



From The Desk Of

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Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

JUNE 2015

June marks historic gay rights moments

June has arrived, and with it, the end of school and the start of summer vacations. For many, it is also the time of year to mark the progress of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

On June 28, 1969, police attempted to shut down a Greenwich Village bar catering to LGBT residents. Patrons decided they had tolerated enough discrimination and abuse and took to the streets in protest – an event we now call the Stonewall Riots.

This year's local gay pride celebration is particularly poignant. June 13 will be the 20th anniversary of when the Broward County Commission rewrote its human rights ordinance to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation. Many of us campaigned long and hard for that basic right. It's incredible to believe how far we've come



since, both locally and nationally.

One way or another, this will be a historic pride month. The U.S.

Supreme Court is expected to decide in the next couple weeks whether marriage is a constitutional right available to all in every state regardless of sexual orientation. The justices struck down the federal government's ban on recognizing same-sex marriage two years ago so we have good reason to hope that equality for all will win again.

There also is some sadness with this year's commemoration. Our community lost a beloved activist on June 7, Bill Mullins.

Bill and his partner of 52 years, Richard Rogers, were the first same-sex couple to record their relationship after the county started its domestic partnership registry. Bill's extraordinary commitment to social service should be an example to all.

He was a founding member of American

Veterans for Equal Rights and SAGE of South Florida, a gay senior non-profit group. He also was active in the the Dolphin Democrats and Dignity/Fort Lauderdale, a LGBT Catholic group. And, he and Richard logged thousands of hours volunteering at the Oakland Park Veterans Administration Clinic.

Bill will be greatly missed.

Whatever your upcoming plans, I hope you have a great summer. Let's also hope it's another year in which we are safe from any tropical storm.

Now, here's some news about what's been happening in city government.

Short-term rentals. The City Commission recently received a proposal from the city attorney to regulate short-term home rentals. The city regularly receives complaints about problems created by vacationers renting homes by the day or week, but the state won't allow us to impose any rules that limit the duration or frequency of such rentals.

Our attorney has proposed that owners wishing to rent their properties on a short-term basis be required to register with the city, provide a 24/7 contact for any problems and assume responsibility that tenants follow pertinent city regulations regarding noise, parking and garbage. The commission asked for the proposal to be strengthened and is waiting for a second draft.

Underground utilities. City staff and I met with the vice president of operations for FPL to discuss our concern that the design work to bury utility lines in four neighborhoods off Las Olas Boulevard is progressing slower than hoped. I'm happy to announce that he agreed to commit a second engineer to the project.

We now anticipate receiving the preliminary plans for Idlewyld and Riviera Isles in about eight months. We will then obtain a final cost estimate from FPL, thus setting the stage for the neighborhoods to vote



on whether they want to specially tax themselves to pay for construction. The city also has begun the preliminary survey work on Seven Isles and Las Olas Isles so FPL can immediately switch its focus there once the Idlewyld/Riviera Isles engineering is completed.

Esplanade Park. The city just received some very exciting news. The Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation selected Esplanade Park as a site for one of their acclaimed Levitt Pavilions. The foundation currently has pavilions in such places as MacArthur Park in Los Angeles and Founders Plaza in Arlington, Texas.

The pavilion consists of an open air stage with a partial roof covering and state-of-the-art light and sound systems. Levitt would use it for 50 free concerts a year and make it available for other community events. Levitt believes the Riverwalk is a unique location that can become a "must see" destination for locals and visitors and a cultural hub for the community. Our next step is to form a Friends of the Levitt Pavilion to help raise additional capital required for construction.

This really should be a great addition to our fast developing downtown.

Sincerely,



Reminder: Prepare for hurricane season

Remember that hurricane season began at the start of June and runs through November.

Please don't be complacent just because we have not been hit by a storm since 2005. As the season starts, everyone should review their family emergency plan and assemble a hurricane supply kit.

The city of Fort Lauderdale offers detailed information about hurricane preparedness on its web site. Please visit www.fortlauderdale.gov/hurricane.

Everyone should have emergency supplies for at least three days. Those supplies should include at least one gallon of water per person per day, non-perishable food that is ready to eat, a battery-powered flashlight, a battery-powered radio, a first-aid kit and a reserve of

prescription medicine.

As part of your family action plan, you should determine if you live in an evacuation zone and where you would go if ordered to evacuate. It's also prudent to inventory your possessions, assess your home for vulnerable spots, trim trees and check the condition of shutters and back-up generators.

The city will host a hurricane expo from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 8 at War Memorial Auditorium, 800 NE 8th St. Hurricane preparation vendors and emergency agencies will help you learn the newest measures to protect you and your family. Participants can also learn how to track storms, pack a disaster kit, administer first aid and protect pets during storms.



Commissioner Trantalis recognizes the Venetian Condominium for being named "Community of the Year" at the Florida Communities of Excellence Awards.



Commissioner Trantalis helps developers break ground on the new Riva condominium project that is being built at 1180 N. Federal Highway.



Commissioner Trantalis and School Board member Heather Brinkworth dedicate 40 ligustrum trees planted along the east side of Fort Lauderdale High School.



Commissioner Trantalis tours Ruth's Ministry, the homeless feeding program located at the United Church of Christ's First Congregational Church.