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As **See It: Amazing Things
are Happening in Collier City
District 5**



Rendering of new E. Pat Larkins Center.



Rendering of new City Hall.

Pompano Beach's Downtown Transformation: Promise, Progress, and the Path Ahead

By Attiyya Atkins

Pompano Beach is moving forward with a \$2 billion downtown redevelopment project that promises to transform the heart of the city over the next decade. Centered around the area west of Dixie Highway near Atlantic Boulevard, the plan seeks to estab-

lish a walkable, mixed-use urban core that will attract residents, businesses, and tourists alike. But as progress moves forward, local residents—especially in historically Black neighborhoods like Northwest Pompano—are watching closely, weighing the opportunities and potential costs of such a

■ *Path Ahead, see page 11*



Residents in front of Blanche Ely's house at Pompano Heritage parade.

POMPANO BEACH'S FIRST HERITAGE PARADE

By Attiyya Atkins

POMPANO BEACH, FL – Black history and community are important to Northwest Pompano, so when the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade in Pompano Beach was canceled this year due to inclement weather—the community was outraged.

UNDER gray skies and light rain, local residents, marching bands, performers, and families still gathered in

what was supposed to be a day of celebration and remembrance. Instead, they were met with frustration and disappointment as the City of Pompano Beach officially called off the parade due to weather concerns.

"We were ready to go, everyone was out there," said Trenelle Jones, a community member at the event and member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

Although the parade was cancelled, the celebration at Mitchell Moore Park went on as scheduled – in the rain.

Many questioned the city's
■ *Heritage Parade, see page 10*



Kids enjoying slide at Mitchell Moore's MLK Parade Celebration, after the parade was cancelled.

Aviation Pioneer Barrington Irving Launches Technical Training School in Pompano Beach

By Attiyya Atkins

Pompano Beach, FL — Renowned aviator and educator Barrington Irving, the first Black man and youngest person at the time to fly solo around the world, has launched a bold new initiative aimed at inspiring and equipping the next generation of aviation professionals. The Barrington Irving Technical Training School (BITTS) is now open at

■ *Aviation Pioneer, see page 11*

Northwest Pompano Community Garden to be Dedicated as Ocean-Friendly

By Attiyya Atkins

POMPANO BEACH, FL – There are seeds of change in Northwest Pompano Beach, and it's happening at the Patricia Davis Community Garden. On March 29, 2025, the Patricia Davis Community Garden at

■ *Northwest Pompano, see page 11*

The Prescription for a Troubled Heart

By Rev Griff

Trouble has a way of showing up uninvited.

It knocks, lingers, and sometimes barges right in, disrupting our peace and shaking our faith. But Jesus, in His wisdom and love, left us with a command that is both simple and powerful: "Let not your heart be troubled."

(John 14:1)

THIS is not a suggestion—it's a prescription from the Great Physician Himself.

Villij News!

The late, great Fred G. Sanford had a way of responding

to trouble. Whenever life hit him hard, he'd clutch his chest, stagger back, and call out, "Elizabeth, this is the big one!" He braced for impact, anticipating the worst. But Jesus tells us there's another way. Trouble may come, but don't let it take residence in your heart.

Villij News!

Think about the human heart—beating over 100,000 times a day, working tirelessly whether we acknowledge it or not. Beyond its physical function, the Bible speaks of many different kinds of hearts: broken hearts, pure hearts, troubled hearts, wise hearts, and even wicked hearts. The state of your heart matters to God. That's why He commands us to guard it.

But how, Villij News? How do we keep our hearts from being troubled? Jesus not only gives us the command, but He also provides the prescription: "Believe in God, believe also in Me." Faith is the antidote to fear. Trust is the remedy for turmoil.

Many of us take prescriptions daily, trusting the instructions without question. If we can trust human doctors, how much more should we trust the divine prescription Jesus offers?

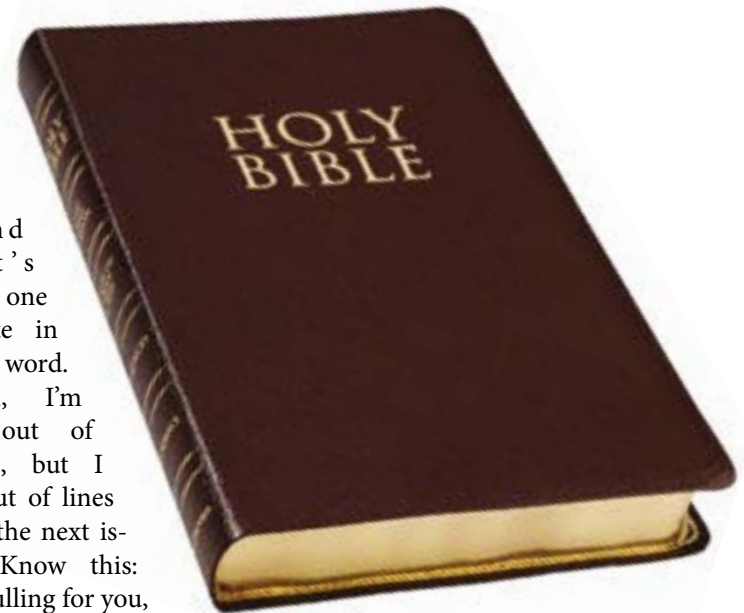
So today, take the prescription. Shake it, take it, and let it settle in your soul. Trouble may knock, but it doesn't have to move in. Fear may come, but it doesn't have to reign. Your heart is in the hands of the One who holds the universe.

And that is a promise worth standing on. Refill as needed.

And that's your one minute in the word. Listen, I'm not out of words, but I am out of lines until the next issue. Know this: I'm pulling for you, and I'm praying for you. God bless you. Stay connected.

Life's Question:

Are you taking your spiritual medicine?



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SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:45 A.M.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

SERVICE 9:45 A.M.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE

STUDY 6:30 P.M.



**OPEN ARMS DELIVERANCE
PASTOR HENRY AND
LADY BELINDA GOODWIN**

As I See It: Amazing Things are Happening in Collier City District 5

By David Miller

Well, what happened?

Since 2021, there has been a lot of construction work being done on the streets of Collier City, a predominantly African American subdivision in the City of Pompano Beach. Thirty years! Long anticipated infrastructure has been taking place on NW 27th avenue, and now we finally see some results from the General Obligation Bond at Ronald E. McNair Park for the 2023-2024 year. The Pompano Public Arts Committee installed our signature Pompano fish at the center at former District 5 Commissioner Cyndy Floyd's request. Floyd was also

honored as an influencer along with 13 of our coaches at "Honoring the Pompano Cowboys Coaches" at the Collier City Trailblazers Exhibit 2023. This Black History Month event was a great event that also highlighted the bright blue field.

Last year, the city's ribbon-cutting for our newly renovated, state-of-the-art park was a great function in 2023 as well.

MY name is David Miller, a Pompano artist spreading Afrofuturism. I currently serve on the Pompano Beach Public Arts Committee. I suggest more art be placed at this center because the fish is not enough. We are currently installing a mural on the main building at McNair Park. The decision-making process for the artwork was hard as we tried to focus on pro-athletes that grew up in Pompano Beach. Then we decided to show diversity by adding more ladies. When



complete, this mural will be a reflection of athletes and people who played for, coached or made it to the professional level from Collier City.

This mural was created by Steven Teller, priced at \$15,000 upon completion. Teller's original design disrupted the community due to the athletes chosen. Unfortunately, we had to remove Barry Krausse and replace him with legend James Jones, a strong recommendation by Mr. Van Warren Coach Peanut. After outreach to a tense community, we made an agreement. I stood out with the muralist while he painted the first Collier City legend, Johnny Jones. I'm hoping he comes back to finish this monumental piece before the holidays.

During this process, community leaders Phyllis Smith and Ron Thurston were upset that they weren't consulted and wanted to provide input. Because of this there is currently a hold on the completion of the mural. It was said "we have to constantly remind the City of Pompano that they should do more community outreach so you know what we want." The community knows who the greatest, directly



from Collier City are, so a revised list was added with Latoya Jordan suggested by Karen Moreland Alford. It was said that aggressive threats were made to the artist that I don't agree with, but I had to take the side with the community when they expressed "we have to always see and live with it, so the residents should have input on what's being placed in their front yard."

Personally, I really didn't like the color at first and I wanted faces without the helmet. I actually had to explain to the artist that this mural is not an opportunity for diversity and inclusion, this one is for the African American hoods, like the ones in

Miami, Tallahassee, Gainesville and Jacksonville. This location is specifically a statewide reflection of what Black people from Collier City have produced. High level athletics, stellar level science trips and art programs have been signature for decades in northwest Pompano.

I shared the struggles I faced with creating mural art. I then was able to culturally educate the artist Steven Teller about a book called the "Miseducation of the Negro" by Carter G. Woodson. This book depicts how every time a Black person has a noteworthy achievement, a white person inserts themselves in the middle of the success,

leaving a psychological effect. Again, this piece is not for any random person from the neighborhood who was pretty good, or for a coach who still speaks on the good ol' days. This mural is for people who set the standard on the court, on the track and on the football field and then excel beyond it while being from Pompano Beach using the McNair Park in Collier City. The committee agreed on (James Jones, Latoya Jordan, Iris Davis, Coach Tommy Hunter, Lamar Jackson, Shayla Sanders, Tyrone Carter and Johnny Jones) to be the official names of the athletes for the McNair Center mural.

With cultural education invigorating our African American student athletes, they are educated at a high level and I'm confident that they can work for NASA. Apollo Park is like our rocket ship, then Ronald McNair Center is the astronaut. The future is bright as long as we invest in our future, we can blast off to the moon.

To submit your opinion piece to Villij News' "As I See It" section, email ads@villijnews.com or write a letter to 5200 NW 33rd Ave, Suite 200, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309.

Pompano Beach and Terrasini, Italy, Form Friendship City Partnership

By June Atlas

Pompano Beach, FL – The City of Pompano Beach has officially entered into a Friendship City partnership with Terrasini, Italy, forging a new international alliance to promote tourism, culture, education, and economic development, signed by Pompano Beach Mayor Rex Hardin and Terrasini Mayor Giosue Maniaci, aims to strengthen connections between the two coastal communities.

Bridging Cultures and Economies

The agreement focuses on three key areas: tourism: encouraging travel exchanges, cruise tourism, and nautical sports; culture: supporting joint initiatives in music, dance, theater, film, and art exhibitions; and education: facilitating partnerships between high schools and colleges for student exchanges.

Both cities share a strong connection to the ocean and cultural heritage, city officials believe it will help highlight Pompano Beach's growing arts and business scene while creating new international opportunities.

Pompano Beach Invests Over \$1 Million in Pickleball Expansion

By June Atlas

POMPANO BEACH, FL – The City of Pompano Beach has awarded a \$1 million contract to Alexander & Johnson Project Management and Development, Inc. for the construction of the Kip Jacoby Pickleball Courts, at Sgt. Kip A. Jacoby Park, 620 S. Cypress Road, marking a major investment in the city's growing demand for recreational facilities.

The project, designed by Munson Design and Consulting, Inc., will include the installation of new pickleball courts along with necessary infrastructure to support the popular sport. The contract outlines a 150-day construction period, with completion expected within 180 days from the start date.

A Game-Changer for Local Sports

Pickleball, a hybrid of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong, has surged in popularity nationwide, and Pompano Beach is no exception. The expansion aims to meet the growing demand for courts, particularly as residents increasingly advocate for more public access to the sport.

Town Hall Spotlights Youth Mental Health in Pompano Beach

By June Atlas

The City of Pompano Beach, together with Broward School Board Member Nora Rupert (District 7), will host a Town Hall Mental Health Event on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the E. Pat Larkins Community Center.

THE event - "Help us to help you - understanding the impact of stress," aims to raise awareness about mental health and provide support for students and families. Local officials and educators emphasize the importance of community conversations around youth stress and well-being, hoping to encourage attendees to seek help. The event will feature a Q&A



with a panel of experts and a resource fair.

The upcoming town hall is part of a broader push to prioritize mental health in local communities and schools. In recent years, Florida educators have increased their focus on mental health – since 2019, every Florida public school has been required to provide at least five hours of mental health instruction per year to students in grades 6 through 12. Broward County Public Schools likewise has a dedicated Mental Health Services department with a vision of “promoting mental health awareness, fostering resilience, and building positive community connections” for students and families. Community forums like the Pompano Beach Town

Hall put these ideals into action outside the classroom, extending the reach of mental health education into neighborhoods. By hosting this event, the City of Pompano Beach and School Board Member Nora Rupert – along with partners such as the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition and United Way of Broward County’s Commission on Behavioral Health – demonstrate an ongoing commitment to supporting mental wellness at the grassroots level.

Organizers emphasize that open dialogue and education about mental wellness are vital for both students and adults. In Broward County, nearly 37% of high school students reported feeling sad or hopeless during the past year (according to a 2019 survey).



Italian Meatballs

New to Pompano Beach: Miraggio Italian Grill Brings a Taste of Italy with a Modern Twist

By Akayliah Simpson

POMPANO BEACH, FL – Italian food lovers, rejoice! A new dining gem has arrived in the neighborhood, and it's already making waves among locals. Miraggio Italian Grill, located at 3100 E. Atlantic Blvd., which opened its doors in December, is quickly becoming a go-to destination for authentic Italian cuisine with a fresh, contemporary touch.

DESPITE being a newcomer, the restaurant has garnered a flood of positive reviews, with guests raving about its flavors, ambiance, and service. One enthusiastic diner, MsClaudia2323, described her visit as “a magnificent experience... the food, the service, and the atmosphere... You MUST go. My new favorite restaurant!!!” And she's not alone—many others have taken to online platforms to share

their praise.

The overwhelming demand led Miraggio Italian Grill to extend its hours just weeks after its debut. Now, guests can enjoy a delectable lunch starting just before noon—an opportunity to savor Italian classics in a more relaxed setting before the evening crowds roll in. The restaurant offers a distinct lunch menu, separate from its dinner selection, giving patrons even more to explore.

A Menu That Delights Every Palate

Miraggio Italian Grill takes pride in serving a diverse selection of dishes that cater to both the pickiest eaters and the most refined palates. Among the fan favorites are the creamy Penne Vodka Pasta, savory Chicken Parmigiana, crispy yet tender Calamari, and the must-try Meatball Appetizer.

For those looking to branch out, the menu also features hand-made Ravioli, wood-fired Pizza, a perfectly seared Ribeye Steak,

golden-fried Clams, hearty Soups, and even a well-curated Charcuterie Board. And if you have a sweet tooth, don't skip dessert—Miraggio's take on Limoncello Cake, Key Lime Pie, rich Brownies, and classic Cannolis are the perfect way to end a meal.

More Than Just a Meal—An Experience

Beyond the food, Miraggio Italian Grill offers an inviting atmosphere with multiple seating options, including waterfront dining for those who want to enjoy their meal with a view. The restaurant's warm and attentive staff further enhances the experience, making guests feel right at home.

Located at 3100 B E Atlantic Blvd, Pompano Beach, FL 33062, Miraggio Italian Grill is open daily from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Whether you're craving a cozy lunch, a lively dinner, or a unique twist on traditional Italian flavors, this restaurant is a must-visit. To reserve a table, visit their website or call (954) 876-1066.

Baby Boomers Flock to Pompano Beach Amid Rising Costs and Gentrification

By Akayliah Simpson

POMPANO BEACH, FL – Despite concerns about climate change, flooding, and rising living expenses, Pompano Beach has become a magnet for Baby Boomers seeking to make the most of their retirement years. The city's warm climate, diverse recreational opportunities, and relatively affordable housing market have made it an attractive destination for this demographic.

A Haven for Active Retirees

Pompano Beach offers a plethora of activities catering to the interests of retirees. Whether it's boating, fishing, or simply enjoying the sun-kissed beaches, there's no shortage of ways to stay active. The city's parks, animal exhibits, and services like the Pompano Beach Water Taxi provide ample opportunities for exploration and leisure.

The Pompano Beach Senior Activity Center, located at 2005 NW 9th St, serves as a hub for older adults. Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., the center offers state-of-the-art facilities and a wide range of programs, fostering social connections and community engagement. Membership is free for residents and \$30 for non-residents.

Housing Market Dynamics

As of February 2025, the median listing home price in Pompano Beach stands at \$369,500, with properties typically selling for about 4.72% below the asking price. While these figures may seem modest compared to other South Florida locales, certain neighborhoods have experienced significant appreciation. For instance, the Beach neighborhood has a median listing price of \$560,000, reflecting a 1.8% year-over-year increase. Similarly, Old Pompano's median listing price is \$630,000.

The Gentrification Debate

The influx of wealthier retirees has contributed to the gentrification of Pompano Beach, particularly in historically underserved areas. Longtime residents have voiced concerns about being priced out of their neighborhoods as property values and living costs escalate. A petition on Change.org highlights the displacement of low-income Black families due to rising housing prices underscores the complexities of this transformation.

City officials and developers are working to balance modernization efforts with the preservation of Pompano Beach's cultural heritage. The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has been acquiring land for the New Downtown Project, aiming to revitalize the urban core without displacing existing communities. The CRA emphasizes that the project is not about gentrification but about creating opportunities and adding value to the area. Residents disagree.

Looking Ahead

As Baby Boomers continue to relocate to Pompano Beach, the city faces the challenge of accommodating new residents while ensuring that development benefits all community members. Striking a balance between growth and inclusivity will be crucial in maintaining Pompano Beach's appeal as a vibrant and welcoming destination for retirees and longtime residents alike.

Teen, Alberto Touetbon, Missing Since February



Alberto Touetbon, 16.

Authorities are seeking public assistance in locating Alberto Touetbon, a 16-year-old from Pompano Beach who has been missing since 8 p.m. on Friday, February 21.

According to the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) Missing Persons Unit, Touetbon was last seen near the 1000 block of Southwest 46th

Avenue.

He is described as 6 feet 1 inch tall, weighing approximately 210 pounds, with black hair and brown eyes. At the time of his disappearance, he was wearing a black hoodie and black pants.

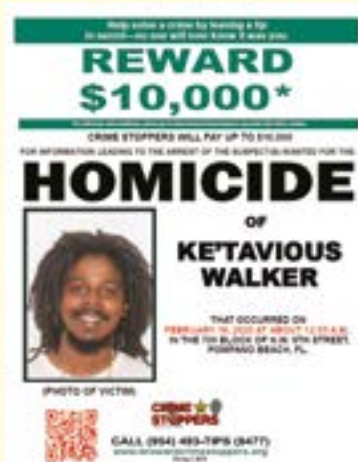
The BSO urges anyone with information on Touetbon's whereabouts to contact Detective Chris Blankenship at 954-321-4268 or the BSO non-emergency number at 954-764-HELP (4357).

Community organizations like The AWARE Foundation have also amplified the call for assistance, sharing details of Touetbon's disappearance on social media platforms to broaden the search efforts.

Local news outlets, including WSVN 7 News, have reported on the case, urging the public to come forward with any information that could aid in locating the missing teenager.

As the search continues, authorities and community members remain hopeful for Touetbon's safe return.

Man Fatally Shot in Pompano Beach, Broward Sheriff's Office Investigating



By Villij News
Crime Desk

The Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) Homicide and Crime Scene units are investigating a fatal shooting that occurred in Pompano Beach early Sunday morning, resulting in the death of

one man.

Authorities reported that at approximately 12:52 a.m. on Sunday, February 16, Broward County Regional Communications received reports of gunfire at 713 N.W. Sixth Street. BSO deputies and Pompano Beach Fire Rescue responded to the scene, where they found an adult male suffering from a gunshot wound. The man was identified as Ke'Tavious Walker, 30.

■ *Man Fatally, see page 10*

Avoid the T.R.A.P.S

Kaysia Earley, Esq., has earned the title of South Florida's most influential Criminal Defense and Personal Injury attorneys, in Florida, based on her legal expertise in the law. She is also known as the "TRAPS Attorney", the creator of T.R.A.P.S.: Arrive Alive During a Police Encounter®. Since that time, Kaysia have given away over 35,000 free T.R.A.P.S. cards across the United States.

“MY goal is to equal the scales of justice. Parents should teach their children and themselves the law, considering officers are knowledgeable of the law, which gives them the upper hand when they encounter individuals. I want to give that power back to the people, especially minorities, who are disproportionately pulled over, arrested, and ultimately convicted”, she said. T.R.A.P.S. is an acronym for the Constitutional rights of individuals when they encounter law enforcement. “T” stands for Trickery, “R” stands for Respect, “A” stands for Attorney, “P” stands for Permission, and “S” stands for Silence.

“T”: Don't get TRICKED. During an encounter or interrogation, officers can legally lie and make false claims to induce confessions. These legal and psychological tactics can pressure and terrorize innocent people, especially juveniles, into falsely confessing to crimes they didn't



commit, which ultimately leads to wrongful arrests and convictions.

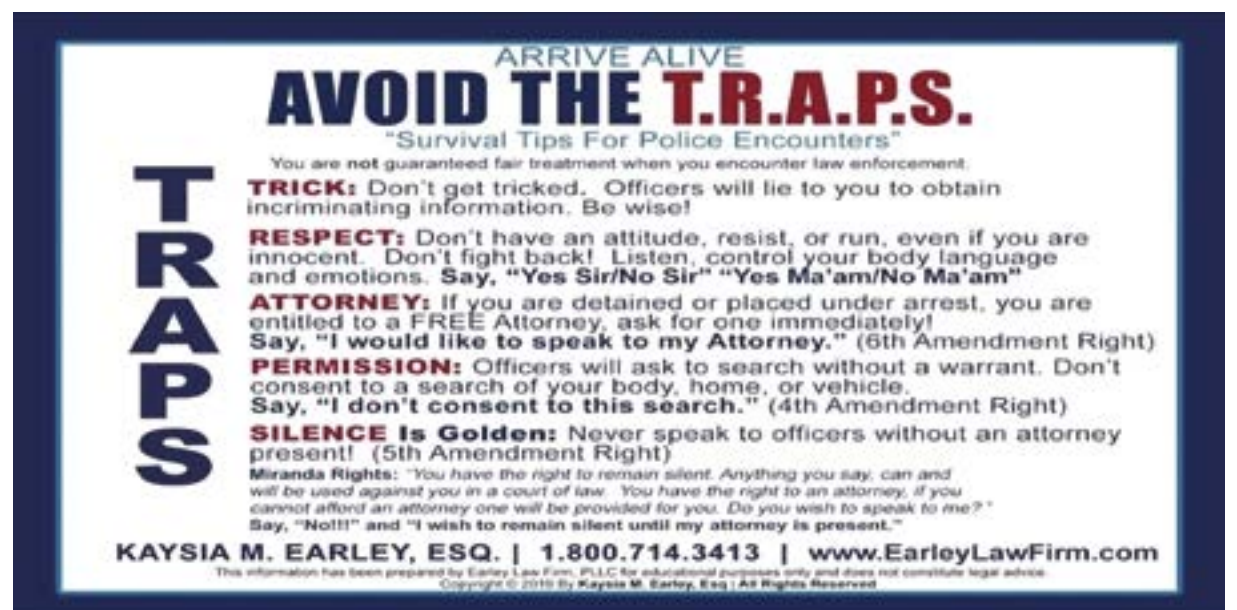
“R”: Be RESPECTFUL to law enforcement during a police encounter. Officer involved shootings, violence, and tensions are at an all-time high between civilians and officers. Unfortunately, this in turn has bred a culture of people who fear and even despise law enforcement, leading to further instances of violence. Mutual respect goes a long way, however, don't wait for an officer to be respectful during an encounter. Remain calm and respectful, no matter how the officer interacts with you. Officers are public servants and are obligated to treat every individual with respect. After the encounter, if you feel the officer was disrespectful, go to the district police station and file an Internal Affairs (“I.A.”) complaint to initiate an investigation.

“A”: You have the right to a free ATTORNEY (Public Defender), ask for one immediately upon an

arrest. Say, “I would like to speak to my attorney.” The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a lawyer; however, you must verbally request an attorney to end the interrogation.

“P”: Never give PERMISSION for officers to search your house, car, or belongings. Say, “I do not consent to this search.” The Fourth Amendment protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures. It limits the power of law enforcement to search an individual or their property without permission or a warrant. You may believe consenting to a search is harmless, especially if you have nothing to hide. Unfortunately, it may lead to an arrest due to unethical officers illegally placing contraband in your vehicle or mistakenly believing medication or items in your vehicle are illegal.

“S”: SILENCE is Golden. Do not speak to law enforcement without an attorney present. Say, ■ *Avoid the T.R.A.P.S, see page 10*



Lizzo Returns with Empowering New Single ‘Still Bad’

Lizzo is back with a bold statement in her new single “Still Bad,” released on March 14, 2025. The song, co-produced by Blake Slatkin and Ricky Reed, blends funk, pop, and R&B, delivering a message of resilience and self-confidence despite heartbreak (Pitchfork).

THE music video, directed by Colin Tilley, adds a spooky visual twist, featuring zombies and enchanted forests, reinforcing the theme of survival (People). “Still Bad” is the second single from Lizzo’s upcoming album, *Love in Real Life*, following the February release of its title track. To celebrate, Liz-

zo has announced a mini-tour with intimate performances in Los Angeles, New York, and Minneapolis (NY Post). Despite facing personal struggles and legal disputes, Lizzo remains unstoppable. “Still Bad” reaffirms her strength, proving she’s still that girl—unapologetic, empowered, and ready to own the stage once again (EW).



Peking Duck House Restaurant Reopens with Elevated Menu

Peking Duck House is reintroducing Pompano Beach to authentic Chinese cuisine

By Kristen Hernandez

Pompano Beach – It may be at the same location, but this isn’t the same Peking Duck House that has been a Pompano Beach staple since 1985. The iconic restaurant at 1200 E. Atlantic Blvd., Pompano Beach, reopened in February, after a severe storm caused significant water damage to the kitchen and storage areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, restaurant management changed hands from a family-owned business to Unisolo, a South-Florida based restaurant management group. But the authentic Chinese flavors that Pompano residents know, and love hasn’t been lost. Gastronomy aficionados can choose rice or noodle dish options like the Tonkotsu Ramen with pork belly or short rib, Volcano Fried Rice - served lit on fire - different styles of Chinese curry, crispy duck salad, Hunan-style jumbo shrimp - fresh from the

sea, Dim Sum, and of course Peking duck cooked in an authentic Chinese fashion. “The former owner’s father was the chef of Peking Duck House, and when he passed the menu was also passed to our current master chef, Chef Lin,” said Apinya Punjanon, general manager of Peking Duck House. “All of our sauces are homemade, like our spicy mustard, hoisin sauce, and duck sauce, and they come with a signature blend of authentic Chinese spices. All guests should taste the authenticity and mastery our chef brings to your table.” The restaurant’s namesake, Peking duck, was a display of true culinary artistry and technical mastery. Traditionally, Peking duck was a feast exclusive to the Chinese rulers. “It’s dry roasted for eight hours and coated with a honey glaze. The air-dry technique helps to create that golden, crispy skin and takes true mastery,” said Pun-



Peking Duck House Exterior

janon. Owners of Unisolo Restaurant Group, Tina Wang and Chef Jason Zheng, own other restaurants in Parkland, Coral Springs and throughout South Florida, but wanted to stay true to the authentic flavors the restaurant is known for. “When we considered the acquisition of Peking Duck House, we knew it was a beloved restaurant, but we felt it needed some refreshing,” Wang said in a statement.

Peking Duck House’s menu is as exuberant as the Oriental motifs, carved wood accents, and vibrant masks that adorn the

restaurant. The commitment to showcase the treasures of Chinese culture and reintroduce the essence of authentic, hand-crafted cuisine is clear. There is also a full bar with wine, beer and cocktails. “More and more people are discovering a passion for Asian cuisine,” Wang said. “It’s healthy, it’s flavorful, it’s fresh, and it’s growing in popularity. We want to share the Asian culinary experience with as many people as we can. Our incredible chef has over 20 years’ experience, and he’s a genius at putting a contemporary twist on traditional specialties.” Peking Duck House is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Peking Duck at Peking Duck House Pompano



Sampler at Peking Duck House Pompano

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Attiyya Atkins
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Soul Beach Music Festival Returns to St. Maarten with Star-Studded Lineup Featuring Charlie Wilson, Muni Long & Cedric the Entertainer

An Unforgettable Blend of Music, Comedy, and Caribbean Luxury This Memorial Day Weekend

By June Atlas

The Soul Beach Music Festival is making a return to St. Maarten this Memorial Day Weekend (May 21-26, 2025) with an electrifying lineup featuring Charlie Wilson, Muni Long, and Cedric the Entertainer. Known for its unparalleled fusion of music, culture, and breathtaking island scenery, this 23rd edition promises an unforgettable escape filled with soulful sounds, comedy, and non-stop celebrations.

VHIS year's event will be hosted by none other than Doug E. Fresh and Chris Spencer, with special guest DJ Envy (co-host of iHeart Media's nationally syndicated The Breakfast Club) curating high-energy sets that will keep the island's rhythm alive.

A Lineup of Legends & Rising Stars

Charlie Wilson – An R&B icon whose legendary vocals have transcended generations, Wilson first captivated audiences as the lead singer of the GAP Band (You Dropped the Bomb on Me, Outstanding, Party Train). As a solo artist, he has amassed 13 No. 1 singles, 13 GRAMMY® nominations, and prestigious accolades including a BET Lifetime Achievement Award and NAACP Music Makes a Difference Award.

Muni Long – A GRAMMY® Award-winning powerhouse, Muni Long has solidified her mark on R&B with hits like



“Hrs & Hrs” (which won Best R&B Performance at the 65th GRAMMYs) and her latest chart-topper, “Slow Grind.”

Cedric the Entertainer – A comedy king with a resume spanning film, television, and stand-up, Cedric continues to dominate entertainment. From starring in CBS's hit sitcom The Neighborhood to his Las Vegas residency “Love & Laughter”, he brings a show-stopping comedic presence to this year's festival.

The Ultimate Island Getaway

Set against the backdrop of Jocelyn Arndell Festival Village, festivalgoers will experience

Hosting the 30th anniversary of Soul Beach Music Festival, nearly three decades after its inception in St. Maarten, is an honor. This festival is not just about entertainment; it's a major economic driver, bringing tourism and vibrancy to the island at a crucial time,

world-class entertainment under the stars, alongside daytime beach parties, exclusive culinary experiences, and island adventures.

“Hosting the 30th anniversary of Soul Beach Music Festival, nearly three decades after its

inception in St. Maarten, is an honor. This festival is not just about entertainment; it's a major economic driver, bringing tourism and vibrancy to the island at a crucial time,” says Grisha Heyliger-Marten, Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs,

Transport & Telecommunication.

St. Maarten, known as “The Friendly Island,” offers a dynamic fusion of laid-back luxury and high-energy adventure, making it the perfect destination for music lovers and cultural enthusiasts alike. From indulging in Michelin-worthy cuisine to exploring hidden beaches, water sports, and scenic hiking trails, every moment is designed to ignite the spirit.

By day, visitors can shop the vibrant streets of Philipsburg, take in panoramic views from Fort Louis, or unwind at world-famous Maho Beach. By night, they'll be dancing under the Caribbean sky as the island transforms into the epicenter of rhythm and revelry.

“This year's festival blends nostalgia with the future. Charlie Wilson represents timeless greatness, while Muni Long signals the next era of R&B. We're inviting festivalgoers to not just watch the show, but to fully immerse themselves in the energy and magic of St. Maarten,” says Mark Adkins, CEO & Executive Producer of Soul Beach Festival.

Secure Your Spot at the Ultimate Festival Experience

Tickets, accommodations, and exclusive festival perks are available at www.soulbeach.com. Stay connected by joining the social conversation @SoulBeachMusic on Instagram and Facebook.

Get ready to glow up, vibe out, and make memories that last a lifetime at Soul Beach Music Festival 2025—an experience that's more than a festival, it's a movement.

#SBMF2025 #SoulBeachFestival #VisitStMaarten



living room
CONCERT SERIES

BOBBY
PRUITT

APR 24 | 7PM

Catch the talented disco, soul, and house singer-songwriter Bobby Pruitt in an intimate setting for an up-close, personal performance!



POMPANO BEACH CULTURAL CENTER
50W ATLANTIC BLVD. POMPANO BEACH, FL
POMPANOBEACHARTS.ORG | 954.545.7800



SCAN FOR
MORE INFO

Avoid the T.R.A.P.S

continued from page 6

"I wish to remain silent." Do not sign anything without an attorney present. You do not need to give your side of the 'story' to officers, you'll only talk yourself into an arrest. Your silence will be beneficial for your attorney, if charges are formally filed, to zealously represent you during trial.

Kaysia created physical T.R.A.P.S. cards in 2015 while working as an Assistant Public Defender in Broward County's Juvenile division. She quickly realized out of the 800 juveniles she represented, only a handful were white. The rest of her clients were minorities from underrepresented communities. As she began to investigate her clients' cases, she discovered, most of the time law enforcement abused their powers and most of her clients were racially profiled. Kaysia also realized her clients failed to exercise their Constitutional rights during their police encounter which ultimately led to their arrest or conviction.

Kaysia was arrested in 2003 during her senior year, while attending Howard University, and has a unique perspective from both sides of the criminal justice system. She was arrested at a shoe store, due to allegations of embezzlement. She admitted to law enforcement, when authorities were called to her job, that she discounted shoes for family members and friends while employed. Her statement was utilized to prosecute her, and she was later sentenced to county jail and probation. Kaysia admits, "I didn't know my Constitutional rights until I went to law school, and sadly, many people don't know it either. Invoking your right to remain silent is not about getting away with a crime, it's about protecting your Civil Rights until you have an attorney knowledgeable of the law to advocate on your behalf."

Kaysia is a community advocate who educates students at universities, schools, detention centers and community events of the T.R.A.P.S. of the criminal justice system and empowers them to utilize their legal rights. "Unless we exercise our power, there will continue to be an increase in arrests, convictions, and casualties within the minority community. We must be proactive and educate ourselves and others about the law, rather than reacting every time there is a police encounter gone array" she said.

Kaysia is the founding attorney and owner of Earley Law Firm. She has tried over 100 trials to verdict and has secured over 300 dismissals in less than 10 years. If you would like to receive your FREE T.R.A.P.S. Cards or to learn more visit www.EarleyLawFirm.com, Instagram and Facebook: @EarleyLawFirm | @KaysiaEarley or call 1-800-714-3413.

Man Fatally

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The victim was transported to Broward Health North, where he was later pronounced deceased.

BSO's Homicide and Crime Scene units are currently investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident. At this time, no suspect details have been released.

Authorities Request Public Assistance

Investigators are asking anyone with information about this case to step forward.

Individuals can contact BSO Detective Alison Craven-Swan at 954-321-4200 or submit a tip through the SaferWatch app.

Those who wish to remain anonymous can reach out to Broward Crime Stoppers at 954-493-TIPS (8477), visit browardcrimestoppers.org, or dial TIPS (8477) from any cellphone in the United States.

Anonymous tipsters may be eligible for a reward of up to \$10,000 if their information leads to an arrest.

This remains a developing story, and Villij News will provide further updates as more details become available.

Heritage Parade

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The staff and children of All My Children Daycare in Pompano Beach at the Heritage Parade.



City Commissioners Audrey Fesik and Beverly Perkins at the Heritage Parade.



Jackie Moreland holds a photo of John L. Moreland, a local community leader who passed in 2022.



Empty children's play equipment at the MLK ceremony after the MLK Parade was cancelled.



Members of Kappa Alpha Psi and Grand Marshal, Dr. Samuel Hunter.

decision, especially considering the community's visible readiness to proceed, with groups from Delt While safety concerns were cited, residents expressed frustration over what they saw as a lack of commitment to one of the few large-scale public celebrations of Black legacy in the city.

Resident Jackie Moreland expressed her frustration questioned the commission at a January 28 meeting for cancelling the parade.

"Schools and organizations put in a great deal of work and

preparation for Dr King's march and parade," she said. "Despite all of the rain, people showed up for only to be cancelled at the 9th hour at the last minute."

There was no thunder, lightning and no puddles.

Recognizing that disappointment, Commissioner Beverly Perkins announced a Heritage Parade and Celebration for February 17, dedicated to honoring Black leaders past and present. Perkins emphasized the need to not only continue the celebration but to amplify it.

Perkins said the parade was about "continuing the importance of Black History in Northwest Pompano." And it did, The Heritage Parade brought together residents, artists, youth groups, and community leaders for a vibrant celebration of Black history and culture—a second chance to make good on what was lost during the MLK parade cancellation.

For many in Pompano, the event is more than a makeup parade—it's a statement of Black perseverance, pride, and purpose.

Aviation Pioneer

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Pompano Air Park, 1001 NE 10th St, Pompano Beach, FL 33060.

The new school is designed to provide hands-on technical education in aviation maintenance, repair, and overhaul, offering programs for both high school students and adults. The goal: create direct pipelines to careers in aviation and aerospace, industries in critical need of skilled labor.

Irving, a Jamaican-born trailblazer raised in Miami's inner city, made global headlines in 2007 when, at just 23 years old, he became the youngest person and first Black pilot to fly solo around the world. His 97-day journey aboard a single-engine aircraft he built himself was more than a personal feat — it was a mission to show young people, especially Black and brown children, what's possible with vision, discipline, and opportunity.

"Pompano Airport and Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport will become training hubs to serve communities directly focused on aviation-related careers," Irving said at the school's unveiling. "It's about empowering our youth with tools to dream big and take off."

BITTS has received strong support from the City of Pompano Beach, which allocated over \$200,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the



project. Mayor Rex Hardin emphasized the city's commitment to innovation and youth development: "We're proud to support this outstanding initiative... and we are honored that celebrated pilot, educator, and entrepreneur Barrington Irving will lead this acclaimed program."

Irving is also the founder of the

Flying Classroom, an educational platform that uses aviation to teach STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) in real-world ways. His work has reached thousands of students across the country, and BITTS marks his latest effort to bring those opportunities closer to home — and to communities that need them most.

Northwest Pompano

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1089 NW 6th Ave, Pompano Beach, will be officially dedicated as an ocean-friendly garden by the Surfrider Foundation. The ceremony will highlight the importance of the community garden and its role in addressing food insecurity, sustainability, and community engagement. The event is from 9 to 11 a.m.

A Solution to Pompano Beach's Food Desert Crisis

Although Pompano Beach was historically known as a farming town, recently, many families in Northwest Pompano Beach have struggled with limited access to fresh, affordable and healthy food.

According to the City of Pompano Beach, Patricia Davis Community Garden produces more than 1,000 pounds of fresh produce. The garden is managed by The Fruitful Field, a non-profit organization dedicated to growing nutritious food for those who need it the most.

Also, 40% of the garden's harvest is donated to programs at E. Pat Larkins, Blanche Ely High School's Culinary Program, the Blessings Food Pantry and Our Father's House Soup Kitchen. The garden also has 10 smaller plots available for lease to local families.

William Sidwell manages the garden and encourages the community to get involved.

"Growing food to feed others is one of the most humbling things people can do. Plant a seed harvest for a lifetime," he said.

Fresh Food, Weekly Sales, and Farmers Market Access

Beyond serving as a community resource, the garden also operates as a weekly fresh produce hub, allowing residents to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables at affordable prices. The goal is to provide consistent, high-quality food options while encouraging people to embrace sustainable, healthy eating habits.

The garden's impact extends beyond its immediate surroundings, with produce also available at the Pompano Beach Green Market on the second and fourth Saturday of the month from November to April. The goal is to make fresh food more accessible to the broader community while supporting urban agriculture initiatives. As the Patricia Davis Community Garden takes root, it represents a growing movement toward self-sufficiency, environmental awareness, and food justice in Pompano Beach.

Path Ahead

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major transformation.

What's Being Planned Downtown

The revitalization is part of the Downtown Pompano Beach Innovation District, which will combine government buildings, cultural venues, new housing, retail, green space, and transit upgrades. Phase I of the project includes the construction of a new City Hall, civic plaza, and an expanded Bailey Contemporary Arts Center (BaCA), all set for completion by 2034. Plans also include a new Tri-Rail station to improve regional connectivity.

Over time, developers expect to build over 4 million square feet of residential, office, and retail space—designed to create what the city calls a "live, work, play" environment.

Economic Boost, But For Whom?

Proponents of the plan highlight the potential for job creation and tax revenue. City estimates suggest over 3,000 permanent jobs and more than 5,000 construction jobs will be created. Once fully built out, the area could generate \$42 million in annual tax revenue and more than \$1 billion in annual economic activity.

But questions remain about who will benefit. Local leaders have promised to prioritize affordable workforce housing and job opportunities for residents. However, the rising tide of redevelopment in other South Florida cities has sometimes led to displacement of longtime residents and small businesses—a concern shared by many in Northwest Pompano.

The E. Pat Larkins Community Center: A Symbolic and Strategic Pivot

One of the most significant and potentially controversial changes involves the E. Pat Larkins Community Center. Long a cornerstone of civic life in Northwest Pompano and a tribute to one of the city's first Black mayors, the center is slated to be demolished as part of the downtown overhaul. In its place, a new "state-of-the-art" cultural center will be constructed nearby, according to city plans.

City officials say the new facility will offer upgraded amenities, expanded programming, and improved access. They argue that the redevelopment honors the legacy of Pat Larkins while modernizing the infrastructure to better serve the next generation.

However, some community members have expressed concern about losing a site with deep historical and emotional value. Critics worry that

removing the existing center could dilute its significance and leave residents feeling left out of decisions that directly affect their neighborhood.

Gentrification and the Future of Northwest Pompano

As new luxury apartments, entertainment venues, and retail corridors begin to reshape downtown, there are real concerns about rising property values and rent increases creeping into nearby neighborhoods. While city leaders have committed to preserving affordable housing and promoting homeownership among local residents, the forces of gentrification are difficult to control once large-scale private development enters the picture.

Efforts such as public meetings, workshops, and community engagement are ongoing, but their effectiveness

will depend on how closely city planners and developers listen to the voices of long-established residents, especially Black homeowners and small businesses who have been part of Pompano's story for generations.

A Vision in Progress

Pompano Beach's downtown redevelopment is a bold, long-term investment in the city's future. It has the potential to bring new energy, jobs, and opportunities. But it also comes with trade-offs—especially for historically marginalized communities who have seen similar projects elsewhere push them to the sidelines.

For residents of Northwest Pompano, the coming years will be a critical time to remain engaged, informed, and vocal about their place in the city's changing landscape.

Letter From the Editor



SMELL THE SEASON FEEL THE MOMENT

By Attiyya Atkins

It's Women's History Month and the first breath of Spring—what a divine time to be alive. There's something sacred about this season. The world is blooming, the air is shifting, and life is reminding us to pause... and really take it in.

I don't know about you, but I can't get over how Spring smells. It stops me in my tracks every time. One deep breath of fresh-cut grass or gardenia in the wind, and suddenly, I'm present. In a world that's always logged on and locked in—where we scroll more than we speak—Spring is the reminder that real life doesn't

live in the cloud.

You can't smell through a text. You can't feel sunlight through a screen. But you can walk outside, inhale deeply, and be reminded that you're here. You're alive. You're breathing. And if you're reading this, you're blessed with another chance to find meaning—in your day, in your work, in your connections.

This season, don't get caught chasing what's temporary. Tap into what's timeless. Be present with the people you love. Be rooted in the spaces that ground you. Smell the air. Feel the warmth. Let it remind you of who you are.

Spring is here—and so are you.

Attiyya Atkins

Editor-in-Chief, Villij News



Dear Annie,

I've been with my girl for a little over a year now, and things are mostly smooth—except for one big problem.

My mom doesn't vibe with her, and my girl doesn't really mess with my mom either. Anytime there's a family event, I'm low-key stressed, like I'm waiting for some drama to pop off. My mom says my girl's disrespectful, my girl says my mom's controlling and always judging her. I'm stuck in the middle, trying to keep the peace, but it's getting old. Should I take a side or try to get them to squash it?

—Between Two Queens

Dear Between Two Queens,

Whew—sounds like you're the middle man in a standoff that neither your mama nor your girl is backing down from. Let me be real with you: you don't gotta choose sides, but you do need to step up and lead.

Your girl is your partner. Your mama is your foundation. But when those two worlds collide? You're the one who has to set the tone, check the disrespect, and protect your peace.

Start by pulling your girl to the side. Let her get it off her chest—what's really rubbing her wrong? Is she feeling disrespected? Dismissed? Then, do the same with your mama. And yes, I know it's your mama, but grown or not, she can't be wildin' out just because she's family. Let her know love doesn't give her a pass to be petty.

Now listen—they ain't gotta braid each other's hair and be besties, but they do need to respect you and the role each of them plays in your life. And if either one can't do that? That's their choice—but the boundaries still stand.

You can love them both without getting dragged in the crossfire. Set the rules. Keep the peace. And if they can't act right, it's okay to excuse yourself from the nonsense—even if that means missing a cookout or two.

You're not choosing between them. You're choosing you. And that's what you need to do.

—Annie

Want Annie to weigh in on your love life, messy friendships, or family drama? Hit her up at askan-nie@villijnews.com. She got you.

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