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Eric Berkowitz

Audit lightning strikes again! One of City Auditor Allyson Love's troops, auditor Renee Foley, uncovered a contractor's repeated overbilling of the city, apparently in cahoots with city employees. Love's office also brought into sharp focus the glaring absence of a written business ethics policy for vendors doing business with Fort Lauderdale and the marked lack of reasonable controls on city projects. Fort Lauderdale contractor Recreational Design and Construction Inc., or RDC, billed the City \$110,000 in "questionable costs" during the construction of Civic Peoples Park in southwest Fort Lauderdale, according to Ms. Foley. As a result of the audit, \$85,800 out of the total \$258,114 paid by Fort Lauderdale to RDC for the park project was determined to be "overbilling", for which the City intends to invoice the company.



Civic Peoples park

LOVE STRIKES AGAIN... CITY NAILS ANOTHER AUDIT

Fort Lauderdale, after years of nurturing a free-spending culture that ultimately resulted in the City's budget imploding, is currently in a heightened state of fiscal awareness. The City Auditor's office is operating on all cylinders, seeking budget leaks to plug and historical mistakes to rectify. A recent audit of the Parks Department yielded a veritable buffet of abuses and costly inefficiencies. This effort is adjunctive to Acting City Manager Alan Silva's declared program of financial reforms, service cuts and tax/fee increases designed to insure that Fort Lauderdale "lives within its means". In reviewing the City's relationship with RDC, Foley wrote, "we found significant issues of a material nature that jeopardized the City's assets."

The Civic Peoples Park project, a passive neighborhood park at 3781 SW Riverland Road built between 1999 and 2001, included a walking path, playground equipment, picnic shelter, landscaping and a half dozen parking

spots. RDC enjoys a multi-year contract with the City to provide general design and building services for small projects within the City's Park system. The company also performed construction services for Welcome Park and recently completed work on Riverside Park in Fort Lauderdale.

The City paid RDC extra for items, like a portable toilet, that were already included in the main contract. They picked up lunch tabs for RDC's project manager, Scott Greiner. Fort Lauderdale was billed for a slew of items that were unsupported by any documentation like permit fees and concrete. They reimbursed RDC for undocumented American Express and Home Depot bills. They also paid for consultant work done before the project was even approved.

RDC, located at 3990 North Powerline Road in Fort Lauderdale, invoiced the City for a variety of suspicious expenses. Among them

Continued on page 5

JUST SOLD

Information provided by Eastside Properties

Twelve more properties were sold in the Galt Ocean Mile Community:

L'Hermitage #2308 (2/2) \$1,215,000 - closed 2/11/04	Galleon (2/2) \$340,000 - closed 2/27/04
Coral Ridge Towers E. #1408 (3/2) \$200,000 - closed 2/26/04	L'Ambiance #1406 (3/2) \$515,000 - closed 2/2/04
Fountainhead #10A (3/2) \$525,000 - closed 2/20/04	Continental Condo #803 (2/2) \$315,000 - closed 2/16/04
Royal Ambassador #803 (1/1) \$182,000 - closed 2/27/04	Regency Tower #1404 (1/1) \$235,000 - closed 2/18/04
Commodore #1009 (2/2) \$343,500 - closed 2/10/04	Coral Ridge Towers S. #503 (1/1) \$485,000 - closed 1/14/04
Plaza South #9L (2/2) \$399,000 - closed 2/27/04	Southpoint #906N (1/1.5) \$265,000 - closed 2/27/04



The Galt Mile News

The Galt Mile News is the official newsletter of the Galt Mile Community. Published 12 times a year, this publication is designed to educate the Galt residents of neighborhood-oriented current events and issues, and to offer residents Galt-specific discounts from various local merchants.



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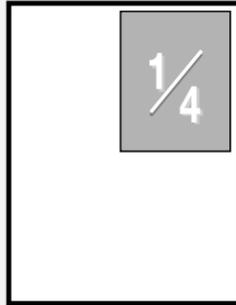
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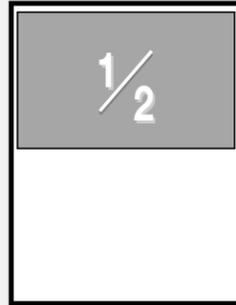


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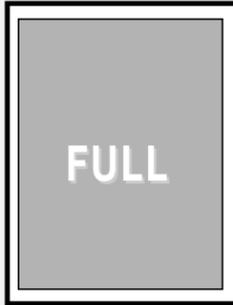


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War...Continued



Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jim Naugle, long on the losing side of countless 3-2 decisions promoting high-rise construction projects, occupies an unusual, albeit not unique, niche. While he has historically supported controlled growth, he stands adamantly opposed to the County's bid to institute top-down regulations designed to slow development. He exhorts that the County's jurisdictional infringement is unnecessary in view of the recent election results wherein Fort Lauderdale voters changed the complexion of the City Commission to reflect a "controlled development" majority. Dean Trantalis, one of the Fort Lauderdale City Commissioners elected last year on this "controlled development" platform, agrees with Mayor Naugle's assessment; "I can point to bad examples of planning in my city, but at the same time, the county should be shamed for some of its decisions, we all have a checkered

past." Hollywood Mayor Mara Guilianti also objects to the County's intentions, "They are treating us like toddlers unable to take steps without being held up by the county." Weston Mayor Eric Hersh agrees, "We know our cities better than the County Commission does."

The County's opening volley in this nascent conflict heralds the beginning of a two year struggle that will see the weighing in of a broad spectrum of interests and the creation of strange political bedfellows as they line up to take sides. Galt Ocean Mile is situated on ground zero of the Barrier Island battlefield. We, as usual, will watch.

Information relative to these hearings may be obtained at the Broward County Planning Council office: Room 307, Government Center, 115 South Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301; Phone: (954) 357-6695, Fax: (954) 357-6685. Additional information about this struggle to control Broward's destiny can be found on the Galt Mile Community Association's web site (www.galtmile.com), including links to the Broward County Charter and the minutes of the aforementioned meetings. •



Mayor Mara Guilianti

Audit...Continued



were pass-through costs of unverified staff overtime and monies paid to subcontractors or consultants directly affiliated with the company for which RDC provided no actual receipts to back up vendors' statements. Because the City failed to include any business ethics standards in the contract, this possible conflict of interest

was accepted in stride. It was also discovered that RDC and its subcontractors didn't carry the proper insurance. Company officials claim that the city's contract administrator, Peter Sheridan, had "verbally" assented to these "contract modifications." Other conflicts cloud the City's relationship with RDC. In a controversy termed, "unusual, suspicious and probably unethical" by Assistant State Attorney John Countryman, Sheridan was forced to resign after it was discovered that RDC built a spa in his private home. Sheridan's mother, in an attempt to mute the potential blowback, paid for the \$11,000 spa months later. In another RDC project overseen by Sheridan, the \$328,614 Welcome Park project, a 2002 audit uncovered \$200,000 in questionable or ineligible payments made by the City to the company. Sheridan currently works at Keith and Schnars, a Fort Lauderdale consulting firm that does substantial repeat business with the City, including improvements to the Holiday Park Gymnasium and George English Park.

Sheridan is not the only municipal employee under suspicion for a conflict of interest. Fort Lauderdale Engineer Peter Strelkow, while overseeing an RDC project for the City, concurrently provided private services to the company. Strelkow, although still employed by the City, is awaiting discipline for yet another conflict of interest controversy.

In response to the disappointing discoveries made by Auditor Allyson Love's office, the City intends to recover the sorely needed \$85,800 overbilled by RDC and exercise substantially stronger controls for effective oversight of future City projects. The Fort Lauderdale Engineering staff has also committed to establishing a written business ethics policy by March 22nd. To preclude a recurrence of this embarrassing (and expensive) scenario, all City contracts would be subject to the terms of this newly created policy. Difficult lessons learned by our municipality in reaction to these audits serve as poor excuses for silver linings. However, if Allyson Love bags a few more juicy ones, not only will she help the City shed its "fiscally casual" reputation that threatens our bond ratings, she'll have the makings of a \$20 million four-part pay-per-view mini-series!

Call 954-828-PARK (7275) to contact the Parks and Recreation Department. The City Auditor is attached to the City Manager's Office. Acting City Manager Alan A. Silva's offices are located at 100 N. Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 and his telephone # is (954) 828-5013, Fax is (954) 828-5021. To further familiarize yourself with Fort Lauderdale's current budget crisis, go to the Galt Mile Community Association's web site (www.galtmile.com). You'll find the Budget Bust Page in the "Issues" section of the site. •

UNCIVIL WAR

Eric Berkowitz

A Civil War is brewing between Broward County and the cities contained in its borders. The battle is over the use of land. The issue is ostensibly about development. The State of Florida is looming in the background like Odin; waiting patiently as he watches his powerful children scheme and fight over the domain that he ultimately holds sway over.

During the past few years, Broward County has been maneuvering to exert final approval over development decisions that historically have been the dominion of its municipalities. As the last remaining pieces of Broward County become annexed into various municipalities, County officials need to find other ways to exert authority over their once significant domain. County Commissioners have quietly developed political alignments with advocates of controlled growth and environmentalists as part of an effort to consolidate a significant alliance before revealing the true scope of their ambitions.

The State of Florida has mandated that Broward County prepare a Master Plan to organize and present county intentions for the next seven years. The centerpiece of this plan is proportional development for land use, insuring that the growth of the County's cities doesn't outstrip their ability to deliver the increased services that development demands. Strains on the area's schools, unplanned for traffic increases, emergency response preparation and adverse environmental impacts have ambushed residents repeatedly throughout the county in the past few years. Recent municipal elections in Fort Lauderdale swept commissioners perceived to be "pro-development" out of office; replacing them with candidates whose major campaign commitment was to control municipal growth.

The Broward County Charter underwrites the County's ultimate authority over all decisions involving land use, in or out of its municipalities. On February 19th, the Broward County Planning Council further empowered County Commissioners by authorizing the development of new land use regulations that will squarely relocate control of municipal and other development to the County Commission. If the County receives the blessing of the State, local planners will spell out the details to which all development, municipal or otherwise, will be subject. In the Broward County Board of County Commissioners Redevelopment Initiative, it states that "Broward County acknowledges that municipalities will continue to lead in initiating, planning and managing redevelopment including approving development plans, site plans, zoning petitions, providing local infrastructure, etc." When a controversy arising from the plans for the Swimming Hall of Fame in Pompano Beach elicited the County's disapproval because it "overburdened the Barrier Island", Broward changed its mind! The cities are not pleased.

Fort Lauderdale, Hallandale Beach, Hollywood, Miramar, Pompano Beach, Davie and Weston have formed a coalition to block Broward County from this unprecedented attempt to wrest control of the cities' growth from municipal leaders.

Continued on page 6



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THE HOMELESS AT WORK

Eric Berkowitz

At a Galt Mile Community Association Advisory Board meeting last year, Fort Lauderdale Police Assistant Chief Chuck Drago addressed the growing problem of allegedly homeless people occupying the benches along Galt Ocean Drive. There is a special unit in the FLPD whose mandate is to reach out to these people and alert them to a wide variety of services including medical services, room and board, and employment. "Homeless" individuals can avail themselves of these voluntary services at their discretion. There is no law that can be invoked to force these individuals to leave the area. While they are predominantly harmless, there have been several complaints surrounding the behavior of certain individuals.

When their ranks seem to swell during "the season" (November through April), suggestions proliferate among residents about how best to contend with the "Homeless". Most of these "ideas" are knee-jerk reactions, borne of anger or frustration, that uniformly suffer from not having been "thought through". Turning on sprinklers during daylight hours proximal to their favorite benches or removing the benches altogether punishes hundreds of residents who enjoy using them (in addition to being an inexcusably stupid waste of valuable water!). The City, as an experimental effort, once paid the airfare for one of the more persistent "homeless" denizens to his former home in Chicago. Three months later, he returned, not surprisingly, to his favorite bench after enjoying his "gift" vacation.

Assistant Chief Drago said that while some of the homeless people on our benches have impactful medical histories (primarily mental); there are a healthy percentage of them that are homeless by avocation. They "earn a living" by emotionally blackmailing sympathetic passers-by for assorted forms of sustenance. This includes food, clothing, and a surprisingly substantial amount of money. Drago explained that the most effective method of thinning the ranks of "homeless people that make a living at it" is to "stop giving them money". Apparently, word spreads that a certain area is ripe for donations. This attracts others who seek "profitable" locations, areas exposed to a substantial amount of sympathetic pedestrian traffic.

It is difficult to encounter fellow human beings who are seemingly "down on their luck" without feeling the urge to offer reasonable assistance. Unfortunately, some of them intentionally take advantage of this common reaction and systematically transform pedestrians' empathy into hard cash. Local merchants unwittingly enable this behavior, providing non-customers with daily access to their commercial "facilities". The only effective way to combat this exploitation is to stop giving them money. When this occurs, they usually relocate to a more "productive" area. Conversely, if the money keeps coming, so do additional "homeless" people to share in the "neighborhood's generosity". Drago suggested that it would be preferable to "contribute to social agencies that provide the services that truly homeless people need". Many of the so-called homeless that collect money from residents "actually have nicer homes" than their misguided benefactors. Food for thought.

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4 Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	5 GMCA President's Council Meeting 7:30 - 9 p.m.	6 Books by the River The New River Inn at the Old Fort Lauderdale Village and Museum. Info.: 954-463-4431 X 17	7 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.	8	9	10
11 4th Annual Easter Egg Hunt at The River House 11 a.m. For Brunch Reservations call 954-525-7661	12	13	14 Jewel Broward Center for the Performing Arts Tix.: 954-462-0222	15 Galt Mile Community Association Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant 11 a.m. Tax Day	16	17 Historic Walking Tour Meet @ New River Inn 11:45 a.m. Reservations 954-463-4431 ext.10
18	19 Commissioner Christine Teel: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center 7 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	20 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.	21	22 Earth Day Clueless on Las Olas Magical Mystery Info.: 1 888 4-LAS OLAS	23	24 Live From South Florida - It's Saturday Night! Broward Center for the Performing Arts Tix.: 954-462-0222
25	26	27	28	29	30	1 Through 5/2 Air & Sea Show Ft. Lauderdale Beach 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
2 Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.	3 GMCA President's Council Meeting 7:30 - 9 p.m. Commissioner Christine Teel: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center 7 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	4 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.	5 The Producers (Through 5/23) Broward Center for the Performing Arts Tix.: 954-462-0222	6	7 12th Annual Cajun/Zydeco Crawfish Festival through 5/9	8 Ansel Adams: A Celebration of Genius Museum of Art (Through 7/5) Info.: 954-525-5500

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I recently injured my knee in a skiing accident. I do not want o stop exercising, but I also don't want to make my injury any worse. I have seen a doctor and worked with a physical therapist. Do you have any suggestions? Thank you, Theresa H.; Ft. Lauderdale

Hello Theresa,
Make sure you do the exercising that your PT recommends. If any of the exercises seem to cause you pain, tell your therapist. Otherwise, you may want to consider water fitness in a pool. Water exercise is one of the best non-impact fitness activities around and good for all ages. The buoyancy of water reduces the weight of a person by about 90 percent and encompasses all the components of fitness: cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. I would also recommend that you work with a certified personal trainer. He/she can organize a program customized to your needs. If you would like to find a water fitness class in your area, please let me know. Good Luck!

How hard must I exercise for an effect to take place? Will just a little exercise do any good? Thanks, I enjoy your column. Linda W.; Coral Ridge

Hello Linda,
Exercise doesn't have to hurt to be beneficial. Actually, physical activity to the point of pain can be harmful. Fitness can be improved for most in 30 minutes or more daily. People who are moderately active substantially reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and improve health in general. Find a program or type of exercise that you enjoy. Try something new such as Pilates, spinning or a beach fitness class. If your having fun, you won't think of it as "work". Increasing daily physical activity can add years to your life and life to your years. Also, if you have children, it is important that you set a good example. They truly watch what we do, and learn. Make it a positive experience. Let me know if I can recommend a facility or program in your area.

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War...Continued

Development on the Barrier Island, because of its physical and geographical limitations, presents a greater challenge than elsewhere in the county when trying to match increased services to the exploding number of new residents. Aside from encouraging the use of public transportation, little can be done to relieve increased traffic or enhance overburdened emergency evacuation systems. The County intends to eliminate the cities' deployment of special land use designations on the beach. These allow a combination of homes and businesses to be considered as a single development in a way that permits the erection of high-rises where they are normally prohibited.

The State, waiting in the wings for Broward to present the details of its Master Plan, is carefully weighing its options. They want to approve a final product that elicits the most palatable voter support. State representatives are walking a tightrope between being counted in the popular "controlled growth" camp while remaining clearly in favor of self-determination and home rule. They also must contend with the long-term pitfalls projected for Broward County. Population growth is anticipated to jump from the current 1.6 million to 2.5 million residents by 2030. According to the Broward County Office of Urban Planning & Redevelopment Planning Services Division's "Accommodating Population Growth in Broward County, 2000 to 2030", "Existing vacant land is insufficient to sustain the anticipated population growth. All vacant residential land in Broward County will be absorbed before 2030: Build out conditions will be reached by 2015 for single family and by 2010 for multi-family units." The County's regulations will attempt to redirect growth to areas

more easily accessible to public services and schools, where new roads can relieve traffic impacts, and where the environmental pressures can be mitigated. The State, however, will not tolerate the balance of power slipping to heavily from one side to the other. State legislators like Senator Steven Geller of Hollywood, are waiting to be summoned by the Cities coalition to advance their case.

While the issues of controlled growth, long term planning, home rule and self-determination are central to this struggle, it would be naive to ignore the political perks that accrue to the winners. The ultimate jurisdictional land use authority will have uncontested access to the sizable bankrolls that developers and their lobbyists disburse to mollify any potential obstacles and align support for their projects. Those on the winning side stand to be wined, dined and have their campaign coffers fattened as the cost of doing business.

Those are the players and that is the scorecard. All sides have substantial support from heavyweight vested and political interests. The roles being played by many of the participants are unusual given their histories. Broward County's role as the "controlled growth" watchdog is inconsistent with the part it played in the construction of Weston, the creation of the Sawgrass Expressway and the expansion of the airport. For decades, County Commissioners have gratefully welcomed contributions from developers as they presided over the massive Broward building boom. These same Commissioners are now allied with environmentalists that they faced on the other side of the table while expanding the airport.

Continued on page 16

FIRE SAFETY BILL HEATS UP

LEGISLATIVE SESSION OPENS

Eric Berkowitz

March 2004 heralds the opening of a new legislative session in Tallahassee. The passage of the Fire Safety Amendment during last year's legislative session slammed the brakes on the mandatory sprinkler retrofitting of every unit in every high-rise in Florida. The door was opened for Associations and their Fire Safety Engineers to re-assume the responsibility for instituting safe and effective Fire Safety systems in our homes. Condominiums and Cooperatives were afforded the opportunity to opt out of the "one-size-fits-all" rigors mandated by the original legislation passed in the dead of night. There is little doubt that the National Fire Sprinkler Association and the Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Union will pump millions into undoing the gains won last year by Condominiums and Coops in an effort to reacquire the multi-BILLION dollar payday that was derailed by the Fire Safety Amendment (S 592). In response, legislators sympathetic to the needs of Condos and Coops are digging in for the anticipated struggle.

While the opt-out provisions inherent in the Fire Safety Amendment are definitely a step in the right direction, they contain several irrational obstacles whose only discernible purpose is to increase our maintenance assessments in exchange for nothing. To avoid the multi-million dollar retrofit requiring sprinkler heads popping out of the ceilings in your unit, two-thirds of the total Association membership must vote to opt out at a duly called association meeting either in person or through the use of a written consent. Proxies, long-acceptable for almost any other reason, are not acceptable for this vote! After the vote, each unit owner must be notified in writing (in 16-point bold print) by certified mail within twenty (20) days about the results of the vote to waive the retrofitting requirement. The Amendment further states, "After such notice is provided to each owner, a copy of such notice shall be provided by the current owner to a new owner prior to closing and shall be provided by a unit owner to a renter prior to signing a lease." This type of disclosure is similar to what the law requires when trying to sell or rent a unit that is infested with termites!

Two bills have been drafted which will allow you to exercise your opt-out rights granted last session in an easier and more streamlined process. Senate Bill 1938, sponsored by Senator Steven Geller (D), and its companion House Bill 747, spon-

sored by Representative Faye Culp (R), would allow the use of limited proxies in connection with the opt-out vote. These bills would also remove the requirement that notice be sent via certified mail to every unit owner within twenty (20) days after the vote was taken. Instead, they would substitute that notice be given by mail, hand delivery or electronic transmission at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting at which the vote to forego retrofitting is held. Not only does this save the Association the expense of a certified mailing, it affords interested residents the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the salient issues before deciding how to vote. Finally, SB 1938 and HB 747 would remove the requirement that a copy of the opt-out vote results notification be given to each prospective owner and renter (the "termite" warning).

The fight to protect our rights is being spearheaded by the Fire Safety Lobby and the Condominium Association Legislative Lobby (CALL), coalitions of Condominiums and Cooperatives throughout the state created to protect millions of Condo and Coop residents from legislative disenfranchisement and unfunded mandates. The Fire Safety Lobby, organized by well-known Condominium Association Law Firm Becker & Poliakoff, has three goals it needs to address this year. The first is to defend the opt-out rights that were granted last year. All of the opponents to the Amendment last year are already geared up for a fight to repeal your opt-out rights. The second is to make the opt-out vote easier to conduct. SB 1938 and HB 747 will realize that. The third is to resolve the lingering common area sprinkler issue. The first two are critical to accomplish this year; the third could be addressed if and when the opportunity presents itself. Because the installation of common area sprinklers cannot be required PRIOR to the end of 2014, there is adequate time to properly prepare for the impending struggle.

Considering the billions of dollars in plumbing sales "on the table", its not surprising that our opponents' minions are awash with cash. The deep-pockets lobbyists for the National Fire Sprinkler Association and the Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Union have launched a well-funded campaign to reverse last year's achievements. The Fire Safety Lobby's secret weapon is US. Letters, telephone calls, faxes and emails from the affected voting constituency was the key to last year's success. Our small individual voices made our lobby's



Continued on page 15

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SCAM-OF-THE-MONTH

Eric Berkowitz

A fast-growing scam that has been identified by the National Fraud Information Center, the F.C.C. (Federal Communications Commission) and others is simply known as the "809", "284", "876" or some other three-digit phone number. You may receive an e-mail, usually with a subject line of "ALERT". The message reads something like: "I am writing to give you a final 24 hours to settle your outstanding account... If you would like to discuss this matter to avoid court action call (i.e.) 1-809-496-2700." Or, you could receive a similar message on your answering machine asking you to call an 809, 284, or 876 number. Since there are so many new area codes these days, many people unknowingly return these calls. If you call from the United States, you apparently will be charged \$25 per minute (yes...that's dollars) - or more.

The 809 area code is located in the Dominican Republic and can be used as a "pay-per-call" number, similar to 900 numbers. Since the 809 area code is not in the United States, it is not covered by U.S. regulations of 900 numbers. Similarly, "876" is an area code for Jamaica and "284" goes to the British Virgin Islands...same deal!

The bottom line is: do not respond to these e-mails or messages by calling the 809 (or 284, or 876) phone number. Trying to fight the charges later can be a real nightmare since you actually did make the call!

I've received several e-mails from Galt residents that have recently been stung by this scam. Although it has been around for a few years, it apparently has found "new legs." The most effective protection available against being victimized by scams such as these is information. The Galt Mile Community Association Web site (www.galtmile.com) carries a Scam-of-the-Month segment that exists to focus light on vicious frauds that proliferate in our community.

War...Continued

The coalition is being advised by Attorney David Orshesky, a specialist in the area of land use. While local Mayors and City Commissioners claim that they agree with the tenets of controlled growth, the divestiture of the final say over that growth within their borders represents a serious threat to home rule and self-determination. Cities stand to lose an important component to their ability to shape their own destinies.

The County also intends to directly control all land use changes on the Barrier Island, requiring that a demonstration of how the changes affect the surrounding area be submitted to the County for review and approval prior to advancement. Control of development from the Intracoastal Waterway to the beach is the prize that both sides are competing for and the main focus of this struggle.

.Continued on page 8



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Senator Geller

Fire...Continued

voice loud by amplifying its credibility in Tallahassee's Statehouse corridors last year.

If members of the various House and Senate Committees required to review the bills throughout the legislative process receive public indication that the bills should be considered favorably, two things happen. First, the legislators will be predisposed to advancing the bill through the legislative maze on its way to becoming a law. This will, as mentioned, make it simpler and less expensive for us to exercise our opt-out rights. Second, and of greater importance, is the signal it will send throughout Tallahassee that any attempt to soak Associations for billions of dollars to satisfy some corporate lobbies will meet with obstinate resistance.

In the Senate

Although these bills only facilitate the housekeeping ascribed to the opt-out vote, making it easier and less expensive for the residents of a Condominium or a Coop to actualize their will, they will face opposition in Tallahassee. In politics, progress is accomplished in baby steps. Politicians feel more comfortable making decisions based on public input than committing their support in a vacuum. On Monday, March 1st at 2:00 PM, the Senate Comprehensive Planning Committee conducted a hearing considering Senator Steven Geller's Senate Bill 1938. The Committee is chaired by Senator Geller and its Vice Chair is Senator Daniel Webster (R). The bill was considered favorably, passing the Committee with 5 YEAS and 0 NAYS. As a result, on March 3rd, the bill was sent to the Senate Committee on Regulated Industries for consideration. So far - so good.

Continued on page 17

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 - Dated 1834 to 1838—Worth from \$190 up to \$45,000
 - Dated 1839 to 1908—Worth from \$105 up to \$1,000,000
 - Dated 1908 to 1929—Worth from \$150 up to \$150,000
- \$10 Gold Coin Dated 1795 to 1804—Worth from \$4,000,000 up to \$1,000,000
 - Dated 1838 to 1907—Worth from \$180 up to \$550,000
 - Dated 1907 to 1933—Worth from \$245 up to \$150,000
- \$20 Gold Coin Dated 1850 to 1907—Worth from \$400 up to \$500,000
 - Dated 1907 to 1933—Worth from \$385 up to \$1,000,000

United States Silver Dollars

- Dated 1795 to 1798—Worth from \$600 up to \$500,000
- Dated 1799 to 1803—Worth from \$500 up to \$150,000
- Dated 1840 to 1873—Worth from \$120 up to \$100,000
- Dated 1873 to 1884—Worth from \$50 up to \$7,000
- Dated 1878 to 1904—Worth from \$8 up to \$500,000

United States Half Dollars

- Dated 1795 to 1797—Worth from \$400 up to \$400,000
- Dated 1801 to 1807—Worth from \$100 up to \$45,000
- Dated 1807 to 1839—Worth from \$30 up to \$28,000
- Dated 1839 to 1891—Worth from \$15 up to \$150,000
- Dated 1892 to 1915—Worth from \$5 up to \$25,000
- Dated 1916 to 1947—Worth from \$1.75 up to \$45,000
- Dated 1948 to 1964—Worth from \$2 up to \$500
- Dated 1965 to 1970—Worth from .55 cents to .65 cents
- Dated 1971 to 1995—Worth from .50 cent to \$25

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Fire...Continued

In the House

House Bill 747 (HB 747), the identical companion bill in the Florida House of Representatives, was referred to the House's Local Government and Veterans' Affairs Committee. This committee is chaired by Rep. Ken Sorensen (R). On March 3rd, the bill was considered favorable in committee, passing with 15 YEAS and 1 NAY out of 20 possible votes. The bill was sent to the House Judiciary Committee for consideration.

The Fire Safety Lobby will need our help again this year. The response from our residents will make the difference between success and failure. The progress of this legislation is followed on the Fire Safety Page in the "Issues" section of the Galt Mile Community Association's Web site (www.galtmile.com). Links to appropriate legislators are provided to permit easy access to those legislative committees wherein the legislation is currently being reviewed. Send an e-mail, a fax, a letter or make a telephone call to the appropriate legislator supporting the passage of the bill. Because the inequities addressed in this legislation only add to the expense of living in a condominium or a co-op, it really doesn't matter whether you agree with the overall legislation or not. The items corrected by this bill will simply lower the cost of accomplishing whatever the condo's membership decides to do.

Alert

On March 15th, the Judiciary Committee voted on HB 747. As a result of a 7 YEAS and 7 NAYS tie (out of a total of 19 members)...the bill was considered "UNFAVORABLY"! As such, it is currently stuck in the Judiciary Committee until it is again placed on the agenda. The reason is simple. The Representatives on the Committee received no indication that the passage of this bill mattered to anyone! They received no correspondences (letters, faxes, telephone calls, e-mails) encouraging them to support the bill. While the lobby did its job in guiding the bill to the Committee floor, the Community went to sleep! Rarely will elected representatives vote affirmatively on an issue for which their constituency doesn't demonstrate support.

It's time to act! If the members of the House Judiciary Committee are contacted (via e-mail, snail mail, fax or phone call) and receive reasonable support for HB 747, we will be back on track to achieving our objectives again this year. The Chair of the Florida House Judiciary Committee, Representative Jeffrey D. "Jeff" Kottkamp (Telephone: (850) 488-7433, E-mail: Jeff.Kottkamp@myfloridahouse.com), will reinstate HB 747 to the Committee's Agenda if he and/or the committee members are contacted and requested to do so. For those of you interested in reacquiring control of your destiny (and saving an enormous amount of money), go to the Galt Mile Community Association Web site (www.galtmile.com) and read "Stuck in Judiciary", an article headline on the Home Page. You will be presented with complete contact information for every Judiciary Committee member including active email links and telephone numbers. After all, it's your money that's being spent; see to it that you decide how and how much! •



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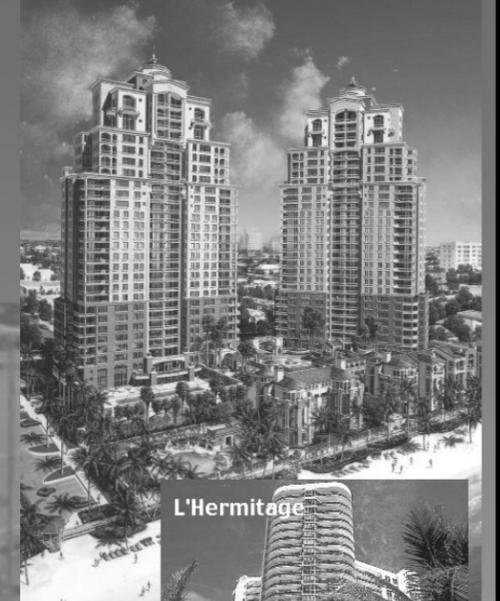
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