



Islander

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DECEMBER 2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE Mayor

“ May the spirit of this wonderful season be with you and your loved ones. ”



Larisa Svechin
Mayor

As I reflect on the last 12 months as your Mayor, I look back with gratefulness. I am humbled by your overwhelming support and active participation during City Commission meetings and town halls. I remember the excitement and awe during our annual city anniversary party. I look forward to the upcoming Chanukah events and Winter Fest Park Lighting. However, what I will remember and treasure the most will be the connections I made with you - the new faces in the crowd during Boogie by the Beach, the packed house at the weekly bingo games, seeing you dance at the concerts, enjoying the food trucks, and the many calls I received from you all.

Like any other year, this was not without its challenges. Rising costs and household bills have impacted us all, bringing new worries and pressures. Yet, it's important to remember that we are not alone.

Throughout the year, I've had the privilege of visiting individuals and organizations who volunteer to help others. I've been heartened by the abundance of generosity, as they perform acts of kindness and freely give of their time.

This is the season of goodwill, a time when we extend our hands

to help others. Once again, Farm Share will be distributing free groceries to those in need. Organizations like the St. Vincent de Paul Society have partnered with the city to collect canned goods so they can help residents.

It is the sense of community, friendship, and togetherness that we will carry with us into the new year. Every day presents an opportunity to share and bring light to others. It was my great privilege to invite Holocaust survivor Judy Rodan to share her story with students. Her grace, patience, and generosity, despite enduring unspeakable horrors, is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and emphasizes the importance of sharing our stories.

As I remain mindful of the hardships facing many in Sunny Isles Beach, I pray for the hostages in Israel to come home. It is my hope that anyone who is struggling finds comfort in knowing that they are not alone.

On behalf of the City of Sunny Isles Beach, I extend my warmest regards and best wishes to everyone. I wish all a peaceful Chanukah and Christmas, and a healthy and happy new year. May the spirit of this wonderful season be with you and your loved ones.

Contact Mayor Larisa Svechin at mayor@sibfl.net or 305.792.1753.

MESSAGE FROM THE City Manager's Office

It is officially the holiday season, and that means cooler weather, bright lights, vibrant decorations, and time with loved ones. Everywhere you look, the city is alive with festive cheer, creating a perfect backdrop for the joyous celebrations ahead.

Our annual Winter Fest will kick off the holiday season at Gateway Park on Sunday, December 3. The park will transform into a magical candy land full of twinkling lights and extravagant entertainment. Families and friends will gather to experience the enchantment of the holidays, making memories that last long after decorations come down. But the celebrations don't stop there. Mark your calendar for the

annual Holiday Ball on December 29, from 6 to 9 p.m. This year, the theme is Times Square, promising a glamorous escape to the Big Apple for a pre-New Year's Eve bash. Join your fellow residents in an evening with glitz and glamour, and the anticipation of the upcoming year.

As we ring in the New Year, a time of new beginnings and resolutions, let's reflect fondly on this year past and set new goals for 2024.

On behalf of the City, we wish you all a very happy holiday season and joyous new year.



Contact City Manager's Office at citymanager@sibfl.net or [305.792.1701](tel:305.792.1701).

What Happened to the Sunny Isles Beach Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)?

Commissioner Fabiola Stuyvesant

The PTSA is a membership-driven association. Local units are part of the National PTA which represents parents' and students' interests, rights, and "values". The bigger the membership the greater the impact they can have on INFLUENCING LEGISLATION at all levels (county, state, and federal). Another interesting fact is that ALL executive board meetings are CONFIDENTIAL. Members are forced to sign some type of non-disclosure agreement to become part of the executive board.

Post-COVID, and after many non-residents of SIB got elected to the SIB PTSA board, the organization became highly dysfunctional: lacking student/community events it was better known for, involving in financial irregularities, and mandating meetings confidentiality hence limiting transparency especially in budget matters.

Questionable spending included wasting over \$5,000 on an Orlando trip during the summer (one of \$1,500 trip recipient

does not even have children attending our school), the UNAUTHORIZED purchase of \$21,600 worth of towels in June 2023, and MORE. The authorities had been made aware of the matter. However, efforts to address these issues with the National, State, and County PTSA were met with minimal to no-action. Their response, essentially suggesting "what is done is done," overlooked the need for accountability and unfairly put the NEWLY elected, uninvolved board on a "pause" instead of holding the real bad actors responsible.

But on a brighter note, I will continue demanding answers for the damage done to our community and I'm glad to share that a group of parents are organizing themselves without any other purpose than to serve our students, teachers, and community thus from the parents of SIB a new organization is being born.

Contact Commissioner Fabiola Stuyvesant at seat3@sibfl.net or [305.792.1751](tel:305.792.1751).



Sunny Isles Beach Unveils Innovative Tech for Swift Emergency Response

Commissioner Jerry Joseph

During my tenure as Vice Mayor, I challenged Chief Edward Santiago to upgrade our capability to locate residents who may need police services when calling the non-emergency Police Communications Center. His team researched options and found the perfect solution.

At the September City Commission meeting, the Police Department asked to use forfeiture funds to purchase enhanced dispatch software. They received overwhelming support from our elected officials with a 5-0 vote.

The software will enable the police dispatch center to text a link to callers, providing their live location via a smartphone. The live location will also include an approximate height, which can be useful in high-rise condo buildings. It will allow callers to share pictures, videos, and chat with communications officers.

If a caller is witnessing an event happening in real-time, they

can stream the event live using their smartphone to our communications center. It will also provide a real-time location through the device's GPS functionality. If they cannot speak, they can initiate a chat or text pictures directly to our communications officers. The software can also translate multiple languages into text from inbound calls to the dispatch center.

This software will work well with our new Hiperwall, a large screen capable of displaying an array of images, typically CCTV streams from our parks. Communications officers can control these images on large monitors from their workstations. This software will assist our police officers in responding more effectively to calls for service by providing potentially critical information. Thanks to Chief Santiago and his team for the swift solution and implementation.

Contact Commissioner Jerry Joseph at seati@sibfl.net or [305.792.1754](tel:305.792.1754).



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF EVENTS, VISIT
sibfl.net/events

Winter Fest

Sunday, December 3
4:30 - 8:30 PM

Gateway Park, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$20 pre-purchase / \$25 at the event

Resident ID Cardholders:

\$5 pre-purchase / \$10 at the event



Bingo

December 6, 13, 20, 27
Wednesdays | 3 - 4 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Gateway Market

December 6, 13, 20, 27
Wednesdays | 5:30 - 10 PM

Gateway Park, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Lunch n' Learn with Mount Sinai

Thursday, December 7
12 - 1 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Pre-registration is required. Lunch is included.



Special City Commission Meeting

Friday, December 8
11:00 AM

Commission Chambers, Government Center,
18070 Collins Ave.

Cultural Trip: Miami City Ballet: George Balanchine's Nutcracker

Friday, December 8
6 - 11 PM

Adrienne Arsht Center, 1300 Biscayne Blvd.
(Bus departs from GWC at 6:15 PM)

Price: \$65

Resident ID Cardholders: \$45

Pre-registration is required.

Mini-FLOW

Monday, December 11
9:30 AM - 1 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Appointments are required.

Call 305.792.1706

Lunch n' Learn with Florida Historian Cesar Becerra: Wind across the Everglades and the Audubon Society.

Tuesday, December 12
11 AM - 12 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$10

Resident ID Cardholders: FREE

Pre-registration is required.

Teen Talk

Tuesday, December 12
6 - 8 PM

The Spot, 215 185th St.

Doc Chats:

Holiday Spending Recovery

Wednesday, December 13

11 AM - 1 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Pre-registration is required.

AARP Smart Driver Course

Friday, December 15
9 AM - 4 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

AARP Members: \$20

Non-Members: \$25

Pre-registration is required.

Teen Grinchmas Party

Friday, December 15
7 - 9 PM

The Spot, 215 185th St.

Pre-registration is required.

Beach Cleanup

Saturday, December 16
8 - 10 AM

Samson Oceanfront Park, 17425 Collins Ave.

Federal Holiday: *Christmas Day*

Monday, December 25

City facilities closed.

SIBshuttle will not run.



Full Moon Yoga

Tuesday, December 26
5:45 - 6:45 PM

On the Beach by Trump International Beach
Resort, 18001 Collins Ave.

Winter Break Camp

Week 1: December 26 - 29

Week 2: January 2 - 5

Register at activities.sibfl.net

Athletics Winter Break Camp

Week 1: December 26 - 29

Week 2: January 2 - 5

Register at activities.sibfl.net

Senior Roundtable

Wednesday, December 27
12 - 1 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Pre-registration is required.

Holiday Ball

Friday, December 29
6 - 8 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$20

Resident ID Cardholders: \$10

Pre-registration is required.

Federal Holiday: *New Year's Day*

Monday, January 1

City facilities closed.

SIBshuttle will not run.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

IT DEPARTMENT

This month, we spotlight our Information Technology department. A team of dedicated professionals, they safeguard our city's cybersecurity, ensuring the safety and connectivity of our facilities.

Back in October, team member Nahid Nizami reached a significant milestone by obtaining the Certified Ethical Hacker certification, which is globally recognized as the leading credential in ethical hacking. The team is committed to maintaining an up-to-date skill set, aligning with the dynamic changes in technology.

Also, after a decade in the making, the IT team is on the verge of completing a groundbreaking project - a fiber optic network spanning 26,500 feet, seamlessly interconnecting every city facility and park. This interconnected network promises superior redundancy and resiliency.

Notably, it's a project that extends its benefits to every department in our city, exemplifying the collaborative and supportive role played by our IT professionals.

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INSIDE THE *Isles*

Scoot Safe! Sunny Isles Beach

The City of Sunny Isles Beach is introducing a new registration program for motorized scooters. Scoot Safe! Sunny Isles Beach is designed to ensure the safety and security for the operator and the scooter.

Why Register?

If you plan to operate your motorized scooter within city limits, it's now required to complete the registration process under Ordinance #23-Z-206. But here's the good news - this registration is not just about following the rules; it's about safeguarding your scooter. In the unfortunate event of theft and other security concerns, having your scooter registered can make all the difference.

Get Your Decal: It's Easy!

Getting on board with the program is easy as a breeze. Just go online and register your motorized scooter. Once you're all set, we'll send you a decal in the mail. This decal is like your scooter's very own badge - simply pop it in a noticeable spot, and you're ready to hit the road!

To register your motorized scooter, please visit sibfl.net/scootsafe.

Holiday Safety Tips

As we deck the halls and soak in the festive spirit, let's also make safety a top priority this holiday season. Here are some merry reminders to keep the season joyful and secure:

- Dress your home in holiday decor but make sure your lights are fire resistant and don't overload electrical outlets.
- Make the 9 p.m. routine your nightly ritual by locking your doors and windows.
- If you're traveling, make sure your home is in safe hands. Ask a trustworthy neighbor or family member to keep an eye on your house.
- Safeguard your delivered gifts by considering tracking your packages, opting for delivery alerts, or have them sent out to a secure location.

- When out shopping, park in well-lit areas. Stay alert and keep an eye on your surroundings, especially in crowded places. Secure your belongings.

Incorporate these safety measures into your holiday routine so you can enjoy the festive season with peace of mind. In case of an emergency, please call 911. For non-emergency inquiries, call the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department at 305.947.4440.



WINTER CAMP

Unleash the Magic of Winter!

AGES: 5 - 12

Week 1: 12/26/23 - 12/29/23 **Week 2:** 1/2/24 - 1/5/24

Join us for a fun-packed winter camp experience designed to make your child's winter break unforgettable.

Activities Include:

- Winter-themed arts and crafts as well as food crafts
- Outdoor games
- Marshmallow toasting
- Seasonal treats and hot cocoa

Price: \$240 / per week

Resident ID Cardholder:
\$160 / per week

Pelican Community Park

Field Trips Include :

- Week 1:
- Boomers
 - Flying Squirrel
- Week 2:
- Planet Air
 - Dave and Busters



Register at sibfl.net/activities





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PUBLISHED BY
CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH
MEDIA DIVISION
18070 Collins Avenue
Sunny Isles Beach, FL 33160

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COMMISSIONER Jerry Joseph

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COMMISSIONER Jeniffer Viscarra

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