



# Downtown NEWS

Issue 4 Volume 2. Summer 2019 | Facebook.com/DowntowNews | Twitter.com/DtownNews | Stay connected: Downtown-news.com

Commentary | Ken Russell  
**Housing Crisis**

Tackling the housing crisis where it hurts most. Commissioner Ken Russell for Downtown NEWS.

If you've read any headlines about the real estate industry in Miami lately, you know that our growing city has a major crisis of affordable housing. That's at all income levels—more than 50% of our residents are paying more than 30% of their income toward housing. The picture is even grimmer for renters.

Our success has become our biggest challenge. This is a complicated economic puzzle—one the City of Miami and other stakeholders are tackling in a variety of ways. We've set major goals to not only create thousands more of housing units for our families, young professionals, and senior citizens but to save and renew the existing stock of housing that is rapidly being gentrified in some of our emerging neighborhoods.

As Chairman of both the Miami Commission and the Omni Community Redevelopment Agency, I've made the housing crisis a priority, pushing for a \$100 million housing bond and innovative inclusionary zoning policies that encourage market-rate developers to include affordable units in their projects.

In the Omni CRA, a neighborhood on the northern edge of downtown, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build some of the critical infrastructure downtown needs to sustain the vibrant community it is rapidly becoming.

Our young professionals need more places they can afford to live. Our young families need more quality school options. Downtown also needs better integration of its public spaces and transit options. These are all things that can be built in the emerging Omni area, with the help of the CRA's targeted resources.

I'd like to tell you about one project we just completed, in partnership with Vagabond Group Consulting, best known for restoring some of the glorious old motels in the MiMo / Biscayne Boulevard Historic District.



Inauguration Day. Photo, courtesy of CRA.

Using financing from the CRA to make the project economically feasible, Vagabond (led by the brilliant Avra Jain) turned a dilapidated 44-unit apartment complex just north of 15th Street into a sleek, (continues page 3)



Miami Fashion Week 2019. Photo, courtesy of MFW

Cover Story | Matilda Kalaveshi

## Sustainable Fashion

Time to reflect on a multi-billion industry

Given the nature of our politics, it is unsurprising that sustainable fashion is very much in vogue these days. It refers to manufacturing practices that take into account both environmental and socio-economic aspects. Points of convergence include maximizing recycling, careful use of natural resources, working with easily biodegradable materials and improving overall working conditions throughout the production chain.

I had a sit down with Stefan Siegel, founder of Not Just A Label. We spoke at length about how complacency with the status quo affects our lives and environment. His message resonated with me given his "day job" as the founder of an online fashion platform that showcases emerging brands from over 110 countries!

We spoke at length about how complacency with the status quo affects our lives and environment. His message resonated with me given his "day job" as the founder of an online fashion platform that showcases emerging brands from over 110 countries! Step aside Alibaba... Continues on page 7.

## Not Again!

City Offers Bayfront Park to Ultra

City administrators led by District 5 Commissioner Keon Hardemon, unveiled, literally, in the dead of night, a resolution to offer downtown's Bayfront Park to Ultra. Downtown Neighbors Alliance President said: "It is a slap in the face! Not only is the City DISMISSING the health risks to residents caused by the Noise from Ultra, but it is now also asking every single taxpayer in the City of Miami to pay for the Security of this event. This deal is even worse than the one the City Commission unanimously rejected last September." What's going on?



Bayfront Park Calendar for 2020. Projected closure: January through May.

### A Legal Perspective

"It is remarkable that the City Commission would consider a resolution to allow Ultra back into Bayfront Park when the Commissioners and other City officials are fully on notice that Ultra's noise level has been shown to cause health damage and loss of property use to the residents." Continues on Page 3.

Editorial | Amal Solh Kabbani  
**Conflict of Interest**

We need protections against those who exploit their position of power to influence city decisions.

A conflict of interest involves any action, inaction, or decision by a public official or public employee in the discharge of his or her official duties which would materially affect his or her financial interest or those of his or her family members, relatives, friends, or any business with which the person is associated in a direct or indirect manner.

Do the City of Miami and Miami Dade County have the proper guardrails in place to protect its constituents from the OVERT and shameless abuse that we are experiencing? Do we have protections against those who exploit their position of power to influence city and potentially county decisions in favor of "Auntie" rather than the well-being of the residents and the safeguard of our city properties?

If those guardrails are in place, now is the time to escalate to the FBI. If they are not in place, now is the time to sponsor a referendum/legislation and get it passed.

I will be dedicating time and energy to research this issue and fix it immediately! Corruption perpetuates only when citizens remain indifferent, and when it comes to corruption, a common denominator is always a conflict of interest.



Amal Solh Kabbani, DNA President.



### INSIDE THE SUMMER ISSUE

Editorials .....	Pg. 2
Letters.....	Pg. 2
Commentary.....	Pg. 3
Food & Drink.....	Pg. 4
Cultural Compass.....	Pg. 5
Neighborhood.....	Pg. 6
Spotlight.....	Pg. 6
Local Institutions.....	Pg. 6
Talk of Downtown.....	Pg. 7
Cultural Compass.....	Pg. 8

Journalism is printing what someone else does not want printed: everything else is public relations. -G. Orwell.



### DNA Members

10 Museum Park. 50 Biscayne. 900 Biscayne. Centro. Epic. Flagler First. Marina Blue. Loft II Downtown. Marquis. Met 1. One Miami. Viscayne.

### Downtown NEWS Summer 2019

**Raul Guerrero**, Editor in Chief  
DNA, Publisher.

**Niels Johansen**, Photography Editor  
**Martha Otis**, Copy Editor

**Contributors:** Aaron de Mayo, Aurea Veras, Terrell Fritz, Islara Souto, Fernando Gonzalez, Matilda Kalaveshi.

**Sales and Marketing:** Alba Herzberg

Online Edition: [Downtown-News.com](http://Downtown-News.com)

## Safety Affects Your Wallet

For years now, downtown residents have been asking elected officials, both at city and county levels, for safer streets and parks. An unsafe neighborhood has a direct impact on our wallets. Insurance rates go up, and the property value goes down. A real estate broker said that one client had decided to rent an apartment in the Central Business District but rescinded because two aggressive panhandlers harassed them as they exited the building. The same thing happened at a Park West tower. Her client has a pet and she wanted to see Maurice Ferré Park across the boulevard. At the entrance, people were hanging their clothes to dry, and further down, the deal-breaker, a man was openly urinating into a large soda cup despite having a bathroom less than twenty yards away.



Photo, Nicola Garello.

Residents who pay upwards of \$20,000 in property taxes are considering further taxing themselves to patrol streets and parks. Why? How is it possible that our leaders can't come up with policies to ensure our streets and parks are safe?

Documentarian Bill Corben—Cocaine Cowboys—speaking at a recent Urbanism Summit, ventured an answer: “We have 21st-century challenges but 20th-century leadership.”

The great thing about democracy is that citizens do have an instrument to hold elected officials accountable, it's called voting. With city and county elections coming up, citizens should demand more than words and promises. It is time to get out and show who is in charge!

Raul Guerrero, Editor.

## Letters to Editor

### OUTSIDE A 7-ELEVEN

Dear Editor:

I'm writing to you to voice my concern as a downtown resident, after a violent crime occurred on the morning of June 14 right in front of my building. At approximately 4 am, two young tourists arrived by taxi to the 7-Eleven to buy some food. At this point, they were approached by a couple who were robbers and demanded their wallets.



Man on the left and woman are alleged robbers. Tourists stand to the right. In the middle is the taxi driver trying to defuse the situation. One tourist, in the white shirt, is bleeding from the nose and upper lip. While the altercation was going on, the woman stole the wallet from one of the tourists.

A struggle ensued in which one of the victims was badly hurt and the assailants fled by foot. Luckily, a Miami patrol was in the area and immediately was able to apprehend them. I'm concerned because I too sometimes arrive at odd hours in the morning. This very well could have happened to any of us residents of this building.

Over the months, there has been a concerning increase of loiterers, panhandlers, and drug dealers in this area. I must mention that I have noticed an increase of police presence but it feels that this is not deterring anyone from publicly getting intoxicated, engaging in acts of prostitution, panhandling, and drug dealing. All these activities are witnessed by us residents on a daily basis. This should not be!

About two weeks ago, I saw a homeless man bullied into giving up the change he had in his pockets. About 3 weeks ago, I saw a homeless woman engaging in a sex act in the corner in front of the College Garage 3 and Loft 2, during the day! Not to mention a man dealing drugs right in front of the First Street Metromover station. This same drug dealer has verbally harassed my wife in more than one occasion. Even the panhandlers are becoming more aggressive and demanding when asking for money. It is now common for them to curse at you when you deny giving them money.

It has become downright scary just to cover the less than 30 yards from College Station Garage to the front of our building. Things seem to be escalating for the worse instead of getting better. I am sure I'm not the only one that feels like this and just wishes that our streets in downtown received the same police attention as the ones in Brickell do. Whatever the police is doing there it seems that it is better than what they are doing in this side of downtown.

**Dan Cruz**, Central Business District Resident

### TRAPEZE OR NO TRAPEZE?

That is the question many residents are asking about an outfit that one day came and occupied Maurice Ferré Park—prime real estate overlooking Biscayne Bay.

To the editor:

As residents of the Park West neighborhood, named after the park across the street, we are outraged that since about a year ago, a rickety looking structure also known as a Trapeze [The Flying Trapeze School] is occupying a large part of the beautiful park.



This structure, closed 80% of the time, doesn't serve our community, and basically is the hobby of a few well-connected individuals, who pay bargain basement rent for the waterside space they occupy. Either they pay up major [market rent], so we can afford security for our park, which was taken away due to lack of funds, or get out!!!

**Claudia Roussel**, Park West resident.

### PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS

Sunday afternoon happy hour next to a convenience store that sells beer by the can and across a residential building.



This is what 500 hundred residents see of their neighborhood as they open the door.

Convenience stores continue to sell single beers, which contributes to the area's panhandling plague.

**Jorge Sanches**, LOFT 2 Resident.

Letter to Editor and Commentary send to [rguerrero@dassmiami.com](mailto:rguerrero@dassmiami.com).



## YOUR DOWNTOWN SPECIALIST

BUY | SELL | RENT

South Florida's premier source for real estate backed by a global brand with a heritage of unsurpassed quality, value and trust.

**EXPERIENCE IS NOT EXPENSIVE..IT IS PRICELESS!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT ME



**ALBA HERZBERG**  
ESTATE AGENT

786.282.0149  
[aherzberg@onesothebysrealty.com](mailto:aherzberg@onesothebysrealty.com)

**Don't leave them home alone!**  
Bring them to our **FREE** Adult Day Health Care Centers  
Transportation included for those within route boundaries.

**Call today for more details!**  
**786.470.3080**

Hammocks License #9342    Hialeah License #8957    Little Havana License #8274

[www.Lhanc.org](http://www.Lhanc.org)

## America

The name comes from Amerigo Vespucci. Spanish King Ferdinand appointed Vespucci, a Genovese established in Seville, Naval Commissioner. As such, he traveled to what Christopher Columbus thought was India or Indies. (Since Marco Polo, the lands west of Japan and China were called West Indies.) Columbus had set out to find an alternate way to the land of spices and thought he had arrived there on October 12, 1492. Amerigo Vespucci proposed that Columbus had instead reached a new continent.

There are various theories on the name America. One, well-documented, claims the origin is a 1507 planisphere—a map of the world—by the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller, which shows for the first time the name America stamped over South America.

Waldseemüller named the New World after his friend Amerigo Vespucci.

Another theory suggests that the name America comes from the dispatches Naval Commissioner Amerigo Vespucci sent from the New World, and King Ferdinand and Court labeled *Noticias Americanas*, “American News.”

The appellation 'Indias' continued to be used in Spanish for the New World, Britain always used America for their possessions.

### The United States of America

When did America become an integral part of the United States? It is somewhat of a mystery. Thomas Jefferson introduced the name in the Declaration of Independence: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

However, historians found 'America' used in the Philadelphia Gazette, January 1776, attributed to A. Planter. The use of a pen name, or the more elegant pseudonym, was widespread for fear of losing one's head for treason. Suspects for coining United States of America are Thomas Paine, John Adams, the very Thomas Jefferson, or a Virginian A. Platter who was not afraid of decapitation and signed his name. Some even venture a theory attributing the use of America to General George Washington.

Historical dilemmas of this nature must be decided by the National Archives, the authority on American History. The National Archives responded to my inquiry, indicating that the term United States of America was formally used for the first time in the Declaration of Independence, consequently, they recognized Jefferson as the originator.

The 13 British colonies formally declared independence on July 4, 1776, and set out to solidify words on the battlefield. It took seven years of bloody war, both at home and internationally, before Britain signed the 1783 Treaty of Paris, recognizing the independent Republic of the United States of America.

The nationality of the citizens of the the United States of America hence became American.

Raul Guerrero

## Ultra: Not Again! (From Page 1)

### A Legal Perspective

Observes attorney Sam Dubbin: “It is remarkable that the City Commission would consider a resolution to allow Ultra back into Bayfront Park when the Commissioners and other City officials are fully on notice that Ultra’s noise level has been shown to cause health damage and loss of property use to the residents.

They are also on notice that the transaction violates the City Charter because there has been no competitive bidding, no appraisals, and Ultra would pay a fraction of fair market value for its months-long usurpation of Bayfront Park. That the agreement is titled “revocable license” does not make it so, and courts have previously rejected such a cynical violation of the City Charter. Less than a year ago, the Commission properly, and unanimously, rejected a proposal that would have generated twice as much money. It is difficult to understand how any Commissioner would now run the risk of personally violating the Charter to bring Ultra back into the City.”

### Housing Crisis (from page 1.)

modern facility that will remain affordable to its residents for at least 30 years. Not a single resident was displaced by this revamp.



Avra Jain. Photo, CRA.



Interior of renovated apartment. Photo, CRA.

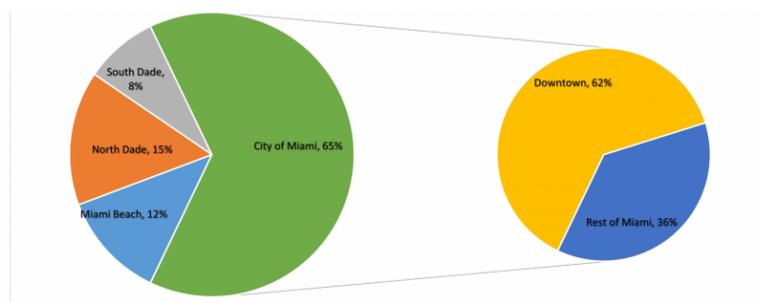
This is a perfect example of a public-private partnership that both preserves the community and helps us provide a healthy mix of affordable housing options for residents at all income levels. It pairs well with the small business grants the CRA has offered to help bring business into the neighborhood as well.

I’m excited by the prospect of being able to help other similar efforts bring housing, good-paying jobs, schools and public spaces to this region of the city.



Commissioner Ken Russell. Photo, CRA.

## Pottinger and the Homeless



Homeless Census - 2018. Percent by Jurisdiction. DDA.

Miami has one of the most complex legal/logistical frameworks in the country for dealing with homelessness. I have been working on this issue as an attorney, looking into regulatory reason as to why homelessness is still so prevalent and how we can help. In the process, it amazed me how much of the decision-making was done from behind a desk by individuals with little understanding of the true battles that are fought on the sidewalk. I made sure to go on outreach and health visits with the Lazarus Project, police, and the IDEA Needle Exchange Program. An important factor in homelessness is substance abuse and mental health. We need to treat these two problems in a more innovative manner, forming teams of professionals and recovered peers, for example. Housing is a factor, sure, but many of the chronic homeless are not ready to live alone.

### Pottinger

The Pottinger lawsuit was filed over 30 years ago when Miami was a very different place. In 1988, an injunction was entered by the court to prevent the arrest of the homeless for simply being homeless and for the destruction of their property. After 10 years of litigation, a consent decree was entered, providing certain guidance to the City on law enforcement as it relates to homeless individuals (Pottinger Agreement). It was later modified, in 2014, to exclude sex offenders from protected class and allow for more flexibility in law enforcement. Last September, Judge Federico Moreno terminated the Pottinger Consent Decree, agreeing that the City not only complied with it over the years but, also, that it was no longer necessary. As opined, Pottinger was in place for 20 years and caused a revolution in this community as to the treatment and care of the homeless. Now there is much more respect for the rights of the homeless and they have many resources. At the same time, Downtown has evolved dramatically into a thriving residential place with over 90 thousand residents, including families with children. The ACLU appealed the decision, and the lawsuit is currently pending.”

### Misunderstandings

In sum, whether someone is wearing a designer suit or soiled and ripped clothes, the same exact law should apply to them! What Pottinger represented back in the '90s is the law of the land today. Some residents resent the fact that a homeless individual sleeps or lies on a bench. But why shouldn't they? Because they don't comply with our aesthetic standards? If you and I have the right to sit or lie on a bench so do the homeless. We demand that panhandling be eliminated, but that is a violation of the First Amendment, freedom of speech. If a little girl can ask for money for her Girl Scouts' program, preventing a homeless person from panhandling is an infringement of his free speech rights, with more serious implication like controlling the message. Aggressive panhandling, intimidating or threatening pedestrians... That is a different story. Just because you are homeless you are not entitled to break the law.

### Protections

Protection that the City must always embrace, regardless of the outcome of the case. Pottinger protects the homeless regarding life-sustaining misdemeanors—things that you have to do to survive. There are a lot of misconceptions about that. Police can and should approach individuals engaging in those acts (like urinating on the sidewalk). The only thing that Pottinger mandates is that they do not arrest the homeless without first offering them to be taken to shelter. The homeless individual then should have a choice. However, if there is a bathroom within a ¼ mile, and you choose the sidewalk, or if you fully obstruct the sidewalk—then Pottinger protections are not applicable.

Elena Bondarenko

### Corporate Sponsors

**Becker**  
Becker & Poliakoff

**GRG** Gerstle, Rosen & Goldenberg, P.A.  
Certified Public Accountants



Islara Souto

Billing itself as offering “Tijuana-style seafood,” I became even more intrigued, since my notion of Baja California *pescado* was limited to fried fish tacos with cabbage. Any taco is an almost-perfect dish because anything can be wrapped in a corn tortilla (or a blasphemous flour tortilla), but a really good taco must have the right ingredients to start, and a flavorsome sauce to kick it up a notch. Lunch Special: two fish tacos, Ensenada-style. The *pescado* was a 1” x 3” stick of corvina, a white, flaky, rather bland fish, lightly breaded and fried, and stuffed in an industrial corn tortilla properly charred in spots from a very hot comal, “a smooth, flat griddle, used to cook tortillas.” Sliced, raw cabbage enveloped the corvina and a short drizzle of Mexican crema dressed the tops. That’s it. I could barely taste the fish and so I carefully deconstructed a taco and picked at its innards with my fork (a nice heavy fork)—but I still could not taste the *pescado*. Thankfully, our server had brought a trio of sauces, which every taco (no matter how sophisticated it is) begs for: salsa verde, an emerald green sauce piquant with cilantro and jalapeno chiles, red pickled onions sliced thin, and a unique sauce I had never tasted before in my travels through Mexico: a darkly ominous, thick, brown sauce of ground peanuts with *chile de arbol*. I tried dollops of each—and all three took my otherwise bland *pescado* tacos to a definitely higher, spicier, and yes, tastier level.

One of my companions had a six-inch leg of grilled octopus with a mole made of ... olives!, apparently a frequent ingredient of Baja cuisine. I tasted the olive mole and it was black, thick, salty of briny olives, delicious yet maybe a little too strong for the delicate pulpo, “octopus.” My other companion had the soup *vuelve a la vida*, “return to life.” He had slept poorly the night before and felt tired, but after drinking the amber broth in which swam *mariscos*, “seafood,” of various kinds, his countenance brightened and he, indeed, *volvio a la vida*. I tasted the broth. It was sublime.



### Service

Our service was excellent. We were accommodated by a caring server who explained all menu items in a warm and patient way; I could tell she knew the cuisine of Baja and the ingredients in the imaginative dishes the restaurant serves. I asked her for a straw for my *agua del dia*, a refreshing pineapple and ginger water. They didn’t have straws, she said, because they were trying to be *ecologicos*. Quick, smart and trendy response.



PEZ: 20 W. Flagler St. Miami 33130. 305.570 3440. \$\$ Pezmiami.com Photos courtesy of Pez. Ah... the subtleties of the Spanish language. *Pez* refers to a fish in the water, while *pescado* is a fish out of the water, no longer wriggling and ready for consumption.

## Bayside Marketplace

Bayside Marketplace is Miami’s number one tourist destination for the simple reason that it embodies Miami as few places can. Food, shopping, live music, dancing, boats, people from all walks of life, and the little weirdness—a huge snake welcomes visitors ready to be embraced for a photo. Not to mention Biscayne Bay in its azure brilliance or thunderous magnificence.

### A Little History

Bayside Marketplace, the two-story open-mall, dates back to 1987. Modeled after Boston’s Quincy Market and the Harborplace in Baltimore, Bayside Marketplace was built within Bayfront Park and around the existing Marina in an L-shape with the octagonal Hard Rock Cafe to the south. The book *Miami Architecture* describes it: “Bayside’s restrained yet colorful architecture alludes to the metal-roofed market sheds of the former British West Indies.”

### Food & Drink

You will find plenty. From the all-American HOOTERS to the BAVARIA HAUS, from LOS RANCHOS Steakhouse to the Caribbean MAMBO CAFE. And have a happy hour with a great view of the Bay at BREW-VILLE or SEGAFREDO. For a full listing of restaurants—and the list is long—visit the official Bayside Market page. And there is live music, provided by small local groups rotating between samba, Caribbean jazz, mambo, and bossa nova.



Panoramic view of Bayside Marketplace, Biscayne Bay, and Downtown Miami. From the series Planet Downtown. Niels Johansen.

### Mojitos

Arguably, Miami’s favorite drink is the Mojito. What is a mojito? Basically, a cocktail containing white rum, lime or lemon juice, sugar, mint, ice, and sparkling water. The idea is obvious, a refreshing drink for a hot city. Mixologists’ creative juices, however, can run wild under the Miami moon, and you can order a dirty mojito, a frosty one, and mango, guava, burry, cucumber or a healthy variation. Healthy? Green tea with no sugar.



### Future Attractions

Sky Wheel is a family-oriented Ferris wheel coming up November 2019. “It’s exciting and safe,” said General Manager Pamela Weller. The wheel is see-through, so it wouldn’t block any views of our neighbors. We care about our community. We are part of this community. We sponsor programs for downtown families such as Shakespeare in the park for children. And for the 4th of July we have a celebration featuring the Marlins.”

Bayside Marketplace is truly like taking a vacation to an exotic place without leaving downtown Miami. 401 Biscayne Boulevard. Miami, FL. 33132. Baysidemarketplace.com



The DNA has been promoting and improving the quality of life of downtown residents and business owners since 2013.

The DNA has influenced policy regarding noise abatement, homelessness, pedestrian safety, zoning, policing, the creation of adequate schools, and preserving downtown's green spaces.

### Accountability

"Not few battles we have engaged with private and public officials to defend our downtown neighborhood, to demand that the rights of our residents are respected," observed the DNA President.

### Your Support

While public officials have lawyers and staff paid by your taxes, the DNA has to finance it all. Yes, we do need your support.

For more information on how you can support the DNA, please visit

[miamidna.org](http://miamidna.org)



### What role does Conductor Ariel Britos play in forging professional musicians, and the lives of over 2,000 kids since 1996?

Maria: Maestro Britos's work is remarkable. He studied and worked in Venezuela. There, he saw the success of the well-known Sistema de Orquestas. Then he took this project to Uruguay and developed it with his wife, Claudia Rieiro, a professional flutist. At first, it was their independent project, and years later became the Uruguayan National Youth Orchestra, SODRE.

Martin: The Orchestra provides all of them with musical education from early on, and through competitions, they get to the "cherry on top", as they like to call it. Going back to Maestro Britos, he has won multiple international awards and is currently the President of Iberorquestas Juveniles.



### Why did you, both accomplished artists, chose to play with a youth orchestra?

Maria: We believe in the importance of their work, and their fresh energy reminds us of why we chose to be musicians in the first place. For us, making music is not just about being "professionals". One can never forget about the passion, about always being willing to work hard and give it all.

### Are they excited to play in the same theater where Pavarotti and Elvis Presley played?

Martin: Of course! But again, these young musicians are incredibly fortunate to be invited to play at iconic theaters all over the world like Berlin's Philharmonie and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and with famous and accomplished artists. Maestro Britos makes sure to expose them to opportunities such as this.

### On a personal level, musicians like soldiers must be on the road a lot, is it difficult juggling professional life and parenthood?

Martin: It has its challenges. We have a smart and sweet four-year-old girl, Amelia, to whom we try to give the best possible life. To us, that means being together as a family as much as possible, and for that reason, we decided to home school her.

Maria: Amelia loves traveling and gets to live unique opportunities that most children don't get. At the same time, we try our best not to miss her own activities. Sometimes when we are working together on a production, we have to bring family from Uruguay to help us. So far we have made it work.

Maria has performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, and the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, in roles like Mimi in *La bohème*, Angelica in *Suor Angelica*, and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*.

### What are some of the challenges opera faces reaching a younger audience, millennials?

Maria: I think there is a movement, if you wish, away from fast-food—used as a euphemism for everything that is substandard. Young people, millennials, are demanding more complexity. Opera has many layers. When you attend a performance you know you are in for a treat. It's not just something one can improvise out of the blue. Opera combines various artistic genres, choreography, composing a libretto, that is, the literary arts, music... Some of the best composers created operas, Verdi, Mozart... And even though some of these operas are centuries old, every time an interpreter owns them, they are new and unique.

### Operas are timepieces, an operatic staging is a history lesson...

Maria: But not in the sense of learning dates and names... It is a cultural history through the fashion of the times, the customs... Of course, center stage is the voice.

### Do you think Opera should be part of history curricula? Should students go to the opera?

Maria, laughing: I think everyone should go to the opera.

Martin is an electrical engineer. When he was doing graduate work at the University of Montevideo, across the street from the Conservatory, he couldn't resist and walked over to register for voice lessons. While he was working as an engineer, he listened to Pavarotti all day. At one point, he had to choose, and his passion for the opera won. He has performed internationally, gaining raving reviews. *Charleston Today*: "Astonishing, his presence enthralled the audience in almost an embarrassment of pleasure."

Lyrical Moments, featuring María Antúnez and Martín Nusspaumer at the historic Olympia Theater, July 11, 8 pm. For tickets please visit [OlympiaTheater.org](http://OlympiaTheater.org)



Downtown NEWS focuses on the neighborhood.

We listen to downtown residents. We have a team of citizen-journalists.

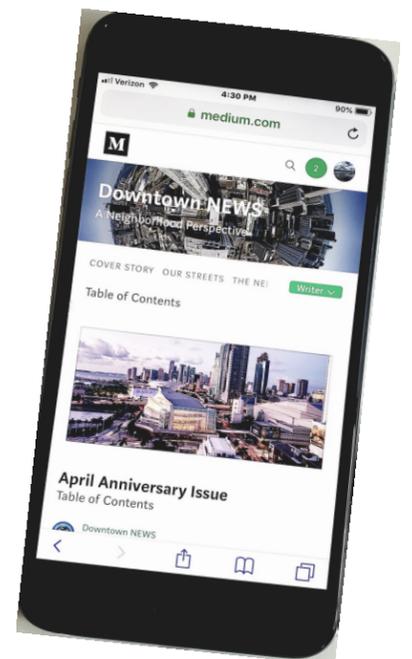
We fact-check every story and report from multiple angles.

Subscribe @ [miamidna.org](http://miamidna.org)

### Advertise

The print edition reaches 7.5 thousand downtown apartments, and thousands more on-line.

Downtown News is a bridge to this exclusive but elusive market.



### For Rates

[rguerrero@dass.miami.com](mailto:rguerrero@dass.miami.com)

[Downtown-News.com](http://Downtown-News.com)

Spotlight

## Elena Bondarenko



Elena Bondarenko is a lawyer. Since 2017, she has been with the Downtown Development Authority, where she handles government relations, land-use and zoning issues, as well as legislative and policy initiatives that affect Downtown Miami.

Elena was born in Russia's far-east, in the city of Vladivostok, closer to Tokyo than Moscow. By age 17, she finished high school and two years of college simultaneously. Ok, smart girl. Her parents moved to Toronto, as is the case with most immigrants, looking for a better future for the kids. But her hometown, surrounded by water, had claimed a special place in her psyche that Toronto couldn't quite satisfy.

Visiting Miami, the proverbial love at first sight occurred. Miami became her new home, and she assumed a role in shaping its history.

Beginnings are seldom easy. Elena had to commute from Boca Raton to FIU College of Law in Miami, where she graduated second of her class—really first but for a technicality—while rearing a toddler as a single mother. Not to mention English was not her first language. Somehow, that is one detail that gets lost about immigrants, her tenacity. And, as we shall see, the commitment to the true definition of citizenship.

### A Woman of Consequence

Right out of school, Elena got a job at a law firm representing the interests of developers in zoning and environmental matters. Later, she also practiced construction and condo association law. On her free time, she volunteered for causes such as creating schools for the emerging downtown. She was now living in Brickell. Having worked with development and government, she knew about infrastructure planning and impact fees—imposed by local governments for public services, including schools. Yet, there were no schools in the greater downtown. That chasm made her want to get involved. "Through research, I found that thousands of units were approved every year, and millions in impact fees were collected without plans for building schools to serve the new residents."

She joined the PTA and led an extensive advocacy campaign for the expansion of Brickell's Southside Elementary and its conversion to a K-8. "At the beginning, every public official recited in our face the archaic notion that there were no kids in Brickell. Every bit of free time I had, I fought the battle for the urban core's 'ghost' children and their right for neighborhood schools. I worked with the City and MDCPS on the K-8 application and drafting ordinances to encourage developers to invest in the expansion of schools. This pro-bono project resulted in the DDA offering me a leadership position, allowing me to focus my career on helping my neighborhood and heading their education advocacy efforts. I'm proud to say that Southside is now a K-8."

DN: Switching from a private law firm to the DDA, a quasi-governmental agency, meant a pay cut... Any regrets?

EB: Not at all. No money can buy happiness! I wake up excited every morning, all because of the work I do.

DN: What do you do at the DDA?

EB: Work with our elected officials and decision makers at all levels of government to further the interests of the DDA district in the areas of development, the environment, resiliency, homelessness, education, and urban planning. In addition to advising the executive staff on matters of local government law, procurement, ethics, grants, and contract law. In other words, help those in need, fight for our children, make my favorite city beautiful, resilient, and livable for all. I still get to be a land use lawyer, but now I get to fight for what is in the best interest of our downtown.

Half of Miami's population are women and all the City of Miami Commissioners are men. "Your resume is a perfect roadmap to politics. Do you see a future in politics?"

Elena rolls her eyes as if saying, are you kidding? No, she can do more for downtown from where she is. And her contagious laugh roars bringing the conversation to an end.

Local Institutions

## MCAD



### Miami Center for Architecture and Design (MCAD). A destination for everyone interested in the built environment.

In 2011, The Miami Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a professional association that is part of an International organization with over 90,000 members worldwide, decided to create a center for architecture that would be an independent non-profit that would serve as a cultural institution bringing the concepts of architecture, urban design and planning to the community. MCAD is a destination for everyone interested in the built environment (residents, tourists, and professionals alike), and celebrates the City's vibrant and unique architecture and urban fabric. MCAD educates the public and enhances public appreciation for architecture and design through exhibitions, lectures, tours, film series and other programs that aim to reveal the richness of design in Miami.



The Miami Center for Architecture & Design (MCAD.) 310 SE 1st Street, Miami. For more information visit [www.miamicad.org](http://www.miamicad.org)

Downtown News spoke to Cheryl Jacobs, MCAD Executive Vice President.

### Is MCAD involved in helping design policy regarding climate change, the affordable housing crisis?

CJ: MCAD functions as a resource for the architectural profession and the general community. MCAD'S goal is to raise awareness about issues within our community that affect the built environment and ultimately our quality of life. We strive to do programming that brings clarity to issues such as climate change; attainable housing; resiliency; healthier buildings.

### Has MCAD a saying in shaping architecture schools' curricula?

CJ: AIA Miami works regularly with DASH, UMSOA, and FIU CARTA to help our next generations take those steps to leadership in our industry and community.

### On the local level, can you speak a bit about some of the programs specifically geared for downtown residents and visitors?

CJ: MCAD is also the Downtown Miami Welcome Center. Currently, we offer the Downtown Miami Historic Architecture Walking Tour on alternate Saturdays ([www.miamicad.org/tours](http://www.miamicad.org/tours)) and quarterly, SketchMIA, an Urban Sketch Tour. Additionally, we offer private custom architecture tours that showcase much of Miami's exciting, vibrant architecture. We hope to expand our regular tour offerings in the fall and will be recruiting new tour guides and holding tour training over the summer. Also, our first exhibit in our new space will open on July 10: Miami Designs: AIA Miami Design Award Winners 2018. The exhibit will feature the winners of the 2018 awards, which highlights the work of Miami Architects.



MCAD Annual Urban Warrior Awards. The signature event recognizes individuals who have accomplished much to better Miami's urban landscape. Martin Pinilla, Barlington Group; Marta Vicedo, Urban Impact Lab; Cheryl Jacobs, MCAD Executive Vice President; Maurice Ferre' (Lifetime Achievement), 6 Term Miami Mayor; Sara Hernandez, MCAD President, Biscayne Bank; Bill Fuller, Barlington Group.

MCAD is a great resource for downtown.

Rediscover the art of conversation  
Downtown Arts + Science Salon: [DASSMIAMI.COM](http://DASSMIAMI.COM)

## Sustainable Fashion

Matilda Kalaveshi (From Pg. 1)

Stefan was warm, affable, hip and had a lot on his mind regarding sustainable fashion. He was very candid about his Miami experience, having been in town for only three days.

Stefan Siegel: I spent two hrs on the beach today and I've never seen so much plastic. Even though I am staying at one of the nicest hotels in town, it is covered in plastic. Comparing it to California and how clean it is, it is a little shocking to see... Unfortunately, life goes on. I feel like the summit is handled the same way. We preach to people and some hear it and most don't. I think it is imperative to incorporate the summit together with the shows and use the platform to reach the masses.

Downtown News: Do you think people are oblivious to it or do you think they chose to ignore it?

SS: When people are provided the information and choose to ignore it there is complacency and indifference and that is what has gotten us here.



Stefan Siegel and TV host Andrea Minski. Photo, Santiago, PHOTOSHOOTS

DN: Let's talk a little bit about your platform. Not Just a Label is a virtual showroom and online community that connects independent designers with consumers.

Designers get a chance to have their work showcased and vetted (for free) by the masses regardless of their location. The platform has brought notoriety and fame to many emerging designers and has contributed greatly to their success. Going back to the beginning, when the platform first launched was sustainability in the forefront of the business model or did that develop as it grew? Also does dealing with smaller, up and coming designers equate to sustainability?

SS: Sustainability is a mindset and not a special add on. A lot of problems that fashion has these days smaller designers do not have. As an example, the use of plastic from the manufacturer to the brand is something no one talks about. Currently, there is no way to hygienically package fashion garments from the manufacturer in China and bring it to the US and dispatch it around the country. The amount of plastic used is dreadful. The biggest issues are more on B2B side vs the end customer side. Smaller brands that adhere to certain standards and manufacture locally do not have this issue and are more inclined to conduct business in a sustainable way.

DN: In my experience as a retail consultant, dealing with smaller brands means holding their hand in certain aspects of the business, whether it is their pricing strategy, margins or something as simple as tagging. Did or does NJAL provide such services?

SS: Our goal was to create a showcasing platform, we step back from meeting designers and having one on one relationship with them. There are enough organizations from Fashion Council and local institutions that handle these services very well and aid emerging designers on all aspects of their business. We can help more by giving thousands of designers equal exposure opportunity. Ultimately we want to compliment vs compete with local institutions.



**Matilda Kalaveshi**, MBA, is the business and fashion correspondent for Downtown News. A former fashion model, she is the founder of EMP Retail Consulting.

For a full version of this article: [DowntownNews.com](http://DowntownNews.com)

## Resiliency

Aaron DeMayo

NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Science Studies did a complete assessment of their temperature data to see if past predictions of rising temperatures were accurate, and to know of any uncertainty within their data with the goal of understanding if the models were reliable for the future. The results found they are scarily accurate to within 1/20th a degree Celsius. They concluded that 2016 was the warmest year on record, and 2018 was the fourth.

The ice sheets across Greenland have seen unusual but not unprecedented melting already this 2019 season, which has been an increasing contributor to global sea level rise over the past two decades.

The South East Florida Regional Climate Change Compact from 2015 is the industry standard used to create infrastructure across much of Miami. The data suggests that by 2030 a 6-inch increase in sea level rise, on the low end, and 12 inches on the high end. By 2060, 13 inches on the low end, and 34 inches on the high end. NOAA provided the high-end predictions.

### The Miami Urban Core

We can see climate change effects regularly, with multiple flooding incidents in the past month from this year's intense summer storms. Morning Thunderstorms on Monday, June 10th, on NE 23rd Street in Edgewater, left cars underwater and water up to people's front doors essentially trapping them inside. On the evening of May 5th, thousands enjoyed Cinco de Mayo parties when a massive storm threatened to dampen festivities. Many areas throughout the urban core felt the effects of the extreme rain event as people pulled up their pant legs and waded through feet of water to get home as many streets were impassable by car. The issues stem deeper than wet socks, tow trucks, and broken tree limbs. During Hurricane Irma, we saw our sea walls inundated as the Category 3 made landfall hundreds of miles away on the west coast of Florida.



Aaron DeMayo, left, leading a Climate Panel during a recent edition of Urbanism Summit. Photo courtesy of Urbanism Summit.

Numerous solutions are already being put in place including backflow preventers on the stormwater outfalls and cleaning debris from stormwater systems to restore maximum capacity. Several reports created by renowned experts include both simple and creative suggestions.

The return on investment of upgraded infrastructure is becoming more apparent, and as a result, Miamians have taxed themselves hundreds of millions of dollars for resiliency efforts with the expectation of a better quality of life and increased financial security. Miami's future successes in the capital markets will be graded by savvy investors who will judge action vs. inaction and look for confidence in the market, and a city. The affordability of insurance is a major risk and leading many property owners to take initiatives on their own. A potential wide-scale solution is for Florida to stay at the forefront of design and construction by updating our building codes.

We will have options to choose from, some more simple, some more robust, each with its own unique set of challenges and price tags.

**Aaron DeMayo**, Architectural Designer and Urban Planner, Future Vision Studios.

## The Art of Conversation

Aurea Veras

The Downtown Arts + Science Salon is a combination of TED Talks and a local Social Club. A space for exchanging ideas on scientific innovations, books, art, technological trends, and to dance tango. Co-founder Marc Schmidt, a cardiologist and photographer, put it: "Take a break from virtual reality and reconnect with real people over a glass of wine, or two."

One Salon explored how emotions influence laws-making. "If enough people in a particular place share the emotion of disgust, it can be enacted into law," said evolutionary psychologist Debra Lieberman, drawing on her book *Objection*, Oxford University Press. "A majority group, based on emotions, can criminalize, for example, homosexuality," Observed Raul Guerrero, Academic Curator: "That is the idea behind DASS, get a group of neighbors talking about issues that are important not only to academics but for everyday life."



Salons take place at iconic venues, from Books & Books and the DuPont Building to Mana Contemporary and Miami Dade College, as well as jazz clubs such as Le Chat Noir and residential buildings. Photo by Marc Schmidt.

### Literature & Jazz

In partnership with the Olympia Theater, DASS invited local writers, famous and aspiring, to collaborate, and commissioned jazz musicians to interpret their writings. Actors then dramatized the pieces, creating a dialogue of artistic genres. The Florida Book Review observed: "Drawing on the concept of the salon, which flourished during the European Enlightenment and enjoyed a heyday during the Parisian jazz age of Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein, DASS staged a memorable event that combined literature and music."

### Science

Schmidt recalled how physicist Peter Markowitz and artist Xavier Cortada helped unlock the mysteries of the universe in one enlightening evening. "They explained why we are not drifting away in space. Dr. Markowitz was part of a team working at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) that proved the existence of the Higgs Boson, the particle that gives mass, as we know it, to all other mass particles. The Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded because of that work."

### It All Started in Paris

Salons evolved in Paris as an alternative to universities and over rigorous scientific academies. The likes of Voltaire, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin were regulars. And firm believers that knowledge and pleasure, understood as fine food, wine and a little flirting, a word derived from the French term for throwing flowers, were compatible, and complemented one another.

Such nuances couldn't be ignored by the media. The Miami New Times quipped: "DASS is the best place in Miami to meet intelligent women."



**Aurea Veras** writes about popular culture, food & drink. She loves photography, dancing and flowers, in particular orchids. 9 to 5 she is all business. More information on DASS at [dassmiami.com](http://dassmiami.com)

## Science

### Citizen Science

Citizen science activities at the Virginia Key North Point restoration site with Frost Museum of Science, including:

**Invasive Plant Documentation and Removal:** Invasive plants will be removed from the site to make way for native vegetation.

**Marine Debris Cleanup:** Volunteers collect trash from the beach and log each item using Marine Debris Tracker and Clean Swell, free smart phone and tablet apps.

**Biodiversity Monitoring:** Volunteers observe newly planted trees throughout our restoration site as well as observing native wildlife. Observations may be logged with iNaturalist – another smart phone app.

**Native Vegetation Planting:** Volunteers plant trees and grasses to enhance native habitats.

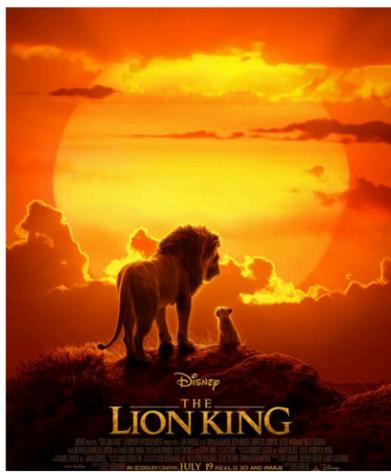
MUVE Volunteer Workdays are excellent opportunities to make an immediate impact on the environment by investing your time in one of our several restoration projects. Volunteers must only commit to a single workday at a time but can choose to do so regularly.

### Frost Science

111 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, Florida 33132. Admission is included in admission tickets. [Frostscience.org](http://Frostscience.org)

## Cinema

### Lion King



After the murder of his father, a young lion prince flees his kingdom only to learn the true meaning of responsibility and bravery.

Film will play in English with Spanish subtitles. Run Time: 118 Minutes. Genre: Adventure. Opening Date: July 19, 2019

### Silverspot Cinema

A state-of-the-art entertainment dine-in theater created for the true film lover.

Located just around the corner at SE 3rd Avenue & 3rd Street in Downtown Miami. Great staff, delectable food and drink selections, 100% laser projection, fully-reclining plush seats and good programming!

"It features in-theater service from our chef inspired TRILOGY menu, an extensive assortment of fine wines, ice cold beers, and signature cocktails," said management.

## History

### The Kislak Center at MDC

The permanent collection houses some extraordinary original material related to the history of the early Americas, including books, maps, manuscripts, and Pre-Columbian artifacts. It offers perspectives on the events and personalities that shaped the modern world.



Jade Mosaic Mask from the Classic Maya, Guatemala Lowlands. 700-900 CE. Jade was highly prized by Maya and associated with fertility.

The exhibition presents a multidimensional view of the Western Hemisphere beginning with early Native American cultures and extending to modern times. Through the lens of history, visitors will glimpse the process of cultural change and adaptation that continues to the present day.

Curated by Arthur Dunkelman, Director of the Jay I. Kislak Foundation, and nationally-recognized art historian Dr. Carol Damia.

The Kislak gift included funding for construction of the center inside the Freedom Tower and access to more than 2,300 objects from the collection valued at approximately \$30 million.

Location Information: Freedom Tower. 600 Biscayne Blvd. Miami, FL 33132

## Music

### Talent. Youth. Beautiful Music.

A conversation with soprano María Antúnez and tenor Martín Nusspaumer, two enchanting artists so in love with opera and each other.

On July 11, the National Youth Orchestra of Uruguay will join world-renowned soprano María Antúnez and tenor Martín Nusspaumer at the historic Olympia Theater for Lyrical Moments, an unforgettable evening featuring Spanish inspired selections from Carmen, Zarzuelas, and Broadway musical theatre. Lyrical Moments is a journey from Europe to the Americas, from the most classic genres of lyric poetry to exotic tang.

The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Hollywood Reporter and Opera Today had to say about Maria, a protegee of Plácido Domingo: "Impressive, remarkable, smoldering, an excellent artist with a flexible, dark voice of dramatic weight..." And one reviewer commented on Martin: "His sound was sizable and memorable, his phrasing sculpted and sensitive, and his stage presence striking even in the moments when he wasn't singing."



The National Youth Orchestra of Uruguay An institution recognized globally for having developed thousands of musicians, sometimes providing instruments for less privileged kids. UNESCO, among other organizations, have lauded the significance of the Orchestra's work socially and musically. At the helm of the Youth Orchestra is Maestro Ariel Britos, one of Latin America's outstanding musical leaders, who commented: "At the orchestra, kids not only learn music, they learn about perseverance, hard work, discipline, and they learn about teamwork. And these are skills they take out to the community."



Downtown NEWS had the opportunity to chat with Maria and Martin—who are married to each other—and made Miami their home when not on the road performing. Just last week they were in Spain and next week they are heading to Uruguay.

### What is your relationship with the Youth Orchestra?

Martin: Our relationship with the National Youth Orchestra of Uruguay dates back to 2014 when we did a very fun New Year's Eve Concert together. We had instant chemistry with them, not just as musicians but also as people, and for the concept they represent—the social work they achieve through music. Since then we have collaborated in several projects, including operas and concerts. Continues on page 5.

ORQUESTA JUVENIL SUDRI URUGUAY  
MAGIC CITY OPERA

**LYRICAL MOMENTS**  
MOMENTOS LIRICOS

SOPRANO MARIA ANTÚNEZ  
TENOR MARTÍN NUSSPAUMER  
CONDUCTOR MTRO. ARIEL BRITOS

**JULY 11 - 8PM**  
OLYMPIA THEATER

Tickets @ [OlympiaTheater.org](http://OlympiaTheater.org)

## Concert

### Lyrical Moment

A beautiful musical program with the acclaimed Uruguayan National Youth Orchestra, featuring soprano María Antunez and tenor Martín Nusspaumer as soloists. The program is designed with an eclectic spirit and covers several styles, starting with a Spanish essence through a selection of the Opera Carmen and extracts of zarzuelas, addressing the inescapable musical comedy and ending with the most typical sounds of the Río de la Plata. It is a journey from Europe to the Americas, encompassing the most classic genres of lyric poetry to the most exotic of tango. This dynamic and engaging concert, will surely please downtown audiences with its variety of musical genres, moods and emotions. The program features orchestra solo numbers, and soprano and tenor solos as well as duets. For more information:

[Olympiatheater.org](http://Olympiatheater.org).

Support the Downtown Neighbors Alliance (DNA). Why? Because it's the only organization devoted to the neighborhood, to our streets, our parks, our fight for schools, for our safety. Because it is the only organization that holds public and private officials accountable. And because the DNA publishes your local newspaper, *Downtown NEWS*. Learn how you can support: [miamidna.org](http://miamidna.org).