



# Downtown NEWS

Issue 2 Volume 4. November 2020 | Facebook.com/DowntowNews | Twitter.com/DtownNews | Stay connected: Downtown-News.com

Urban Planning | Aaron DeMayo

## Transforming Urban Deliveries

Ecommerce sales have consistently been growing, and Covid 19 has increased that trend. From grocery delivery, prepared food delivery, USPS, and ridesharing, the number of companies and vehicles vying for curb space creates new competition. Our neighborhood has a limited amount of on-street loading zones, and those are often ignored as vehicles park directly in front of buildings' front doors. On 1st Ave and 2nd Ave, our three-lane north-to-south Corridors, it is common to see vehicles parked on both sides of the road, causing everyone to merge into the center lane and creating unnecessary congestion.

Recently we sat down to speak with Commissioner Reyes, the Chair of the Downtown Development Authority, about his vision for the Urban Core. He has made progress within the built environment, boosting safety by adding streetlights throughout downtown and streamlining deliveries by sponsoring a one-year pilot program for e-cargo bikes.

The City of Miami has partnered with shipping company DHL Express and mobility logistics hub Reef Technology to pilot four low-powered electric-assist e-cargo bikes that will be used for deliveries, each capable of hauling 400 pounds. A DHL truck will bring up to nine cargo containers to the reef hub, to be hooked up to the bikes for last-mile delivery. The bikes are anticipated to reduce 101,000 kg of CO2 annually. The bikes are to park in loading zones when possible but are also permitted to park on the sidewalks or the street if they do not obstruct the right-of-way.

Data from other Cargo Bike pilots have shown that vans spent three times as long parked compared to bikes, and E-cargo bikes consume 94% less energy than traditional e-van for the same deliveries. Cargo bikes also produce less fine particle emissions from tire and brake wear, which can have a detrimental effect on urban air quality and can cause marine pollution when washed into the stormwater system.

Delivery technology needs to become smarter, cleaner, quieter, smaller, and safer. Cargo Bikes are a step in the right direction, but how they are incorporated into the built environment from where they move to where they park, will be key to their success. As we shift to new ways of commuting and purchasing goods, our cities and our streets must adapt. Completing our protected bike network and incorporating new dedicated loading zones that do not block street movement or pedestrians on sidewalks will create a more productive, safe, enjoyable, and sustainable Miami.

Cover Story | In Their Own Words

## Women Who Make a Difference



Downtown News honors and celebrates women whose work improves the lives of Downtown residents. Difficult job, having to select eight ladies out of fifty percent of our population. But we are confident these ladies capture the wealth of talent, inspiration, determination and compassion women display at every turn, and its diversity. Continued on page 6.

Talk of Downtown

## Downtown Challenges

City of Miami Commissioner and Chairman of the Downtown Development Authority Manolo Reyes in conversation with Aaron DeMayo, Matilda Kalaveshi and Raul Guerrero.

Commissioner Manolo Reyes is an affable septuagenarian gentleman, which adds perspective to his words, and nostalgia. When he first arrived in Miami, he recalls, downtown was the economic and cultural epicenter for Miami-Dade and beyond. Before all the mega-malls were built, people came shopping to Flagler Street, as they did to watch a movie. He recalls walking past Biscayne Boulevard to a Bayfront Park with an uninterrupted view of the Bay. "Not only did Miamians flock to downtown; people from all over Latin America came shopping along Flagler Street. Then things deteriorated. Malls were built and people stopped driving downtown. Things got worse in the early 1980s."

Commissioner Reyes, an economist, has a firm grasp of the many issues downtown confronts. His priority as Chair of the Downtown Development Authority is fostering economic development, but he points out, "to achieve it we need to provide the proper environment."

Since he was elected to the City of Miami Commission, representing District 4, which does not include the Greater Downtown, he has been very vocal about the need to redevelop downtown. "There were the issues of crime, homelessness, a lack of security, and, most important, downtown had no residents, had no neighbors. That has changed. And we now have to provide these thriving neighborhoods the amenities and safety they need, and opportunities." When his fellow commissioners appointed him to chair the Downtown Development Agency, he admits, some people might have felt ambivalent. They did not know what he would do. "But I had a plan. Objectives I wanted to achieve in my first year." Continued on page 7.



Cargo Bikes for urban delivery, photo by Aaron DeMayo.  
Downtown Central Business District, aerial photo by  
Niels Johansen



In Brief | Citizen Journalists

## News & Curiosities

### App to Detect Covid

The app for smartphones alerts the proximity of a person who has tested positive for Covid-19. It's called the **CombatCOVID MDC app**, issued by Miami-Dade County government, and it's free. The app user's privacy and identity are protected (no names, email addresses, locations or personally identifying information is required or acquired). Personal identity or phone number is never revealed. "This app would be beneficial to help curb the pandemic in dense areas, such as downtown Miami," reported Islara Souto. Available in English, Spanish and Creole. More info: [www.combatcovidapp.com/mdc/](http://www.combatcovidapp.com/mdc/)

### Motorcycles and ATVs

Around 7:00pm, usually on Saturdays, at least 50- 75 motorcycles and ATVs take over. "Going in and around our traffic, running stop lights and performing wheelies. I have reported it on multiple occasions to 911 and the answer is always the same: *If we try to do anything it will create a safety hazard.* Then why can Miami Beach do something about it? I recently saw on a local news program that when the same thing happened on Washington Ave in Miami Beach the police made arrests and confiscated vehicles. Why can't Miami Police do the same? Park West resident Michael Feuling asks. His questions were extended to Police Commander Antonio Regueira at a DNA Zoom meeting. He promised to put an end to the lawless activity, deploying, he said, dozens of officers, whatever resources are necessary.

### Election Day is November 3

These three local runoff elections have a direct impact on the Greater Downtown: **Mayor, Miami-Dade County:** Daniella Levine Cava vs. Esteban L. Bovo Jr. **Commissioner District 3, Miami-Dade County:** Keon Hardemon vs. Gepsie Metellus. **Commissioner District 5, Miami-Dade County:** Eileen Higgins vs. Renier Diaz de la Portilla.

"Please vote. Not voting justifies inaction or actions that hurt the community. It makes you inconsequential!" Amal Solh Kabbani.

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Downtown NEWS  
November 2020 Issue

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Online Edition: **Downtown-News.com**  
Email Letters to the Editor and Commentaries to **RGuerrero@dassmiami.com**

From the Editor

I will start with a rather immodest display of praise for the work we do at Downtown News. One resident wrote: "Downtown is so much better informed, cohesive and now has a sense of community pride since Downtown News appeared on the scene. Keep doing what you do so very well." Another downtown resident commented on the article *Crimes & Misdemeanors*, which chronicles downtown homelessness: "Raul, excellent article. You accurately captured the complexities of the issue." Thank you. But the only credit due is for having organized a team of citizen-journalists that perfectly complement the objectives of the Downtown Neighbors Alliance (DNA) and the Downtown Arts + Science Salon.

The DNA has promoted and improved the quality of life, common good and general welfare of downtown residents and businesses since 2013. Through its various committees, the DNA has influenced policy regarding noise abatement, homelessness, pedestrian safety, zoning, policing, the creation of adequate schools, and preserving downtown's green spaces. The Downtown Arts + Science Salon (DASS), a combination of open university and a local social club, was founded as a space to exchange ideas on scientific innovations, technological trends, books, art, and society. That is, to help forge a sense of downtown neighborhood through intelligent conversation. Salons thrived in the Paris of the Enlightenment, and competed with rancid universities that excluded women. Salons not only welcomed women, the best ones were ran by women.

November Issue

In the spirit of the Enlightenment, Downtown News honors and celebrates eight Downtown women who make a difference, and stand as role models. Also, we feature a visit with Commissioner Manolo Reyes, Chair of the Downtown Development Authority. In a candid conversation, he explores the challenges downtown Miami confronts and his proposed solutions. And Megan McLaughlin addresses the importance of saving our historic buildings, and her work in preserving the grand Central Baptist Church on NE First Avenue.

To coincide with the 2020 Miami Book Fair, we put together a literary supplement featuring Florida books, international best sellers, and one favorite, *Make it Clear*, a guide to concise business writing, public speaking and making presentations by a revered MIT professor of both computer science and communications. And you will find the popular staples: *In Brief*, *Opinion Page*, *Talk of Downtown*, *Food & Drink*, and *Cultural Compass*.

One more thing, sign up! It's free. You will receive regular updates and invitations to our events: [Dassmiami.com](http://Dassmiami.com).  
Enjoy it!



**Raul Guerrero**  
Editor, Downtown News  
Academic Curator, Downtown Arts and  
Science Salon (DASS) [DASSMIAMI.COM](http://DASSMIAMI.COM)



The Downtown Neighbors Alliance (DNA) has been advocating and improving the quality of life of downtown residents since 2013. We represent more than 30 thousand residents. We are the only organization exclusively focused on Downtown residents. We help residents with noise violations, homelessness, pedestrian safety, zoning, and policing. And advocate for schools, and the preservation of our parks.

The DNA Member Towers

10 Museum Park. 50 Biscayne. 900 Biscayne. Centro. The Epic. Flagler First. Marina Blue. The Loft II, Downtown. The Marquis. Met 1. One Miami. Paramount Miami Worldcenter. The River Front Master Association. The Vizcayne.

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

Letters and  
Comments to  
Editor

Census Extended

The deadline has been extended to October 31. Almost 40 percent of our residents still have not filled out the Census. For the next ten years the federal government will rely on the numbers collected in the 2020 census. I want to be clear about this: The future of our hospitals, the future of our schools, infrastructure and public transportation is dependent on the numbers of this Census. We are never going to receive the money that we deserve if we don't know how many people are living in our city. It takes five minutes every decade to do it. Unfortunately, Downtown and Brickell have some of the lowest response rates in all of the city.

**Francis Suarez**, City of Miami Mayor.



30 Billion Dollars

It is clearly important that we make sure we get our people counted. The dollar amount that we are leaving on the table could be equal to 30 billion dollars over ten years. Some areas like Brickell Park have a 30.2 percent response rate. We need to get those numbers up and we don't have time. The response rate in Miami Dade is at 62 percent. The State of Florida is at 63, and the national response rate is at 66.9 percent. COVID should not be an excuse. You can do it online, by phone or by mail. Short of voting, the Census is the most important thing we can do as a community."

**Esteban Bovo**, Miami-Dade  
Commissioner

Masks & Curfew

Per Miami-Dade County Emergency Order, masks/facial coverings must be worn at all times in public in the City of Miami. Violators are subject to civil citations and may also be subject to fines and penalties at a later date.

The City of Miami will be enforcing the countywide curfew effective from midnight to 6 a.m. every day, until canceled or revised  
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Commissioner  
**Eileen Higgins**  
District 5

When Covid Visits

By Isabel Garcia Cintas

I am back after a long absence, *Just like the crested lark that lashes the gale ...*, as the singer-songwriter and poet Chango Rodríguez said. But I do not bring songs, instead I bring gratitude and hope.

I had an encounter with the undesirable COVID-19 in early August. It was a slight touch, considering the number of victims that this complex virus has wiped out so far. Still mild, because I got over it at home, but it carried the weight of two or three flu episodes together and a series of general complications. I had to stay in bed strictly for several weeks and was only recently able to get up. For all those who do not wear a mask when in contact with others, or who believe that this virus is a "hoax", or that it is pure invention or exaggeration, the only thing I can tell you is that it is very real and I'm still not fully recovered. It is a slow process, very slow and also thankless; one day well, another more or less, and so on. I am thankful that I was able to sit in front of the computer for more than five minutes today without breaking down. I am thankful for every morning that I feel good. And the only thing I wish is that nobody else suffers this, because I cannot imagine what it would be like to have to be admitted to a hospital with VERY serious symptoms. I also thank my closest family and friends who gave me emotional support; from my bed, I was able to continue sharing moments with them. I give thanks for the technology that unites us in this virtual way, supplementing the physical presence with the written or spoken word. And I am immensely grateful for having a companion "made of iron" as we say, in my husband, who has treated me like a queen all this time, displaying inexhaustible patience and encouragement. My wish is that we all contribute so that there are fewer infections and this pandemic can be controlled.

Happy to be back

Isabel Garcia Cintas is a local writer.

Homelessness: A Resident's View

By Christina W.

We see them sleeping on sidewalks, panhandling on street corners and immediately we feel empathy and sympathy. Back in 2008, as the PR manager and spokesperson of a local icon company, we chose homelessness as our cause to support that year. I recall how proud I was that we raised awareness and funding. But as it turns out, I knew almost nothing.

A year later I started my own company specializing in tourism. Offering a job to the homeless was part of my original plan to give back. An easy job like handing out flyers. I did not expect their reaction. They laughed at me. First, they boasted they earned more by panhandling. Secondly, in South Beach I discovered how one’s car was towed within 10 minutes of illegally parking. The homeless tipped off the towing companies and made their cut of \$80+.

I moved from Brickell Avenue to north of the river downtown. On Saturday evenings, a church used to drive over and donate meals right in front of our building. More than 50 homeless persons appeared. This was a kind gesture. To repay that kindness, rather than take a few steps to deposit their trash, the homeless would litter our streets with the remaining food and styrofoam plates. But worse, they would throw their glass liquor bottles against the sidewalk. Trash, food and shards of glass strewn all over the sidewalk. Families with children and pets could not walk the sidewalk on a Sunday morning. It was a landmine. I asked myself: “Why would they do this?”

To better understand the situation, I would sit on the street curb with them and simply listen. These individuals do not want to go to shelters. They refuse to live with rules and do not want to give up their drugs or alcohol. Clearly there were mental health issues of varying degrees. The danger of this became evident on several occasions. Homeless killing homeless (a stabbing) occurred right next to our building under a bridge where they built a shanty town. Another evening a homeless woman tried to attack me when she recognized my face after talking to officers to share my observations and concerns. Thankfully, other homeless individuals nearby held her back. Lesson learned-never let them see you talk to any official.

Many homeless moved into our neighborhoods after the dismantling of the homeless camps under the Julia Tuttle 195 bridge. News reports claimed they would move into shelters. But I knew otherwise. Civil rights laws dictate the city can only offer shelters, the homeless are not obligated to use them. For Miami city/county, aesthetics for tourists was more important than the safety of our residents. Many of these under-the-bridge campers were registered sex offenders. And we also learned that New York City purchases one-way tickets for their homeless to spend winters in Miami. Snowbird gypsies.

What about the police? Stay tuned for part two.

Christina W. is a downtown resident since 1998, who for obvious reasons requested anonymity. This is the first of two commentaries based on her observations.

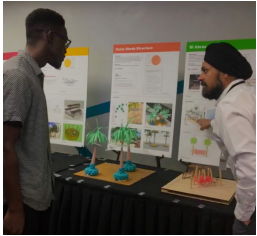
Dispatch from the Streets

[Excerpted from a poem by Manuel Hutchinson]

Sometimes, I scratch myself to feed the scars within me,  
Sometimes, I look away  
Because I'm too shy to see the future  
Right in front of me.  
Sometimes, I stutter when I step  
Because one day I'm AFRAID that Step, Might, Break, Me, Down...  
...  
My scars runs deep!  
I can't be no king  
If I got a basket full of insecurity.  
I'm afraid one day that step might break me down  
But if I don't take that step now  
I won't ever see the jewels  
God has provided for me on his crown.  
...  
This is my story  
Of empowerment to the masses  
On the blindside,  
I wish to overcome  
My fear of low self-esteem and confidence  
Day by day,  
Piece by piece,  
I learned  
You can rise up and break those chains

Manuel Hutchinson

Born to a home where both his parents were deaf. Sign language was his first and only language. In effect, he taught himself English much later, and still feels not fully confident speaking it. He and a sister grew up with a single mother, and for long stretches the family was homeless. Manuel also taught himself computers at the public library, a skill that gained him a job at the YMCA, and the Thomas P. Lang Jr. Memorial and Scholarship



Only in  
Downtown  
Miami



A downtown resident suggested documenting hard to believe phenomena under the name "Only in Downtown Miami." He sent the photo above to illustrate an invitation to an accident.

Fortunately the agency responsible for the road signage blunder walked back and stripped it. Or, said the resident: "The blunder was de-blundered with the help of Commissioner Higgins’ office."

If you come across one of these *actos insolitos*, "hard to believe acts," please put on you *Citizen Journalist* hat and document it.

Send to

Rguerrero@dassmiami.com

Libraries Rock

By Leila Khalil

Our free resources can save you money! From homework help to expanding job skills to digital content, Public Libraries offer learning, training and entertainment resources through its website **mdpls.org**.

All you need is a library card to tap into training tools like Lynda.com, featuring lessons from masters on everything from Photoshop to JavaScript to time management. Homework Help & Tutoring Program, now online, provides free one-on-one tutoring sessions from certified teachers in reading and math for students grades K-12. Additionally, the Library’s subscription to Tutor.com is another resource for homework, test prep and essay writing from 9 a.m. to midnight daily.

Speaking of savings, Consumer Reports online will help you be a smarter shopper. And if interested in learning a new language, Mango offers instruction in more than 70 languages, including English as a second language, and has a handy mobile app.

Library card holders also have quick access to the wide trove of digital content, including Overdrive/Libby and Axis360, which offer ebooks and audiobooks. Hoopla is the place to go for comics, music, movies and TV shows, as well as ebooks and audiobooks. And Freegal music allows downloads and streaming of more than 10 million songs.

These are just some of the resources available to you with the library card. Getting a card is easy. Visit [ecard.mdpls.org](http://ecard.mdpls.org) to register for an eCard that gets you immediate access, or email [customer@mdpls.org](mailto:customer@mdpls.org) if you need assistance.

Leila Khalil, Chief, Communications & Community Engagement, Miami-Dade County Public Libraries.



Looking to step out for a bite or formal dinner after who knows how long?

If you are in the vicinity of Biscayne Blvd, Avenue 3 or Second Avenue:

**Sagrado Cafe**  
www.sagrado.cafe  
900 Biscayne Blvd, Downtown Miami, FL 33132

**SUSHI SAKE**  
www.sushisakemiami.com  
900 Biscayne Blvd, Downtown Miami, FL 33132

**BAYSIDE Marketplace**  
baysidemarketplace.com  
401 Biscayne Blvd. Miami, FL 33132

**Toro Toro**  
torotoromiami.com  
100 Chopin Plz, Miami, FL 33131

**Novikov Miami**  
www.novikovmiami.com  
300 S Biscayne Blvd, Miami, FL 33131

**Area 31**  
area31restaurant.com  
270 Biscayne Blvd Way, Miami, FL 33131

**RAKIJA GRILL**  
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**CVI.CHE 105**  
www.ceviche105.com  
105 NE 3rd Ave, Miami, FL 33132

**Sedici Cafe Grill**  
facebook.com/sedificafegrill  
16 NE 3rd Ave, Miami, FL 33132-2512

**Sparky's Roadside Barbecue**  
sparkysroadsidebarbecue.com  
204 NE 1st St, Miami, FL 33132 Miami, FL 33132

**Soya & Pomodoro**  
soyaepomodorumiami.com  
120 NE 1st St. Miami, FL 33132

**Tuyo**  
tuyomiami.com  
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**NIU Kitchen**  
niukitchen.com  
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**Fratelli Milano**  
ristorantefratellimilano.com  
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The Quote

"Often, in the excitement of a national election, we forget the importance of local government in our lives." **Eileen Higgins**, Miami-Dade County Commissioner, the only elected official in the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County who is a downtown resident.

The Question

To make **Downtown News** more relevant, we need your input regarding our editorial content. We only have one question:

**What type of stories would you like to see more?**

Five categories: **1.** Opinion (residents not pundits). **2.** Spotlight local residents and businesses. **3.** In-depth covering of neighborhood issues. **4.** Local government. **5.** Cultural events, including restaurant reviews.

Please, submit answers to [rguerrero@dassmiami.com](mailto:rguerrero@dassmiami.com)

The Thought

As the pandemic washes over us like a tidal wave, many closet entrepreneurs are turning ideas into reality. But, is this the right time to start a new venture? Sun Tzu said: Opportunity lies in the midst of chaos. **Matilda Kalaveshi**. Her article on page 7.



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We focus exclusively on Downtown. We listen to residents. Our citizen-journalists are leaders in their respective fields, and driven by nothing but the neighborhood, the community, by the belief that civilizations start and end down the street.

### Readers Said

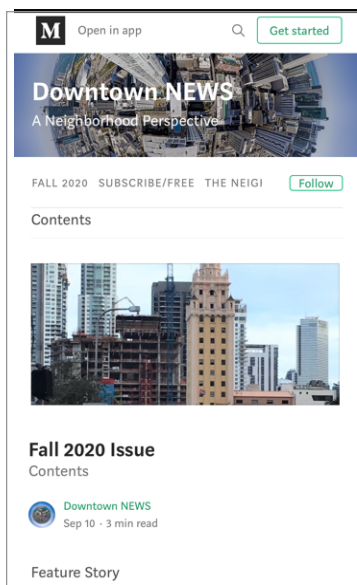
"I learn so much about Downtown Miami. I love the Cultural Calendar."

"Downtown News gives you a sense of neighborhood."

"The publication is smart, informative, but unpretentious."

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## Frost Science Museum



**Nature's Superheroes: Life at the Limits**, a new immersive exhibition at the Frost Museum of Science on view through Sunday, April 11, 2021, offers a fascinating glimpse of the diversity of the natural world and the power of natural selection to shape exceptional responses to the challenges, and opportunities, of life on Earth. Organized by the American Museum of Natural History, the exhibition features life-size and larger-than-life models, videos and interactive exhibits which highlight an array of organisms with surprising ways of thriving in harsh environments, finding a mate or their next meal, leveraging strength, endurance, speed and more.

Admission to Nature's Superheroes: Life at the Limits is included with all museum admission tickets. Additional information on the exhibition can be found at [frostsscience.org/superheroes](http://frostsscience.org/superheroes).

## Recent Spanish Cinema



Olympia Theater's annual "Recent Spanish Cinema Series" will be online and well, you know the routine, but you don't want to miss this great line-up of 8 new movies and a closing night drive-in experience. Films are available Oct. 22-29, 2020. **Details, Tickets, & Info at: [www.OlympiaTheater.org](http://www.OlympiaTheater.org)**

## HistoryMiami Museum

Reopened October 16! For the first two weeks museum admission will be complimentary to the public. Pre-registered online prior to your visit. All tickets are for timed entry, with two hour slots. Capacity within the museum will be limited to 25 guests at a time.

Must wear facial coverings at all times, except children under age 2 or those who have trouble breathing due to a chronic health condition. Masks must be tied at the back of the head or looped around the ears. Visitors must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters) from staff and other visitors, except for members of the same party.

Don't miss HistoryMiami's *In Class with Resident Historian Dr. Paul George: A History of Florida*. Via Zoom. Tuesday Nov 10, 2020 - Tuesday Dec 15, 2020.



More Info: [HistoryMiami.org](http://HistoryMiami.org)

## The Honest Thief



### Silverspot Cinema - Downtown Miami

They call him the In and Out Bandit because meticulous thief Tom Carter (Liam Neeson) has stolen \$9 million from small-town banks while managing to keep his identity a secret. But after he falls in love with the bubbly Annie (Kate Walsh), Tom decides to make a fresh start by coming clean about his criminal past, only to be double-crossed by two ruthless FBI agents. More info: [Silverspot.net](http://Silverspot.net)

### Excerpt Love (continued from page 8)



Empowered by the thick tomes under my arm, I asked: "Can I invite you to lunch?" She corrected me: "The English expression is, can I buy you lunch?" Already in love, deeply and inconsolably, I reformulated the invitation: "Can I buy you lunch?"

One might ask, how can anybody fall in love so precipitously? The history of literature abounds in chance encounters, the perfect other walking opposite you or waiting behind a counter, and you know, as poet Pablo Neruda wrote, *you and I, simply, my dear, must fall in love*. I repeated: "Can I buy you lunch?" She laughed and kissed me on both cheeks. "Sorry, kid, but I am meeting my husband in five minutes."

She left me with all the words in the English language under my arm and a solitude so painful that it blinded me to all the words in the world.

*Lufu* is old English for love, a romantic and sexual attraction, affection, friendship, the love of God, and the love of country." *Lufu* comes from the Germanic *lofo*, and this from an Indo-European root *leubh*, 'to care and desire.' Form the same Indo-European root comes the Latin *libido*, "desire."

**Raul Guerrero** is the author of multiple books of fiction and nonfiction, including *Women Love Dr. Boll*, a novel set in downtown Miami. The essay *Love* is excerpted from the forthcoming *Curiosities. A Language and Sex Memoir*.



Italian actress Monica Vitti. Color photo, top, from *Red Desert*, and black and white photo from *L'Aventura*, both films by Michelangelo Antonioni.

## Miami Book Fair



### November 15 - 22, 2020

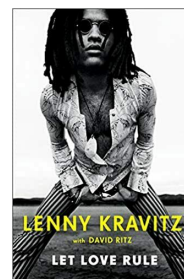
The great festival for book lovers is going virtual this year, and it promises to be sensational. So said Mitch Kaplan, the Fair's co-founder. "Netflix for the bibliophile. You can attend live events, or watch the recordings on demand. It's free." Books presented will be available for sale through Books & Books. Director of Programs Lissette Mendez added: "Our mission is to engage the community through inclusive, accessible programs that promote reading and support writers. Though online, we still are the Miami Book Fair."

More than 300 authors will participate, including Margaret Atwood, Richard Ford, Kevin Kwan; Joyce Carol Oates; Terry McMillan; Mary Gordon; Nelson Georg, Claudia Rankine; Jeffrey Toobin; P.J. O'Rourke; Anthony DePalma; Erin Brockovich.

Registration is required: [miamibookfaironline.com](http://miamibookfaironline.com). Registered fairgoers can build a watchlist.

## The Rock and Roller

Lenny Kravitz is releasing a memoir named after his great song *Let Love Rule*. Kravitz recalls the first twenty-five years of his life, the trials and tribulations of growing up the child of an interracial marriage and making his way into the music business.



The autobiography chronicles the first twenty-five years of his life, discussing what it was like growing up the son of an interracial marriage and trying to break into the music business.

## Debut Novella

**The Bell Chime**, by Mona Kabbani (Amazon). "A disturbing, psychological novella debut," reads the description. And here is more to wet your appetite:

"A girl suffering from paralyzing night terrors finds a missing poster hanging from the door of her apartment building. On that poster is a photograph of a frighteningly familiar face. It's her."



# M3 COLLECTIVE

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Downtown Women Who Make a Difference



2020 marks one hundred years since women won the right to vote. That is a landmark Downtown News wanted to honor and celebrate.

And honor and celebrate the legacy of Justice Ruth Ginsburg, eloquent example of courage, intelligence and character.

The perfect occasion to herald downtown women, and highlight a lesson Margaret Thatcher imparted: “If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman.”

Fields included: economic development, philanthropy, education, government, community & opera, science, youth empowerment, and urban planning.

Left to right, and top to bottom, in alphabetical order.  
Top Row: Christina Crespi, Rebecca Fishman-Lipsey , Beatriz Gonzalez. Middle row: Eileen Higgins, Amal Solh Kabbani. Bottom: Arlen Ramsingh, Graylyn Swiley-Woods, and Dana Wall.

**Christina Crespi**  
The Executive Director of the Downtown Development Authority observes: "As the pandemic began to unfold in our community, we immediately pivoted to focusing almost exclusively on promoting health and hygiene, educating our community about the importance of social distancing, cultivating a sense of community among our residents who are staying home, and providing immediate relief to our small businesses. In addition, following the stay at home order that completely upended the way we live, work and play, the DDA began implementing programs to inform, support, and sustain Downtown Miami’s business community and 100,000 residents. From creating a Small Business Task Force aimed at helping businesses navigate state and federal funding programs, to co-hosting a live set with DJ and music producer David Guetta livestreamed from downtown Miami and viewed by more than 20 million people worldwide, the Miami DDA has made it a priority to help businesses and residents stay afloat and set a path to economic recovery."

**Eileen Higgins**  
I ran for office to improve the way our neighborhoods are represented. As the first County Commissioner for District 5 from Downtown, I see our community through your eyes. Because I know Downtown and am out on the streets nearly every day, I’ve been able to react to problems and get solutions implemented quickly. When our sidewalks started being ripped up and spray painted by cell phone companies intent on installing gigantic poles for 5G, I was one of the first people to see the destruction and raise the alarm. By calling telecommunication companies into my office and holding them accountable for their mess, we’ve been able to get work sites cleaned up and our beautiful pavers put back in place. I am lucky enough to walk to work most days, and I know what it feels like to be a pedestrian Downtown. I’ve pushed our public works department to improve pedestrian signalization and crosswalks in the urban areas of the county.  
The manuals and guidelines for our county roads are written as if everybody lives in the suburbs and spends most of

their commute time behind the wheel! I am working every day to change that. Downtown Miami, like everywhere else in the county, must be resilient in the face of climate change and sea level rise. We need more trees and outdoor spaces, but we don’t have a lot of room to work with. I am dedicated to finding every nook and cranny I can to get trees and shrubbery planted, check out E. First Avenue soon for some much needed greenery, and making Downtown a more beautiful and sustainable neighborhood. I know Downtown has its challenges but as many of you know - I love a good challenge!

**Rebecca Fishman-Lipsey**  
"Philanthropy, when most effective, is a team sport. So often, people approach their giving privately, based on their own, individual priorities. That can be impactful, but to truly move the needle on the issues we care about most, we need to think boldly and to stand together with others who share our values. Are you passionate about educational equity? Access to the arts? Climate resilience? You’re not alone. My most important role as President and CEO of The Miami Foundation is bringing people together to create solutions that would not be possible by ourselves."  
There’s something particularly magical about doing that kind of work in the only major American city founded by a woman. Julia Tuttle saw this swampy outpost and envisioned something bigger. Every day in my work I try to channel her, to see issues like the digital divide, housing, sea level rise, and to mobilize our region toward serious solutions.

That spirit really comes alive on *Give Miami Day*, coming up on November 19. Thousands of residents give to strengthen hundreds of nonprofits, creating a historic moment for our community. We’re in this together, and the more we live that value as residents, the healthier and more vibrant Miami will be."

**Beatriz Gonzalez**  
I feel very fortunate to serve as President of the Wolfson Campus of Miami Dade College; I know it’s exactly where I’m supposed to be. I love this city. After spending six years in Southern California, it’s great to be back home.  
The Wolfson Campus sits in the heart of our exuberant City of Miami, a bellwether place, having to figure out first what other cities and states have yet to see. Diversity, necessity, and opportunity combine to give Miami its creative energy. The natural tensions among different groups yield a space that is uniquely inspired and original. In this sort of environment, innovation is more likely. When I see Miami, I see asset after asset, and that asset-based approach towards the community in which we educate allows us to partner with stakeholders to build a better education for our students and a stronger public sphere.

Working with wide-ranging partners, such as the YWCA, ViacomCBS, and The Underline, is mutually beneficial and demonstrates Wolfson’s distinct capacity to serve a broad span of constituents,

from a new high school graduate, to a working dad returning to school after many years, to professionals updating their skills to bring added value at work. The goal is to strengthen Wolfson Campus as a community-centered space. Our function is to serve: sometimes as educator, sometimes as convener, sometimes as respite from harried city life through our open-to-all events like Downtown Movie Night. Ultimately, we aim to be a trusted anchor, yet one that emancipates personally and professionally through engagement and education. It’s a privilege to be in a role that calls me to build community in Miami.

**Amal Solh Kabbani**  
Corporate executive, promoter of the opera, and the respected and somewhat feared president of the Downtown Neighbors Alliance, an organization that represents downtown Miami residents and keeps government officials and business interests accountable. "Downtown is a thriving community, but too often neglected, abused... Well, not anymore, not in my watch! We strive to keep residents informed and involved."  
As to the opera: “Culture and the arts are foundations to any modern civilization, and it's a shame to have any form fade over time. I love opera, the one artistic genre that contains music, drama, visual arts, dance, and literature. Making it accessible to children is a way to guarantee that it continues serving as an outlet for society to express its hardships or happy times.” Amal Solh Kabbani is the current President of the Young Patronesses of the Opera.

Multitasking might be a defining characteristic. Any preference? "Education is closest to my heart. Opera, besides its elegance, increases our cognitive ability... Children should be regularly fed opera. If we build enough awareness with new generations, maybe we can produce right here in Miami the new Wagner, Verdi or Mozart."

**Arlene Ramsingh**  
A brilliant virologist with post-doctoral studies in human genetics at Yale University, Arlene is an expert on vaccines. Like most downtown residents, Arlene had to endure lockdown, but unlike most of us, she coupled her social isolation with science to invent a vaccine for COVID-19.  
"I started poking holes in existing and proposed vaccine strategies for COVID-19, and then created a brand new molecule. I was able to come out with a new protein vaccine. I sent it to a colleague in New York, a structural biologist. After some refining, it was ready for testing."

And how is testing going?  
"We received funding to finish pre-clinical studies in monkeys. We have contracted with a company in MA to make the protein vaccine. We need an adjuvant to formulate the vaccine and are in discussions with two vaccine companies for this. Once the studies in monkeys are completed, we will proceed to the next step - Phase I clinical trials in people.



We will need to partner with a vaccine company for the clinical testing phase since that is outside my area of expertise."

Graylyn Swiley-Woods

As Executive Director of the Overtown Children and Youth Coalition, I use Collective Impact, a valuable way to convene the community, stakeholders and agencies who affect and are affected by policies and programs on health, education, youth well-being, etc. Let me explain. First, Collective Impact requires having a common agenda by which all participants come to have a shared vision for change. This includes having a common understanding of the problem and approach to solving it. Second, *shared measurements* to assess common possibilities as well as pitfalls. The third conditions, *mutually reinforcing activities*, which refers to the need for participant activities to be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutual supporting plan of action. The fourth condition is *continuous communication*. The final condition argues for *backbone support*. This means a separate organization, with staff, and a specific set of skills, to convene, coordinate and serve in a leadership role.

Collective Impact suggest that if the appropriate people come together in constructive ways, with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns their community faces. This integration has led to numerous successful collaborations. At the end of it all, my philosophy is to *give people the power* sooner rather than later. Communities know more about their lived experiences and have solutions beyond anyone can provide from the outside. I say, give the people the resources deserved, and with a Collective Strategy, communities will become healthier, better, and wiser.

Dana Wall

At Street Plans, I manage the implementation of Tactical Urbanism projects to both help communities envision what permanent street transformations could look and feel like, and to implement infrastructure faster than a typical capital project process. Our methodology is central to our ethos: it's more effective to see a plan on the pavement than on paper. Our projects range from a day, to several years.

For Avenue 3, Street Plans provided technical expertise to help produce Taste of Avenue 3, a temporary street transformation and block party celebration, to help engender support for a future, more pedestrianized street. I worked with the Avenue 3 team to create a "rendering in real time" of sidewalk extensions and increased pedestrian space, supported by the MDT Quick-Build Program. On Biscayne Boulevard, we worked with partners to turn parking islands into public space, as a catalyst for the long-term, permanent change of the street. As an advocate for bikeability and walkability, it's fun to get to create such immediate change directly with people, and evaluate its performance to inform long-term initiatives. I am a two-wheeled traveler, and always looking for the next parking lot to paint or bike lane to build!

Challenges (From front page)

One of the first issues in his agenda was relocating, "in a humane way," the homeless from the central business district. "If you lived in Miami, you couldn't walk on the sidewalks behind the former Macy's. Those sidewalks were packed with homeless people, and the stench was unbearable. It was so bad I couldn't walk there."

And he took issue with street feeding. On NE First Avenue, people came to feed the homeless... If they didn't like the food, they threw it right there on the street, causing unsanitary conditions, dangerous conditions that attracted roaches and rats.

He introduced legislation to establish a place for feeding the homeless in a responsible manner. "If you want to come to feed the homeless, you need to get a permit, which is free, and do it at assigned places where the homeless can have access to other facilities, medicine, economic help, for drug addiction, mental issues, and training for jobs that would allow them to rejoin society. At these places those who want could be referred to shelters. They will find the support system needed, and this legislation was supported by residents, and the Homeless Trust. "You see, my first priority is fostering economic development. I am an economist. I have taught economics at FIU and here at MDC's Wolfson campus. But there are issues that need to be addressed that would make economic development possible.



Commissioner Manolo Reyes.

"One thing that got me angry when I drove around downtown at nighttime is how dark it was. I said, I am going to start an illumination program. Increase street lighting. We just passed a resolution that all the overheads have to be lighted. The prominent obstructs street lighting. And you know that light provides a sense of security. I don't know if you have noticed, but there is more light in downtown Miami and I'm not finished yet."

Commissioner Reyes has also tackled our deficient public transportation system. If people are to come to downtown, they have to either drive or take a bus, and the vast majority will opt for driving. That is a fact. If you are driving to a downtown restaurant or store, the first problem is finding a place to park. Yet, there is plenty of parking around downtown but people do not feel safe walking two or three blocks. Even locals have second thoughts going from, say, a condo in the Park West neighborhood to the Central Business District. Commissioner Reyes has proposed a *circulator*, a transit system within downtown that offers residents and visitors the means to move around safely. It works like a shuttle between parking garages and restaurants and shops.

"I have talked to the City of Miami Police Department to see how we can increase police officers patrolling downtown. I am working on a proposal to complement the police presence with private security. This combined presence of the police and private security will make the *circulator* more viable."

His vision as Chair of the DDA is for a vibrant downtown. "Look at Avenue 3, that place is happening... Better light, sidewalk cafes... I am working with Miami Dade County to make those sidewalk cafes permanent. As you know, Miami Dade County owns the roads even if we have to maintain them. I know, more needs to be done, but I believe, like the old Chinese saying, a thousand miles trip starts with the first step!"

Business Report | Matilda Kalaveshi  
Fashion

The US is home to over 3 million small businesses which account for over 99% of the total businesses in our country (SBA). Therefore, it is fair to state that small business is the engine of our economy and plays a pivotal role in the recovery process.

The fashion industry, along with hospitality and real estate, has the potential to become the backbone of our economy. When we think fashion, we think glamorous models, paparazzi, the ultra-rich, social media, Milan, Paris or New York. However, that is just the narcissistic side of the industry. A better way to understand fashion is by focusing on the business of retail, branding, customer shopping habits, the garment industry, factories, supply chains, jobs and so much more!

Taking it a step closer and examining our very own backyard, it is clear that Miami is perfectly positioned for success. Given our geography, the cultural and financial connections to Latin America and its diverse population, we are poised to become the next fashion capital as long as we take the reins and create an inclusive and dependable fashion community not only for us but also our future fashion leaders.

The city is catering to education in our field with great gravitas. Downtown is home to the Miami International University of Art and Design and Miami-Dade College with its well-recognized Fashion Institute. A stone's throw away the Mangione Fashion Institute offers our future professionals an array of certificates and degrees. Additionally, Miami presents great retail possibilities for entrepreneurs with the Miami Worldcenter opening 300,000 square feet of space dedicated to retail, Brickell Center is within walking distance across the bridge, and the Design District just up the road.

It is clear that the Magic City has claimed a place at the forefront of international fashion as it is widely considered the Latin American capital and an important destination for Europeans, Asians and Americans alike. Lastly, Miami is FUN. No one has ever accused Miami to shy away from a good party.

Historic Preservation | Raul Guerrero  
Grand Old Church

Miami has great historic buildings. One is the Central Baptist Church which parallels the very history of Miami. Built in 1926 in neoclassical grandeur by the Memphis firm of Dougherty and Gardner, it has undergone a complete rehabilitation, explained preservationist Megan McLaughlin of PlusUrbia, who serves as adviser and liaison for permitting with the city.

Given that she is an expert in historic preservation, we start by addressing characteristics of downtown historic architecture?

**Megan McLaughlin:** Buildings from the 1920s are distinctive because they are very large. There was such a boom going on in the 1920s. Miami buildings were taller, more robust, than those in Palm Beach, Orlando and other municipalities in Florida. Because of the nature of architecture in that period, and up to the 1960s, buildings were more humane, designed for people to inhabit them, to experience them...

**Downtown News:** You mean today's buildings aren't as humane?

**MM:** Yes. Today they build with a different audience in mind. They have other requirements, which might not be so much human interaction. They have to house a lot of cars and that changes the nature and feeling of the building. Sometimes they build for impressiveness, to be viewed from across the Bay or from I95. It's almost like advertisement, not so much to experience the building as a person from the street or inside. Older buildings were more about the human experience.

**DN:** Luckily in downtown we can relive history through our buildings. The question is, how can we preserve them vis a vis the voracious appetite for development?

**MM:** Downtown Miami has been in a unique situation. Preservation came naturally. The Royal Palm Hotel [Flagler's hotel], a very large site, when it burnt down in the 1930s, it was never really redeveloped. It became an enormous parking lot. That was like the saving grace for Downtown Miami as there was no need to tear down buildings to create parking lots, which happened in most major cities in the 1950's and 60s. We had this enormous parking lot. So, Flagler Street is, even today, a continuous frontage of buildings built between 1920 and 1960.



Photo, Niels Johansen.

Another factor that preserved old architecture naturally is that it is just so difficult to build on those tiny old lots. Any rational developer would much rather find a site that is easier to work with like Brickell, where you can get larger sites and the land price is probably more affordable. That said, there is more pressure to build now than in previous decades. The downtown business community recognizes the uniqueness of Flagler Street and the National Registered Historic District, but in terms of protection it's a difficult conversation. If downtown became the next market, it would be difficult to make an argument that a ten or fifteen story building is worth keeping in place when it is possible to build eighty stories. That is a difficult mathematical equation.

**DN:** Which brings us to the Central Baptist Church. You said it was a beautiful project...

**MM:** It's always nice to be involved in a positive preservation project, a success story of a partnership between new developers and preservation. The church was able to sell its parking lots and areas that were not used, where new towers are now being built. The infusion of capital allowed the rehabilitation of the building. They were able to replace the roof, for example, taking great care to select the tile that most closely matched the original. In the process, they fixed many problems, like leakings. After the roof came the windows. Understandingly, they wanted to replace them with impact resistant windows. "We brought in a local architect adept to historic preservation and we came up with a plan to keep the original steel casements and install impact glass. When it came to repairing the cast stone in the pediment, with urns and beautiful designs, we recommended working with nationally renowned conservator Rosa Lowinger, who had worked with the Vizcaya. The Church and the contractors had been committed to bringing back the church to its glory in a historic accurate way. That is a beautiful story.



Photo, Aurea Veras.

One final question. Wouldn't the renovated church feel caged surrounded by the towers going up? Megan McLaughlin, a professor of architecture at the University of Miami, doesn't think so. "It would be like a breath of fresh air, a jewel within an active and thriving city."



Every fall brings a new harvest of books, and the epitome of literary celebration is the Miami Book Fair. Hundreds of authors flock to the Magic City to share their latest work. 2020 is no exception but for a little twist: it's going virtual. Or, said the Fair's co-founder, Mitch Kaplan, it's like Netflix for books. Whatever the format, book fairs offer the opportunity to discover lesser known gems, and *that* book everyone is talking about... Downtown News selected an international bestseller, five Florida books, a Business Communications guide, and the excerpt *Love*, and more.

International Bestseller

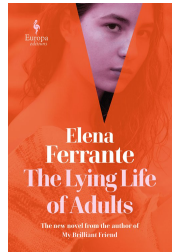
The Lying Lives of Adults  
by Elena Ferrante (*Europa*)

Giovanna’s pretty face is turning ugly, her father thinks. Giovanna, he says, looks more like Aunt Vittoria. But can it be true? Is she really changing? Is she turning into her Aunt Vittoria, a woman she hardly knows but whom her mother and father despise? Surely there is a mirror somewhere in which she can see herself as she truly is.

Giovanna is searching for her reflection in two kindred cities that fear and detest one another: Naples of the heights, which assumes a mask of refinement, and Naples of the depths, a place of excess and vulgarity. She moves from one to the other in search of the truth, but neither city seems to offer answers or escape.

Set in the early 1990s in Naples, Italy, the story is that of 12-year-old Giovanna Trada. The adult Giovanna reminisces her past. In Giovanna’s imagination, Vittoria is a “lean, demonic silhouette, an unkempt figure lurking in the corners of houses when darkness falls.” Giovanna has to meet Vittoria and discover her own destiny.

This novel is about the transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. Smoothly written, and compelling. Author Elelena Ferrante, a pseudonym, is one of the world’s most read and beloved writers.



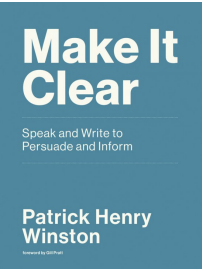
“There’s no doubt [the publication of The Lying Life of Adults] will be the literary event of the year.”—**Elle Magazin.**

**The book quote:** Sometimes we tell ourselves lovely tales, sometimes petty lies. Falsehoods protect us.

Business Communications

Make it Clear, by Patrick  
Henry Winston (MIT).

Speak and Write to Persuade and Inform. This book explains how to communicate, how to speak and write to get your ideas across. The author was a professor of both computer science and communications at MIT for more than forty years. It starts with the basics: finding your voice, organizing your ideas, making sure what you say is remembered, and receiving critique, and goes on to cover such specifics as preparing slides, writing and rewriting, and even choosing a type family.

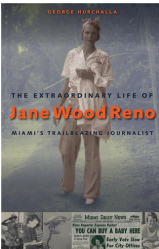


I learned more from Patrick Wilson than any otyher professor while at MIT. I use many of his lessons, both inside and outside the workplace. **Eric Chemi**, CNBC TV Reporter.

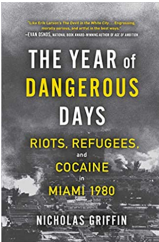
**The Book Quote:** *Previous, former and latter* force your reader to stop reading, to scan back, and to reread previous material. Use an unambiguous reference instead:  
**Bad:** I like sports, especially the sport discussed previously.  
**Good:** I like sports, especially skiing.

Briefly Reviewed

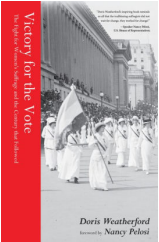
Five Florida Books



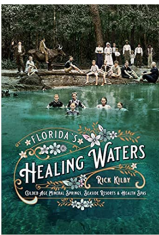
**Jane Wood Reno, Miami's Trailblazing Journalist**, by George Hurchalla, (*UPF*). Journalist, activist, and adventurer, Jane Wood Reno (1913–1992) was one groundbreaking and colorful American women of the twentieth century. Told by her grandson, George Hurchalla, *The Extraordinary Life of Jane Wood Reno* is an intimate biography of a free thinker who shattered barriers during the explosive early years of Miami. She scored as a genius on an IQ test at the age of 11, earned a degree in physics during the Depression, worked as a social worker, explored the Everglades, wrestled alligators, helped pioneer scuba diving in Florida, interviewed Amelia Earhart, downed shots with Tennessee Williams. She built her own house by hand, funding the project with her writing. She wrote countless freelance articles under male names for the Miami Daily News until the paper was forced to let her publish under her own name.



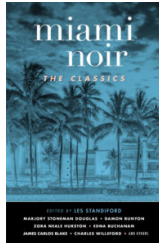
**The Year of Dangerous Days, Riots, Refugees, and Cocaine in Miami 1980** by Nicholas Griffin (*37 Ink*). A fascinating chronicle of a pivotal but forgotten year in American history. With a cast that includes iconic characters such as Jimmy Carter, Fidel Castro, and Janet Reno, brought to life through intertwining personal stories. At the core, there’s Edna Buchanan, a reporter for the Miami Herald who breaks the story on the wrongful murder of a black man and the shocking police cover-up; Captain Marshall Frank, the hardboiled homicide detective tasked with investigating the murder; and Mayor Maurice Ferré, the charismatic politician who watches the case, and the city, fall apart. These three figures cross paths as the city explodes in one of the worst race riots in American history as more than 120,000 Cuban refugees land south of Miami, and as drug cartels flood the city with cocaine and infiltrate all levels of law enforcement.



**Victory for the Vote**, by by Doris Weatherdfodr, (Mango). This history of the American suffragist movement puts the fight for suffrage into contemporary context by highlighting the revolutionary women whose activism changed the world in the decades following the passage of the suffrage amendment. Weatherford addresses key challenges for women since 1920, such as reproductive rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and expanding political power. With Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s foreword. A central book in the 2020 Centennial celebration of women’s right to vote.



**Florida's Healing Waters**, by Rick Kilby (*UPF*). Through images, Kilby shows how Florida’s natural wonders were promoted and developed as restorative destinations for America’s emerging upper class. The rapid growth in tourism infrastructure that began during the Gilded Age lasted well into the twentieth century, and Kilby explains how these now-lost resorts helped boost the economy of modern Florida. Today, these splendid health spas and elaborate bathing facilities have been lost, replaced by recreational amenities for a culture more about sun and fun than physical renewal. Kilby emphasizes the value of honoring and preserving the natural features of the state in the face of continual development. He reminds us that Florida’s water is still a life-giving treasure.



**Miami Noir, The Classics**, edited by Less Standiford (*Akashick*). "When terrible things threaten in some tough cities, a reader of these stories might be forgiven for expecting the worst; but when calamity takes place against the backdrop of paradise, as we have here in Miami, the impact is all the greater," Len Standiford writes in the introduction to this sequel to 2006’s bestselling Miami Noir, an outstanding tradition of legendary writers exploring the dark side of paradise. Featuring classic noir fiction from Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Elmore Leonard, Lester Dent, Les Standiford, Preston L. Allen, and more. Added Les Standiford: "Miami remained at the time essentially a frontier town, a city on the edge of the continent, inviting all comers, full of fractious delight, where nothing of import had been settled, where no special interest group could yet claim control of politics or culture, and every day brought a new melee between some subset of those destined to collision. The perfect literary medium to give voice to such a place, I venture, was the story of crime and punishment."

An Excerpt

Love

Raul Guerrero

I fell in love for the first time in New York one October afternoon. She, the bookseller, Brigitte, was a woman in her thirties, and I, a boy of seventeen in his first year of college, a kid with one unhealthy attachment to poetry, impracticality, and perhaps a chip on his shoulders.

I asked her to recommend an English equivalent of the Spanish Dictionary by the Royal Language Academy, the dictionary of reference in Spanish. She pulled two thick tomes and placed them on the counter, The Oxford Dictionary and Merriam-Webster.

Was there a difference?

Brigitte said the Oxford’s approach was historical and global while Merriam-Webster focused on American contemporary usage. I looked for the word utopia in both dictionaries. Brigitte smiled. “Interesting choice.”

Could she translate the definitions?

She did with admirable skill — as if reading a Spanish text. She spoke both Spanish and English with a slight and enchanting French accent. Why did I ask her to translate a word I knew? I wanted to have her a bit longer, and fortunately, no other costumers were at hand. The utopian plan to have her all for myself worked, demonstrating idealism is not such a bad word. (Idealism in the sense of the French idealisme, an aspiration for the perfect state.)

Brigitte, wiser, smiled again. “Are you sure you don’t want to buy a bilingual dictionary?” She pointed to an inexpensive one, rich in practical stuff like milk, job, bathroom and boundaries.

I felt humiliated. Humiliation, like human, derives from the Latin *humus*, clay, dust, earth, death. The original meaning of humiliation was to bring the nonconformist down to earth. The first human act of rebellion against dust was a determination to fly, but the distant ancestor realized that no matter how hard he jumped in preparation, he would never fly. Flying was an impossible dream. Resigned, he created poetry, a fantastical reality with a genealogy linking him to those eternal heavenly creatures made of light — a definition of divine. Through fantasy, humans flew. In their minds, humans could do as they wished. The Latin word for lying, *mentire*, is closely related to *mente*, Spanish for mind. But fantasy’s mortal enemy is reality. Reality would bring humans once and again down to earth. The bookseller reached out for the Spanish-English bilingual dictionary. “Maybe, this is what you need, and it’s more affordable.”

I had \$15 in my pocket, a fortune for a foreign student in the 1970s. The Oxford Dictionary was out of my reach, but the Merriam-Webster cost \$14.99. Buying it meant walking back one hundred blocks and go without eating for the rest of the day. Defiantly, I said I would take the Merriam-Webster and be back for the Oxford.

“OK. It’s fifteen sixty, including tax.”

Simple math devastated my arrogance and humiliated conceded I was 60 cents short.

“I can lend you sixty cents,” she said, “but I have a better idea.”

She took her lunch hour. “Come with me,” she guided me to a thrift shop around the corner. There, I bought both English dictionaries for three dollars, and for fifty cents a bilingual dictionary. She looked up the word redolence. “Nice word,” she said, passing on the dictionary to me. Redolence had two meanings, aroma and to evoke. Indeed, redolence evoked a time when Brigitte was new to the city, like me, and went discovering her own version of New York. In Psychology 101 we learned that falling in love is recognizing on the other something so yours and yet unattainable. **Continued on page 5.**



Rediscover the art of conversation. **dassmiami.com**