



GABLES
GOOD GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE



NEWSLETTER

GGG-NEWS.WIX.COM/GGG-NEWS# • 2013 YEAR IN REVIEW
1825 PONCE DE LEON BLVD., #448, CORAL GABLES, FL 33134 | 305/975-8158

GGG HONORS LOCAL LEADERS

More than 50 guests attended a Gables Good Government (GGG) Committee **Reception** last year at the **Biltmore Hotel** to honor the first Hispanic Chairwoman of the Miami-Dade County Commission, **Rebeca Sosa**.

GGG President **Jeannett Slesnick** presented Chairwoman Sosa with the **“Civic Leader of the Year” Award** for the outstanding contribution she has made in Coral Gables while serving **District 6** for 12 years on the Commission (covering Coral Gables north of Bird Road).

Chairwoman Sosa has funded and supported a variety of important projects that have helped improve the City

(for example: the new Art Museum). Also recognized was former City of Coral Gables Commissioner **Maria Anderson** for her 12 years of service, and **Nicolas Cabrera** was in attendance to receive a plaque on behalf of his father, Commissioner **Ralph Cabrera**.

The GGG Committee holds an annual reception to honor local leaders, and keeps members informed of news surrounding current government issues that affect the community, as well as interesting civic events.

For more information, please email us at: ggg-news@hotmail.com, or call us at 305-446-2001.



West Miami Commissioner Elsa Vazquez, Honoree Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa, former CG Mayor Dorothy Thomson, and Jeannett Slesnick



South Miami City Manager Steven Alexander and West Miami Mayor Eduardo Muhina



West Miami City Manager Yolanda Aguilar, Debbie Swain, former CG Commissioner Maria Anderson, Nicolas Cabrera (representing his father Ralph Cabrera), Tom Snook, Richard Dewitt Esq., GGG President Jeannett Slesnick, CG Commissioner Pat Keon, Evelyn Budde, Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa, Richard Leslie, former CG Mayor Don Slesnick



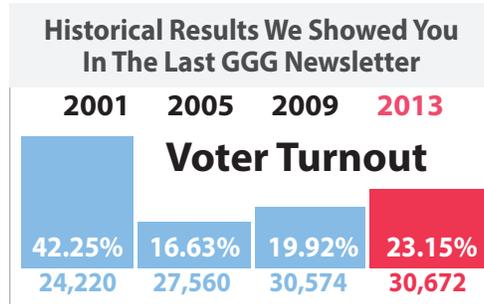
2013 ELECTION | Possible Run-off?

Looking Back at the April 9th Municipal Election

This year's general biennial local elections produced a turnout of 23.15% out of 30,672 registered voters. Below are the results specifically for the **Commissioner Group III** race where **Pat Keon** won the seat with almost 49% of the vote. **Mary Young** came in at 36% of the vote.

Commissioner Group III	Votes	%
Jackson Rip Holmes	89	1.32
→ Patricia "Pat" Keon	3,290	48.98
← Could have been a run-off? P.J. Mitchell	496	7.38
Tony Newell	403	6.00
← Mary Martin Young	2,439	36.31

If you also look at the number of votes cast for each of these candidates, together they had more than 85% of the total votes, and could have substantiated a run-off election. Do you agree that the Gables would benefit from run-off elections?



FPL Wants To Build High-Voltage Power Lines

Florida Power & Light wants to build high voltage power lines across the County, some falling in Coral Gables.

In July, 2013, Coral Gables sued FP&L for breaking parts of their contract, charging that the utility had violated its long-standing franchise agreement with the City by proposing to build poles up to **100 feet high and 4 feet wide**, strung with 230-kilovolt lines, northward along the portion of Ponce de Leon Boulevard that runs parallel to US-1.

Currently, the City's agreement with FP&L, which runs through 2028, stipulates that the poles range from **54 to 80 feet high and no more than 3 feet wide**. The City also hosted public hearings to get the community's input.

Governor Scott and his Cabinet, who compose the state's **Power Siting Board**, were expected to make a decision on the lines in January 2014 but we are still waiting to hear.

SOURCE: www.miamiherald.com



How Do You Feel About Running For Public Office?

Excerpt from **USAtoday.com**

"The American impulse to make a contribution to the community is strong, but the feeling that politics can be an avenue to do that seems to be souring. A **USA Today Bipartisan Policy Center** poll finds that Americans by more than 2:1 say the best way to make positive changes in society is through volunteer organizations and charities, not by being active in government. Those younger than 30 are particularly put off by politics. They are significantly less likely than their

parents to say participating in politics is an important value in their lives." While the under-30 respondents said they wouldn't run for office because it is fraught with corruption, the over-30 crowd said the career is too time-consuming. Still, 40 million Americans say they would run for public office.

Would you? E-mail your thoughts to us at: ggg-news@hotmail.com.

*Reprinted with permission courtesy of State Archives of Florida | William A. Fishbaugh, photographer (#RC06607)



LOWER PROPERTY TAXES??

Do you remember in our last newsletter we said Coral Gables could lower the tax rate due to more funds coming into the City via increased property values? Well this has come true. The City Commission voted unanimously to decrease property taxes.

We contacted the Property Appraiser's office who were very helpful and they directed us to their website where we pulled up the 2013 proposed millage and 2012 actual millage rate tables.

We did the calculations using an average \$700,000 home and came up with:

- 2013 tax rate (City) = \$3,940.30
- 2012 tax rate (City) = \$3,968.30
- 2013 Savings to homeowner = \$28

The estimated total savings to a homeowner in the Gables is just \$28, which makes us wonder . . .

According to many real estate agents in Coral Gables (and MLS data), property values in the City have gone up about 25% since last year. This means that for an average home value of \$700,000, the value according to realtors is actually \$875,000, so we expected much more of a tax break.

“Any millage rate that exceeds the rollback millage rate as defined in Florida Statute 200.065, is technically considered a tax increase because it will generate more revenue for the city than the previous fiscal year. For 2013, the rollback rate for Coral

Gables was 4.4097 mills. The City’s adopted millage rate is 4.7035. Therefore, by tentatively adopting a rate higher than the rollback rate, the city is required to notice it as a property tax increase. The city can still lower the millage rate, but will be unable to make changes to it after that date.”

– Carlos Lopez-Cantera

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

It is interesting to see the Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser’s County-wide property values. Coral Gables values went up 2% on the chart below.

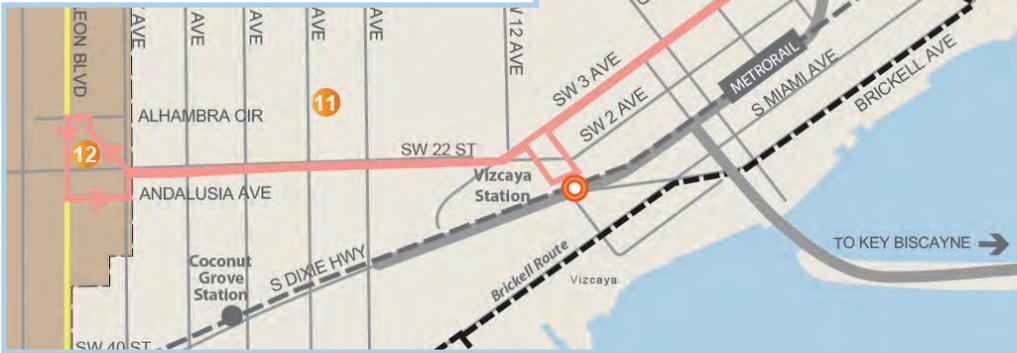
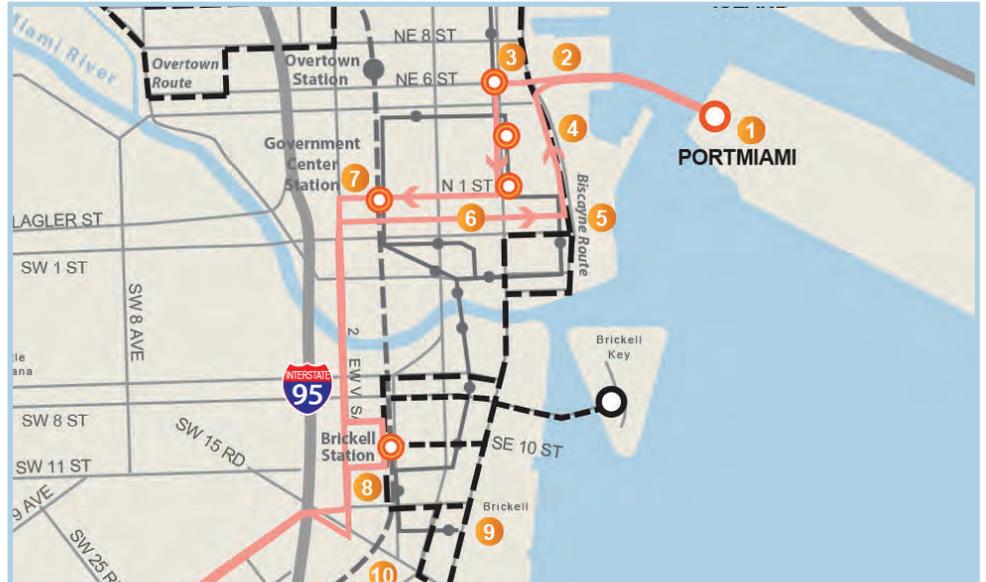
2013 ESTIMATED TAXABLE VALUES BY TAXING AUTHORITY

TAXING AUTHORITY	2012 PRELIMINARY TAXABLE VALUE	NEW CONSTRUCTION	2013 JUNE 1ST ESTIMATE	% CHANGE FROM 2012
01 Miami	31,333,834,037	95,000,000	32,264,000,000	4.1%
02 Miami Beach	23,072,321,980	79,000,000	24,594,000,000	6.6%
03 Coral Gables	12,025,562,902	75,000,000	12,269,000,000	2.0%
04 Hialeah	7,224,650,057	13,000,000	6,948,000,000	-3.8%
09 South Miami	1,426,836,326	17,000,000	1,430,000,000	0.2%
12 Bal Harbour	3,172,470,734	2,000,000	3,660,000,000	15.4%
15 West Miami	289,664,055	1,000,000	283,000,000	-2.3%
20 Pinecrest	3,639,963,100	28,000,000	3,734,000,000	2.6%
21 Indian Creek	360,636,046	-1,000,000	431,000,000	19.5%
33 Palmetto Bay	2,414,961,782	2,000,000	2,397,000,000	-0.7%
35 Doral	8,660,768,494	67,000,000	8,844,000,000	2.1%
36 Cutler Bay	1,705,481,398	17,000,000	1,758,000,000	3.1%



Free Trolley Rides Extend To Brickell Avenue

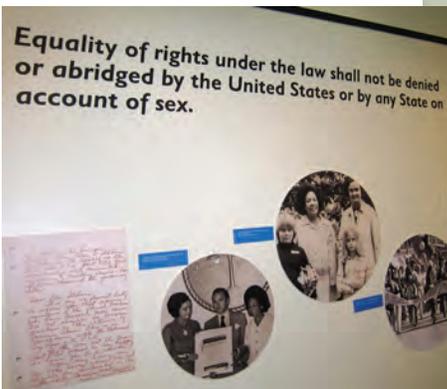
GREAT news for commuters! The City of Miami has extended free trolley rides into the Gables along a Coral Way route. The trolleys make stops approximately every 20 minutes from 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM weekdays only at the corner of Miracle Mile and Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The Trolley route has multiple stops at major points of interest downtown Miami (see orange numbered list at right). For a complete list (with maps) of the Miami Trolley system visit miamigov.com/trolley/



CITIZEN OF THE MONTH ROXYCY O'NEAL BOLTON

Roxcy Bolton was honored with an exhibit at the Coral Gables Library for her lifelong work in promoting women's issues and fighting for their equal rights and protection. Thank you, Roxcy, for all that you have been able to accomplish.

We laud your efforts.



FARMERS MARKET

The Farmers' Market starts January 18th and runs through March 29th each Saturday from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM in front of City Hall, at 405 Biltmore Way. Free Activities include:

- 8:00 AM **Tai Chi in the park**
- 9:00 AM **Gardening Workshop**
- 10:00 AM **Cooking Demonstration**
- 11:00 AM **Childrens' Activities**

Come shop for fresh produce, including organic vegetables, artisan foods, exotic plants for sale, and homemade goodies.



CORAL GABLES REAL ESTATE FOR SALE



756 ALHAMBRA CIRCLE

1933 SPANISH-DECO BY FAMED ARCHITECT L. MURRAY DIXON. 3 BEDROOM, 3 BATH + 2 SEPARATE 1/1 COTTAGES ON 100 X 150 LOT.

\$1,995,000

COLDWELL BANKER
Laura Mullaney
305/790.1000



2623 ALHAMBRA CIRCLE

NEW (2013) 6 BEDROOM, 7 BATH, 6,141 SQ. FT. MEDITERRANEAN ON 13,500' LOT WITH COURTYARD, LOGGIA, POOL AND HOT TUB.

\$3,100,000

GMI INVESTMENTS INC.
Iliana Abella
305/505.0488



1415 MADRID STREET

3 BEDROOM/3BATH ON 10,200' WALLED CORNER LOT. 2/2 IN MAIN HOUSE PLUS 1/1 WITH SITTING RM OFF 2-CAR CARPORT.

\$575,000

SLESNICK & JOCHEM
Ginger Jochem
305/494.6422

THE PALACE OPENS IN CORAL GABLES

The Palace Coral Gables, located at One Andalusia Avenue in the heart of downtown Coral Gables, opened its doors in July of 2013. A 9-story structure just steps away from Miracle Mile, it boasts 243 luxurious residences with a diverse retail component on the ground level.

The City of Coral Gables has been fostering the development of a senior living facility in the Gables for more than 15 years. **Kathy Swanson** (now the City Manager of Hollywood, Florida) was instrumental as

the former Economic Sustainability Director, along with the Coral Gables City Commission, in working with the Shahams in putting the project together.

This building is on city land and is a public/private partnership. The new multi-story parking garage directly across the street to the south serves the Palace and has designated public spaces that replace the former City-owned garage. **For more information, visit www.thepalace.org or call 305-445-7444.**



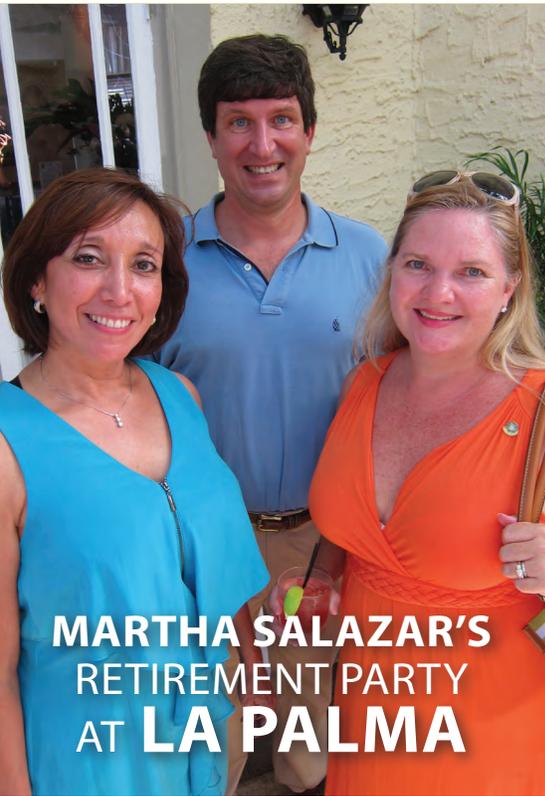
Palace President Helen Shaham with Beverly Stein of Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre



Cindy Dorrell, Cathy Swanson, and Jeannett Slesnick



EVENTS AROUND TOWN

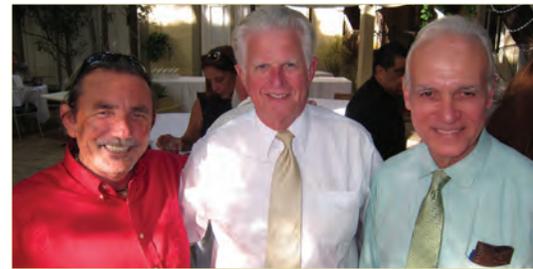


**MARTHA SALAZAR'S
RETIREMENT PARTY
AT LA PALMA**

"I worked for the City of Coral Gables Building and Zoning Department (now known as Development Services) for 28 years coordinating the administration of the Code Enforcement Board, the Board of Adjustment, Board of Architects, and the Civil Citation appeals program. I was a liaison to other City Officials and regularly met with the City Attorney's office. It was an honor to work with 3 different City Attorneys: Robert Zahner, Elizabeth Hernandez, and current City Attorney Craig Leen. Even though enforcing codes was challenging at times, at the end of the day, Coral Gables is a beautiful City because of the enforcement of its Zoning Code.

Now I want to give back to those who could use my expertise. I created **MSB Zoning & Development Consulting Corp.** which will enable me to help individuals navigate and resolve issues (ie: zoning, permitting, code enforcement, variance, certificate of use, etc.) with different governmental agencies." (Martha is in the blue dress, at left.)

marthasalazarblanco@yahoo.com



**6TH ANNUAL GEORGE E. MERRICK
AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
DINNER AT THE BILTMORE HOTEL**

On June 27, 2013, at the historic Biltmore Hotel, the **Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce** and **The Allen Morris Company** honored **Robert J. Fewell** as the recipient of the 6th Annual **George E. Merrick Award of Excellence**. Mr.

Fewell has been an outstanding citizen of Coral Gables for more than seven decades. **The Biltmore Hotel** was honored as the second recipient of The **Merrick Legacy Award**. Also recognized were: **Luis G. Chiappy**,

AXA Advisors, **Claudine Claus**, Home Financing Center, **Donald D. Slesnick II**, Law Offices of Slesnick & Casey LLP and Former Mayor **Dorothy H. Thomson**, John M. Thomson, P.A. and Former Mayor.

L to R: The Hon. Donald D. Slesnick II, Esq., Law Offices of Slesnick & Casey LLP | Gene Prescott, President & CEO, The Biltmore Hotel (LEGACY AWARD) | Robert J. Fewell (GEORGE E. MERRICK AWARD) | The Hon. Dorothy H. Thomson | Claudine Claus, Home Financing Center | Luis G. Chiappy, AXA Advisors **In Back:** W. Allen Morris, The Allen Morris Co. | CG Chamber Past Chair Darla Thompson | current CG Chamber Chair Perry Adair



EPICURE Market & Café OPENS IN CORAL GABLES

Article and Photo by **Jacqueline Coleman**

Epicure gourmet market and café has added a third location at the base of the new Gables Ponce luxury apartment building on Le Jeune. Epicure has been a long-standing business on Miami Beach since it was opened by the Thai family in 1945.

In this brand new 24,000 SF location, you can find everything from freshly made bakery items to prepared meals and gourmet salads. At the back of the store is the "wine library" and chilled cellar room. **Carol Lopez-Bethel**, one of the "wine curators", boasts that the store will hold over 800 different wines when fully stocked.

4711 LE JEUNE ROAD, CORAL GABLES, FL 33146

305/503.8001

@EpicureEventsFL • epicuremarket.com



Epicure's wine library

BEAUX ARTS FESTIVAL

The 63rd Annual Beaux Arts Festival of Art will be held on January 18-19, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM on the University of Miami campus in Coral Gables, near the **Lowe Art Museum**. There is free admission and parking throughout the weekend. Beaux Arts is Miami's oldest juried fine arts show, and features over 220 exhibitors.



There will be live music in the Main-stage tent, and an Art Park for kids ages 4-12 (by Miami Children's Hospital), plus lots of great food booths.

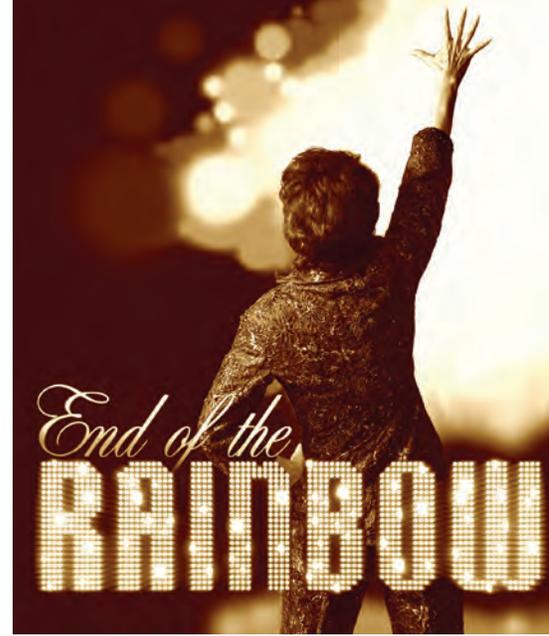


An ideal fair to find exquisite jewelry, the perfect gift for your favorite person, and start or add to your own fine art collection. Visit the Lowe to see the **Student Artist Showcase** featuring artwork by middle school and high school students.

1301 STANFORD DRIVE, CORAL GABLES, FL 33146

305/668.8499

artfestinfo@beauxartsmiami.org



"END OF THE RAINBOW" JANUARY 15 - FEBRUARY 9

Play By **Peter Quilter**

It's December 1968, and Judy Garland is about to make her triumphant comeback . . . again. This savagely funny drama offers insight into the inner conflict that inspired and consumed one of the most beloved figures in popular culture. Featuring over a half dozen of Judy's signature songs performed live on stage, **END OF THE RAINBOW** was a huge hit in London's West End, and on Broadway just last season.

"A STAR IS BORN" (1954)

JANUARY 25 & 26

Dir. **George Cukor**

Watch Judy Garland in "A STAR IS BORN" on Saturday at 11:30 PM or on Sunday at 7:00 PM as part of the Miracle Theater's ongoing **FREE Film Series**. Reserve your seats online at actorsplayhouse.org.



Order early for best seats & savings!

305.445.9293 • actorsplayhouse.org

280 MIRACLE MILE, CORAL GABLES | @APMiracle



MARIA ANDERSON THANK YOU FOR 12 YEARS OF SERVICE



"Let me offer my special 'thanks' to the Gables Good Government Committee for giving me this moment to offer a proper 'farewell' following my twelve years of public service on the City Commission. I'm proud to have served Coral Gables and am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of a great team that accomplished much, even when times were tough. Most people would prefer to lead during times of good and plenty — but the test of character is to devote one's self to public service during times of challenge."

-Maria Anderson



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM FLORIDA'S FIRST LADY

"Dear Jeannett, Congratulations on being the recipient of the Rosalind Ludwig Chairman's Award. Sincerely, Ann"

-Ann Scott, Tallahassee, FL

BIG PROJECT SIGNS

I thought those great big banner-style construction signs announcing street projects were banned. They are very 'County', not very Gables.

-Maria Martinez, Coral Gables, FL

CHAIRWOMAN REBECA SOSA

"Dear Mrs. Slesnick, It was a pleasure attending the annual meeting hosted by the GGG at the Biltmore. Thank you for honoring me with the Civic Leader of the Year Award. I was truly humbled by this recognition and the warm welcome from your board members."

-Rebeca Sosa, Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners

CRIME WATCH

"If you see someone who looks suspicious, call the police at 305-442-1600. I'm trying to encourage everyone to be the eyes and the ears and work with the police department. Awareness is key. I encourage all residents to start their own crime watch group."

-Molly Kiely, Neighborhood Crime Watch, Coral Gables, FL

SEGOVIA IMPROVEMENTS

"The new streetscape improvements on Segovia, including the beautiful trees, make such a big difference in Coral Gables. Thanks to the City for a project well-done."

-Jorge Castro, Coral Gables, FL

Editor's Note:

We are glad that the City has recently gone back to the policing by "zone" practice. Feel free to write a Letter to the Editor at ggg-news@hotmail.com and we will publish your concerns about crime and any news about incidents.



GGG BOARD

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MEMBER FEES

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