

# Words from your Council

In October, I had the pleasure of attending the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. It was a wonderful event and very well attended. Many business owners and community leaders were recognized for their contributions and services to the Homestead, Florida City and South Dade Community. In addition to the certificates of appreciation that were presented, I presented two proclamations. One was to Mike and Yvelice Gonzalez and the other was to Dr. Jeanne Jacobs, the President of Miami Dade College Homestead Campus.

I am proud to report that the City received a letter from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) announcing that the City has earned a FY 2005/2006 Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the fourth consecutive year that our City has achieved this award.

To give you some background, the Certificate Program has been in existence for over 60 years and has gained widespread recognition as the premier indicator of excellence in governmental accounting and financial reporting. This is a great achievement and reflects the professionalism and dedication of our Finance Department staff, as well as the high degree of dedication to excellence and leadership on the part of our city managers and elected officials.



As the holidays approach, I wish you all a joyous holiday season. May God bless you and bless the City of Homestead.

Roscoe Warren  
Mayor

Dear Neighbors:

As this article is being written, the first cool morning of fall brings to mind the many events the service organizations of this community will offer over the next several weeks. While our community is now ever changing and growing, some things still remain the same and it is my hope that the many coming events will continue to attract those new to Homestead so that the spirit of this community as a separate, distinct and unique place to live will continue.

With my apologies to those happenings that I may have forgotten to list here, I want to acknowledge several and urge my readers to take part in some of these community events: the annual Veterans Day Parade, one of the few remaining in South Florida; the Pineapple Ball to raise funds for Homestead Hospital, the Homestead Rotary Spaghetti Dinner for the benefit of the Homestead/Redland Girl Scout troops; the Listing Exchange Halloween party to benefit local charities; the Christmas tree lightings in Losner Park and at City Hall, and the on-going community policing events sponsored by our own Homestead Police Department.

If these are not enough to fill your calendar, stop by Harris Field on most Fall Friday nights to catch some great high school football action by both South Dade and Homestead High.

As I meet public officials and others throughout our state and around the nation, the response to my being from Homestead is no longer a question or comment about Hurricane Andrew but a reference to Homestead being the site of the race-track. One Mayor from North Florida I met recently saw Homestead on my name badge and loudly proclaimed for all to hear that Homestead is home to the greatest racetrack in the world. It is on that note that I extend a warm welcome to NASCAR fans, teams and sponsors who will be visiting our hometown in mid November.

While there are many good things happening in our corner of the world, there is much yet to be done. I know that with your continued sup-



port and input, together, we can continue to build a community of which we can all be proud. Keep in touch.

Steven D. Losner,  
Vice Mayor

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Greetings to you all.

I can't believe how quickly this year is flying. Soon it will be Thanksgiving and then Christmas. This is certainly my favorite time of year as the air begins to turn cooler and I just might even get to put on a sweater!

I just returned from a three day Florida Redevelopment Conference. It was wonderful learning experience. I met with other cities that also have Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA's) and got to see first hand how many cities have redeveloped their blighted areas. Homestead has a CRA and your City Council is the CRA Board. I came back with some good ideas that I am eager to share with our CRA.

I have good news concerning our first school that will be built as a result of the formation of our Educational Facilities benefit District (EFBD). We have finally completed the permitting process after almost two years. What an arduous process! We have finally cleared the hurdles with all of the governing agencies such as DERM, the South Florida Water Management District and the Army Corps of Engineers. Whew! We should have a groundbreaking some time in December with a projected opening in August of 2008. I just can't wait. This is so exciting especially since many said it couldn't be done! This school will be a pre-K-8 facility. I will certainly keep you posted as to our progress.

I have scheduled my next workday, and it will be with the Parks and Recreation Department so you will have to stay tuned for my article on that experience. I have found the workdays to be an extremely productive learning experience. I plan on visiting every department within the city to understand the inner workings of each and every department. It has also become quite evident that the city employees appreciate someone who takes the time to learn about their job! Well, it has been a pleasure.

Stay tuned for more and have a great month.



Have a blessed Thanksgiving and let us be reminded of all of the wonderful blessing that our Lord has richly bestowed upon us!

Lynda Bell  
Councilwoman

Dear friends and neighbors,

The Mayor's Youth Council (MYC) held their 3<sup>rd</sup> annual election to elect the MYC Mayor and six councilmembers who will hold office for the coming school year. The election included a candidate's forum so that each person running for an elected position had an opportunity to answer questions and address their constituents. The election process is a great experience for the MYC members - democracy in action!

Please join me in congratulating MYC Mayor Vanesa Vaquer, Vice-Mayor Maria Rangel and Councilmembers Esther Mathurin, Chimene Mathurin, Arthur Jones, Yadira Murguia and Amanda Powell. During their October meeting, the MYC Council appointed Rosel Vazquez as their Clerk, Beatrice Diehl as their Historian and Jesse Cravin as their Parliamentarian. I am looking forward to another great year working with this outstanding group of students!

I had one of the most thrilling experiences of my life in October - a ride in an F-16 Fighter Jet! As a member of the Military Affairs Committee, I was invited for an incentive ride in an F-16. Col. Randall Falcon, the Commander of the 482d Fighter Wing at the Homestead Reserve Base, was my pilot for the approximately one hour flight. I have always appreciated our military personnel but being on the base and going through the pre-flight preparation and training gave me a renewed respect for all that they do.

As Veterans Day approaches, I encourage everyone to show your support for our military by attending the Veterans Day Parade sponsored by the Military Affairs Committee of the Greater Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce.



The parade will begin on Flagler Avenue in downtown Homestead at Noon on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. I hope to see you all there!

Amanda Garner  
Councilwoman

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Recently, I attended a very informative conference, the Florida Redevelopment Association's Annual Conference. It was a local three and a half-day conference that covered key community revitalization and redevelopment issues such as density, attainable housing, development agreements and preservation of urban quality of life. I feel that it is very important for me, as a City Council member, to stay informed about key issues important to our community. I will continue to make every effort to attend informative conferences related to City issues as they are available.

In October, the City also celebrated Public Power Week. As the Chairman of the Utility Committee, I had the pleasure of presenting a proclamation to our Utility Director, Gregg Paulson. Over 2,000 cities and towns in the United States light up their homes, businesses and streets with "Public Power" - electricity that comes from a community owned and operated utility like ours. Homestead Energy Services is a valuable community asset that contributes substantially to the well-being of our citizens through energy efficiency, customer service, environmental protection, economic development and safety awareness. As part of our continued efforts to provide better customer service, utility customers can also pay their monthly bill on-line through the City's website, [www.cityofhomestead.com](http://www.cityofhomestead.com). For more information, please visit our website or call Customer Service at 305-224-4800.



In closing, I would like to wish you all a wonderful holiday season.

Norman Hodge, Jr.  
Councilman

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As a member of the Military Affairs Committee Board of Directors, I was very pleased to hear that the best unit in the Air Force Reserve is right here in Homestead! Col. Randy Falcon, the 482<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing Commander, was presented with the Air Force Association 2006 Outstanding Reserve Unit Award during a recent ceremony in Washington DC. The award recognizes the Reserve Unit that demonstrates superior performance and achievement.

Bottom line is the best unit in the entire Air Force Reserve, which has 37 different units, was the 482<sup>nd</sup>! Please join me in congratulating Col. Falcon and all of the men and women who serve

our country at the Homestead Air Reserve Base for their dedication and commitment to keep us safe.

I am also pleased to report that the Police Department recently received additional grant funds: \$61,780 from Kids of Miami, which supports Project SOS contractual case managers who work with crime victims and residents who need assistance with a wide range of issues; \$47,100 from the Office of the Attorney General, VOCA Grant, which funds one victim's advocate and the purchase of a new laptop for data entry of crime victim information; \$41,505 from the Bureau of Justice JAG Grant, which provides overtime for detectives and officers who conduct "hot spot" details and also funds a part-time victim's advocate; \$1 million over five years from the Bureau of Justice for our Weed and Seed Program; and \$500,000 Drug Free Communities grant for a 5-year period. Grant funds are a valuable resource for our City and we will keep seeking them out!

More good news...In October, we attended the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department's groundbreaking ceremony for the East Homestead Station #65. The new station will be located directly in front of Homestead Senior High at SW 344 Street and 167 Ave. It is anticipated the new fire station will be operational by 9/07.



I wish you all a very happy Thanksgiving holiday!

Jeff Porter  
Councilman

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I had the honor of attending the recent Homestead Police Department Project Start Off Smart Candlelight Vigil in Support of the Victims of Domestic Violence and would like to thank everyone who attended for your support.

Margaret Mead said it very well, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

As many of you know, October was National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer remains the second leading cause of cancer deaths among American women and we should all be aware that there are many factors that can contribute to the risk of developing this disease including age, genetics and family history. As a breast cancer survivor myself, I urge you to do a regular self-exam and to follow your doctors advice regarding annual mammograms. It is so very important to remember that treatment for this disease is most effective when breast cancer is detected early.

I would also like to thank everyone who came out to support the Little Angels Foundation during the annual Halloween Party and for your support of Homestead Hospital by attending the Pineapple Ball. Both events were very well attended and we had a truly wonderful time.

In October, our City Clerk, Sheila Paul Shedd, did a great job hosting the Miami-Dade County Municipal Clerks Association luncheon in the Champions Club at the Homestead-Miami Speedway. Hosting this event was a great opportunity to invite city representatives from all over Miami-Dade County to visit our area.



As I conclude my article, I would like to wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving!

Judy Waldman