



INSIDE HILLCREST

CONNECTING NEIGHBORS TO NEIGHBORS

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JANUARY INSIDE HILLCREST

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For me, 2025 was the year that I lost too many close friends. On April 15th, one of my longtime BFFs who I have written about over the years, **Boodro, the Rajin' Cajun** (real name, Edward Mitchell), passed away after a short but deadly illness. Boodro was one in a million, a real character and one of the few people that Brian and I spent a lot of time with over the years, so it really hurt my heart.

Then, a friend of over 50 years, **Allen (Brownie) Brown** passed away a week before we were to attend his 90th birthday party. He lived in Hollywood up until a few years ago and Brian and I spent EVERY Sunday watching the Dolphin games at his house. I met him in the 70's at Tony Roma's. He was a legend in the boat industry and wrote a book "Tales of Thunderboat Row". Brownie was a veteran powerboat racer, raconteur, and former columnist of Speedboat magazine (as well as innumerable other publications). His larger-than-life personality, mentorship and storytelling skills were beloved by enthusiasts worldwide. Brownie was a titan of offshore powerboat racing and revered storyteller who was known for his fearless racing, innovative boatbuilding, and colorful anecdotes that he accumulated during a career that spanned decades. His contributions as a racer, builder, and historian cemented his status as an Offshore Racing Hall of Fame inductee.

Willa Matevi, Hillcrest 21, also passed away this past year. Willa's father-in-law, Gene Matevi, lived with my mom in Hillcrest 22. They were together for 32 years, so I got to know Willa and her son Lynch, quite well. She always made homemade cards for my birthdays and Christmas, and I still have every one of them.

"**Chicago Jimmy**" Freehling, was my BFF here in Hillcrest 27. We went to the pool every Friday and shared a love of food. He loved my cooking, so I always made extra. He would bring me Sam's Club Chickens two at a time so I could use the best chicken meat for my soup and chicken salad and make homemade broth from the bones. He nicknamed himself "Chicken Man" but I preferred Chicago Jimmy. We talked almost every day. And yes, Brian was OK with

him being my "pool husband". He passed away suddenly the day after Thanksgiving, and I still cry at least once a week. I haven't been to the pool since. See this month's Kitchen Korner for some of his favorites.

The love story between **Chickie Blumberg, Hillcrest 24**, and our **Inside Hillcrest Graphic Designer, Leon Cortez**, began in 2000. Chickie passed away December 8th after a long illness. The one blessing is that she was home with Leon after a long hospital stay. I can tell you that getting the December and January issues of Inside Hillcrest together is a credit to a heartbroken man. With the help of our IH reporter Steve Schneider, Leon wrote a touching tribute to Chickie, the love of his life on pages 4 and 5.

HLC MEETINGS

January and February are historically the months that the Hillcrest buildings conduct their Annual Meetings and elections so we will not hold the next HLC meeting until March. We have an email list of the building board members. Please be sure to send the emails of your new board members to info@HillcrestLC.com and let us know which emails to remove. We do not share this list, of course, but we do use it to forward any information that building leaders need to know; from City of Hollywood announcements, changes in condo law, educational events for board members and most importantly, to connect leaders with other leaders who have completed large projects in their buildings that may be facing themselves. Of the 24 buildings, 21 actively use the resources of the HLC to learn from and share knowledge with other building leaders.

The next HLC meeting will be held on March 5, 2026, at 6PM in Rec Room 2, 1151 Hillcrest Court. **Police Chief Jeff Devlin**, our new **Fire Chief Jeffrey Levy** and new **Fire Marshall Jeff Lucas** would like to meet our building leaders, give updates and learn more about our concerns. Of course, our Neighborhood Team

Leader, **Officer Josh Grotenhuis**, will be in attendance.

ANNUAL MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

In my 29 years at Hillcrest, I have seen elections manipulated more than once. In one building, the ballot box was kept in an office instead of at the front desk with 24/7 security. Late at night, a board member accessed the office, reviewed envelopes, replaced some votes, and submitted ballots for absent or uninvolved owners. Board members also went door-to-door to "help" owners vote. Another year I saw a front desk employee stapling the corners of some of the envelopes as they were turned. I can only imagine why.

There can be NO special markings on the outside of either envelope. Florida Law allows secret voting for board members. The vote goes into an envelope marked BALLOT and inserted into a larger envelope which is marked with the unit owner's name, unit number and signature.

The ballot box must be impossible to open before election night, either a sealed box that must be broken open, or one fully secured until the meeting.

See pages 2-3 for clear instructions on how to properly conduct an Annual Meeting, elections, and how board members select officers.

SPOTLIGHT ON... LYNNE GURST

If you lived in Hillcrest 27 anytime since 1994, you met Lynne Gurst. I knew her before I even moved to 27, because she served on the board for over 25 years. When we had a buyer for one of the units, she was in charge of screening and welcoming new buyers, so everyone in the building knew her.

Lynne has been recuperating from a fall for the past few months and decided to move back to Philly last week to be with family. Why is she so special? She is the ONLY woman I have ever met that NOT ONE person disliked. It was impossible not to like her.

Yes, she had the occasional knock-down, drag-out tiffs with folks, but she refused to let it define a relationship. She was one in a billion. She loved it when we dedicated the January and July issues to jokes, mainly because she submitted quite a few of them. And she LOVES Inside Hillcrest. She reads it cover to cover. In her honor we dedicated a portion of this issue to some of her favorite jokes. We will be mailing her a hard copy every month from now on.

Lynne, turn to page 9!



CONDO BOARD ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Condo Board Elections: A Simple Do and Don't Guide - Florida Condominium Associations

Condo board elections are not just a formality. They directly affect how your building is governed, how money is spent, and how fair decisions are made. When election rules are followed correctly, everyone benefits. Transparency builds trust, protects owners, and helps ensure that the board truly reflects the will of the community.

Why This Matters to Unit Owners

First, it protects your vote. Secret ballots are required so no owner feels pressured, intimidated, or singled out for how they vote.

Second, it prevents bad decisions. When proper procedures are followed, elections are fair, transparent, and not influenced by favoritism or behind-the-scenes manipulation. Third, it avoids legal problems. Election mistakes can invalidate results and lead to arbitration, lawsuits, or expensive special assessments that all owners end up paying for.

What Should Be Done Before the Meeting

The association must use the required two-envelope secret ballot system. A written election and voting procedure should be adopted in advance so everyone knows the rules before voting begins.

Ballots must be accepted by mail or hand delivery. All envelopes must remain sealed, and ballots must be stored in a locked box or secure location until the meeting.

Ballots, Proxies, and Safeguarding Your Vote

This is the time of year when we receive many questions about how board ballots should be handled.

First, when is an election required?

- If the number of candidates is **equal to** the number of open board seats, no election is **required**.
- If the number of candidates **exceeds** the number of open seats, **an election must be held**.

Unfortunately, we are also often asked how unit owners can protect their votes when there are concerns about a corrupt board or management. Guidance on that is included below.

One of the earliest signs of corruption is when board members tell unit owners how to vote or offer to “help” them fill out their ballots. With that in mind, here is how to properly complete and submit your ballot.

Step 1: Review Your Packet

Open your election packet and **read the instructions carefully**. If you **will not attend** the annual meeting, **sign your proxy** and give it to a **trusted friend or neighbor** to submit **before the meeting starts**.

Step 2: Set Aside These Items - You will need:

1. The sheet listing the board candidates
2. The small envelope marked “**BALLOT**”
3. The large outer envelope will be marked:

Printed name _____
Signature _____
Unit number _____

Step 3: Mark Your Ballot

- Check **only the names of the candidates you want to serve**.
- You may vote for **fewer** candidates than the number of open seats, but not more.

Example:

If there are 6 candidates and 4 open seats, you may vote for up to 4 candidates.

If you vote for **more than allowed**, your ballot will be invalid.

Step 4: Seal and Sign Correctly

1. Place your completed ballot in the small **BALLOT** envelope and seal it (*you may need to fold it*)

What Must Not Be Done Before the Meeting

No envelopes may be opened for any reason. Outer envelopes must not be reviewed, sorted, marked, or screened before the meeting.

What Should Be Done at the Meeting, in Public View

Only the outer envelopes are verified, checking the owner's name, unit number, and signature. Eligible owners are marked as having voted.

The outer envelopes are opened, but the inner envelopes remain sealed. The sealed inner envelopes are placed into a container and mixed thoroughly so no ballot can be linked to a specific owner.

At least two people should be involved in counting the votes, and the process must be visible and transparent.

What Must Not Be Done at the Meeting

A ballot must never be linked to an individual owner. Candidates should never handle ballots. Votes must not be counted privately, and procedures must not be changed during the meeting.

After the Vote: Clear Results and Proper Record Keeping

The results should be announced clearly. All voting materials must be kept for one year, including ballots, inner and outer envelopes, sign-in sheets, and any proxies used to establish a quorum.

What Must Not Be Done After the Vote

Ballots or envelopes must not be discarded, and owners must not be denied lawful access to election records.

2. Place the sealed BALLOT envelope into the large envelope and seal it

3. On the large envelope:

Print your name

Sign your name

Write your unit number

Step 5: Protect Your Vote

If you have **any trust issues** with the board or management:

- Turn in your ballot **just before the annual meeting begins**
- Once the meeting starts, no ballots may be accepted

If you **will not attend** the meeting, remember to:

- Sign your proxy
- Give it to a trusted person to submit before the meeting begins

Important Reminder: On a personal note: In one election year, a security guard, at the direction of the board, was stapling the corners of certain ballots. **Make sure a trusted, independent person is verifying the envelopes on the night of the unit owner meeting and election.**

Again, If the board/management may be corrupt, what is the safest way to submit a ballot?

The safest option is to hand-deliver your ballot immediately before the meeting starts.

Best practice when integrity is in doubt:

- Bring the **sealed two-envelope ballot** with you
- Hand it **directly to the manager or inspector of election**
- Do this **before the meeting is called to order**
- Watch it go **into the ballot box**

This minimizes:

- Pre-meeting access
- “Lost” ballots
- Envelope substitution
- Unauthorized opening

Mailing ballots is legally allowed, but when corruption is suspected, hand delivery is far safer.

ANNUAL MEETINGS / ELECTIONS - VOTE WISELY



Unit owners vote for their board members and board members vote for the Officers of the Board.

PRESIDENT – KEY QUALITY: LEADERSHIP

A building president who is a true leader must be an expert at **team building**. The ability to delegate wisely is a close second; both are important **LEADERSHIP** qualities. True leaders value the welfare of those they lead and come from service. Poor leaders value power and serve their own ego.

When building presidents have the qualities of a leader, they are respected by their fellow board members and by the unit owners that they serve.

One of the most important team building duties of a president is inclusiveness and recognition of skills in their fellow board members AND building residents. To better build a team and effectively delegate, many leaders abide by their by-laws that mandate committees because they know how to bring people together for a common cause.

VICE-PRESIDENT – KEY QUALITY: COMMUNICATION

Other than being an ex-officio member of all the mandated committees, the Vice-President's position is to assume the duties of the President when the President is absent. In some buildings, the VP is the liaison between the Board and the Unit Owners. This gives the VP the chance to learn firsthand unit owner concerns in preparation for stepping up as president.

SECRETARY – KEY QUALITY: TRANSPARENCY

The Secretary is one of the most important positions on a Condominium Board of Directors. This role is responsible for making sure the Board's official communications and records are clear, accurate, and properly handled.

The Secretary takes meeting minutes and records them properly but also organizes and distributes ALL notices and is responsible for ALL record keeping. The Secretary oversees the paperwork required for the Annual Meeting and elections and keeps the roster of all unit owner mailing/contact info. When this role is done well, owners are properly informed and meetings run more smoothly.

TREASURER – KEY QUALITY: ACCOUNTABILITY

Anything to do with the handling of building funds is handled by the treasurer, full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements, and deposits of all funds and investments. The treasurer must give a full accounting of the association's financial condition at every regular board meeting.

In a nutshell, the treasurer must record every cent coming in or going out of the building coffers and be able to provide documentation of same to unit owners who request them.

Hello Neighbor!



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SPOTLIGHT ON...CHICKIE BLUMBERG - BUILDING 24

"It's amazing, Molly. The love inside, you take it with you."
- Sam (ghost, 1990).



Miami Beach in the 1950's was America's glamorous playground, a booming resort known for its vibrant Art Deco architecture, neon lights, and bustling nightlife, attracting the wealthy and celebrities like the Rat Pack, with luxury hotels like the Fontainebleau and Eden Roc, cruising along Collins Avenue in flashy cars, and a focus on sun, fun, and post-war prosperity. Our story begins here; Chickie Blumberg was raised in the Venetian Islands area after Paul and Thelma Blumberg moved to Florida from Baltimore, Maryland.

They worked very hard to give the life and education they wished for their only daughter. Paul owned a book, magazine and newspaper store and Thelma owned and managed a gift shop at one of the hotels.



While growing up, Chickie was privileged to be able to travel with her parents to different countries and experience the food, culture and history. She always had a very unique interest in past cultures and civilizations long gone. Always a free spirited and thinker she developed an interest in modeling at an early age. She also loved music and you would see her always dancing with her friends at local discos along with her best friend and soul sister Debby D.



During the early 1990's she started doing volunteer work for Health Crisis Network and the Suicide Hotline. Always helping a fellow human soul. Always giving of her self. In the 1990's, Miami's Health Crisis Network (HCN) was a crucial organization responding to the burgeoning HIV/AIDS epidemic, offering essential crisis intervention, education, and support. She was awarded with several certificates because of her dedication and the love she gave.

Continued on Pg. 5

Continued from Pg. 4

Miami's Health Crisis Network (HCN) Gala Fundraiser



Our love story begins on April 8, 2000 when a blind date between her and our current web developer and Inside Hillcrest Graphic Designer Leon Cortez meeting at a North Miami Italian restaurant. It was like they had met before in previous incarnations and finally found each other once again. Many believe soulmates are drawn by an unseen force for a profound, enduring bond, a cosmic design to find each other.



Leon and Chickie have this connection still even after her transition. He feels her energies and love and he believes they will be reunited again once his earthly mission is completed. Whenever you saw Leon she was always by his side always supporting him, loving him and giving him light and wisdom. They were inseparable.



Chickie was able to finally see Leon in his U.S. Marine Dress Blues uniform on New Year's eve of 2024. She started developing health issues early 2025 and many trips to the doctors had to be done. Leon never left her by herself and always was there to accompany her and provide love and support.



By July of 2025, Chickie started having serious medical issues and was hospitalized for surgeries. Driving from Hollywood to Mount Sinai hospital in Miami Beach every single day to spend his days next to the love of his life and to be by her bedside.

On Friday, December 5, 2025 Chickie was discharged finally from the hospital and was getting ready to move on with her home health care and physical therapy and start enjoying the holiday season. Chickie did not want to go to a long term care facility nor another physical Rehab and just wanted to be home with Leon. She went to her spiritual home on Monday December 8, 2025 The Angels and her Parents came to walk and escort her to the eternal spiritual realm in her sleep. Leon says "She came home, so she could go home."

The most beautiful love story he has ever experienced in many of his several lives. Leon still feels her love and her guidance, love never dies, it evolves into something greater and profound.

"We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love...and then we return home."
- Australian Aboriginal Proverb"



MARTY KIAR BROWARD COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER



Automatic Renewal for the Limited-Income Senior Exemption

Property owners receiving the Limited-Income Senior Exemption do not need to reapply for this exemption annually. After the initial Senior Exemption application approval, this exemption automatically renews each year unless the senior notifies our office that they have exceeded the current year's income requirement for this exemption. People who

received the Senior Exemption in 2025, whose income does not exceed the limit and are still living at the same address do not need to send in a renewal card to continue receiving this exemption.

My office will mail the 2026 Senior Exemption Renewal Cards to all exemption recipients later this month.

- If your 2025 adjusted household gross income did not exceed the amount stated on the card, you DO NOT need to do anything to continue receiving this valuable exemption for 2026. Your exemption will automatically be renewed at your homesteaded property.
- If your 2025 adjusted household gross income did exceed the amount stated on the card, you must return the card to our office stating that you no longer qualify to receive the Senior Exemption for this tax year.

If you did not receive the Senior Exemption for 2025 and believe you may qualify, please visit our website at web.bcpa.net – click on “Exemptions & Classifications” - to apply for the Senior Exemption and any other tax-saving exemptions online.

The deadline to apply for any 2026 exemption is September 18, 2026. If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please call us at 954-357-6830 or email me directly at martykiar@bcpa.net.

Take care,

Marty Kiar

Marty Kiar, JD, CFA
Broward County Property Appraiser

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INSIDE HILLCREST NEW YEAR'S HUMOR

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Seen in a coffee shop: "No we do not have Wi-Fi, talk to each other!"
 Seen in a restaurant: "No Senior Citizen discounts. You've had twice as long to get the money."

REALITY BITES

My therapist said that my narcissism causes me to misread social situations. I'm pretty sure he was hitting on me.

Denny's has a slogan, "If it's your birthday, the meal is on us." If you are in Denny's and it's your birthday, your life sucks!

The pharmacist asked me my birth date again today. I'm pretty sure she's going to buy me something.



Going to bed early. Not going out. Not going to parties. My childhood punishments have become my adult goals.

FIFTEEN TRUTHISMS

Lying around, pondering the problems of the world, I realized that, at my age, I don't really give a rat's ass anymore. If walking is good for your health, the postman would be immortal. A whale swims all day, only eats fish, and drinks water, but is still fat. A rabbit runs, and hops, and only lives 15 years, while a tortoise doesn't run, and does mostly nothing, yet it lives for 150 years. And they tell us to exercise? I don't think so.

Now that I'm older, here's what I've discovered:

1. I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
2. My wild oats are mostly enjoyed with prunes and all-bran.
3. Funny, I don't remember being absent-minded.
4. If all is not lost, then where the heck is it?
5. It was a whole lot easier to get older than it was to get wiser.
6. Some days, you're the top dog, some days you're the hydrant.
7. I wish the buck really did stop here; I sure could use a few of them.
8. Kids in the back-seat cause accidents. Accidents in the backseat cause kids.
9. It is hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.
10. The world only beats a path to your door when you're in the bathroom.
11. If God wanted me to touch my toes, he'd have put them on my knees.
12. When I'm finally holding all the right cards, everyone wants to play chess.
13. It is not hard to meet expenses, they're everywhere.
14. The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.
15. These days, I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter; I go somewhere to get something and then wonder what I'm
16. "here after".
17. Funny, I don't remember being absent-minded.

THE JOYS OF MARRIAGE

A husband and wife are shopping in their local supermarket. The husband picks up a case of beer and puts it in their cart. "What do you think you're doing?" asks the wife. "They're on sale, only \$20 for 24 cans" he replies. "Put them back, we can't afford them" demands the wife.

They continue shopping. A few aisles farther on, the woman picks up a \$40 jar of face cream and puts it in the basket. "What do you think you're doing?" asks the husband. "It's my face cream. It makes me look beautiful," replies the wife. Her husband retorts: "So does 24 cans of beer, and it's half the price."



That's him, on the floor in Aisle 5

FABLE OF THE PORCUPINE

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold. The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep warm. This way they covered and protected themselves; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions.

After a while, they decided to distance themselves one from the other and they began to die, alone and frozen. So, they had to make a choice: either accept the quills of their companions or disappear from the Earth.

Wisely, they decided to go back to being together. They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions to receive the heat that came from the others. This way they were able to survive.

The best relationship is not the one that brings together perfect people, but when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities.

The moral of the story is: Just learn to live with the pricks in your life.

TAKE ME OUT TO THE WOODSHED

Once there was a little boy that lived in the country. They had to use an outhouse, and the little boy hated it because it was hot in the summer and cold in the winter and stank all the time. The outhouse was sitting on the bank of a creek and the boy determined that one day he would push that outhouse into the creek.

One day after a spring rain, the creek was swollen so the little boy decided today was the day to push the outhouse into the creek. So, he got a large stick and started pushing. Finally, the outhouse toppled into the creek and floated away.

That night his dad told him they were going to the woodshed after supper. Knowing that meant a spanking, the little boy asked why. The dad replied, "Someone pushed the outhouse into the creek today. It was you, wasn't it son?" The boy answered yes. Then he thought a moment and said, "Dad, I read in school today that George Washington chopped down a cherry tree and didn't get into trouble because he told the truth." The dad replied, "Well, son, George Washington's father wasn't in the cherry tree."

Ed Note: You know if you are old if you don't know what the words "woodshed" or "outhouse" or "creek" mean, and the way things are going, there is a good chance one day young people won't know who George Washington was...

SPOTLIGHT ON...LYNNE GURST, HILLCREST 27



Even before I moved to Hillcrest 27, I knew **Lynne Gurst** because she was the board member in charge of screening new buyers. As a Realtor, I loved selling listings in Hillcrest 27 because Lynne was the board member in charge of buyer screenings. She wasn't the "Here are the rules" or "Don't forget to give me the elevator deposit when you move in." She was one of the rarities. People weren't just "buyers" to her, they were future neighbors. She gave each a warm welcome and went out of her way to introduce them to residents who they met while she was giving them the tour. And, of course, when we moved in, she was our welcoming committee also. Lynne was on the board for most of the 15 years since we moved in.

That was when I found out why 27 was sometimes called "Little Philly". Her #1 BFF, **Shane Kramer**, was also from Philly AND my next door neighbor, **Steve Zalut**. I am surprised I didn't pick up the accent.

Lynne moved into Hillcrest 27 in 1994, and through the years served on the board 25+ years. She was unique in that she has never had an enemy. You could fight with her and not speak to her for days, but sooner or later, Lynne would say "hi" like nothing happened and smile, and it was over. Maybe just until the next time, but she did not know the definition of the word "grudge".

Every building has their "hate" group – but even they couldn't rile her. She would wear them down with her refusal to accept the thought that they were...well, hateful. She could not see evil in anyone, which sometimes backfired when it came to board members who were, shall we say, less than honest when dealing with the building finances. She was friends to the end with a guy who ended up as a convicted felon. I swear the if he hadn't gone to jail, she would still only be able to think of the good in him.

Then she fell and broke her femur and spent four months in the Emerald Nursing and Rehabilitation Center less than a block down the street from Hillcrest 27. The number of residents who called and visited were phenomenal. Everyone at their front desk knew who Lynne was. The staff adored her. No matter how bad she felt, her wit and good humor would come out. We had the same parting words every time I left. She would say, "You know I've never liked you." And I would say, "I've never liked you either." And she would say, "That's good. At least we have something in common." Then the next time, I would get to start the "You know..." goodbye ritual.

One of the funny things I remember about Lynne. For some reason, a disgruntled former employee was slashing the tires of those that he thought led to him getting fired. Lynne's tires got slashed! It seemed logical that since she just got a different car, the slasher just got the wrong one. Someone spotted him so he fled before he got to the fourth ties. Lynne called me and said, "You know why I know it wasn't you?" Because you would have gotten all four..."

For her good-bye, the unit owners and staff signed four LARGE cards to express their thoughts and wishes for Lynne. She touched so many lives; it was hard to read some of them without getting teary-eyed! On the front of each card, we added a picture of her with neighbors when she received

a plaque for her years of service and when she stopped by the day before she left for Philly, along with the following quotes:

Lynne has left the building...

...but her stories, spirit, and opinions absolutely have not.

From Hillcrest 27 to Philly – with love.

We'll miss the accent almost as much as we'll miss you.

She's moving back to Philly...

Consider this our official warning to Philadelphia. We expect full reports on mischief.

Lynne: Officially relocated, unofficially unforgettable.

Good luck convincing anyone else to laugh at your jokes like we did.

And of course a good-bye wouldn't be complete without an Ode to Lynne...

An Ode to Lynne

Thirty-one years here
More than twenty of them spent giving back,

Showing up, speaking up,
And somehow keeping the peace
Even when the room got loud.

You could argue with Lynne like crazy,
And the next day
It was over, forgotten, forgiven.

Because with Lynne it was never personal
It was always about doing what was right.

She listened.
She remembered.
She cared.

Not a single person didn't like her
And in a building like this,
That might be her greatest accomplishment of all.

Lynne, thank you for the time, the patience,
The calm after the storm,
And the example you set without ever trying to.

You will be deeply missed
And impossible to replace.

Love, EVERYBODY!

IMPORTANT VOTE BY MAIL INFORMATION

Volunteers staff a Hollywood phone bank to remind voters to reapply to vote by mail. Their work is important, says former state House Rep. **Elaine Schwartz**, because a change in state law requires voters to reapply to vote by mail every two years.

Many voters select this option because it is easier and more convenient than standing in a line to vote at Early Voting or on Election Day. If you want to volunteer to make calls on Thursday afternoon and early evening, or Saturday, call **Sandy Harris-Wisotsky** at (754) 971-7467, or email her at sandyapril7@bellsouth.net.

Volunteers work in an office near downtown and Hollywood Blvd. Parking is free. Refreshments will be served including lox and bagels on Saturday.

What's Happening In The Real Estate Market in Hillcrest and Parkview?



Cindy Abraham



Brian Gaiefsky

The 2025 market started out flat, showings have picked up and we are seeing our listings sell. The momentum is still leaning toward buyers. Slower sales and more listings mean they have more choices and more negotiating power. Inventory keeps climbing and selling times are longer, but Keller Williams A Team Florida continues to be the leader in Hillcrest sales.

Sellers who align with the market (realistic pricing, good presentation) can still do well, but patience may be necessary. Hillcrest has the perfect location, but price and condition are still major considerations for buyers. One of A Team Florida's key advantages is knowing exactly what matters most to today's buyers, so we can guide our sellers on how to make every showing count. Another is that we have been selling Hillcrest since 2005, and we know the buyer agents who shop here regularly. With our in depth knowledge of Hillcrest, we make the process from contract to close smooth and stress-free.

Looking to buy or sell? Let's talk. Or send us an email or text:

Chat - 954-964-2559 - Email - Info@ATeamFlorida.com

Text - Cindy - 954-895-1617 Brian - 954-415-5323



ateamflorida.com info@ateamflorida.com **8-HILLCREST (844) 552-7378**

KELLER WILLIAMS A TEAM FLORIDA'S QUICK TIPS

- by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams A Team Florida



1. Numbers: PRICE to value; Price too high = no sale; price right = quick sale; price low = quick sale over list price
2. Appeal: STAGE smart; play to all the buyer's senses. We also do virtual staging.
3. Strategy: Market to the right audience; ads and pictures don't sell homes, realtors do. We have a database of 130+ buyer agents who look for our listings because they know we get them to the closing table.
4. Psychology: Personal SHOWINGS by a professional agent is the fastest path to a quick sale at the highest price.
5. Business: Wise negotiating creates a win-win situation.

Ask **A Team Florida** why WE PAY for a professional home appraisal before we list your home. For condo owners, we go above and beyond to help you prepare your condo to sell for the most amount of money in the shortest amount of time.

Are you a BUYER? The best investment you can make for your future:

1. Meet with your bank or mortgage broker to find out how much you can afford.
2. Do your homework; online is a great way to research home prices and neighborhoods. Know what you want and where you want to live before that all important personal consultation with your Realtor.
3. Choose a professional realtor whom you trust so that one of the most important decisions you can make for you and your family is the right one.
4. Ask A Team Florida for our Buyer Checklist. From Consult to Close, you will know what to expect each step of the way. We also have strategies to get YOUR offer accepted over others.

Are you a RENTER? Rent wisely now so that you can BUY later:

1. Be sure you MUST rent; only rent if you CANNOT buy anything right now either due to your credit score or while you are saving for a down payment.
2. If you can buy something smaller than you would like, DO IT. In a few years you will build up enough equity to buy what you really want.
3. If you must rent, call us. We will help you find the perfect place to rent and give you strategies to achieve your ultimate goal of buying.
4. Ask A Team Florida how we help renters get on the fast track to stop paying their landlord's mortgage.

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER MARKET REPORT FOR HILLCREST AND PARKVIEW AT HILLCREST

– by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams A Team Florida



Apologies for not having the November State of the Market report in the last issue. I am combining November and December in this issue. And please note that all information is taken directly from the MLS so if agents input incorrect information, it will be reflected in these reports.

November was a good month for closings for Hillcrest condos, townhomes and single family homes. For condos, although there were only four closings in November, TWELVE went under contract resulting in ten closed sales in December, And the inventory has dropped to the low 80's.

For Parkview at Hillcrest homes and town homes, there were seven closed sales in November but none in December although two went under contract. **ALL 2025 sales for Parkview at Hillcrest are listed in this issue.**

Currently there are twelve condos for rent, seven townhomes and five single family homes for rent, from \$3,500 for a 3/2/1 townhome to \$9,000 per month for a 5/2 single family home. One bedroom condos range from \$1,650 to \$1,899 and 2/2 units range from \$1,800 to \$2,300. **PLEASE PRICE RIGHT ON RENTALS!** Every month that you list too high, you are losing hundreds of dollars. It is better to price right and rent quickly.

2025 SALES RECAP

Condos: 86 total sales in 2025

36 one-bedroom units

48 two-bedroom units

44 were in over-55 buildings

38 were in all-age buildings but of the 38 sales, 15 were in buildings that allow rentals

The highest sale was 360K for a 1714 SF 2/2/1 remodeled unit. The lowest sale was 85K for an original 1/1/0 unit

Townhomes: 17 total sales in 2025

All were 3/2/1 units ranging from 1,421 SF to 2,049 SF

Single Family Homes: 9 total sales in 2025

Ranging from 1,748 SF 4/3 to 2,801 4/2/1 waterfront home

If you are thinking about buying, selling, or simply exploring your options, reach out to **Brian Gaiefsky and Cindy Abraham with Keller Williams A Team Florida**. Our goal is not just to list your property—but to guide you every step of the way until you close with confidence.



CLOSED HILLCREST CONDO SALES FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

(R-Rental building, C- Corner unit, T – Townhome, S – Single Family)

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
C-26	4001 Hillcrest Dr 601	1344	2/2/0	274,000	269,000	178
C-1017	4001 Hillcrest Dr 1017	1344	2/2/0	269,999	250,000	20
R-901	901 Hillcrest Dr 215	1150	2/2/0	235,000	218,000	66
C-23	4330 Hillcrest Dr 311	1312	2/2/0	189,000	175,000	280
C-4	1000 Hillcrest Ct 111	961	2/2/0	180,000	190,000	97
6	1200 Hillcrest Ct 107	672	1/1/0	170,000	159,000	176
R-24	4200 Hillcrest Dr 308	844	1/1/1	169,000	169,000	59
26	4001 Hillcrest Dr	715	1/1/1	163,900	160,000	265
10	981 Hillcrest Ct 208	672	1/1/0	160,000	160,000	144
22	4350 Hillcrest Dr 818	1216	2/2	159,000	155,000	9

HILLCREST/PARKVIEW NOVEMBER/DECEMBER RENTALS

(S) = seasonal/furnished

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	RENT	DOM
S	1512 Bursera Terr.	2502	5/3	7,300	7,000	17
S	1467 Pongam Terr	2220	3/2/1	5,300	5,300	181
T	1105 Banyan Dr	1784	3/2/1	4,000	4,000	50
T	4764 Eucalyptus Dr.	1780	3/2/1	3,900	3,900	72
T	3932 Long Leaf Ln	1673	3/2/1	3,500	3,500	50
T	3956 Poinciana Ln	1421	3/2/1	3,000	3,000	313
24	4200 Hillcrest 303	1132	2/2	2,200	2,200	71
20	919 Hillcrest Dr. 301	1,150	2/2	1,995	1,995	34
18(S)	4650 Washington 110	992	2/2	1,795	1,795	147
16	950 Hillcrest Dr 106	700	1/1/0	1,550	1,550	117

CLOSED HILLCREST CONDO SALES FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

(R-Rental building, C- Corner unit, T – Townhome, S – Single Family)

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
S/W	3813 Greenway Dr	2502	5/3	1,350,000	1,250,000	89
S/W	4317 Ficus St	2801	4/2/1	1,199,000	1,150,000	204
S	4401 Large Leaf Ln	2501	6/4	949,000	900,000	15
S/W	1575 Bursera Ter	2349	3/2/1	945,000	889,000	226
S	1665 Trailhead Ter	2220	3/2/1	932,000	890,000	101
S	1541 Trailhead Ter	2220	3/2/1	899,000	895,000	115
S	4685 Greenway Dr	1829	3/2/0	799,999	750,000	35
S	4233 Large Leaf Ln	2220	4/3/0	799,000	808,550	217
T	1426 Silk Oak Dr	1769	3/2/1	739,000	729,500	190
T	4705 Eucalyptus Dr	2049	3/2/1	735,000	675,000	105
T	1494 Silk Oak Dr	1769	3/2/1	699,000	670,000	72
T	4915 Eucalyptus Dr	1905	3/2/1	689,000	675,000	66
T	5185 Eucalyptus Dr	1776	3/2/1	689,000	669,990	94
T	1425 Silk Oak Dr	1768	3/2/1	669,000	659,000	50
S	4955 Eucalyptus Dr	1760	3/2/1	630,000	570,000	42
T	4845 Eucalyptus Dr	1929	3/2/1	655,000	655,000	4
T #4	5040 Eucalyptus Dr	1561	3/2/1	630,000	570,000	13
T #4	5110 Eucalyptus Dr	1561	3/2/1	595,000	585,000	50
T #4	4920 Eucalyptus Dr	1561	3/2/1	585,000	587,700	164
T	4144 Greenway Dr	1561	3/2/1	579,000	550,000	103
T #2	1240 Eucalyptus Dr	1421	3/2/1	578,900	550,000	137
T #1	4810 Eucalyptus Dr	1561	3/2/1	575,000	550,000	139
T	4154 Greenway Dr	1421	3/2/1	569,900	550,000	119
T #4	1190 Eucalyptus Dr	1421	3/2/1	568,900	550,000	19
T #2	1030 Eucalyptus Dr	1421	3/2/1	550,000	530,000	106
T #5	1190 Eucalyptus Dr	1421	3/2/1	548,500	520,000	115

January Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham

SAY CHEESE!

I know I've mentioned before that we've become big pasta people ever since high-fiber pasta arrived to rescue us from the land of empty carbs. And we do love cheese. And yes, I am aware there's a very serious group of people who believe dairy is basically the devil. Dietitians warn about cheese consumption, often pointing out that we're the only species that consumes dairy after infancy. Really? Has anyone considered that we're also the only species that knows how to milk a cow? I feel like that part matters.

When my daughter was a baby, cow's milk didn't agree with her, so the doctor suggested goat's milk. She loved it. Then she pooped. Have you ever tried changing the diaper of someone who has consumed goat's milk? You don't need wipes; you need a hazmat team. My mother lived down the street and had to come over and handle it while I gagged quietly in the bathroom, questioning all my life choices. Soy milk eventually saved us. Weird segue but stay with me.

I love goat cheese, love it, and one of the recipes below includes it. It definitely has a distinctive flavor, so feel free to substitute if goat cheese isn't your thing. But this recipe? One of our absolute favorites. And thankfully, no hazmat gear required.

PASTA WITH CARAMELIZED ONIONS AND GOAT CHEESE

6 oz. pound pasta, penne or rigatoni
2 TBS butter
4 TBS olive oil
1 cup chopped onion
½ tsp salt
½ tsp sugar
12 oz. stemless portobello mushrooms caps halved and then cut crosswise into 1/4 slices
3 TBS chopped fresh parsley
1/4 tsp fresh-ground black pepper
4 oz. container of soft goat cheese crumbles
3 TBS grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving



In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the pasta until just done, about 13 minutes. Reserve 3/4 cup of the pasta water and drain.

In a large frying pan, melt 1 TBS of the butter with 2 TBS of the oil over moderate heat. Add the onions, 1/2 tsp of the salt, and the sugar and cook, stirring frequently, until the onions are well browned, about 20 minutes.

Remove from the pan. In the same pan, melt the remaining 1 TBS butter with 1 TBS of the oil over moderate heat. Add the mushrooms and 1/4 tsp of the salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender and brown, about 8 minutes.

Add the reserved onions, the parsley, the remaining 1/4 tsp salt, and the pepper.

Toss the pasta and 1/2 cup of the reserved pasta water with the mushroom mixture, the remaining 1 TBS oil, the goat cheese, and the Parmesan. If the pasta seems dry, add more of the reserved pasta water. Serve with additional Parmesan.

BAKED FETA PASTA

2 pints cherry tomatoes (about 1 ¼ lbs.
½ cup chopped shallots
1 ½ TBS thinly sliced garlic cloves
1 tsp fresh oregano
½ tsp garlic salt
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp crushed red pepper
6 TBS olive oil (divided)
8 oz. block of Feta
6 oz. Rigatoni or fusilli
Thinly sliced fresh basil leaves for garnish



Start boiling the water for the pasta and cook according to package directions, about 10-15 minutes. If ready before the next step, drain and reserve pasta water.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a 13 X 9 baking dish, toss together tomatoes, shallots, garlic, oregano, salt, black pepper, crushed red pepper and ¼ cup oil. Place feta in the center of baking dish and drizzle with remaining 2 TBS oil. Bake until tomatoes blister and sauce bubbles about 35 minutes.

Remove baking dish from oven. Mash feta and stir together with the tomato mix. Stir in cooked pasta and add reserved pasta cooking liquid 2 TBS at a time until sauce reached desired consistency.

Serve immediately with sliced basil leaves and black pepper.

FANCY SCHMANCY: Ode to Chicago Jimmy)

Jimmy loved oysters, clams, lobster—anything that once lived in the sea—and he never blinked at paying top dollar for them in a restaurant. When I made the dishes below, I always shared. These were his absolute favorites.

The bonus? They're much easier on the budget than ordering out, and surprisingly easy to make.

Winn-Dixie sometimes has a full pound of Jack's Catch claw crabmeat for as low as \$6.99, so stock up when you see it. And as for lobster tails, always wait for a sale. If you've never butterflied a lobster tail before, go online and watch a quick demo. It's completely worth it.

CRABMEAT STUFFED LOBSTER TAIL

2 large lobster tails
3 TBS chopped green onion
2 TBS sun-dried tomatoes
½ lb. crabmeat, drained
⅓ cup fresh breadcrumbs
1 egg, beaten
½ tsp Old Bay seasoning
⅓ cup mayonnaise
3 TBS finely minced parsley
Melted butter for drizzling
Paprika, for light sprinkling



Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Preheat oven to 350°F. Butterfly each lobster tail and generously top with the crabmeat mixture. Lightly drizzle melted butter over each tail and bake for 10-12 minutes.

Finish with a light sprinkle of paprika and serve.

• • • THE BACK NINE • • •



You know, time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was young, just married and embarking on my new life with my mate. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams. But here it is, the back nine of my life, and it catches me by surprise! How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go? I remember well seeing older people through the years and thinking that those older people were years away from me and that I was only on the first hole and the back nine was so far off that I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like.

But here it is, my friends are retired and getting gray, they move slower and I see an older person now. Some are in better shape than me, and some in worse, but I see the great change. Not like the ones that I remember who were young and vibrant but like me, their age is beginning to show, and we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd become. And so now I enter this new season of my life

unprepared for all the aches and pains and the loss of strength and ability to go and do things that I wish I had done but never did!! But at least I know that though I'm on the back nine, and I'm not sure how long it will last, I know; when it's over on this earth, it's over.

A new adventure will begin! Yes, I have regrets. There are things I wish I hadn't done and things I should have done, but indeed there are many things I'm happy to have done. It's all in a lifetime.

Your kids are becoming you, but your grandchildren are perfect! Going out is good but coming home is better. You forget names but it's OK because some people forgot they even knew you. The things you used to enjoy doing aren't as interesting anymore. But it is OK because you really don't care that you aren't as interested. And you finally realize that no matter what, you are never going to be great at the game of golf. So, if you're not on the back nine yet, let me remind you that it will be here faster than you think. At this point, whatever you would like to accomplish in your life, do it now

Don't put things off too long, life goes by quickly. Do what you can today as you can never be sure whether you're on the back nine or not.

There is no guarantee that you will see all the seasons of your life. So, live for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember; you can only hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things that you have done for them in all the years past! "Life" is a gift to you. The way you live your life is your gift to those who come after.

Make it a fantastic one. LIVE IT WELL! ENJOY TODAY! DO SOMETHING FUN! BE HAPPY! HAVE A GREAT DAY! Remember "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver. "May you have a Happy and Healthy 2026!

Continued from Pg. 12

Jimmy gave me oyster shells whenever he had them at a restaurant. Or you can use the one when you buy Matlaw stuffed clams and/or scallops BOBO at Publix or you even a mini muffin pan.

CHEATER STUFFED CLAMS OR SCALLOPS



Here is how to turn the 6 stuffed Matlaw clams or scallops into 10-12:

Thaw the stuffed clams or scallops and scoop the filling into a bowl. Add:

One 15-oz can of whole clams, drained OR for scallops: about 1 cup frozen scallops (Aldi has them cheap), thawed and chopped.

Stir in: ¼ cup additional breadcrumbs, 1 TBS chopped parsley, 2 TBS Parmesan cheese. You now have enough stuffing for 10-12 clams or scallops. Dust lightly with

paprika and refreeze until ready to use.

Tip: When thawing scallops, save some of the liquid—you may need it to moisten the stuffing. Same goes for the clam juice from the canned clams.

CHEATER OYSTERS ROCKEFELLER

Publix sells fresh oysters in the seafood department, \$6.99 for 8 large oysters. Double the recipe if you buy two containers.

1 cup chopped spinach
1 TBS butter
¼ cup finely chopped onion
1 TBS minced garlic
1 tsp anise-flavored liqueur (optional) or ½ tsp dried fennel
1 TBS half-and-half
½ cup shredded white cheese
2 TBS panko, breadcrumbs, or cracker crumbs



Melt butter in a medium pan over moderately high heat. When foamy, add onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until softened. Add spinach and stir until wilted.

Stir in the liqueur (or fennel), half-and-half, and salt and pepper to taste. Add shredded cheese and stir until thickened. Remove from heat, transfer to a bowl, and refrigerate until cool.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spoon sauce over oysters and sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Bake until lightly browned and the oysters begin to curl at the edges, 15-20 minutes.

Using tongs or a spatula, carefully transfer hot shells to plates and serve immediately.

Continued from Pg. 8

JUST FRED



An Arizona Highway Patrol officer stops a Harley for traveling faster than the posted speed limit, so he asks the biker his name. 'Fred,' he replies. 'Fred what?' the officer asks. 'Just Fred,' the man responds. The officer is in a good mood, thinks he might just give the biker a break, and write him out a warning instead of a ticket. The officer then presses him for the last name.

The man tells him that he used to have a last name but lost it. The officer thinks that he has a nut case on his hands but plays along with it.

'Tell me, Fred, how did you lose your last name?'

The biker replied, 'It's a long story, so stay with me.' I was born Fred Johnson. I studied hard and got good grades. When I got older, I realized that I wanted to be a doctor. I went through college, medical school, internship, residency, and finally got my degree, so I was Fred Johnson, MD. After a while I got bored being a doctor, so I decided to go back to school. Dentistry was my dream! Got all the way through School, got my degree, so then I was Fred Johnson, MD, DDS. Got bored doing dentistry, so I started fooling around with my assistant and she gave me VD, so now I was Fred Johnson, MD, DDS, with VD.' Well, the ADA found out about the VD, so they took away my DDS. Then I was Fred Johnson, MD, with VD. Then the AMA found out about the ADA taking away my DDS because of the VD, so they took away my MD leaving me as Fred Johnson with VD. Then the VD took away my Johnson, so now I am Just Fred.'

The Officer walked away in tears...

VINNY AND SAL

Vinny and Sal are out in the woods hunting when suddenly Sal grabs his chest and falls to the ground. He doesn't seem to be breathing; his eyes are rolled back in his head.

Vinny whips out his cell phone and calls 911. He tells the operator, "I think Sal is dead! What should I do? The operator, in a calm soothing voice says, "Just take it easy and follow my instructions. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence. And then a gunshot is heard. Vinny's voice comes back on the line, "Okay... Now what?"

JUST SAYIN'

We all love to spend money buying new clothes, but we never realize that the best moments in life are enjoyed without clothes.

Having a cold drink on a hot day with a few friends is nice but having a hot friend on a cold night after a few drinks - PRICELESS.

Breaking News: Condoms don't guarantee safe sex anymore. A friend of mine was wearing one when he was shot dead by the woman's husband.

GO BEARS!!!



A man was sitting in his primo 50- yard line seat at a Chicago Bear's game. A couple walking by commented as to why there was an empty seat next to him. He replied, "My wife and I have had these seats and never missed a game in over 30 years. Sadly, she passed away recently." After extending their condolences, the couple asked, "But surely, you could have invited a friend or relative to join you?" The man replied, "No, they are all at her funeral".

GOD'S PROBLEM NOW



His wife's graveside service was just barely finished, when there was a massive clap of thunder, followed by a tremendous bolt of lightning, accompanied by even more thunder rumbling in the distance. The little, old man looked at the pastor and calmly said, "Well, she's there."

OH SISTER!



Sister Catherine and Sister Helen are traveling through Europe in their car. They get to Transylvania and are stopped at a traffic light. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a tiny little Dracula jumps onto the hood of the car and hisses through the windshield. "Quick, quick!" shouts Sister Catherine. "What shall we do?" "Turn the windshield wipers on. That will get rid of the abomination," says Sister Helen. Sister Catherine switches them on, knocking Dracula about, but he clings on and continues hissing at the nuns.

"What shall I do now?" she shouts. "Switch on the windshield washer. I filled it up with Holy Water at the Vatican," says Sister Helen. Sister Catherine turns on the windshield washer. Dracula screams as the water burns his skin, but he clings on and continues hissing at the nuns. "Now what?" shouts Sister Catherine.

"Show him your cross!" says Sister Helen. "Now you're talking," says Sister Catherine. She rolls down the window and shouts, "Get the f*** off the windshield!"

GRANDMA

When Ryan was 9 years old, he stayed with his grandmother for a few days. He had been playing outside with the other kids, when he came into the house and asked her, "Grandma, what's that called when two people sleep in the same bedroom and one is on top of the other?" She was a little taken aback, but current wisdom says to tell the truth without elaborating so she simply said. "Well, dear, it's called sexual intercourse."

Continued on Pg. 15

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"Oh," Little Ryan said, "OK," and went back outside to play with the other kids. A few minutes later he came back inside and said angrily, "Grandma, it is NOT called sexual intercourse! It's called Bunk Beds! And Dustin's mom wants to talk to you!"

STATS

At Any Given Moment: FACT: 79,000,000 people are engaged in sex - right now. FACT: 58,000,000 are kissing. FACT: 37,000,000 are relaxing after having sex. FACT: 1 pathetic person is reading a condo newsletter.

You hang in there, Sunshine ...

Have no fear of perfection; you'll never achieve it



A man walks out to the street and catches a taxi just going by. He gets into the taxi, and the Cabbie says, "Perfect timing. You're just like Frank Feldman". Passenger: "Who?"

Cabbie: "Frank Feldman. He's a guy who did everything right all the time. Like my coming along when you needed a cab, things happened like that to Frank Feldman every single time.

Passenger: "There are always a few clouds over everybody." Cabbie: Not Frank Feldman. He was a terrific athlete. He could have won the Grand Slam at tennis. He could golf with the pros. He sang like an opera baritone and danced like a Broadway star, and you should have heard him play the piano. He was an amazing guy.

Passenger: Sounds like he was something special. Cabbie: "There's more. He had a memory like a computer. He remembered everybody's birthday. He knew all about wine, which foods to order and which fork to eat them with. He could fix anything. Not like me. I change a fuse, and the whole street blacks out. But Frank Feldman, could do everything right."

Passenger: "Wow, he was some guy." Cabbie: "He always knew the quickest way to go in traffic and avoid traffic jams. Not like me, I always seem to get stuck in them. Have no fear of perfection; you'll never achieve it. A crusty But Frank, he never made a mistake, and he really knew how to

treat a woman and make her feel good. He would never answer her back even if she was in the wrong and his clothing was always immaculate, shoes highly polished too. He was the perfect man! He never made a mistake. No one could ever measure up to Frank Feldman.

Passenger: What an amazing fellow. How did you meet him? Cabbie: "Well...I never actually met Frank. He died and I married his friggin' wife."

GUILTY AS CHARGED



Have you ever been guilty of looking at others your own age and thinking, surely, I can't look that old. Well...you'll love this one.

I was sitting in the waiting room for my first appointment with a new dentist. I noticed his DDS diploma on the wall, which bore his full name. Suddenly, I remembered a tall, handsome, dark-haired boy with the same name had been in my high school class some 40-odd years ago. Could he be the same guy that I had a secret crush on, way back then?

Upon seeing him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was way too old to have been my classmate. After he examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended Morgan Park High School. "Yes, yes, I did. I'm a Mustang", he said proudly. "When did you graduate?", I asked. He answered, "In 1975. Why do you ask?" "You were in my class", I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely. Then, that ugly, old bald, wrinkle-faced, fat-assed, gray-haired, decrepit son-of-a-bitch asked, "What did you teach?"

NEED HELP FOR A FRIEND

I'm reaching out because a friend of mine needs some help. His wife told him to go out and get some of those pills that would help him get an erection. When he came back, he tossed her some diet pills. Anyway, he's looking for a place to live. Can any of you help him?"

GLAZER & SACHS P.A.

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‘MY HAPPINESS PROJECT’ – FROM UNCONSCIOUS SORROW TO CONSCIENCE JOY!

– by Aruna Ladv BK, London England, Edited and submitted by BK Etta Stevens, Miami/Hollywood, Florida



I invite you all to join me in **My Happiness Project**. It may begin with me, but it doesn't belong to me alone. This is my New Year gift to all of you. The moment you adopt it, it becomes your own personal journey (My' Happiness Project), something to explore, practice, master, and ultimately treasure. The day we stop postponing happiness is the day life starts cooperating.

Project Overview Mission: Happiness is a conscious living project designed to help individuals reclaim happiness as their natural state, protect it as a personal treasure, and practice it daily—regardless of external circumstances. This project is not about bypassing pain or denying reality. It is about where we place our attention, energy, and belief, and learning how to remain compassionate without absorbing sorrow, stability without becoming numb, and happiness without dependency.

Core Intention: To remember and live from our original state of happiness, rather than seeking it outside ourselves or postponing it for a “someday” that never arrives.

Primary Objective: To remain happy no matter what—by developing awareness, choice, and inner mastery.

Secondary Objectives:

To recognize how and where happiness is lost during the day.

To reduce unconscious emotional drain from people, media, beliefs, and expectations.

To strengthen emotional and spiritual stability while remaining compassionate.

To shift happiness from a concept into a daily lived practice.

To transform sorrow into learning, insight, and growth (emotional compost).

To build a personal system for protecting happiness as a valuable asset.

Guiding Principles of: My Happiness Project:

Energy follows attention: What I dwell on, I feed.

Happiness is my nature, not a reward.

No one gives me happiness; therefore, no one can take it away.

Compassion does not require suffering.

Stability helps more than emotional collapse.

Happiness is and can be abundant and constant

Choice precedes experience.

Project Structure, Phase 1: Awareness – “Where Does My Happiness Go?”

Objective: To become conscious of happiness leaks. To-Do's: Daily self-check-in (2–5 minutes): When did my happiness dip today? Who was I with, thinking about, or engaging with? What belief or expectation was activated?

Notice emotional contamination: Am I feeling with someone or for someone? Did I absorb sorrow instead of holding compassion?

Reduce exposure to: Draining conversations, Fear-based media, Mental loops that consume energy

Outcome: Clarity around patterns that steal happiness.

Phase 2: Choice – “Happiness Is a Decision”. Objective: To consciously choose happiness, moment by moment. To-Do's: Practice the pause: Before reacting, ask: What would a happy, empowered version of me choose?

Challenge false measurements:

“I was happier back then” - Compared to what?

Replace postponement language:

From “Someday I'll be happy” - “I choose happiness now.”

Daily affirmation: Happiness is my default state.

Outcome: Ownership of happiness instead of outsourcing it.

Phase 3: Protection – “Happiness Is My Treasure” Objective: To guard happiness as something precious and non-negotiable.

To-Do's: Identify happiness thieves: Expectations, Ego reactions, Comparison, Over-identification with problems

Set inner boundaries: I can care without collapsing and I can listen without absorbing.

Create a Happiness Rule: “Nothing external has permission to steal my inner state.”

Emotional sovereignty and resilience.

Phase 4: Activation – “Happiness as Creative Energy” Objective: To use happiness as fuel for life, creativity, and service.

To-Do's: Find your Happiness Multiplier: Music, Movement, Nature, Creativity, Silence, Connection

Introduce lightness daily: One joyful act with no agenda.

Observe productivity: Notice how happiness increases clarity, efficiency, and impact.

Outcome: Happiness becomes energizing, contagious, and productive.

Phase 5: Integration – “Living ... Happiness” Objective: To turn happiness into a way of life.

To-Do's: Create a Happiness Mascot like a word, mantra, song, object, or symbol.

Weekly reflection: What protected my happiness this week? What challenged it? What strengthened it?

Share happiness without preaching. Through presence, stability, and example.

Outcome: Happiness embodied, not explained, Reflection & Inquiry (Project Journal Prompts)

Which expectations block my happiness?

What is my current definition of happiness?

How “expensive” is my happiness?

What is already okay in my life right now?

What am I afraid will take away my happiness?

What do I love—and do I believe it gives me happiness?



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What does optimal happiness feel like in:

My body?

My relationships?

My possessions?

If happiness is my treasure, how will I protect it today?

Success Indicators: Faster emotional recovery, Reduced reactivity, Increased clarity and creativity.

Greater compassion without exhaustion. Inner stability during external chaos, A felt sense of lightness and empowerment

My Happiness — Activated!

HAPPY NEW YEAR! That's why the path of spirituality and meditation teaches us the importance of being able to master the self. To learn how to master the senses is the way to master the world around you. We must be able to control our inner world of thoughts, long before they extend out into the world through our words and actions. This is attained through self-discipline and self-management, because it all starts with the "self". As we begin to lose the self, then we try more desperately to control everyone and everything on the outside, and we all know how badly that works out for everyone.

Happiness is one of the original qualities that are deep within our souls. When you become retrospective and go within, you will find creating **THE HAPPINESS PROJECT** exactly what you need to live in a place of **PEACE!** Learning meditation and practicing it daily will help you understand yourself better and learn to discern what is real from what is not.

I am conducting a **FREE ZOOM** meditation class on Tuesday mornings, so that we can all learn to live more positively, with **HAPPINESS** in our heart and mind, by putting the self first, especially in these troubling times. It begins promptly at 10:30AM and continues until approximately 11:30AM.

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