



From the desk of the Vice Mayor
DEAN TRANTALIS
Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

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City should celebrate its diversity

Election serves as reminder that tolerance, acceptance are at the heart of nation's culture

“In Fort Lauderdale, we do not build walls. We build roads.”

I spoke those words at the dedication of the rebuilt section of A1A north of Sunrise Boulevard. My meaning was that we are an important intersection of the world. We do not restrict people from our shores, but rather embrace people from all corners of the world and from all walks of life.

With the election season concluded, there are new lessons to learn about what America thinks and how Americans feel about one another. Those of us who have experienced many election cycles can see patterns in voter choices.

A lot has been said about the economy, women’s rights and military involvement in other countries. But most noteworthy have been the themes at the presidential level regarding foreign aggression, terrorism and immigration. Donald Trump, now our president-elect, ignited long-simmering passions within American voters who fear an intrusion from the outside.

The success of the Trump campaign relied in large measure on the fear of foreigners. Donald Trump stoked the jitters people already felt toward people from the Middle East. His call to exclude all Muslims from our shores played right into the fear that terrorism was at our doorstep. Coupled with this was the belief that foreigners who came here hoping to achieve financial success are instead stealing those dreams from Americans.

I have always embraced the inclusion of people from other cultures and other regions. My own family emigrated from Greece a century ago. They became a part of the infrastructure that fueled our 20th century economy. Driven by the hope of capturing a piece of the American dream, they worked long hours in factory jobs that few Americans wanted because of the toil.

Today, people from everywhere are



When I attend meetings of the Central Beach Alliance, I listen to the voices of the people. Often, they are spoken with accents from Canada, Europe and Latin America. These folks have made our city their home, even if it may be their second or third.

discovering our city – whether to visit or make it home. It’s not just folks from the Northeast, the Midwest or Canada. You can hear accents from England, South Africa, Venezuela, India, you name it. In fact, more than 50 languages are spoken in homes in Broward County.

Coming Dec. 15, Emirates Airlines will start non-stop service between Dubai and Fort Lauderdale. It is being welcomed by many, especially in the business community. The route will bring visitors from other parts of the world and adds to the growing international nature of our airport.

Dubai is the crossroads of the Arabian peninsula, and soon we’ll see women dressed in a hijab or other covering. That’s not a common scene on Las Olas or at the Galleria today. Let’s welcome the diversity.

Our community continues to grow and populate. I recall that when I arrived here in the early ’80s, many people didn’t want to drive through Victoria Park or Lake Ridge, let alone walk their dog. Industrious people, in no small measure amongst the LGBT community, bought dilapidated homes on the cheap and created a quality of life that, well, ain’t cheap anymore.

African-Americans in our city rounds out the rich cultural heritage that we enjoy, and persons of color from Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and elsewhere in the Caribbean add new flavors not just to our cuisine, but to a way of life that encompasses the sense of dignity and respect for one another.

In the months ahead, I expect we are going to feel the tug from some who believe that America can only “return to greatness” if we exclude foreigners or people who are different from us. We’re being told that there will be more jobs available once others are told to go back where they came from. We’ve heard that the only solution to terrorism is to be sure we do not let refugees into our country, even if they are themselves are victims of terrorism.

Frankly, America has never lost its greatness. Let’s just hope it hasn’t lost its soul. But to ensure its greatness, we cannot deny who we are as a people. Although our paths may be different, the American dream is open to all who may seek it.

Sincerely,





THE FORT LAUDERDALE JUNIOR WOMAN'S CLUB
& BROWARD TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PRESENT

HISTORIC HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

3-8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4.

The Annie Beck House. The Marshall House. The Needham Estate. Telli's Tara. Casa Palms. The Pink House. Casa Rio Vista. The Fire House & Safety Museum.

Cost: \$40. For more information, go to historicholidayhometour.org.



Vice Mayor Trantalis joins Gov. Rick Scott at the announcement of Uniform Advantage's decision to move its offices to Tower 101 in downtown Fort Lauderdale.



Vice Mayor Trantalis participates in the ribbon-cutting of street improvements that Fort Lauderdale recently completed in the Progresso Village neighborhood.



Vice Mayor Trantalis attends a reception for the start of non-stop jet service to Dubai, posing with Stiles executive Doug Eagon and Emirates executive Matthias Schmid.



Vice Mayor Trantalis and Mayor Jack Seiler present a proclamation regarding Day of the Dead to event promoter Jim Hammond and the consul general of Mexico.

