

Obeying the law surely causes a lot of grief



R. Kenneth Bluh

KENNETH'S COMMENTARY

tion stop driving through the intersection," exclaimed the law enforcement officer. "That's the law."

"But officer," I said in frustration. "I could sit for hours waiting for the traffic to die down. What do you do?"

"You wait, or proceed straight through the intersection and make three right turns and then you are driving in the direction you wanted."

Well, I paid the fine. I went to school. And, my car premium still went up. Not much, because it was my first moving violation in years and years. But, it did go up.

Since that date I have been waiting, like a good boy, behind the white line. Waiting for the arrow that says it is okay to turn.

Then, the other day, driving north on SW 62nd Avenue, I tried to make a left turn onto S. Dixie Highway (US 1) after buying a cheeseburger for my wife at McDonalds. I waited for the arrow.

Guess what? There isn't an arrow for the benefit of those going north who want to make a left turn onto US 1. I guess there aren't very many of us that have spouses that want a \$1 cheeseburger from McDonalds at 5:45 in the evening. Unfortunately, I am one of them.

When the first cycle ended and a turn arrow did not appear, I decided that this is the time to see just how long I would have to wait — it seemed like a subject for a column. It was!

Jumping to the end of the story I must

tell you that I waited nine turns of the light before I lucked out and no traffic was headed south on SW 62nd Avenue wanting to continue south. Hallelujah, I made my left turn and got home before the cheeseburger turned completely cold.

Between arriving at the intersection and finally making my left turn a few things happened to me.

Three cars that originally came up behind my car angrily pulled into the right-hand lane and then with screeching wheels, pulled in front of me, giving me a dirty look as they proceeded into the intersection, waited and then made an illegal left turn. Where are the cops when you need them?

Nine cars honked their horn at me — a few for more than a "honk, honk," more like a "blast, blast."

Four drivers shot me a bird as they pulled into the right hand lane and proceeded to cross US 1. I hope none of them had a pregnant wife in their car trying to get to South Miami Hospital right across the highway. I'm sorry.

One driver pulled alongside my car, stopped, put down his window, and shouted "— you, you crazy driver." At least that's what my limited lip reading talent said he was shouting. Only an idiot would open his car window to hear what he was screaming.

Lord, was I happy when, at last, I could make a "legal" left turn and deliv-

VIEWPOINT

er my cheeseburger to my wife. I told her my tale of woe. Do you know what she said? "You dummy, look what happened to you the last time you pulled into an intersection to make a left turn!" So much for sympathy.

So, here is what I should have done. First, forget about buying a dollar McDonald's cheeseburger when the fast food is being sold on the other side of US 1, especially, at 5:45 in the evening.

That's really not the answer. I should have crossed US 1, headed one block north to Sunset Drive, and then made a right turn on Sunset and headed east to US 1. Made another right turn at US 1, and headed south, delivering my cheeseburger while still warm. See, there is always a solution.

I am happy the guy that shouted out his window at me didn't have a permit to carry a concealed weapon in his car — after all, he might have just come from work.

We appreciate your opinions on this column whether in agreement or disagreement. Please send your comments to (fax number) 305-662-6980 or email to <letters@communitynewspapers.com>. The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of this newspaper, its editors or publisher.

Remember when I wrote about receiving a ticket for blocking an intersection about six months ago? I was waiting for the traffic to slow down so I could proceed through the intersection and make a left turn when a car coming in the other direction ran into me.

I told the law enforcement officer, "I knew the law; it says to proceed to the center of the intersection and wait for the traffic to slow down before making a turn. The lady coming in the other direction ran the red light and ran into my car. I was in the right!"

"Wrong," said the county cop. "You wait behind that white line for the opposite direction traffic to end or wait for the arrow at the intersection."

"What if there isn't an arrow? What if the traffic doesn't stop before the light turns red?"

"You wait!"

"What if it's five o'clock and the traffic coming in the other direction doesn't end before the light turns red?"

"You wait!"

I asked, "How long do you wait?"

"Until the cars coming in other direc-



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PUBLIC WORKSHOP

As a part of Miami-Dade County's continuing commitment to public participation in local government, the Park and Recreation Department invites area residents to attend a public workshop:

A.D. "DOUG" BARNES PARK
3401 SW 72nd AVENUE MIAMI, FL 33155

The meeting is designed for the public to share ideas and discussion on potential improvements. As part of the meeting, County staff and consultant will answer questions about planning, development and operations. Residents are encouraged to attend and comment on planning for A.D. "Doug" Barnes Park. **The meeting will take place:**

WEST DADE REGIONAL LIBRARY
9445 CORAL WAY MIAMI, FL 33165
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2008 7:00-9:00PM

For further information, requests for foreign language interpreters, or questions prior to the meeting please contact:

DIANA CORNELY, PARK PLANNER
 Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department
 dcornel@miamidade.gov or 305-755-7907

Call 305-755-7848 (V/TDD) for materials in accessible format, information on access for Persons with Disabilities or sign language interpreters (five days in advance). **Multiple members of individual community councils may attend.**

Making digital TV converters work when power is cut off



Like so many other South Florida residents, Sherry Garrett worries about getting the most up-to-date and accurate information during hurricane season. That's why Sherry relies on her battery-operated TV set to stay tuned to CBS4 News during weather emergencies that often disrupt South Florida's power grid.

It's an all-too-common problem. As a bad storm approaches, the winds pick up as the weather gets worse. The power goes out and her battery operated TV set becomes her lifeline to critical disaster-preparedness information.

That's why she wrote CBS4 about her concerns that this may be the last Hurricane Season she can rely on her portable TV. She recently heard about the February 2009 National DTV conversion. That's when over-the-air TV in the United States switches from analog to digital transmission.

Sherry asks: "With the DTV switchover, are the battery powered televisions we depend on during hurricane season going to be able to use the DTV to analog converters?"

First, if you subscribe to satellite or cable, you're fine under normal circumstances. You're probably already getting digital signals through your cable or satellite box. The TV you're using now will continue to work the way it always has. But if you have an older analog TV, using so-called Rabbit Ears or other kinds of "over-the-air" antennas, you'll need a digital converter to tune in the new digital over-the-air TV signals.

In fact, the federal government even offers free \$40 converter discount coupons to help pay for the new digital converters. In most cases, digital converters are being sold at local electronics' retailers for about \$50-60. So the actual out of pocket expense for most shoppers should be minimal.

Regardless, local consumers are still confused and they're complaining to their lawmakers. Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz told me what they're doing to get a simple answer to Sherry Garrett's question.

The problem is that these portable TVs that people have are analog and the DTV conversion boxes require power to operate and convert the DTV signal that will be all that is broadcast after next February. There was never a mandate from the FCC to produce portable or battery operated DTV conversion boxes and there is

not the expectation that they will be manufactured due to a lack of perceived demand in the market. What this means is that after February of next year, if there is a power outage, no one is going to be able to watch your broadcasts unless they have a generator.

So what does it all mean for Emergency-Powered TV after the February 2009 DTV Conversion?

As I first reported on CBS4 News several months ago, there's a quick and easy solution until new, battery-operated digital TVs hit the market. The battery operated TV will still work with its regular batteries once the power goes off. It's the digital converters that need battery power.

This tip comes from Marcelo Sanchez, CBS4's director of broadcast operations and engineering. He reminded me that in the very same emergency, the uninterrupted power supplies many of us already have for our home or office computers can also be used for short-term emergency power on the new digital converter boxes too.

Several months ago, I was able to visit Amy Hefferman. She told me, "I think everybody's confused and I just can't get any definitive answers, so I hope you can give me some."

Using the small battery backup system from her computer, I plugged the converter into its' emergency power outlet. I connected a pair of cheap rabbit Ear antennas into the back of the new digital converter. I hooked the converter to her emergency, battery operated TV. To simulate a power outage I pulled the plug out of the wall on back-up power supply. Without missing a second of TV, the back-up battery powered the digital converter and we were able to continue to watch her emergency battery TV without any problem at all.

So how long will Emergency, Battery "back-ups Last? Remember, the portable TV's battery will limit how long it can work until the regular power is restored. The back up battery system powering the Digital Converters will limit how long they will work. The more-expensive units could power the digital converter for an hour or more, depending on their battery capacity.

Hopefully, a Digital-Capable portable TV will hit the market before next storm season, so you can stay tuned to CBS4 News for all your critical storm information... even when the power goes out.

For more information, go to CBS4 Digital TV Information at <www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/digitaltv.html>.

Watch Al Sunshine weekdays on CBS4 News beginning at 5 p.m.



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**SUNKIST PINELAND PARK
8401 SW 64th STREET MIAMI, FL 33143**

The Sunkist Pineland Park General Plan will be presented for public comment. As part of the meeting, County staff will answer questions about planning, development and operations. The meeting will take place:

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THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2008 7:00-9:00PM**

For further information, requests for foreign language interpreters, or questions prior to the meeting please contact:

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Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department
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Water restrictions loosened, but still in effect in county

BY FRANK CALDERON

New, less restrictive water usage rules are in place for Miami-Dade County. The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has placed its jurisdictional area — which includes Miami-Dade County — under a Modified Phase II Severe Water Shortage Order.

This order loosens water usage restrictions somewhat, allowing residents to water their lawns two days a week, rather than just the one day previously permitted.

In Miami-Dade County, watering is allowed as follows:

- Residents whose street addresses end in an odd number (such as 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9) may irrigate lawns and landscapes on Wednesdays and Saturdays from midnight to 9 a.m. or 5 to 11:59 p.m.

- Residents whose street addresses end in an even number (such as 0, 2, 4, 6 or 8) may irrigate lawns and landscapes on Thursdays and Sundays from

midnight to 9 a.m. or 5 to 11:59 p.m.

- These times differ slightly from the times allowed by SFWMD because a Miami-Dade County ordinance prohibits lawn watering from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. So the restrictions listed above only apply to Miami-Dade residents.

- Hand-watering with one hose fitted with an automatic shut-off nozzle is allowed for 10 minutes per day for landscape stress relief and to prevent plant die-off.

- No restrictions apply to other outside water uses, such as for car and boat washing, pressure cleaning of paved surfaces, decorative fountains and water-based recreation (e.g. swimming pools, water slides).

Miami-Dade residents are encouraged to continue voluntarily saving water both inside and outside the home. For additional information, Miami-Dade residents can call 3-1-1; the SFWMD's toll-free Water Conservation Hotline at 1-800-662-8876, or they can visit <www.miamidade.gov/conservation> or <www.sfwmd.gov>.

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C. Gables Commissioner Cabrera among MS Bike Ride participants

BY BETH COHEN

Each spring for the past 21 years, countless cyclists have been making a 150-mile journey from Miami to Key Largo and back, and they do it all in the name of charity. In its 22nd year, the Zimmerman MS Bike Ride Presented by Wachovia anticipates breaking record numbers in participants and fundraising.

Coral Gables City Commissioner Ralph Cabrera will be among those participating in his 12th MS 150 Bike Tour on May 3. At last year's Bike Tour he raised \$3,500, which ranked him in the top 50 fundraisers. Cabrera is really excited about this year's event because he already has raised more than \$5,500.

Cabrera has been cycling for 25 years. He has participated in other bike tours, but the MS 150 Bike Tour is very special to him. In the early 1990s he started a courtship with his wife, Jodi, after running into her at the event. They had only met briefly once before at the Lipton Tennis Tournament, but never exchanged numbers. They saw each other after finishing the first 75 miles of the MS Bike Tour in Key Largo and went out to dinner that night before returning to Miami.

In 1998, Cabrera received the National MS Society Leadership Award for his great work in raising funds for the National MS Society—South Florida Chapter. He hopes to pass his love and devotion of community service down to his children, and of course cycling.

The event, which will be conducted on May 3 and 4, is Florida's largest charity bike tour, raising money to help the thousands of South Floridians affected by multiple sclerosis. In 2007, participants raised nearly \$1.9 million. The 2008 fundraising goal is \$2 million, supporting MS research and client services to thousands of men, women and children living with MS.

Riders will begin their trek at the new start line, University of Miami's BankUnited Center, and spend the night in Key Largo at the MetroPCS Village at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Once all the riders arrive, they will be treated to a tropical beach party with food, fun and entertainment.

After a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast, riders will return to UM BankUnited Center, where dedicated volunteers will cheer them across the finish line. One of the highlights includes an exciting lap around the Maroone Pit Stop at Homestead-Miami Speedway as friends and families cheer them on the second day of the ride. Participants receive a medal from a person with multiple sclerosis before they



Coral Gables City Commissioner Ralph Cabrera pictured during the 2007 MS Bike Ride.

sit down for lunch from Tony Roma's and chat with their new friends.

"MS Bike Ride participants and volunteers are passionate individuals who want to do something about MS now," said Karen Dresbach, National MS Society South Florida Chapter president. "Together we can change the future and bring an end to multiple sclerosis. The National MS Society is all about movement. MS Bike riders have joined the movement toward a world free of MS."

In addition to the generous support from new title sponsor, Zimmerman Advertising, and returning presenting sponsor, Wachovia, the following have committed as major supporters of the Ride: American Medical Response, MetroPCS, Maroone, FedEx, Motorola, Homestead-Miami Speedway, Miami-Dade County, Eastern Financial Florida Credit Union and Tony Roma's.

To register for the Zimmerman MS Bike Ride Presented by Wachovia call 1-800-FIGHT-MS (1-800-344-4867) or visit online at <www.msbikeflorida.org>.

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