



*Celebrating 80 Years*  
**VILLAGE OF  
 BISCAYNE PARK**

*Transparency, Integrity & Professionalism*

*May 2013*



**VILLAGE HALL**

640 NE 114<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Biscayne Park, FL 33161  
 Tel: 305 899 8000  
 Fax: 305 891 7241  
[www.biscayneparkfl.gov](http://www.biscayneparkfl.gov)

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 Commissioner Barbara Watts

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 Ray Atesiano, Chief of Police  
 Candido Sosa-Cruz, Asst. to the Mgr.  
 Bernard Pratt, Public Works Director  
 Issa Thornell, Parks & Rec Director

**NEIGHBORS**

Recently, I was at a meeting with a couple of former County Commissioners. During the meeting, I was asked what the biggest asset of Biscayne Park was. I thought about it for a bit. What does Biscayne Park bring to North Dade that makes us so special.

We all relish our beautiful trees and medians. While a wonderful benefit for the Village, it isn't the best part of our community. We have amazing, and varied programs, that offer something for everyone. Again, this is wonderful benefit, but there is one thing that trumps each of these, our neighbors.

We have a commitment to support our green space as evidenced by our Tree City USA designations, and numerous other awards. This shows a commitment from the civil administration, this commitment runs through the Village as a whole. The commission has budgeted significant monies for tree maintenance and new planting. Realize also, that some of our friends and neighbors volunteer on boards that support our green space, and others volunteer for special activities such as MLK day. This shows a community wide commitment that we can all be proud of. Some of these events are annual programs

In the next few months, we have numerous programs to look back upon, and forward to. We had an amazingly successful Spring Egg Hunt, and I have every expectation that the upcoming health and fitness day will be wonderful also. These events enhance the great programs that run almost daily at the Ed Burke Recreation Center. .

These are only two examples of the great activities. While it slows down a bit in the summer, things will really pick up again in the fall.

I contend though that our neighbors are our greatest asset. In 2013, when many people no longer let their children play in the front yard, it's quite common in Biscayne Park to see people bring a casserole to a new neighbor. We are a community that will organize to help someone clean or paint the house of a resident who needs a hand. As hurricane season approaches, I know there are villagers who check on each other to make certain that everyone is safe and sound. While there are any number of other amazing aspects of the people that live here, it's the small kindnesses that I like to focus on.



All the best,  
**Mayor Noah  
 Jacobs**

[njacobs@biscayneparkfl.gov](mailto:njacobs@biscayneparkfl.gov)

786-385-4136



*Back row: Diane Kessel, Mr. Easter Bunny, and David Filsame from Parks & Recreation; Front row: Cassie Jacobs, Mayor Jacobs, Elizabeth Jacobs*



**Commissioner**  
**Bob Anderson:**  
**To allow space for**  
**important** **for**  
**information** **for**  
**our residents, I**  
**am donating my**  
**space to our**  
**Parks and**  
**Parkways Board**

**Commissioner Bob Anderson**  
*banderson@biscayneparkfl.gov*

The Biscayne Park Parks and Parkways Board is charged by the Commission to study the existing parks and parkways and make recommendations for their improvement. To accomplish this, Board members have made studies of the existing public tree population and landscaping planted in the Village and available planting spaces for new plantings. This has resulted in the planting of approximately 300 trees. We strongly believe establishing the tree canopy in the Village is the necessary first step in the further development of the landscape, particularly as related to the medians. Removal of dead, diseased and generally unaesthetic plantings and better maintenance including tree trimming throughout the Village, has also been urged.

The Board has assisted the Village with the completion of various landscape projects over the years. Amongst these is the median of NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. We recommended and designed the plantings on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue adjacent to the Village sign. We designed and helped to install the native plant garden and other plantings at the Recreation Center. Many volunteers and generous donations were important to assisting the Village with the completion of the latter two projects.

The Board advised the Village regarding the need for better maintenance of the Recreation Center athletic field and the Commission and staff provided great follow through in that effort.



Parks and Parkways has provided requested assistance to Village Staff with their successful efforts at seeking several grants for landscape related projects. Happily, one of these efforts will soon result in the landscaping of the bridge area at NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Following up on the successful installation of the main Village entrance sign, the Board has also recommended that the Village continue on with improving the other entrances to the Village as a way of announcing our community to visitors and we hope that the community can get behind these efforts. We welcome your input and encourage you to attend our meetings held at the Recreation Center. More information at [www.biscayneparkfl.gov](http://www.biscayneparkfl.gov)



**Biscayne**  
**Park –**  
**Answer the**  
**Question**

The CLEO (Creative Learning & Engagement Opportunities) Institute Project on Climate Change recently asked conference participants: “What is Climate Change and What’s your Role in it?”

My Answer: “I see my role as an elected official and as a citizen of the planet, to raise awareness and provide resources to the general public as well as to influence policy changes to address mitigation and adaptations to the scientifically projected future conditions.”

We enjoy living in Biscayne Park, choosing this place above others for its wide medians, large and numerous trees, and proximity to the downtown metropolis of Miami. So we bought in, quite a number of years ago, became homeowners, stakeholders and in many ways stewards of

our Village treasures. Today, many of those treasures have aged, trees are damaged by time and are vulnerable to insects and ailments that are hostile to their existence. As much as I like to let nature take its course, urban green infrastructure requires management, maintenance, replacement and period supplements in order to thrive in harmony with other urban structures and the people who

inhabit them. From North to South, the Village is performing long-overdue grooming of our trees and removing dead wood in preparation for hurricane season. You can expect more grooming, plus infill native plantings where compromised trees were removed and new plantings to enhance our green infrastructure. Our Village takes great pride in making conscience choices to protect our green infrastructure. How Can We Help? We can contribute to these efforts to protect our Village environment by reporting areas that need attention, and donating to our dedicated urban forestry funds.

The CLEO Institute engages policymakers to develop and replicate transformative initiatives to adapt and mitigate the impact of scientifically projected environmental changes. CLEO also encourages civic engagement, promotes environmental literacy, and asks us all to answer the question: How Can we Reduce Our Own Footprint? We can all contribute by simple choices: reusable grocery bags, products made from recycled materials, natural cleaning products, locally grown food; donate/shop thrift stores; walk, bike or carpool whenever possible; reuse and RECYCLE; control A/C thermostat settings; RETROFIT homes with insulation, irrigation, energy efficient appliances and regenerated energy sources like solar-power; be an informed voter and VOTE.

Remember our Recycling Pick-up is every Wednesday in the Village. Let’s challenge our neighbors to RECYCLE MORE, and reduce the amount of landfill refuse.

Recently the Village partnered with the Town of Bay Harbor Islands in establishing the Clean Energy Coastal Corridor, a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) District, (with slots for 5 other cities to join) in order to facilitate the financing of upfront costs of energy efficient and renewable energy, wind resistance and other improvement projects. More information will be available on the Clean Energy Coastal Corridor as it develops.

So, by measures small and large, let’s all Answer the Question: How Can We Help? How Can We Reduce Our Own Footprint?



**Roxanna Ross, Commissioner**  
**Cell Phone: 305.710.0620**



## A May Miscellany

Commissioner  
Barbara Watts

[bwatts@biscayneparkfl.gov](mailto:bwatts@biscayneparkfl.gov)

I'd like to offer a few words on a recent event, an upcoming art project, and an issue that we need to consider, however contentious it may be.

### Earth Hour

This year's first observance of *Earth Hour*, March 23 was delightful and I hope that next year, you will make it a point to attend. The weather was perfect, and the setting, in front of the Log Cabin, idyllic--made all the more so by the luminaries that lined the green (thanks to our Village Clerk, Maria Camara). The folk group, *Box of Light*, gracefully rose to the challenge of making music under minimal lighting conditions. Most magical, were the patterns made by the children's flashlights as they rhythmically waved them across the trees and Log Cabin. Thanks to residents, Tom Pliske (FIU professor) and Jessica Roque (Miami-Dade College student) for their apropos words about the environment.

### Calling All Artists!

In February, the Commission unanimously approved a mural project for the handball court at the Recreation Center. We've been working with Lisa Fernandez from MOCA on this project, and soon, an RFP will go out to arts organizations and institutions. It also will be posted on the Village website under the "RPF/RFQ/Bid Postings." We are asking for designs that are appropriate to the handball court's setting, in a park, adjacent to a tot lot, with residences directly across the street. We're also asking that, in some way, the mural reflect the Village's identity as a Bird Sanctuary and Tree City U.S.A. We are tentatively planning for an unveiling in November.



When the proposals come in, we will need your opinions: we plan to have the top designs on display at the Recreation Center in late July (and the others available for viewing); and if the website can handle it, all submissions will be made available electronically. So, Biscayne Park artists, please start your designs!

### Annexation

I winced when I read the title of the article concerning the Village's foray into annexation in the May issue of the *Biscayne Times* ("Strapped for Cash? Try a Land Grab"), but could not quibble with it. Biscayne Park's financial situation is, indeed, the root of the matter. Years ago, I spoke against annexation when former Mayor Walker proposed it; the current financial outlook, with costs continually rising, however, warrants that we carefully consider it. Decision, one way or the other, will be critical in the molding of Biscayne Park's future. Therefore, resident deliberation and input to the fullest extent is absolutely necessary. Please keep posted for agendas items, workshops, and polls.

Decades ago, Biscayne Park had an agreement with the State that enabled it to sell cartons of cigarettes at a discounted price from the Village Hall, and thereby augment its income. Cigarettes aside, wouldn't it be great if we had some such deal now.

***"Don't give up. Don't ever give up."***

*Coach Jim Valvano*

In life an unrealized dream, a disappointment or a setback can perhaps bring us down. A door may close, something we wanted did not materialize so what do we do? We have choices in life and the greatest choice we have every day is our attitude, for our attitude in life will determine our altitude and the heights we can reach in all aspects of our life. We can be negative and pessimistic or choose to be positive, optimistic and have faith that good things will come our way. What we believe and expect we will attract - it's just a matter of time!

Last year at this time we were all very excited as both the State House and the State Senate supported an appropriation for the Village of \$150,000 to commence the much needed restoration of our historic log cabin, Village Hall. The Governor

received the approved budget and many difficult decisions had to be made as the FRS issue was still pending. The veto penalized millions of dollars in last year's state budget including the funding for Biscayne Park. We needed the money so badly and we came so close to getting it, I couldn't help but feel discouraged, but not for long! I remember meeting with our State Representative Daphne Campbell, who worked tirelessly on our behalf, and she said to me, "Ana, next year we are going to get double or triple what we asked for!" At that moment we both had a smile on our faces and the focus had shifted to next year and the opportunities that would be available in 2013-2014. After all, a large state appropriation for our Village as we commemorate our 80th year of incorporation would certainly make for a fine script. A great story with a much better ending.

This year our Mayor and Commission designated Commissioner Ross to again travel to Tallahassee with me, as together we had been quite effective as advocates for our Village in our State's Capitol. We had two great days in Tallahassee this past February communicating to all that would

*Continued on page 4*



*Left to right: Commissioner Roxanna Ross, House Representative Daphne Campbell, Florida Speaker of the House, Will Weatherford, and Village Manager Ana Garcia*

listen about the dire need we have to renovate Village Hall, for the 80 year old Cabin continues to show extreme deterioration. We met with a multitude of State Representatives including House Speaker Will Weatherford and Senator Diaz de La Portilla. Representative Campbell set several key meetings for us and every time we presented our narrative with our request for the Village, we felt the momentum, energy and enthusiasm that comes from perseverance and a determined attitude to seek and believe you will find.

It's the second week of May and the budget that is on the Governor's desk includes \$520,000 for the Village, more than three times the amount that was vetoed in May of 2012.



*Stay tuned,  
stay positive,  
and don't ever  
give up on  
your dreams!*

**Ana M. Garcia**  
Village Manager

## Safety & Beautification

The Village of Biscayne Park's Public Works Department is dedicated to providing a high quality level of service to the residents of Biscayne Park. Our team is committed to anticipating and identifying problems and needs within our community and developing and implementing efficient solutions. The Public Works Department focuses on issues such as street repair, storm drainage systems, tree trimming, tree planting, dead tree removal, Village wide solid waste collection and disposal, and overseeing the recycling program.

This year's priority and focus has been tree trimming, dead tree removal, and the beautification of our medians. The department has classified these functions into two categories; the first being SAFETY and second BEAUTIFICATION. These have been the guiding force behind the 2012-2013 objectives of the Public Works Department.

Under SAFETY, the Public Works Department implemented a regular tree maintenance schedule with a balanced emphasis on tree pruning and tree maintenance removal. This tree maintenance implementation reduces

public health and property risk by removing street trees of poor health. Additionally, Public Works is following and guided by the Street Tree Master Plan of Miami-Dade County. The Street Tree Master Plan provides recommendations such as planting quality trees in public rights of way, proper pruning and maintenance, and protecting the tree canopy from hurricanes and windstorms.

Under BEAUTIFICATION, the department is removing and replacing aged and disrepair signs. We are also installing several new signs in all of our key entry points. We have installed three (3) signs to date: the first sign was installed at the Ed Burke Park, second on the median of 113<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> avenue, and the third sign at our entry point on 107<sup>th</sup> Street crossing over the railroad tracks. The department plans to meet and partner with both the Parks and Parkways and Ecology board to discuss ground cover and or landscaping around these signs to further enhance their presence. Our Village Comprehensive Traffic Study Report recommended entry signs as a way to alert motorist that they are entering our neighborhood. These signs will further accentuate our sense of place and our unique Village and bird sanctuary. Along with replacing old entry signs with new ones, the department is working with the Manager and Assistant in beautifying S.R. 915/NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue through the Florida Department of Transportation Highway Beautification Grant and beautifying our medians throughout the Village. Continued collaboration with both the Parks and Parkways and Ecology board will greatly support our beautification efforts.

Your Public Works Department understands the importance of an adequate tree canopy to the environment and economic being of our community. Trees reduce storm water runoff by intercepting rainfall through their leaves and branches and releasing it slowly and also actively removing water from the soil.

National studies indicate that trees increase property values by 5 to 15% and make communities more visually and environmentally appealing. By emphasizing on SAFETY and BEAUTIFICATION the Village of Biscayne Park

benefits from a green infrastructure that improves the quality of life and enhances the aesthetics of the Village.



*Commissioner Barbara Watts and Commissioner Roxanna Ross unveiling a new sign at the Ed Burke Recreation Center on Earth Day.*



*A reminder that it is a violation of our Code of Ordinances to post any type of sign on our medians right of ways, traffic signs, utility poles, trees, etc. This includes signs for lost pets or garage sales – they are not allowed. If you see any signs illegally posted, please contact our Code Compliance Department at [code@biscayneparkfl.gov](mailto:code@biscayneparkfl.gov).*

## Village of Biscayne Park



### Police Department

By Chief Ray Atesiano

## WHAT'S AT YOUR POLICE DEPARTMENT'S CORE?

As we began this new year, there were many goals we had set for ourselves to achieve and none of which was more important than to be the police department our residents could be proud to call their own. Our officers work tirelessly to protect our residents not only from crime, but from hardships and disparity as well. Our main goal as a police department is to improve the quality of life for all we encounter and for those who are not even aware we were able to quell the problem before it existed.

In attempting to take on these challenges and ideals, we began to search and investigate what was wanted from not only our community, but nationwide from their police department. As we researched these areas, we discovered that it was not a far off goal and mirrored many of the reasons many strive to become police officers. During this time period, Lieutenant Churchman and I attended multiple seminars and conferences and were able to expand our search. When the time came to write the core values of the Village of Biscayne Park Police Department, they were able to be penned knowing wholeheartedly that each one was achievable by our officers and also deserved by our residents. What follows is what was recently put into place as our core values and is proudly displayed in our station.

- A **BISCAYNE PARK POLICE OFFICER** knows the purpose of policing and each interaction – a bigger picture focus than just this moment.
- A **BISCAYNE PARK POLICE OFFICER** knows how to improvise to create the right outcome in each circumstance.
- A **BISCAYNE PARK POLICE OFFICER** is acutely aware of any social context and how their behavior affects others.
- A **BISCAYNE PARK POLICE OFFICER** exercises good judgment making decisions that best serves those involved, the circumstances, justice, and the profession.

- A **BISCAYNE PARK POLICE OFFICER** is humble enough to be empathetic, able to see a situation through the perspective of another, and considering how another feels.
- A **BISCAYNE PARK POLICE OFFICER** is emotionally in control and uses emotion as a tool to inform reason.
- A **BISCAYNE PARK POLICE OFFICER** is an experienced person who works hard to master the craft of policing. They learn and practice the craft of policing relentlessly.

More than our job, it is our duty and privilege to serve the Village of Biscayne Park to the best of our ability and following these guiding principles, we believe to remain at the highest distinction for those who think us to be and to change the minds of those that may believe otherwise. It is my commitment to excellence and my commitment to the Village of Biscayne Park to keep our streets safe for our families and for every person to be proud to say they are a resident.



### *A Message from the Biscayne Park Foundation*

Greetings Biscayne Park neighbors. I don't know whether I can say the Foundation is well, but it's certainly alive. We have four members, and we're looking for a fifth. Until recently, we had only three. Supreme Dorvil and I are original Trustees, Joe Chao joined us in the past few months, and Marie Smith is our newest Trustee.

The Foundation's purpose is to raise money for special projects to improve the Village. We've had a few ideas for projects, some of them being a possible dog park, an idea which did not get enough traction among BPer's, and resurfacing the tot lot at our park. What we need most, though, is a predictable pattern of fund-raising.

We've survived so far on donations from Biscayne Park residents, and our signature event, Food and Tunes. If you haven't

attended this little party, please join us. Recent Food and Tunes events have been on March 15 and May 17. We always choose Friday evenings, and we generally start about 6:00 or 6:30. We have a band to provide live music, and we invite food trucks for those who want to eat and don't bring their own picnics. The bands have been local (BP residents) more often than not. The music has been quite good. So again, come on out to join us.

We are developing two ways to raise funds. One depends on larger donors, who are increasingly hard to find these days, and the other depends on you. What we're hoping to stimulate is BP residents who will donate \$20 per household per year. It doesn't sound like much, and it isn't much for a household, but if each of our 1300 households made that donation every year, the Foundation would raise \$26,000 per year. The result of donations like that would be hard to miss in Biscayne Park. So please consider donating to your Foundation, and send \$20 and your contact information to any of the Foundation Trustees or to Village Hall.

Another service offered by the Foundation is to support fund-raising for other Village functions. We currently have a private fund for the Parks & Parkways Board, and one for a series of car shows which benefit the Village. We don't pay interest, but there's no fee, either. So if you're involved in a civic project regarding the Village, the Foundation is the place you can keep the proceeds until you're ready to spend them. And you will have to list the Foundation as the fund-raising entity for your effort or event. Only the Village itself and the Foundation are authorized by law to raise funds.

We invite you, of course, to come to Foundation meetings. They're about once a month, on a Monday evening, and we hold them at the recreation center at 6:30. Check the Village website for the next meeting.

Fred Jonas,  
Foundation President



## Griffing Boulevard Asheville, North Carolina

By Maria C. Camara, Village Clerk

No, it's not a typo, and yes, there is a Griffing Boulevard in Asheville, North Carolina! And, it was named after Arthur Mertlow Griffing, the founder of Biscayne Park.

Recently I was contacted by Ms. Marsha M. Shortell, a resident of Asheville and a member of the Rose Garden Renovation Project Committee. Ms. Shortell has been doing extensive research on the origins of the rose garden and in doing so came upon the fact that in 1926, Mr. Griffing created the landscaped community in Asheville (Kimberly Heights). Around a long, narrow grassy median that once had been used to train cavalry, he lined the nearly one acre park with 100 hemlocks (a few of which survive today). Then in 1941, the area was filled with 860 rose bushes. (See picture below right of a portion of the rose garden along Asheville's Griffing Boulevard today.)

Ms. Shortell was also kind enough to share the information she found on Mr. Griffing. Here is an excerpt from a book titled *Men of the South*, written by Daniel Decatur Moore, published in 1922:

*"Arthur M. Griffing, nurseryman and real estate operator, was born at Norwich, NY on June 11, 1875, the son of David C.*

*Griffing and Marilla Griffing. He was educated in the public schools.*

*Mr. Griffing was secretary-treasurer of the Griffing Florida Orchard Corporation, Jacksonville, Florida from 1900 to 1903. In 1903 he moved to Miami and has since been engaged in the nursery business. He has devoted his time to horticultural and landscape developments and real estate propositions. His principal developments are 500 acres of Citrus Groves in the Redland District, South Dade County; Biscayne Heights Homesites; Miami Heights and Biscayne Park Estates Building Lots. The Biscayne Park Estates on the Dixie Highway, north of Miami, constitute one of the most attractive home propositions in South Florida. It is one of the most ideal of the landscape improvements in tropical Florida. The lots are large and the streets and avenues are wide. It is one of the beauty spots of this section of the state.*

*Mr. Griffing is a member of the First Baptist Church. He was married to Alabama Beatrice Wing, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1901. Their children are Minnie Mertlow, Marilla Beatrice, Esther Lucille, and Charles Wing. His home address is in Miami Heights and his business address is on First Street (San Carlos Hotel Corner) in Miami, Florida."*

### Arthur Mertlow Griffing, circa 1922



Additional photographs were provided by Ms. Shortell of the rose garden in Asheville from the 1940's as well as today and they are truly spectacular. We are currently working on a display at the recreation center to showcase the pictures for everyone to see and enjoy.

We thank Ms. Shortell for sharing a part of her community's history with us.



Griffing Boulevard Rose Garden in Asheville, North Carolina



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