

Annual State of the Village message

January 14 - 27, 2002

BY EVELYN GREER

Pinecrest Mayor



Mayor Greer

It is both my pleasure and my responsibility under the Pinecrest Charter to give a State of the Village report each winter. The state of the Village is great.

Seven years ago, when the Village founders — Gary and Veronica Matzner,

Cindi Blanck, myself and many, many others — were being ridiculed and attacked for daring to propose the radical step of “breaking away” from Dade County and creating a new city, we did not fully imagine the success of the future Village of Pinecrest. Saturation police presence, plummeting crime rate, low taxes, paved streets, Pinecrest Park, street trees and signs, and truly responsive government have all been accomplished over the loud objections of those who saw conspiracies and bad motives in our public service.

The Village of Pinecrest at the end of 2001 is a fully functioning local government delivering quality services to residents in a cost-efficient, open and sophisticated manner. The government runs as a quality private business would run: we maintain and update a five-year pro forma to anticipate our needs and allocate our resources, we run on budget in operations and capital projects and we maintain a flat organizational chart that keeps the people doing the work very close to the people setting the policies.

Further, we stay very close to our customer base. If you have written me a letter, you know that I respond in writing. I have, in fact, responded to hundreds of letters, emails, faxes and telephone calls in 2001 and in each year since I was first elected in 1996. Many of the suggestions or requests in such letters have been promptly and cheerfully implemented or accommodated, without delay. Many have been delightful, but undoable, although I appreciate the effort and thought behind each one.

My personal thanks to our excellent Village manager, Peter Lombardi, who continues to methodically and deliberately work his way through a mountainous agenda of issues and projects. Peter’s quiet, intense and utterly dedicated approach has stretched every tax dollar to its maximum and insured

See GREAT SHAPE, page 10

GREAT SHAPE, from page 1

that we get our money’s worth on every deal.

Our new police chief, John Hohensee, has brought a high level of professionalism and pride to our police department. In the 2001-2002 budget, we have provided for 58 sworn officers, up from 45 positions in 1999-2000, with a minimum of 12 officers on patrol in the streets during day and evening shifts. We have increased the number of detectives from two to three and now employ 87 people in the police department. We have placed defibrillators in each patrol car and trained our officers to use them.

I recognize the tremendous effect that our police officers have when my teenager’s friends complain that they all slow down to the speed limit as soon as they enter Pinecrest. I tell them that’s exactly what we intended.

Residents frequently ask why our police officers conduct so many traffic stops, sometimes for minor offenses like a malfunctioning taillight or an expired registration. Our experience has been that these petty violations lead to the discovery of larger problems. Last year, for example, one of our officers stopped a car for minor non-moving violations and discovered the body of a murder victim in the passenger seat. Yes, Virginia, in Pinecrest.

Our actual crime statistics continue to trend down, but law enforcement is well aware of the impact of economic hard times and demographics on crime rates. We continue to utilize a system of tracking crime that gives us early warning of crime hot spots, such as a rash of muggings in one area of town, so that we may concentrate resources in that area.

In capital projects, we continue to plan for and carry out our five-year capital plan. Projects completed in 2001 include the completion of our five-year road program, ongoing road and drainage improvement projects, the installation of our excellent street signs, the completion (almost) of the Red Road linear park, construction of a new soccer field at Pinecrest Elementary School and the continuation of our tree planting project. Our biggest project for 2002 is planning for and the acquisition of the Parrot Jungle property.

I have received many communications from residents and continue to urge all residents to provide their input and ideas to me and to the council. Your opinion does count and I do want to hear it. You can reach me at evyengreer@greerco.com or at my office, 2400 S. Dixie Hwy., Miami, FL 33133.