

SUNRISE

THE NEWSLETTER OF VIRGINIA KEY BEACH PARK TRUST

FALL 2007

VOL. 8

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Delivering the dream for everyone! **Grand re-opening is February 22, 2008!**

Come join us for the long, awaited re-inaugural celebrations, taking place February 22, 2008 that coincides with the close of Black History Month.

Virginia Key Beach Park Trust extends a heartfelt invitation to all our readers to mark their calendars for an exciting line-up of gala events for the whole family. Come join us for the long, awaited re-inaugural celebrations, taking place February 22, 2008 that coincides with the close of Black History Month.

Friday begins at 10:00 a.m. with the vibrant sounds of Caribbean inspired music and a nostalgic opening day parade while

the public tours the Historic Zone and the mock museum. Dignitaries, local leaders and honored guests will gather for the public dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony on the spot where the new museum/cultural center will soon break ground. Anticipation runs high when students who participated to design a Historic Virginia Key Beach Park poster, get to see the winning selection officially unveiled by the judges. Kids of all ages can then get onboard the newly re-commis-



sioned 'Biscayne Virginia Rickenbacker Central' miniature railroad and there will be plenty of old-time favorites to go around like authentic corn dogs, popcorn, refreshing Nehi sodas and other nostalgic treats.

Saturday is 'Family Super Fest Day at Historic Virginia Key' filled with continuous entertainment and an array of vendors from

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NFL 's Larry Little Hosts Golf Tournament To Benefit Historic Virginia Key Beach Park, December 6th

The 2007 Larry Little Legends Golf Classic is presented by the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians and will be held at the Miccosukee Golf & Country Club, home of the Miccosukee Championship on the PGA Nationwide Tour.

Former Miami Dolphins' great and NFL Hall of Famer Larry Little will host his premiere charity golf tournament December 6th to benefit the restoration efforts at Historic Virginia Key Beach Park which celebrates its grand re-opening during February 22, 2008. The 2007 Larry Little Legends Golf Classic is presented by the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians and will be held at the Miccosukee Golf & Country Club, home of the Miccosukee Championship on the PGA Nationwide Tour.

All fans and corporate supporters are invited to challenge Larry on the green during this two-day special event. Beginning with

the V.I.P. Pairings Party on Wednesday evening, December 5th. Attendees will browse an array of auction items and get to mingle one-on-one with celebrity golfers, football Hall of Famers, former Dolphin players and other influential guests at the Miccosukee Resort & Gaming Complex. On Thursday, December 6th, the golf tournament gets underway at 10:30 a.m. when participants arrive for registration, light refreshments, pre-event putting contests and warm-ups on the spectacular Miccosukee Golf & Country Club's range while members of the Miami Dolphins' Cheerleading Team lend their support. A 'shotgun' tee-off is set for 11:00 a.m. when golfers are paired in groups of five with such NFL legends as Nat Moore (Dolphins), Ricky Jackson (Saints), Ted Hendricks (Raiders), Bobby Mitchell (Redskins), Leroy Kelly (Browns) plus many other sports celebrities. The exciting day is topped off with an award dinner and benefit

auction in the clubhouse immediately following the competition.

Clearly, this is a project that lies very close to Larry's heart because when he was growing up in South Florida, Virginia Key Beach was the only Miami-Dade County recreational facility that African-Americans could utilize. The first ever M. Nathalie Range Community Award will be presented at the culmination of the tournament. It commemorates the remarkable efforts of M. Nathalie Range who helped secure National Register of Historic Site designation for the park and who formed the Historic Virginia Beach Park Trust.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities with the 2007 Larry Little Legends Golf Classic or to contribute to the restoration of Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, please contact Val Screen, Esq., Development Director at vscreen@miami.gov.com.



age the public to rejuvenate their spirits, luxuriate in the natural beauty and, simply bask in the lush open spaces of their newest recreational facility.

For more information about our February re-opening weekend festivities, please contact David S. Friedman, Marketing Director at dfriedman@miami.gov.com.

Continued from the cover:

dawn to dusk. Be sure to set your alarm clocks bright and early for morning live jazz and DJ music in the beach park from 7-10 a.m. Revel in the morning glory sounds of our Festival of Choirs followed by a parade of honorary marshals. Whether you're into reggae, pop, rock, country, hip hop, salsa or rhythm & blues, the midday point will offer a variety of entertainment venues on three main stages. Add to the mix, a vintage car display, clowns, acrobats, magicians, storytellers, historians, a sports pavilion with leading players, a petting zoo, vendor booths filled with crafts, tempting food cook-offs,

exciting contests with prizes, surprises from the past, mouth watering taste selections and the day becomes a true family extravaganza!

Sunday is the day to experience 'Paradise Renewed'—kick back and enjoy all the wonderful amenities that Historic Virginia Key Beach Park has to offer. Explore the barrier island's eco-friendly flora and fauna; view the restored historical structures, attach a hammock between two palm trees and just admire the scenic shoreline, cook up a family barbecue on the grill or spread out a scrumptious luncheon at one of our many picnic areas. In essence, we encour-

A New Museum Is Born

We seek affirmation; we desire inspiration.

The heritage of Miami's people of African descent is rich with voices past and present. The history of Virginia Key and its place in the struggle for civil rights and social justice is a unique chapter in the American story. The Virginia Key Beach Park museum will be unique, educating our community and area visitors about civil rights, social justice and the cultural and natural history of this beautiful park and beyond. Virginia Key Beach Park museum programs and exhibitions will reach across generations and cultures by celebrating the people, places and events that embody Miami's regional heritage and international character. It will become again a major center of community life and



a national symbol of hope and civic engagement where all people can celebrate "paradise renewed." The quality of the "museum within the park and the park within the museum" experience is key to our success. Today's museum visitors want an authentic experience. We seek affirmation; we desire inspiration. The museum experience must include eye-appealing design, the expectant atmosphere of arrival, a celebration of com-

munity heritage and especially a profound sense of spiritual renewal. The VKBPT staff will create immersive exhibits and dynamic educational programs that renew the Historic Virginia Key Beach Park legacy today and for future generations.

For more information about the new museum/cultural center, please contact Robert Blount, Museum Director at rblount@miamigov.com

Trustee Spotlight

As a highly recognized Miami-Dade County retired educator with a thirty-six year academic career, Maud has reached out to help the community for decades...

Every quarter our newsletter intends to highlight the contributions of our distinguished Board of Trustee members. In this edition, we salute Maud Pauline Newbold, a native Miamian and the guardian of three young adults, is the daughter of the late Cecil and Pauline Newbold who migrated from the Bahamas in the early 1900's.

A graduate of historic Booker T. Washington Senior High School and Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida, she later received her M.S. Degree from Florida International University and completed post-graduate work at Florida A&M University.

As a highly recognized Miami-Dade County retired educator with a thirty-six year

academic career, Maud has reached out to help the community for decades covering code enforcement issues to teenage pregnancy prevention advocacy.

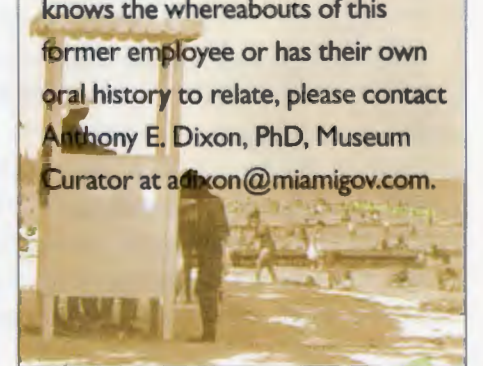


As marketing chair for the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, Maud presently remains totally immersed in developing ways to publicize the significance of the grand re-opening of the 82.5 acre site to a diversified community.

Besides work with the Black Archives Foundation, the M. Athalie Range Cultural Arts Foundation, the Sickle Cell Disease Association, the Woman's History Coalition of Miami-Dade County and Historic St. Agnes Episcopal Church, Maud was recently honored by the Miami-Dade County Black Affairs Advisory Board for her dedication to black heritage historic preservation.

Blast From The Past

John Gillen who served as the first Caucasian lifeguard at Virginia Key Beach during 1973-79, recently contacted our staff to reminisce and inquire about attending the grand re-opening of the beach park, he so adored. John would also like to send a shout out to a fellow lifeguard who served with him named Johnny Robinson. If anyone knows the whereabouts of this former employee or has their own oral history to relate, please contact Anthony E. Dixon, PhD, Museum Curator at adixon@miamigov.com.



Become a VKBP Trust Volunteer

Besides accruing valuable skills and experience that will last a lifetime; students may be eligible to earn community service hours through their schools.

Virginia Key Beach Park Trust (VKBPT) is accepting volunteers who are at least 14 years of age or older. VKBPT is looking for people who can give at least five (5) hours every month and who can make a minimum commitment of six to twelve months. Besides accruing valuable skills and experience that will last a lifetime, students may be eligible to earn community service hours through their schools. Volunteers can lend a hand in a number of environmental and special event capacities such as; park and shoreline clean-up, selective exotic plant removal, construction of the plant nursery, ticket-takers, monitor visitor booth areas and serve as volunteer ambassadors within their schools and communities.

VKBP Trust would like to welcome new volunteers who attended recent orientations. We hope to see you at a project or event soon!

Adriene Haynes	Aptiva Ferguson
Torrance Canady Jr.	Birute Scobee
Charles M. Brow Jr.	Lachresie Walker
Torrell Collins	Elena Iglesias
Glenn Robinson Jr.	Mary Williams
Edwin Nieves	Danielle Demata
Donnell Jones	Stephanie Jean-Baptiste
Marianela Luporini	Jose Rosello

For further information on how you may become part of our Volunteer Corps Program or to inquire about putting your supervisory skills to use as a trained Volunteer Leader, please contact, Quentin Pough, Volunteer Coordinator at qpough@miamigov.com.



Barrier-Free Playground Promises Oodles Of Fun!

Utilizing community design input, a tailor-made play area with wheelchair accessibility, is soon scheduled to take shape on a 20,000 square foot plot of land within the park's Historic Zone.

The Children's Trust, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and families within Miami-Dade County, recently awarded Historic Virginia Key Beach Park a grant in the amount of \$260,000 to install a boundless playground where the equipment accommodates kids of all abilities.

Utilizing community design input, a tailor-made play area, with wheelchair accessibility, is soon scheduled to take shape on a 20,000 square foot plot of land within the park's Historic Zone. Because of special equipment, every child—including children with physical and/or developmental disabilities—can enjoy the playground's amenities. Pathways into the colorful, canopied play areas will be wheelchair accessible. Anyone will be able to reach the highest decks and the ground will be made of recycled materials which provide cushioning in case of falls. While cozy areas, tucked underneath slides and decks prove entertaining to all youngsters, they could also serve as comforting niches for autistic children. Likewise, bal-

ancing pods, easily accessible to everyone, might become a favorite for a child with Down syndrome. Plans call for spiral slides for kids to whirl down, monkey bars to hang from and walls to climb, with a future sandbox component to be added later.

Currently, Historic Virginia Key Beach Park has the distinction of being the only public recreational facility and historically designated property to construct a barrier-free property alongside a beach. The new playground aims to give children a stimulating environment in which to let loose and safely learn to explore while they develop essential life skills through communal play.

According to statistics supplied by Connecticut-based nonprofit group Boundless Playgrounds, nationwide, 116 boundless parks have been constructed. Of those, eleven are in Florida, with eight more scheduled for completion by next summer.

For more information on the boundless playground installation, please contact Quentin Pough, Volunteer Coordinator at qpough@miamigov.com.

Let's Mention Our Recent Park Improvements...

If you still pine for the flavors of yesteryear, head for the newly refurbished Concession Stand serving tempting menu items from the beach park's history.



The Operations Department of Historic Virginia Key Beach Park confirms completion of perhaps, the largest historic feature on the property—the main parking lot! Newly paved asphalt with pedestrian walkways, native trees, electrified light poles and bollards, the 457 parking spaces and concrete car stops will be able to accommodate the handicapped, wider vehicles and, also, provide limited baby stroller access.

Eco-friendly supporters of Historic Virginia Key Beach can applaud the fact that invasive species like Australian Pines and Brazilian Pepper are routinely ground for compost and mulch for future use throughout the acreage. Moreover, extreme care is taken

to protect living animals and native plants as the beach park carries out a five-month long wetland restoration project in conjunction with DERM. Upon completion the project will clear over 50 acres to the West and North of Historic Virginia Key Beach Park by selective clearing/excavation/disposal of all exotic vegetation, the creation of flushing channels and tidal pools, the re-planting of mangroves and, finally, the installation of a raised boardwalk with access through the wetlands. Eventually, this important project will provide additional wildlife, marine habitats and improve the water quality throughout Virginia Key.

Children of all ages should dust off their conductor's caps and get out their train

whistles because the 'Biscayne Virginia Rickenbacker Central' miniature railroad is back on track! One of the most glowingly recalled amusements from the beach park's golden age was secured from a private train memorabilia collector in Sacramento, California. The gasoline powered engine still retains its original lights and bells. The three passenger cars seat 36 passengers and traverses over 4000 feet of track for a 12 minute adventure past six tenths of a mile of native wetlands and tropical hardwood hammocks with stunning views of coastal dunes. Eventually, the cars "choo-choo" their way through the enchanting 70 foot wooden facade of the 'Tunnel of Love' and guests disembark at the original station platform.

If you still pine for the flavors of yesteryear, head for the newly refurbished Concession Stand serving tempting menu items from the beach park's history. Now there is plenty of room to picnic and barbecue under shaded areas with the addition of 44 outdoor grills and 88 tables.

The historic Carousel Building is now restored and gearing up for the day it will receive back its vintage 1950 "Allan Herschell" wooden merry-go-round by-the-sea. In the meantime, the beach park's two historic bathhouses which contain public showers, locker spaces and restroom facilities have been completely modernized.

For more information on the status of our park improvements, please contact Guy Forchion, Operations Director at gforchion@miamigov.com.



Message From The Chair Gene S. Tinnie

Greetings to all. The fresh new look and format of The Sunrise newsletter virtually says it all. We begin a new year unlike any before; as we give thanks for all the blessings and support we have received and prepare for the fulfillment of a community's dream: the grand re-opening of restored

Historic Virginia Key Beach Park for permanent public use on February 22, 2008, appropriately launching Black History Month. This re-opening is a genuine celebration of Miami at its best, as a triumph of steadfast cooperation since 1999 among environmentalists, historic preservationists, public park advocates, City officials and members of the African-American community who fondly remember Miami's onetime only segregation-era "Colored Beach" It is a celebration of our past, present and future, which brings sobering new financial and political challenges emerging even as design of the Park's new museum gets under way. Enjoy and keep hope alive!

An Anchor of Stability

When Tommy Lane learned that his daughter was being assigned to Iraq after a previous deployment in Kuwait, he brought her to this gathering spot of men close to his heart.

By Mamie Ward, originally printed on February 8, 2005 in the Miami Herald

On any given day, a group of more than 20 seniors can be found sitting around on rusted metal chairs, old lawn chairs or rickety stools underneath an olive tree planted more than 40 years ago at Northwest 18th Avenue and 65th Street in Liberty City. Interesting conversations and sometimes heated debates helped the group give the tree its nickname: the Tree of Knowledge.

When Tommy Lane learned that his daughter was being assigned to Iraq after a previous deployment in Kuwait, he brought her to this gathering spot of men close to his heart. "I brought her there because these are the guys that I respect and I wanted her to meet the fellas," said Lane 67, who began acting at age 19. "It was a tough time for me."

Lane's daughter, Kamala, who lives in New Jersey and was visiting her dad, deployed to Iraq last month as a member of the Florida National Guard, taking with her the memory of her meeting with her father's friends. "Instead of making trips to the psychiatrist, we make trips to the tree," Lane said. "No one knows you from the time you were a little tot like these fellas."

For the past four years, in between boost-

ing his acting career, Lane visits the tree to socialize, to discuss issues affecting the community and to reconnect with long-time friends. "The corner is a unique corner that has served as a repository of Miami history and culture," said Frank Pinkney, 71, the group's spokesman.

Younger members like John Carter, 58, a retired postal carrier, say they always wanted to be a part of the group. "I was curious about the men gathering at the tree," Carter said. You hear so many stories coming from the tree... some about entertainers like Duke Ellington, Dizzie Gillespie - they all knew them personally. "You always learn something," he said.

But the tree is more than just a place for hanging out for these gentleman; aside from taking lighthearted jabs at one another and telling stories of the good old days, they also come together to help the community. "We try to keep the streets clean and encourage kids in the area to do good in school," said David Hanna, 63, who started coming to the tree two years ago. Members of the group also work to address issues affecting the neighborhood.

The group has asked the Miami-Dade County commission to place a four-way stop sign at the corner, which they say has a high volume of traffic. "We reminded the commission on Martin Luther King Day that we needed this," Pinkney said. "There's a lot of kids coming through. We are still waiting."

Community service is another mission. The group volunteers for events such as the African American Committee of the Dade Heritage Trust Annual Women's History Luncheon. "We serve as waiters for the day, free of charge," Pinkney said.

They also support an annual Commemorative Service and Procession at the City of Miami cemetery. The men also find time to worship together. On the third Sunday of each month they can be seen sitting together in the pews of a fellow member's church.

"The majority of us grew up together," said Nathaniel Ward Jr., 78, a retired warehouse supervisor. "Some of us went to the same school. We all knew each other from the young days, but now we have lost a few."

The oldest living member of the group, Roy Higdon, is 89. Those long-time memories have members who have left the area still finding time to come back for a 'meeting' or two at the tree.

"We have a member of the group who comes down every Super Bowl and hosts a party at the tree," Pinkney said. "No matter where they [members] end up, somehow they eventually find their way back to the tree."

site would not have been returned to the citizens of Miami and the world if it were not for the Virginia Key Beach Park Trustees who have given countless hours of their personal un-paid time to this project and the many citizens who have contributed so much to this effort. Many of you may know that the City of Miami, in an effort to streamline it's budget, cut the funding of the trust by \$500,000. This was a shocking set back to the Trustees in their efforts to create the nostalgia and serenity of the property in past years, Trustees are continuing the effort to restore the land and are pledging to raise necessary funding to ensure the creation of a legacy; as well as establish an endowment ensuring that the vision of the citizens last for many future generations. To help with this endeavor or to donate funds to the Park, please call the Trust at (305) 960-4600.



Message From The Executive Director David L. Shorter

The largest park in the City of Miami, Historic Virginia Key Beach Park, will open its gates to the public in February

2008. What a great time for this spectacular piece of land to be given back to its citizens, during Black History Month. Although the park will open for public use, the Trust will still improve on the site's wonderful offerings. It should be noted that this magnificent



This research examines the negative correlation between the construction of Interstate 95 and its effects on Overtown, Miami. Throughout the history of Florida, Blacks were both vital and instrumental in state development. In search of employment and new opportunities at the turn of the century Black migrants flocked from other Southern states and even from nearby countries (Bahamas) to Florida. Upon arrival many Blacks were forced to settle in various "All-Black" towns due in part to Jim Crow racial segregation laws and customs.

Despite racist attempts these segregated Black towns flourished. Overtown, Miami is one such example of an All-Black town that prospered under such harsh discrimination. Early residents of Overtown (previously called Colored Town), often worked in the surround-

Our mission is to create a vision for the development and use of Virginia Key Beach Park, promoting and maintaining absolute public ownership and access, fostering its perpetuation as a passive open green-space that include nature trails, recreational facilities and museum structures appropriate and compatible with the nature of Virginia Key, presenting it as a valuable resource to be enjoyed for prosperity, and to honor the rich historical legacy of the social and civil rights history of South Florida.

The Sunrise is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Virginia Key Park Trust. If you have questions or comments, we'd like to hear from you. Write to us at: 4020 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami FL 33149, telephone us at: (305) 960-4600, Fax us at: (305) 960-4620 or e-mail us at: dfriedman@miamigov.com, visit our site: www.virginiakeybeachpark.net

A Road Runs Through: The Effects of Interstate 95 and Urban Redevelopment on Overtown, Miami

Despite racist attempts these segregated Black towns flourished. Overtown, Miami is one such example.

ing Miami area as laborers and domestic workers but returned to their segregated part of town to enjoy the vibrant lifestyle that it provided. Often barred from the clubs and restaurants of Miami Beach, Overtown's citizens created their own restaurants, clubs, hotels and theaters. Great Black legends such as Josephine Baker, Nat King Cole, Joe Louis, and W.E.B. DuBois stayed and performed in Overtown while visiting Miami.

During its heyday from 1930-1960, Overtown provided a lifestyle and community free from discrimination to residents in both Broward and Dade Counties, unfortunately it all would come to an untimely end. Using shrewd and ruthless business methods, racist policy makers allowed for the construction of Interstate 95 to cut through the heart of Overtown. This destructive route created an end to the city and the culture of Overtown and displaced nearly 12,000 Black residents who

were forced to abandon their homes. More profound than the number of displaced and disadvantaged is the lack of information about Overtown, especially in leading sources about the history of Miami.

By examining both housing patterns and historical accounts it is clear that city planners did little to prevent the destruction of Overtown. Instead, city commissioners allowed policy and racially based zoning practices to guide the path of Interstate 95 and the future of Overtown. This study reviews the impact socially, economically and physically of urban policy and Interstate 95 on the residents and area of Overtown, Miami.

Markita A. Samuel is our guest contributor from Miami, Florida. She is a Senior History major, Pre-Law minor at Florida A&M University. To obtain a full version of this study, please contact Markita A. Samuel at markita.samuel@gmail.com

Meet Our New Employees

Virginia Key Beach Park Trust takes pride in welcoming two new additions to our growing staff;

Anthony E. Dixon, PhD has been appointed Museum Curator. With a Doctorate Degree in History from Indiana University, Bloomington, Dr. Dixon is an expert in the African Diaspora, African American History and museum/archival research. His credentials include teaching experience at Florida A&M University, recognition by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as well as work with the African American Preservation Alliance.



David S. Friedman is the new Marketing Director. With a corporate sponsored Graduate Certificate in Business Administration from Long Island University and an undergraduate degree in Romance Languages/Secondary Education from Queens College, he began his career as a Trade/Public Relations Analyst in the African Government Programs Division of the multinational group Societe Generale de Surveillance SA. Mr. Friedman has also held positions in property management, trade show marketing and publishing.

HISTORIC



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Prof Tomanant

Mark Your Calendars For These Upcoming Events

Saturday, November 24, 2007
10:00 PM-4:00 AM
Absolute Entertainment
Presents 'Stages'

Saturday, December 8, 2007
9:30 AM-12:30 PM
VKBPT Volunteer Project

Saturday, January 12, 2008
10:00 AM-11:30 AM
Trust Volunteer Orientation 101

Saturday, February 23, 2008
9:00 AM-12 Noon
Trust Volunteers at Re-opening
of HVKBP



Caribbean Festival **Caribbean Beach Fest Returned Home**

Miami Carnival 2007 was filled with new fetes and places for transient Carnival revelers to enjoy. CDC & Associates pushed the envelope to resurrect an event that all enjoyed, Caribbean Beachfest at Historic Virginia Key Beach Park on Monday, October 8, 2007 which is known as the "last lap" of festivities. Known for popular events like Girl Power and Soca Fest, Caribbean Beachfest swarmed over the park with food, arts and craft vendors that enticed all five senses like Goldies Conch House and Tati's Exotic Ices. There were also live performances by popular Caribbean artists like Destra, Sherwayne Winchester, Traffik, Atlantik, Claudette Peters, Ninja Band, Red Hot Flames, Jam Band and many more. *For more information on how to book your next event please contact Kechi Okpala, Special Events Coordinator at kokpala@miamigov.com*