

artnews



The Fort Lauderdale Historical Society dedicated the Hoch Heritage Center, Robert Elmore Conference Room and the Elizabeth DuPuis Freeman Library in the Old Fort Lauderdale Village and Museum complex in downtown Fort Lauderdale in October. Also unveiled during the event was the Pathway to History, featuring over 130 bricks with special messages from Historical Society members, local businesses and friends.

Hurricane Wilma Buffets Cultural Community

Like so many of us in Broward County, local cultural organizations were forced to deal with power outages, structural and landscape damage and the general havoc wreaked by Hurricane Wilma's unwelcome visit to the region in late October. Numerous events were canceled or postponed, including the Broward Cultural Division's annual County Cultural Forum (rescheduled for January 5) and Cultural Council Planning Meeting (which subsequently took place December 1) and the 2005 Arts Teacher of the Year Award Ceremony, which has been rescheduled for February 21.

As the disruptions continued, cultural venues whose power had been

restored were touted as places where residents could escape the traffic and stress. In many cases, Herculean efforts were in order. The Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, for example, stationed volunteers with signs at major intersections to spread the word that its shows were still on. An extensive article about the Film Festival's hurricane-related challenges appeared on www.filmfestivals.com.

As this issue went to press, the Cultural Division continued to gather information from cultural organizations to assess the extent of the damage to facilities and the disruption to schedules. These reports will be shared with state and national officials to communicate the extent of the local impact.

Sinatra Theatre Debuts At BankAtlantic Center

Start spreading the news! The new Sinatra Theatre in the BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise launched its inaugural season in October with a dazzling concert by Liza Minnelli and is looking forward to hosting a varied schedule of concerts, plays and children's performances over the next several months. "Liza was wonderful and the entire evening was a tremendous success," says Eliot Weisman, executive vice president of programming for the Sinatra Theatre. "Our guests enjoyed themselves and we're looking forward to many more special evenings in the inaugural season of our venue." Weisman was associated with Frank Sinatra for more than 20 years.

The seating capacity for the Sinatra Theatre ranges from 3,000 to 4,000 depending on the show. The new configuration is expected to add another 25 to 30 shows and attractions each year to the Center's schedule. In preparation for the theater's debut, new curtains, chandeliers, sound



Liza Minnelli performed for a sellout crowd at the Sinatra Theatre's opening concert.



From left: Michael Bassichis, Dr. Linda Kaplan, Josue Gonzalez (with cello), Joe Reichgott

and lighting systems and a brand new stage and seating configuration were installed.

“Frank Sinatra was one of the most important musical figures of the 20th century and we are honored to affix his name to our new theater,” notes BankAtlantic Center Chief Operating Officer Michael Yormark. “We have put together a phenomenal lineup of elite entertainers for the Sinatra Theatre’s first year,” he added. Upcoming shows include Linda Ronstadt (January 13), Johnny Mathis (January 22), Patti LaBelle (January 26), Don Rickles and Tony Orlando (February 4), Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme (February 14), Donna Summer (February 18), Engelbert Humperdinck (February 21), Lily Tomlin (March 3), Paul Anka (March 18), Natalie Cole (March 25) and Frank Sinatra Jr. (May 6). For ticket information, call the box office at (954) 835-8499 or visit www.bankatlanticcenter.com.

Musical ‘Good Samaritans’ Replace Student’s Cello

In a touching demonstration of the power of doing good, several Broward County residents recently joined forces when a promising young cello student was faced with a potentially devastating loss. The story begins at the International Music Camp and Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan. Prior to the summer’s final

concert, Rachel Kaplan of Hollywood, a counselor at this year’s camp, and her mother, Dr. Linda Kaplan, noticed a flyer seeking a missing cello. The \$9,500 instrument had been lost by Josue Gonzalez, a young musician from Puerto Rico whose parents had taken out a second mortgage to pay for the cello.

Josue had been accepted to study at the Cleveland Institute of Music, which is affiliated with Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Kaplan, a Case Western Reserve graduate, got in touch with Josue and then contacted Michael Bassichis, a Broward County musician, former Cleveland resident and member of the Broward Cultural Council.

Bassichis, whose company, M&M Instruments, imports and sells musical instruments of all varieties, and his associate Joe Reichgott, a professor of music at Miami-Dade College and former bassist with the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, arranged for Josue to audition three instruments – and then donated the cello he chose to the young man. Dr. Kaplan provided her office in Hallandale Beach for the auditions.

“(Playing the cello) is the thing I most love to do in my entire life; the thing that I get the most pleasure from,” Josue stated in a newspaper article about the saga. “What better to make a career out of something that gives you the most pleasure?”



Public art is far from new. Greek temples, Egyptian pyramids and Roman statuary come to mind as early examples – and there are undoubtedly a myriad of others from cultures around the world. In Broward County, where we measure our history in decades rather than centuries, we can safely state that we value public art and design just as highly as the civilizations that have preceded us.

As the new year begins, Broward County is launching a well-deserved celebration of the 30th Anniversary of its nationally acclaimed Public Art and Design Program. In the years since it was established, the program has come to be known as a national model for how to integrate art into our environment in a way that reflects the uniqueness of our community while making a wide range of constituencies feel engaged and appreciated.

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, I would like to congratulate the Broward Cultural Council and its Public Art and Design Committee, as well as the staff of the Cultural Division and the many volunteers who dedicate their time, energy and creativity to this wonderful program. You have made a remarkable contribution to our community’s enviable quality of life. We – and our children and grandchildren – will be grateful for your efforts for generations to come.

Dr. Ben Graber,
Mayor, Broward County
Board of County Commissioners



Ricardo Zulueta

Zulueta to Oversee Public Art

The Broward Cultural Division's new Public Art and Design Administrator, Ricardo Zulueta, brings a wealth of experience and exposure to the field gained during more than 18 years in arts administration. A visual artist who grew up in Miami, Zulueta lived in New York City for the last 20 years. He was awarded the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in photography, the Cintas Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship and a National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts Fellowship. He has executed public art projects for Miami-Dade Art in Public Places and the San Francisco Art Commission. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

Previously, Zulueta served as senior program officer for cultural programs at the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation. Zulueta holds a bachelor's degree with honors in public administration and visual arts from Florida International University. His new position involves the management and administration of more than 80 public art projects and programs within the Broward Cultural Division.

Public Art Committee Adds Three Members

Three individuals have joined the Broward Cultural Council's Public Art and Design (PAD) Committee, which was created in 1976 to oversee

the goals and mission of the County's Public Art and Design Program. Newly appointed members include:

- *Rebecca A. Conable*, a landscape designer with a strong interest in land and environmental art. A project manager for Kent Wieland Design since 2000, Conable completed her master's degree in landscape architecture from Florida International University in 2004. Working with the Trust for Public Land, she wrote a thesis investigating the sculptural properties of "dredge and fill" and explored devices for exposing these processes to the public.
- *Dr. Jaap Vos*, an associate professor and chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida Atlantic University, where his main interests include environmental planning, environmental justice and sustainable development. He holds a Ph.D. in regional planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master's degree in environmental science from

Wageningen University in the Netherlands.

- *Irvin M. Lippman*, president and executive director of the Museum of Art | Fort Lauderdale since October 2003. Lippman holds a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Denver and a master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin. He served previously as executive director of the Columbus Museum of Art in Ohio as well as assistant director for the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

Toolbox Supports Community Design

In support of the Broward County Commission's commitment to enhancing quality of life in our community, the Broward Cultural Division has introduced a new Community Design Toolbox brochure and companion website. The toolbox provides links to numerous resources available from Broward County Government agencies. These

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PHOTO BY STEVEN GLASSMAN

Broward County Commissioner Sue Gunzburger (left) congratulates State Representative Eleanor Sobel (center) and State Senator Nan Rich (right) upon their recent installation as Chair and Vice Chair of the Broward Legislative Delegation.

Christopher Wren: Creativity on a Grand Scale

In his personal life, Christopher Wren creates small works of art – watercolors, poetry, philosophical writings. As a professional, however, his creativity manifests itself in a much larger way.

As executive director of the Fort Lauderdale Downtown Development Authority since 2002, he works to enhance the central core of Broward County's largest city. Prior to his current position, he served in a variety of urban planning roles with the City of Fort Lauderdale, where he had an important influence on many decisions affecting the look, feel and function of the entire city.

In a sense, though, everything he does is ultimately about art. "I think I apply my creative background in my job day to day, even though it might not be *called* art," he says.

With an interest in all things cultural developed as a child growing up in Virginia, Wren considered becoming a professional artist. But when one of his professors at Texas A&M suggested he channel his creative energies in a more business-oriented direction, he chose landscape architecture – and found that it suited him well.

"I really became interested in the creative output in a dynamic sense," he explains. "I liked having the potential to evoke responses – both good and bad – and to engage people on many different levels. It became very interesting to me – as opposed to being in an office and pushing paper."

After college, Wren worked as a landscape architect and ran his own landscaping companies in Texas and Virginia. He spent six years with the Department of Planning in Hampton, Virginia, before moving to Fort Lauderdale in March 1989 – prompted, in part, by "20 days without sunshine in Virginia," he recalls. He viewed Broward County as "an area that was fresh and exciting and seemed



to have a lot of potential both professionally and personally." Much of his family lived in the area, as well.

He joined Fort Lauderdale's City Planning Department, where one of the first projects he worked on was the redevelopment of the city's key tourist attraction – the beach. "I had never dealt with such a vibrant beachfront environment, but it was a good fit. It was very important to have professionals with design backgrounds to round out the decision-making process to help it reach its goal as a world-class destination," he points out. Now, 15 years later, he's still pleased with the work. "We can look at it today and say 'we're glad we did that,'" he says.

Three years ago, and proud of the direction in which the city as a whole was moving, Wren made the move to the Downtown Development Authority. "I felt it was time for me to apply my skills somewhere else," he observes. "It was a logical step for me. Since I had been nurturing the city along for a number of years, to now be able to focus my energies on such a beautiful downtown that we're all so proud of was extremely exciting."

DDA's original purpose was to remove blight and revitalize the downtown area, but its role today has broadened. "Many of our efforts are focused on quality of life issues: transportation and transit, lighting, crosswalks, affordable housing and art," Wren states. In fact, the DDA has managed its own public art program for the

past five years. Consisting initially of individual pieces of art in high-traffic locations, the program continues to evolve, Wren says. The concept of an art walk is in the exploratory stages, perhaps involving an annual competition to identify an artist who would provide a number of works to be installed in a more concentrated area.

Wren, who recently completed a term on the Broward Cultural Council's Public Art and Design Committee, has actively supported the county's Public Art and Design program for more than a decade. He served on the Design Broward Committee in the mid-1990s, the Sunrise and Broward Boulevard streetscapes' artist selection panels and the Park and Land Bond selection panel. He has chaired the 30th year Light Project and Pooled Libraries artist selection panels as well as Allied Artist Roster committees. He is co-chair of the 30th year Public Art and Design Committee.

He has enjoyed the work a great deal. "These processes involve a cross-section of the community, including a lot of different stakeholders with different points of view. It has been very satisfying when I have been able to get everyone to agree to a set of principles and develop a consensus."

Although he gives no indication that he's ready to leave his very public life, Wren does have a vision for his retirement. "I plan on opening an art studio, where I can do sculpture, painting and drawing. I have this big middle of my life delay; a love I put on hold," he notes.

But he has no regrets about the choices he's made. "I've always done and pursued what I've enjoyed," he says. It's an approach he recommends. "If you're not happy with what you're doing now, shame on you for not leaving," he offers. "If you have initiative, you'll find your place." ★
– Leon M. Rubin

CITY CORNER

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City Moments

- *Bits o' the Bard*, a Shakespeare program presented through a collaboration between the Hollywood Boulevard Theatre and the City of Hollywood Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts, received the prestigious **Dorothy Mullen National Arts and Humanities Award** from the National Recreation and Park Association during its annual Congress and Exposition in San Antonio, Texas. The award honors innovative and effective arts and humanities programs across the U.S., and seeks to inspire others who may consider developing similar projects. The two-year-old *Bits o' the Bard* program features a theatrical troupe of five individuals who offer free performances of some of Shakespeare's more colorful characters and memorable scenes. Venues have included community centers, a nursing home, a senior center, an outdoor amphitheater, the Hollywood Playhouse and the Boys and Girls Club.
- Eager to help return the community to its heyday as a tourist destination of half a century ago, the **Dania Beach Tourism Development Council** has been formed to organize and promote the assets of Broward's First City. The independent council will operate in partnership with the City of Dania Beach, the Greater Dania Beach Chamber of Commerce, the Dania Beach Business Development Council, Dania Main Street and businesses in the hospitality and tourism industries. Conceived during the city's Centennial Celebrations in 2004, the Tourism Development Council has largely been the brainchild of founding director **Joseph Van Eron**, proprietor of The Liberty Suites in Dania Beach, who also served on the Centennial Committee. "We have an ambitious agenda," says Mayor

Anne Castro, "but with the dedication of our local tourism leaders, we plan to seize the moment for the future of our economic development through tourism and business development." For more information, go to www.VisitDaniaBeach.com.

- With the input of 1,200 online comments from citizens, the **Coral Springs Public Art Committee** selected four sculptures to purchase for the community. Three will be exhibited in the city's downtown and one is planned for a city park. The unique selection method featured two months of public display of nine sculptures on Sample Road. The selected works include *In Harmony* by **Hanna Jubran**; *Sun Rising in Spring* by CERO Design (the team of **Celso Gonzalez** and **Roberto Biaggi**, who were pictured in the Fall 2005 *Cultural Quarterly*); *Rotate* by **Jack Howard-Potter**; and *Gator and Grebe* by **Doug Makemson**. The artists are from North Carolina and Israel, Puerto Rico, New York and Georgia, respectively. This will be the first permanent public display in Florida for each of the artists. For information on future calls to artists, visit www.coral-springs.org/planning/publicart. ★



A sculpture by Kim Radochia of South Hamilton, Mass., which was displayed in Coral Springs as part of the recent public art selection process, was irreparably damaged by Hurricane Wilma.

programs identify various ways local governments, builders, and neighborhood and civic associations can impact design elements in our urban environment, including architecture, design, transportation, landscape and signage, to create a stronger "sense of place."

To explore the toolbox, visit www.broward.org/arts/publications and click on Broward County Community Design Toolbox, or call (954) 357-7457 to request a copy of the brochure.

Short Takes...

- ▶ Broward County Property Appraiser and former County Commissioner **Lori Nance Parrish** received the Outstanding Public Official Award from the Florida Association of Museums. Parrish has been a member of the Broward Cultural Council and serves on the advisory boards of Florida Singing Sons Boyschoir and Young At Art Children's Museum, and is a trustee of the Davie School Foundation.
- ▶ **Young At Art Children's Museum** received the Promising Practice Award from the MetLife Foundation and the Association of Children's Museums for its ArtREACH homeless shelter program. The award provides recognition and inspiration for children's museums to develop programs that are inclusive, meet community needs, encourage community partnerships and promote lifelong learning.
- ▶ **Ernestine Ray**, curator of the Old Dillard Museum in Fort Lauderdale, has been appointed to the Florida Historical Commission by Governor Jeb Bush. Her term continues through June 30, 2008. Ray is president and founder of Ancestral Legacies, a nonprofit educational and cultural organiza-

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