



GABLES  
GOOD GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE  
**Newsletter**



ONLINE AT [GGG-NEWS.WIX.COM/GGG-NEWS#](http://GGG-NEWS.WIX.COM/GGG-NEWS#) • **MARCH 2014**  
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## CORAL GABLES' CRIME RATE DRAWS CONCERN

By GGG Vice-President **Enrique Lopez**



### OFFICER SHORTAGE

The Coral Gables Police Department is struggling to hire its full complement of budgeted officers. At present, the Department is short by approximately 20 officers. At last count, only 169 of 190 positions were filled. This shortage could actually increase between now and July 2018 (even with the addition of 7 new hires presently in training), as there are over 30 department veterans participating in the "DROP" retirement

program, which requires their departure at the end of a set period of time. In addition, judging by the declining amount of applications, the number of candidates interested in working for the Police Department has dropped. Furthermore, out of a recent 97 candidates who applied for the vacant police officer positions, less than half were found to be qualified.

### CRIME STATISTICS

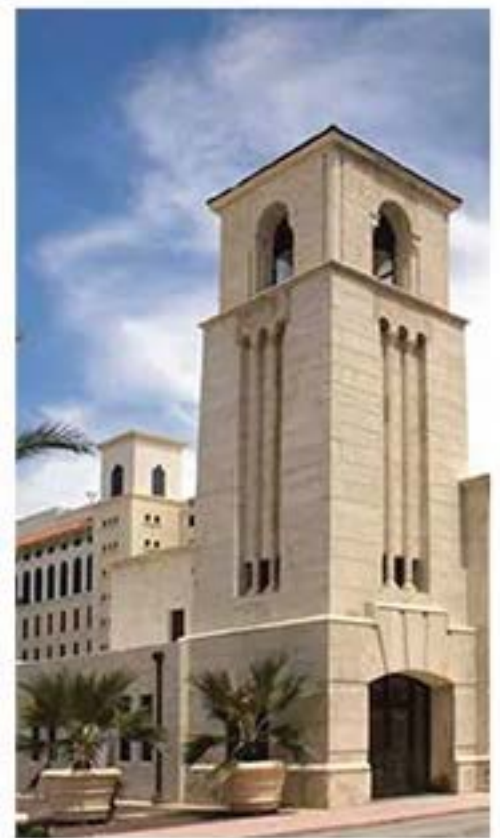
The Police Department reported the following statistics for 2013 (compared to 2012):

#### INCREASES

- ▶ **Burglaries of Businesses** jumped 44%, from 61 to 88, while Residential Burglaries increased 1.3%, to 376 from 371
- ▶ **Larceny** is up 3.9%, from 859 to 893 cases
- ▶ **Robbery** increased by 33%, from 33 to 44 reported cases
- ▶ **Sexual battery** increased by 33%, from 6 reported cases to 8 cases

#### DECREASES

- ▶ **Assault** decreased 29% to 132 cases from an record high in 2012 of 186
  - ▶ **Vehicle Burglaries** (theft of content) decreased by 4.5%, from 754 to 719
- (continued on page 2...)



## GRANT FOR MUSEUM

The Coral Gables Museum has received a \$100,000 grant from the City of Coral Gables to help fund programs. The grant was unanimously approved on Tuesday, March 11th to help the Museum continue to offer free events like family day and movie nights.

Former long-serving City Commissioner and Vice-Chairman of the Museum Board Wayne (continued on page 2...)



## CRIME RATE (cont'd)

► **Vehicle theft** dropped to 97 from 122, a reduction of 20%

Of special concern is the increase in burglaries, larceny, robbery, and sexual battery. The highest activity (58%-96%) occurs between the hours of 7 AM and 11 PM, which brings to the forefront the issue of coverage.



### SHRINKING ZONE COVERAGE

Despite the Police Department's return to zone-patrol coverage, some zones lack adequate coverage. A fully staffed Police Department allows for zone coverage as it is meant to be, 100% of the zones covered by one assigned officer for each designated zone, plus an officer at the station per shift, but this has not been the norm over the past several years.

### PURSE STRINGS, PENSIONS, and PAY

The required contributions made by officers to their pensions have increased, while at the same time, there has not been a pay increase for at least five years, with devastating results. There are many officers whose homes are under the threat of foreclosure. A **Florida Department of Law Enforcement** report comparing department pay scales shows Coral Gables ranking an alarming 21st out of the 24 Police Departments surveyed in Miami-Dade and Broward County, a factor that could very

well limit the City's ability to attract the best candidates. Cities in the study within Miami-Dade County with higher pay for their police officers than Coral Gables include: Bal Harbour, Pinecrest, Aventura, Miami Beach, Miami Shores, Medley, Homestead, Key Biscayne, Miami Springs, Miami Gardens, North Miami Beach, Miami, and Doral, the majority of which have less robust property and business tax bases.

### CONCLUSION

Citizens should stay abreast of the facts surrounding the issue of law enforcement coverage in our neighborhoods. Citizens should demand full staffing and a salary level that attracts and rewards the best personnel possible. If you have specific ideas concerning crime and public safety, let your elected Commissioners and Mayor know your thoughts. City Hall needs to better support our Police Department—now.

**Note:** This information has been sourced from the City's Police and Human Resources Departments, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and [www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com), a website to which the City of Coral Gables Police Department subscribes for up-to-date reports and statistics of all crime reported within the City.



## MUSEUM (cont'd)

E. "Chip" Withers spoke for the museum. Quoted by the *MIAMI HERALD*\*, Withers said the grant would help because "We're not at the point financially with our endowment and our corporate sponsorships to provide the community events like we'd like to provide." Since the Museum's opening in 2011, it has attracted 40,000 visitors and become a key community cultural center.

\*Read more at [MiamiHerald.com](http://MiamiHerald.com):

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/03/11/3988163/coral-gables-approves-100000-grant.html#storylink=cpye>

## NEW PUBLIX FOR CITY OF WEST MIAMI

In a structured deal that featured a \$20.72 million dollar construction loan, **Publix Super Markets** obtained the rights to purchase the shuttered **Colonial Bank** location in West Miami, back in December. This new location, 1500 SW 57th Avenue (Red Road), will be a 48,000 sq. ft. facility on a 1.9 acre site. Dubbing the deal "a new mousetrap", it was described as "technically a construction loan secured by a mortgage, packaged with a short-term lease-and-purchase option."

**Brandon Parnters** (one of the joint venture partners who acquired the rights to the site) explained "The site [is] a unique opportunity as an infill urban site to provide goods and services to meet the community's needs. Occupying two acres, the task was to design a special store for Publix. Customers will shop on the ground floor and park on the two levels above. With City approvals in place, construction will start in 2014 with Publix opening 2015." (Sources: [dailybusinessreview.com](http://dailybusinessreview.com) and [brandonpartners.net](http://brandonpartners.net))



## JR ORANGE BOWL INSTALLATION



The Junior Orange Bowl held its Annual Awards Reception and Installation on Tuesday 3/18 at the Westin Colonnade. New JOB President **Pete Tolmach** was sworn in as the 44th President. The new Board of Directors includes (L-R) Immediate Past President **Robert Bueso, Ph.D.**, **Michelle Bermudez**, Director **Isa Goenaga**, President-Elect **Kathleen Kauffman**, President **Pete Tolmach**, Vice President **Charles Knight**, Director **Barbara Waters**, Secretary **Sam Burritt**, and Director **Maggie Hill** (not pictured: Vice President **Samantha Jones**, Treasurer **Adhys Obeso**, and Director **Isa Goenaga**.)

Board Member **Isa Goenaga** received the **James Charlton Outstanding Service Award** for the 2013-14 festival season.

Former JOB President **Col. Jack Thomson** received the **Presidents Award**. New members are: **R. J. Hessling**, **Cathy Nordlund**, **William Plasencia**, **Randy DeWitt**, **Estrellita Sibila**, and **Mary Snow**. Existing members who were moved up in membership include **Anthony Atwood**, **Michelle Bermudez**, **Felipe Calderon**, **Norma Gavarrete**, **Justin Harmon**, and **Adhys Obeso**. For more info., call 305-662-1210 or visit [www.jrorangebowl.org](http://www.jrorangebowl.org).

## AT GABLESTAGE . . . "THE MOUNTAINTOP"

After delivering one of his most memorable speeches on the night before his assassination, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** retires to room 306 in the now famous **Lorraine Motel** . . . This is the setting of **THE MOUNTAINTOP**, an award-winning play by **Katori Hall**, now through April 13 at the GableStage. Performances on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8 PM, and on Sundays at 2 and at 7 PM. Tickets online at [web.ovationtix.com](http://web.ovationtix.com) or call 866-811-4111. **GablesStage at The Biltmore**, 1200 Anastasia Ave. Box Office: 305-445-1119. **Joseph Adler** | Producing Artistic Director

## SENIOR LUNCH WILL BE AT THE PALACE



Each year, the City hosts a free luncheon for Seniors (55+). This year, the 6th Annual Spring Luncheon will take place at **The Palace Coral Gables** (located at 1 Andalusia Avenue) on April 9th in partnership with The Palace. Doors open at 11:15 a.m. To attend, Gables residents had to register in person at the Youth Center starting on March 6th, and nonresidents were able to register on March 13th. There is currently a waiting list so if you registered and cannot attend, please release your space by calling 305-460-5622.

## NEW DOG-FRIENDLY PARK AREA IN SOUTH GABLES

At the east end of the 9-acre **Chapman Field Park** (13601 Deering Bay Dr.), Miami-Dade Co. has opened an area for leashed dogs. It is also okay to bring your dog to **Ponce Circle Park**, **Gordon Park** (902 Country Club Prado), **Riviera Park** (6611 Yumuri St.), and **Young Park** (950 Castile Plaza).



(L-R) **Robert Bueso, Ph.D.**, **Michelle Bermudez**, **Isa Goenaga**, **Kathleen Kauffman**, **Pete Tolmach**, **Charles Knight**, **Barbara Waters**, **Sam Burritt**, and **Maggie Hill**



## NEW OFFICERS FOR ORANGE BOWL



**C**ongratulations to Gables resident **Luis E. Boué, CPA**, the new President of the Orange Bowl Committee. Boué will oversee the development of the 3rd legacy gift project: the restoration of a park in Ives Estates.

## WEST LAB SCHOOL MAY EXPAND TEACHING

**H**enry S. West Laboratory School better known as "West Lab" currently offers kindergarten through 6th grade classes to 314 students. There is a proposal in the works to change this to 1st to 8th grade.

## FARMERS' MARKET COMING TO AN END...



**T**his Saturday, March 29th, is the final day for this year's Farmers' Market. It's a fun-packed day (8-2) hope to see you there!

## ACTORS PLAYHOUSE AUCTION IN APRIL

**T**he 23rd Annual Actors' Playhouse "Reach for the Stars" Gala Auction will be held on **Saturday, April 12, 2014** from 6 to 11 PM at the Miracle Theatre in Coral Gables. Tickets for this black-tie-optional event are \$250 pp. Actors' Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Proceeds will provide funding for capital improvements of the historic Miracle Theatre and the operating costs of the 2014-15 season. Call **305.444.9293** for tickets or go online to [actorsplayhouse.org](http://actorsplayhouse.org).

## "ON MY WAY" at GABLES CINEMA



**C**atherine Deneuve graces the screen of the Coral Art Gables Cinema starting on Friday, March 28 with the exclusive Miami premiere of *On My Way* (*Elle s'en va*), an irreverent comedy about women and men, the importance of family, and golden years that are full of surprises. Don't miss the **Opening Night special event** that Friday, 3/28 with screenings at 7 & 10 PM, and a reception from 9-10 PM on the outdoor Perrin Plaza, and inside the theater for anyone who purchases a ticket for either show. Tickets are \$20 general admission, and \$15 for members, at [movietickets.com](http://movietickets.com).



## "MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT" NOW THROUGH MARCH 30

Book and lyrics by **Eric Idle**  
Music by **John Du Prez** and **Eric Idle**

Winner of the 2005 Tony Award for Best Musical, this musical comedy sensation lovingly ripped off from the film classic "Monty Python and The Holy Grail," returns to spread laughter and cheer throughout the Kingdom of South Florida. Telling the tale of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and featuring a bevy of beautiful show girls, cows, killer rabbits, and French people, Monty Python's SPAMALOT "raises silliness to an art form" (The Sunday Times) and has been hailed as "a no-holds-barred smash hit" (The New Yorker).

Order early for best seats & savings!



**305.444.9293**  
[actorsplayhouse.org](http://actorsplayhouse.org)  
280 MIRACLE MILE  
@APMiracle

The residents of Coral Gables should be proud of the wonderful cultural mecca we have with the Coral Gables Museum, Coral Gables Art Cinema, Books & Books, and Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theater all close to the new parking garage on Aragon that holds 604 cars. Support the arts. Join one or more of these organizations today ...