sea and Fort Lauderdale. Additionally, 1.5 miles of protective sand dune habitat was created or restored, creating this critically important feature along approximately 70% of Broward County's shoreline. The project was well executed, efficiently operated, in full compliance with environmental protections and regulatory requirements. With equal importance it was completed on-time and within budget.

This project, with 43,276 truckloads of sand, was the





Record Setting Sea Turtle Season

Turtle nesting season came to an end on October 31st, 2016 and this year was officially marked as a record-breaking sea turtle nesting season in Broward County. Since 1981 the Broward County Sea Turtle Conservation Program which is funded by Broward County and carried out by Nova Southeastern University has been counting nests and this year a total of 3,567 laid nests were counted. Loggerheads laid 3,400 nests, green turtles laid 137 nests, leatherbacks laid 27 nests and 3 additional nests were laid, but the species were unconfirmed.

Although this year was a record breaking year for sea turtle nesting it is still imperative that Broward County residents continue to take the initiative to make our beaches an ideal habitat for sea turtles. There are many things that coastal residents of Broward County can do to help; specifically they can reduce the amount of artificial lighting directly on the beach. Reducing artificial lighting on the beach will make our beaches more helpful to nesting females and ensure that the hatchlings crawl towards the water upon emerging from their nests. Let's continue to practice turtle-friendly lighting by turning off unnecessary lights, using red or amber LED bulbs, closing curtains or moving light sources away from windows and only lighting what is needed. Making these small changes can help to continue to preserve sea turtles habitat today and in future generations to come.



Save Water, Save Money and Save the Environment

Broward County recently approved 15 new 5-year agreements for partners in the Broward Water Partnership (BWP). The agreements are a collaboration between Broward County, utilities and local government that promotes water conservation. Since 2012, Broward residents, nonprofits and businesses have saved more than 1.3 billion gallons of water with rebates and devices through the Conservation Pays program. The BWP has also hosted several contests which have encouraged water conservation and provided prizes which include cash, fitness devices, irrigation system controllers, and a complete home retrofit with water and energy saving devices.

Be sure to check your eligibility for toilet rebates. Visit ConservationPays.com or call 800-270-9794 for complete details.



Library's New "Fast Lane" Customer Experience Improvements

The Fast Lane at Broward County Libraries is a quick, easy way to check out items from the library. Fast Lane is part of Broward County Library's new service model, launched earlier this year that provides the community with longer service hours and more open days at library locations without any increase to the library's budget. Fast Lane also allows library staff to provide more one-on-one assistance in addition to making more materials and resources readily available to customers. You can also make Fast Lane even easier by downloading the Broward County Library WoW app on your phone and tablet, which will allow you to use it as a virtual library card. To download the BCL WoW app please visit our Mobile Apps web page and download it now.

The Resident's Guide to Government provides a convenient resource to help people stay connected to their local government. It includes contact information for County officials and Federal, State, and local agencies. Visitors can subscribe to E-news and social media sites. Please sign up at www.Broward.org/District4 to receive email updates from our office. If there is anything that we can do to assist you with your vision for a better Broward, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 954-357-7004 or by email at clamarca@broward.org.

As always, it is my honor to serve you.
Best regards,

Chip



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As always, it is my honor to serve you.
Best regards,

Chip

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<p>19 Sunshine Music Festival Mizner Park Amphitheatre 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Info.: 1-800-745-3000</p> <p>Las Olas Sunday Market 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-426-8436</p>	<p>20 Palm Beach Winter Expo Embassy Suites, Boca 5 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-838-9644</p>	<p>21 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268</p> <p>High Tea & Trivia Broward Health Imperial Point Cafeteria 3 to 4:30 p.m. RSVP/Info.: 954-759-7400</p>	<p>22 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063</p> <p>South Beach Wine & Food Festival (Through 2/26) South Beach, Miami 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Info.: 877-762-3933</p>
<p>26 Ride Fort Lauderdale - On the Beach Fort Lauderdale Beach Park 9 a.m. to Midnight Info.: 754-222-2234</p> <p>Las Olas Sunday Market 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-426-8436</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268</p> <p>Alzheimer & Dementia Support Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Library 2:30 p.m. Info.: 954-776-8961</p>	<p>1 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063</p>
<p>5 Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-396-3622</p> <p>Las Olas Sunday Market 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-426-8436</p>	<p>6 GMCA Presidents Council Meeting Regency Tower Condo Association 7:30 to 9 p.m.</p>	<p>7 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268</p> <p>Caregiver's Support Group SHIP Private Dining Room (1st Floor), 2:30 p.m. Info.: 954-776-8961</p>	<p>8 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063</p> <p>Riverwalk Noon Tunes Performer(s): Joey Gilmore (Blues) Huizenga Plaza Noon to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4755</p>
<p>12 Las Olas Triathlon & Duathlon DC Alexander Park, 7:30 a.m. Info.: 954-213-6699</p> <p>Daylight Saving Time Starts</p> <p>Las Olas Sunday Market 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-426-8436</p>	<p>13 Palm Beach Spring Business Expo Hilton Palm Beach Airport 5 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-838-9644</p>	<p>14 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268</p> <p>PI Day</p>	<p>15 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063</p> <p>Riverwalk Noon Tunes Performer(s): Joe Dougherty's Irish Band Huizenga Plaza Noon to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4755</p>
<p>19 Spring Fine Art Festival Huizenga Plaza 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info.: 954-487-8061</p> <p>Las Olas Sunday Market 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-426-8436</p>	<p>20 Commissioner Bruce Roberts: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033</p>	<p>21 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.</p>	<p>22 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063</p> <p>Riverwalk Noon Tunes Performer(s): The Fabulous Fleetwoods (Southern Rock) Huizenga Plaza, Noon to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-4755</p>



FEB/MAR

FEBRUARY 19: 12th Annual Ft. Lauderdale A1A Marathon, 401 SW 2nd St. at NW 5th Ave., Registration: 6 a.m., Race Start: 7:30 a.m., Info.: 561-241-3801
 FEBRUARY 19-20: ArtGras, Abacoa Town Center in Jupiter, Info.: 561-746-7111
 FEBRUARY 20: Riverwalk Noon Tunes (Performer(s): Big City Dogs (Classic Rock & Blues)), Huizenga Plaza, Noon to 2 p.m., Info.: 954-828-4755
 FEBRUARY 23: Better Breathers Support Group, Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Library, 2:30 p.m., Info.: 954-776-8961
 FEBRUARY 25: 18th Annual Women In Distress SAFEWALK-RUN 5K, Nova Southeastern University, Register: 7:30 a.m.; Start: 9 a.m., Info.: 954-760-9800
 FEBRUARY 25-26: 41st Annual Fort Lauderdale Ruggerfest, Mills Pond Park, Info.: 954-444-6086
 FEBRUARY 25-26: Renaissance Festival, Quiet Waters Park, 10 a.m. to Sundown, Info.: 954-776-1642
 FEBRUARY 26: Loco Rio 8K, Florence Hardy Park (25 SW 9th St.), 7 to 11 a.m., Info.: 270-210-0206
 FEBRUARY 26: Victorian High Tea 2017, Historic Stranahan House Museum, 2 p.m., Info.: 954-524-4736
 MARCH 4-5: 29th Annual Las Olas Art Fair - Part II, Las Olas Blvd between SE 6th Ave. & SE 11th Ave., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 561-746-6615
 MARCH 9: Bereavement Support Group, Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Library, 2:30 p.m., Info.: 954-776-8961
 MARCH 12: 9th Annual Jazz Picnic in the Park, Ilene Lieberman Botanical Gardens, 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Info.: 954-730-3000
 MARCH 19: 2017 Florida AIDS Walk and Music Festival, South Beach Park (Ft. Lauderdale), Registration: 8 a.m.; Opening Ceremony 9 a.m.; Start: 10 a.m.; Music Festival Begins: 11 a.m., Info.: 954-522-3132

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<p>23 Outdoor Farmer's Market Broward Health Imperial Point (6333 N Federal Hwy) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 954-776-8961</p>	<p>24 Music on Main Street Performer(s): Iko-Iko Oakland Park City Hall 6 to 10 p.m. Info: 954-630-4251</p> <p>Blossom Festival James Pirtle Memorial Golf Classic Davie Golf and Country Club 1 p.m. Info: 954-797-1163</p>	<p>25 Street Painting Festival (Through 2/26) Downtown Lake Worth 10 a.m. Info: www.streetpaintingfestivalinc.org</p> <p>Polynesian Cultural Festival (Through 2/26) Jaco Pastorius Park, Oakland Park Noon to 7 p.m. Info: 954-630-4507</p>
<p>2 Outdoor Farmer's Market Broward Health Imperial Point (6333 N Federal Hwy) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 954-776-8961</p> <p>11th Annual Festival of the Arts BOCA (Through 3/12) Mizner Park Amphitheater, Boca Info: 561-368-8445</p>	<p>3 WPB Antiques Festival (Through 3/5) South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB Info: 941-697-7475</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale Taste of Little Italy (Through 3/5) Huizenga Plaza Info: 561-427-0500</p>	<p>4 Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Drop-off 4800 West Copans Rd. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info: 954-828-8000</p> <p>The 34th Annual Southeast Florida Scottish Festival & Highland Games Plantation Heritage Park 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 954-460-5000</p>
<p>9 Outdoor Farmer's Market Broward Health Imperial Point (6333 N Federal Hwy) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 954-776-8961</p> <p>14th Biennial Broward Quilt Expo War Memorial Auditorium Info: 954-873-7416</p>	<p>10 International Orchid Festival (Through 3/12) Fairchild Tropical Gardens 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Info: 305-667-1651</p> <p>2017 Dania Beach Marine Flea Market (Through 3/12) Mardi Gras Casino, Hallendale Beach Info: 954-761-7073</p>	<p>11 Garden Fest & Bonsai Show (Through 3/12) Flamingo Gardens 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Info: 954-473-2955</p> <p>Moonlit Movies Movie: Finding Dory Jaco Pastorius Park, Oakland Park, 3 p.m. Info: 954-630-4507</p>
<p>16 Outdoor Farmer's Market Broward Health Imperial Point (6333 N Federal Hwy) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 954-776-8961</p> <p>G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant, 11 a.m.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Saint Patrick's Day</p>	<p>18 Mad Hatter's Tea Party Stranahan House Museum 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Info: 954-524-4736</p> <p>MS Walk - Fort Lauderdale George English Park (1101 Bayview Dr) Registration: 7 a.m.; Start: 8:30 a.m. Info: 855-372-1331</p>
<p>23 Outdoor Farmer's Market Broward Health Imperial Point (6333 N Federal Hwy) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info: 954-776-8961</p> <p>QueLess on Las Olas: "Murder at the Family Reunion" Stranahan House & Laura Ward Park 7 to 9 p.m. Info: 954-288-7201</p>	<p>24 Miami-Dade County Fair (Through 4/16) Miami-Dade County Fairgrounds 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info: 786-315-5266</p> <p>Palm Beach International Boat Show (Through 3/26) Evernia St. & Flagler Dr. (waterfront) / North Oematis St. & Flagler Dr. (waterfront) Info: 954-64-7642</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Davie Orange Blossom Festival, Parade, and Rodeo (Through 3/26) Davie Town Hall Info: 954-797-1163</p>

LOTS HAPPENING IN TOWN!

MARCH 26
13th Annual Deering Seafood Festival on the Bay
Seafood Alley (along Biscayne Bay), Miami
8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Info: 305-235-1668 ext. 253

MARCH 29
Riverwalk Noon Tunes
Performer(s): Sabor Latino (Latin)
Huizenga Plaza, Noon to 2 p.m.
Info: 954-828-4755

MARCH 29
Palm Beach Condo & HOA Expo 2017
Palm Beach County Convention Center
10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Info: 952-881-5030

MARCH 31
Pineapple Jam Dinner and Auction
Historic Stranahan House Museum
6 to 9 p.m.
Info: 954-524-4736

MARCH 31
Relay For Life of Pembroke Pines
Walter C Young Middle
6 to 9 a.m.
Info: 954-200-7534

APRIL 1
Literary Feast 2017
Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six
5:30 to 8 p.m.
Info: 954-357-7382

APRIL 7-9
Delray Affair 2017
Downtown Delray
Info: <http://delrayaffair.com>

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF EVENTS, GO TO THE CALENDAR AT WWW.GALTMILE.COM



First Saturday of Every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd. & the Beach LBTS (Meet at Pavilion), 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info: 954-776-1000
First Saturday of Every Month: North Beach Art Walk, 3280 NE 32nd St, 7 to 11 p.m., Info: 954-537-3370
Second Saturday of Every Month: Beach Sweep, Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, 1100 Seabreeze Blvd., 7 to 11 a.m., Info: 954-593-8501
Mondays: Food Trucks at Artspark, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Youngs Circle in Hollywood
Thursdays: BHIP Farmer's Market, Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Arts Pavilion (633 N Federal Hwy), 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736
Saturdays: Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars, Fox Astronomical Observatory at Markham Park, Sunset to Midnight, Info: 954-384-0442
Daily: Yoga on the Beach, Ocean Manor Resort (4040 Galt Ocean Dr.), 9:30 a.m. (weather permitting), Mats supplied, \$10 donation, Open to the Public, Info: 754-701-0197 or 516-840-1455

HIGH-TECH CAR THIEVES HIT THE GALT MILE

By Eric Berkowitz

With the exception of a summer hiatus, the Galt Mile Community Association (GMCA) hosts an Advisory Board meeting on the third Thursday of each month. To resolve shared problems or issues specific to any individual association, representatives appointed by each of the GMCA's 29 member associations meet regularly with City Commissioner Bruce Roberts, County Commissioner Chip LaMarca, Statehouse Representative George Moraitis, association advocates and key officials from City, County or State agencies that manage critical services.

FLPD and the Galt Mile Advisory Board

Among the monthly agenda items is a security report. In their capacity as law enforcement liaisons to the Galt Mile Community Association, FLPD Officers Tom Gestal and George Brandner provide the Advisory Board with a snapshot of local crime trends and recommendations for protecting local residents against emerging threats. Since September, they have been updating the Advisory Board about a spike in car thefts that predominantly impact several models of Infiniti. Unlike the standard smash and grab tactics that leave windows broken, or keylocks ripped from car doors, Gestal and Brandner noted how vehicles that were stolen or plundered were left undamaged.

On December 15, Gestal explained that the car thieves were using an electronic device to penetrate vehicles equipped with keyless entry systems, wherein a wireless key fob is used to unlock the doors and in some cases – start the engine – instead of a physical key. This specific vulnerability was comprehensively vetted in 2011 by researchers in ETH Zurich, a Swiss Technology and Engineering University. Since car manufacturers have done nothing during the past five years to plug this security sinkhole, carjacks centrally located in a Mall parking field can now open and start dozens of nearby cars - while their unsuspecting owners hunt for bargains.

During the past decade, Law Enforcement authorities in Europe and North America reported thousands of cases wherein recovered vehicles that were stripped of contents or stolen showed no evidence of forced breach and virtually no damage. Like Gestal's report, the vast majority of these official case summaries referred to an electronic device that somehow compromised the vehicle's security system. This enigma stirred some notoriety in 2006, when this mysterious methodology was described by Spanish police investigating the theft of soccer icon David Beckham's \$100,000 armor-plated BMW X5 in Madrid.

Power Amplifiers and Keyless Entry

Vehicles equipped with keyless entry systems search for the weak passive signal broadcast from a small Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip inside the keyfob, which has an effective reach radius of several feet. Once the keyfob is moved outside that small effective zone, it is no longer detected by the vehicle, temporarily suspending its access and ignition functionality. Until the keyfob is brought back into range, the vehicle would ordinarily remain securely locked. However, for less than \$100, anyone can purchase a power amplifier in most electrical supply stores or online, and use it to defeat this security measure.

Gestal said that this device was used by the crooks to boost the Infiniti signal - thereby expanding the effective operational radius up to 100 yards - the size of a football field. If the key fob was in the driver's pocket while shopping nearby - or laying on a dresser at home, the crook could open the car door and strip the vehicle's contents, or start the car and drive off. As long as the engine wasn't

turned off, the thief could drive as far as a tank of gas would allow.

The equipment required for this kind of heist used to be far more expensive – sufficiently costly to deter its use by street thugs who considered drugs and guns more marketable investments. Gestal explained that the price has since tumbled, and a power amplifier can be purchased on eBay for as little as \$17. Since any hustler with a double sawbuck can now rip off cars with minimal exposure or risk, authorities fear the onset of a remote theft epidemic - unless car manufacturers are dragged - kicking and screaming - to invest in effective protection for these vehicles.

Carmakers are well aware of these vulnerabilities. When thieves began swiping codes to keyless devices, manufacturers countered with a "rolling code generator", which changes the code each time the car door – or garage door – is opened, rendering any stolen codes useless. At a hacker's conference called "Defcon 2015", serial hacker Samy Kamkar introduced Rolljam, a \$30 device that can snatch and later broadcast the supposedly random codes emitted by a rolling code generator.

When the user triggers the car or garage door remote, two of the Rolljam's three internal radios block the signal, and Rolljam records the code. When the user naturally tries again, a new code sent by the rolling generator opens the door. Since the blocked code was never received by the lock, it remains valid until it is broadcast later by the Rolljam, and opens the door for the thief. Although some carmakers have already begun switching to a system in which the codes expire quickly – thereby defeating the hack – Kamkar provided carmakers with a sobering taste of the future.

Geek War: Crooks vs. Carmakers

Based in Munich, Germany, ADAC is the world's largest auto club. After conducting an attack to test the limits of this threat, club officials recently reported having successfully used this technique to breach 24 different model cars from 19 different manufacturers, including European cars like the Audi A3, A4, and A6, BMW 730d, and Opel Ampera, as well as models like the Lexus RX 450h, Ford Galaxy, Kia Optima, and Toyota Rav4. Only the BMW i3 partially resisted the attack; although the car couldn't be opened, the ignition was started.

A Swiss company called 3DB Technologies pioneered the research of this vulnerability. The company's founder, Dr. Boris Danev, developed a deterrent called Proximity-Based Access Control, which can accurately determine the exact location of the fob and the vehicle. If the distance between the car and the fob is too great, the system will supposedly prevent the hack.

Notwithstanding the system's effectiveness in preventing remote thefts attributable to an amplified signal, automobile industry watchdogs have concluded that carmakers won't fund the protection until the problem significantly impacts profits. In this scenario, pundits suggested that insurers will serve as the squeaky wheel.

Continued on page 13

As losses begin to pile up, and carriers hike premiums for unprotected vehicles, carmakers struggling to remain competitive will be forced to step to the plate. However, manufacturers won't acknowledge the threat's existence until confirmed and vetted by the National Insurance Crime Bureau.

Headquartered in Des Plaines, Ill., the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is the insurance industry's research bulwark against insurance fraud and vehicle theft. Leveraging data analytics to investigate and plug security vulnerabilities, the NICB first warned about a suspected keyless entry access device in 2014. On December 7, 2016, NICB reported having acquired a rudimentary version of the device overseas, called a "relay attack unit", possibly in either Germany, Eastern Europe or from a Lebanese company characterized as "a Radio Shack for car thieves".

Partnering with CarMax to test it on 35 different makes and models of cars, SUVs, minivans and a pickup truck, NICB was able to open 19 (54 percent) of the vehicles and start and drive away 18 (51 percent) of them. Admitting that there was currently no effective way of preventing this kind of theft, NICB President and CEO Joe Wehrle exclaimed "We've now seen for ourselves that these devices work." Intimating that the ball is now in the carmakers court, NICB Chief Operating Officer Jim Schweitzer remarked, "Vehicles are a valuable commodity and thieves will continue to wage a tug of war with the manufacturers to find a way to steal them."

It Gets Worse

Motivated hackers have since cobbled together a new threat. Instead of relaying the exploited signal of existing keyfobs, more sophisticated thieves can deploy a combination of technologies to launch a brute force attack that can unravel the security codes of many vehicles. By affixing a laptop or tablet to a radio transmitter (i.e. Software Defined Radio - or SDR), crooks don't have to settle for whatever vehicles respond to an amplified signal, but can target a wish list of cars and trucks.

By programming the laptop to cycle through thousands of codes and boosting signals across a wide range of frequencies, they can hack Audis, Lexus, BMWs, or other vehicles equipped with keyless entry. While expanding a thief's inventory, the hack is comparably deficient in two areas. It could take several hours to stumble on the unlocking code, while relaying an amplified signal takes seconds. Secondly, it can only provide access; it won't start the vehicle.

Automotive security researchers anticipate that hackers will broaden the net by refining the search code algorithm, which will expedite the search. Car-makers will predictably respond with additional layers of complex encryption. This hi-tech potato sack race will continue ad infinitum.

FLPD: Protecting Your Ride

Evidently, our local crooks haven't yet acquired the technical chops for this kind of breach, and have thus far limited their quarry to certain models of Infiniti that respond to an amplified signal boost. Gestal suggested that - if possible - Infiniti owners should park in a closed garage, not a driveway or in the street. When at home, Gestal said an owner might stash the keyfob in the freezer, which acts as a Faraday Cage - and blocks the signal.

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Unfortunately, doing so may damage the lithium batteries. According to standards set by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association, lithium batteries should be stored at about 68 degrees Fahrenheit.

Some security researchers have suggested carrying the keyfob in a wallet or purse designed to thwart hacks of passports with radio-frequency ID (RFID) chips. Wrapping the keyfob in aluminum foil will also block the signal, although any opening will defeat the protection. Recently, several products have become available that were specifically designed to protect keyfobs (passports, bank cards, cell phones and other items with vulnerable chips) from errant signals, and provide a more practical solution. These portable faraday cages include a pouch called Fob Guard and a line of carryalls, cases and wallets made by "Silent Pocket". While these products are marketed as effective protection, in the immortal words of Popeye, "You pays your money and takes your chances."

January 2017 FLPD Security Update

On January 19, 2017, Gestal warned the Advisory Board about a recent surge of violent robberies in local shopping malls. Explaining that the robberies usually took place in the mall's parking field and seemed to target women in their vehicles, he said that victims were often punched or doused with pepper spray. Gestal added that the hi-tech vehicular break-ins posed an on-going threat, and that a County-wide fraud ring was still scamming local seniors (see the January 2017 Galt Mile News or "New Local Scam Targets Seniors" on the Galt Mile website). Gestal closed with a plea, "If you take anything from these reports, it should be this: Please tell your neighbors that they must train themselves to be aware of their surroundings... and if they suspect something is wrong, don't hesitate to call the police."

On January 23, Gestal emailed the following security "tips" to the GMCA, which were in turn forwarded to member associations on the Galt Mile:

FYI, other cities have seen a trend with residents shopping at Publix and possibly being followed back to their residence where a minor car accident is staged. At this time the driver exits the vehicle and is unfortunately robbed of belongings. This can very easily happen along the Galt and any of its local businesses.

Another trend which seems to be making a re-appearance is bank follow outs. This is when a person of age withdraws money from their local bank and goes on to do some shopping and either leaves the cash in the car which gets burglarized or followed only to be victimized.

My tips to the residents for the first mentioned would be to remain in the car and immediately pick up their cell phone allowing the suspect to see you have a phone and call the police, DO NOT EXIT VEHICLE, if this is an honest accident the suspect will understand and remain on scene, if not they will hopefully leave.

Tip for the second mentioned would be to be aware of your surroundings when exiting the bank, do not leave cash in the vehicle, if you feel uncomfortable leaving the bank have an employee escort you out to your vehicle, or conduct your banking when you are in the company of another person.

Tom Gestal

Continued on page 16

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The Rest Of the Story

Gestal's first anecdote mirrors an event that occurred on January 18, 2017 in Plantation, where a 73 year-old woman was robbed after shopping in the Publix at 6921 W. Broward Boulevard. Driving back to her home in El Dorado Estates at Northwest 69th Avenue, a security camera at the Guard Gate caught a Black Nissan Altima following her along the main thoroughfare. She pulled over after being deliberately rear-ended by the other car. As a woman who drove the second car approached while apologizing for the collision, the victim exited her vehicle. Suddenly, the other driver blasted her with pepper spray as two men exited the Altima, punched the victim and snatched her purse – containing \$1,500 and credit cards - at gunpoint. The three crooks drove off with both cars.

The robbery provoked a semi-viral social media reaction. It was one of four incidents since January 15 in which the victims were punched and accosted with pepper spray, guns, or both – after shopping at one of several Publix Supermarkets in Plantation. It also appears that Gestal's familiarity with these cases is no coincidence, as similar incidents were reported in Dania Beach, Boca Raton and here in Fort Lauderdale. Typically targeting women, 8 of the 10 nocturnal robberies took place in a Publix parking lot.

On Tuesday, January 24 – one day after Gestal delivered his warning to the Galt Mile, BSO Detectives and Federal Marshals arrested 18-year-old Fort Lauderdale High School student Erica Makayla Abraham and a 16-year old female accomplice in Oakland Park. After using the stolen credit card at the Pollo Tropical drive-thru, Abraham was recognized by a former classmate employed at the restaurant. Police took a third suspect into custody on January 27 – Alex Abraham – Erica Abraham's 15 year-old brother. While the three suspects were identified by several victims, others claimed their attackers were older. Although police believe the busts may end the Plantation attacks, they are uncertain about their impact in Boca Raton – and Fort Lauderdale.

While apprising our associations about evolving neighborhood crime threats, our FLPD liaisons also help incorporate Advisory Board security concerns into Police District 1 action plans. Based on member feedback, enforcement was enhanced at the Oakland Park Boulevard beach access, across A1A at Miles Corner, near the Galt Mile Library – and shifts as required to quash newly reported neighborhood rat nests. Gestal helped realize an increase in one- and two-officer foot patrols and Brandner serves on the Galt Mile security patrol team. For helping to keep our families safe, we owe these guys a debt of gratitude. •



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REP GEORGE MORAITIS FILES LEGISLATION TO SAVE CONDO RESIDENTS MILLIONS BY ELIMINATING OVER- REACHING REGULATION

On Monday, February 6, 2017, Representative George Moraitis issued the following Press Release:

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Representative Moraitis announced that he filed legislation to protect condominium residents from overreaching regulation.

Representative Moraitis said, "Several years ago the legislature authorized condominium associations to opt-out of costly sprinkler retrofits and we are completing that work by also allowing condominium associations to opt out of emergency life safety system renovations. In many cases, the only practical method for an existing building to adopt a compliant ELSS is to pay for sprinkler retrofits which is contrary to the intent of the 2010 legislation. I want to emphasize that every building in the state of Florida must be built to meet the fire code safety requirements at the time of construction, that every building in the state is subject to an annual fire safety inspection and that the imposition of a mandate to adopt ELSS cannot be justified as a necessary safety measure. This legislation simply allows the owners in a condominium association to make their own choice of whether to incur the substantial expense needed to adopt a compliant ELSS."

"We are grateful to Representative George Moraitis for his unwavering support of this important legislation. The installation of an ELSS in a condominium high rise could cost millions of dollars and is an unnecessary burden that would be placed on already financially stressed retirees, elderly, and individuals on fixed incomes." Said Pio Ieraci, President of the Galt Mile Community Association in Fort Lauderdale.

House bill 653 allows each association to choose whether to participate in installing an ELSS. Armed with data on its necessity and costs, residents by a majority vote, will be able to opt in or out. •

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-  5. Get daily exercise - Commit to a physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day, every day to lower your risk for obesity



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