

# Sky High News

The Sky Lake - Highland Lakes Area  
Homeowners Association Newsletter

www.skyhighhomes.com | January, 2014

## OUR MISSION:

To serve as the collective voice for the Sky Lake - Highland Lakes area neighborhoods and to promote an exceptional quality of life for our community through advocacy and involvement.

## OUR VISION & OBJECTIVE:

Through an engaged, interactive and vibrant community, we intend to enhance and / or monitor security, safety, infrastructure, commercial development, traffic, schools, beautification and other areas with a three step process:

1. **Communicate:** Hold gatherings and discussions open to all residents to identify issues of critical concern.
2. **Educate:** Obtain, share and disseminate accurate information to fully understand these issues and potential impact.
3. **Advocate:** Bring forward our issues to our county officials for action.

Please contact Lenny Feldman - [lfeldman@strtrade.com](mailto:lfeldman@strtrade.com) if you are interested in attending or hosting an informal gathering in your neighborhood to discuss how we can best address these issues.

## Our Community:

We represent residents who live between Miami Gardens Drive to the South, County Line Road to the North, West Dixie Highway to the East and I-95 to the West.

## Mark your Calendar:

### Movie Night

Thursday, February 6, 2014 – 7:30 p.m.  
Highland Oaks Park


### General Membership Meeting and Annual Election

Find out what's on the horizon for your community.

Wednesday, February 12, 2014 – 7 p.m.  
Highland Oaks Park Recreation Building

www.skyhighhomes.com

or

 Sky Lake - Highland Lakes Area  
HOA

## Enhancing Our Community – Will \$8.7 Million in Annual Revenue by Incorporating Make a Difference?

By Lenny Feldman

Over the last five years, our community has paid in taxes about \$6.5 million more than the value of county services we have received. This reflects about .77 cents for each \$1.00 we pay on the assessed value of our homes.

As the nominee for our 2014 HOA President, I look forward to discussing how our tax dollars can more effectively support our community. I am hopeful that all of us – residing in homes or condominiums - will exchange ideas and bring forward our collective suggestions to our county officials regardless as to whether we incorporate as a city.

Our HOA also remains committed to getting you the facts and dispelling the rumors about incorporation and other options, so that you have the accurate information to decide which approach is best for our community.

**Based on research from county data and presentations from county officials, here is some information to consider.**

1. **The County's Position?** The county does not plan to force the remaining residents to incorporate, although nearly 60% of these unincorporated residents already are undergoing incorporation studies like ours. Officials say it will become increasingly challenging to serve the remaining unincorporated areas as additional cities are created.
2. **Aventura and NMB?** Aventura officials have not expressed an interest in annexing our area at this time, but North Miami Beach (whose municipal tax rate is over 3 times our current unincorporated rate) is interested if we do not incorporate.
3. **Tax Increase?** The average millage rate for the most recently established cities under 50,000 residents is 2.3 mills. A 3.0 millage for a new city would cost residents an additional \$17 per month for a home assessed at \$250,000, with a \$50,000 homestead exemption. Most condominium residents would not pay any tax based on their values and many residents could qualify for an additional senior and/or long-term resident exemption.
4. **Security Improvements?** The city would get a dedicated police force of at least five officers on duty at all times for the 18,000 residents. Now we share four officers per shift covering over 50,000 residents in unincorporated areas such as Ives Estates, California Club, 163<sup>rd</sup> Street Mall, Biscayne Gardens/Golden Glades as well as at the public schools.
5. **Other Improvements?** Subject to budgeting the projected \$8.7 million in annual revenue to cover expenses, remaining funds would be available for public safety, beautification, stormwater/road improvement, traffic enhancements, park improvements, controlled/planned development, etc.
6. **Additional Costs?** Before a city is established the residents would vote on a charter (like a constitution) that could specify the salaries for officials, prohibit perks/pensions, control exorbitant expenses, etc. There will be new expenses such as a city manager, staff, office space, etc. that would need to be monitored.
7. **Our Size?** Of the 34 current municipalities, 17 have less than 18,000 residents (they are smaller than our area). Also, the city would include the Miami Gardens Drive business district, as well as the Ojus corridor with over twenty (20) undeveloped acres.

The HOA welcomes all information, opinions and questions on how to enhance and empower our community. Please visit our website, [www.skyhighhomes.com](http://www.skyhighhomes.com), or contact me at [lfeldman@strtrade.com](mailto:lfeldman@strtrade.com) to share your thoughts and ideas or to receive more information. I look forward to a productive year for our community!

# Sky High News

## A message from the President

I wish you a Happy and Healthy 2014 and look forward to seeing you at the General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, February 12, 2014 when our annual elections are held. After 5 years as President of the HOA, I am very excited to be moving on to serve as Immediate Past President for 2014. We have some great candidates for the Board of Directors this coming year which fulfills a goal of increasing representation throughout our entire community and its various subdivisions.

Lenny Feldman has accepted our endorsement to become our new HOA President. Lenny has been very involved in the HOA and our community for numerous years and has taken the time to speak to many different people to gain a good understanding of the quality of life issues as well as the history of our community. Lenny grew up in Highland Lakes and moved back to the community as an adult to raise his family just blocks from where his parents still live. Our community is very fortunate to have Lenny and I am hoping that all of you will show him the same support you have given me during the last 5 years.

Looking back, the time went by very quickly. Just a few of the major accomplishments of our Board of Directors during this period include: installing cameras at the guard gates in the Highland Lakes Special Taxing District; working with the schools to mitigate the effects of advertising through signs, to raise funds; working to find solutions to the traffic created by the schools; supporting Facebook and Nextdoor to increase communication with the residents; and educating the community on the topic of annexation and incorporation so we can all make informed decisions.

I would like to thank the community for their support during these last five years, as well as the Board of Directors, the Officers, and all the others who gave their time as volunteers to our community. Additionally, a special thank you to all of the individuals that made my job as President easier.

Regards,

*Bari Schanerman*  
President

## Committees - Get Involved!

**Beautification** – Work on projects to improve our common areas.

**CERT** – Community Emergency Response Team – Residents are trained.

**Code Enforcement** – Set up teams to deal with issues that impact our neighborhoods.

**Crime Watch** – Establishes networks of neighbors to promote safety in our neighborhoods.

**Park** - Work with county to improve our parks.

**Security** - Security concerns within the special taxing districts and other neighborhoods without guard gates.

Please contact Freyda Hyman - [freddimark@aol.com](mailto:freddimark@aol.com) for more information.

## A message from Commissioner Sally Heyman

Dear Highland Lakes – Skylake Homeowners: Happy New Year and best wishes for a safe and healthy 2014. As your County Commissioner, I want to again thank you for the opportunity to serve you in local government. I along with District 4 staff remain available to assist you in a responsive, professional manner. We are here to assist and facilitate an easy means to government, especially at the County level. We can be reached by phone: (305) 787-5999 (District Office) and (305) 375-5128 (Downtown Office) and via e-mail at [district4@miamidade.gov](mailto:district4@miamidade.gov)

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## SCHOOL UPDATE

### DR. MICHAEL M. KROP SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

With our "A" rating from the Florida Department of Education, a 90% graduation rate, and outstanding advanced placement recognition, Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior (MKHS) is truly taking Miami-Dade County by Storm! This year, our school has increased its curriculum offerings to include 6 on-site dual enrollment opportunities, an Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (AHOT), and an Academy of International Business and Finance (AIBF). The AHOT partners with FIU and Le Cordon Bleu. The AIBF is partnered with the Wharton School of Business through the Knowledge@Wharton program. Both academies seek individuals connected to the fields who are interested in speaking with students and offering internships. Next year, our school will also be an Advanced Placement Capstone school! Combine these new programs with our continued success in the four A's: academics, athletics, the arts, and activities, there is no question as to why 97% of our graduating seniors continue their education at a two-year or four-year university. Come be a part of the amazing climate and excellence at MKHS by volunteering with our academies, attending our athletic and magnet performances, and joining our outstanding Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). All of the necessary information is located on our new website, [www.kropseniorhigh.org](http://www.kropseniorhigh.org).

### HIGHLAND OAKS MIDDLE SCHOOL (HOM)

HOM continues to excel academically, preparing students for the next step to high school. HOM offers an athletic program which includes a variety of sports, rarely found in most middle school as well as a fine arts program. HOM is able to continue and grow these programs each year with funds from the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and numerous fundraisers throughout the year. There are 4 easy ways all homeowners can help raise funds for HOM:

1. **BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION:** Each logo is worth 10 cents for HOM!
2. **LABELS FOR EDUCATION:** Save UPC and beverage caps from participating products. HOM will earn valuable points which can be redeemed for academic, athletic and supplies.
3. **TYSON PRODUCTS:** Cut the label of very Tyson product you buy. Each Logo is worth 24 cents for HOM!
4. **INK & TONER CARTRIDGE:** Collect your empty ink and toner cartridges. For every 10 cartridges collected Office Depot will give a \$20 coupon to buy supplies.

Call 305-932-3810 for more information.

### VIRGINIA A. BOONE HIGHLAND OAKS ELEMENTARY (VABHOE)

This February 2, 2014, from 12:00-4:00, Virginia A. Boone Highland Oaks Elementary School PTA will be hosting the 11th Annual Family Fun Day and Carnival. **The entire community is invited!** Full-access wristbands to this year's event are now on sale at \$12.00 each. Purchase them in advance to save \$3.00, wristbands are \$15.00 at the carnival. This is a cash only event.

Additionally, we are looking for sponsors for our Carnival. The money raised from this event will go directly back to our school to enrich our children's education. Thanks to your generous support in the past, we have been able to purchase a wireless computer lab for teachers and students to use, refresh our media center, purchase new equipment for our music program, facilitate teacher websites, replace worn rugs in primary grades' classrooms, replace the tables in the cafeteria and so much more! Please contact VABHOE@gmail.com to purchase wristbands or for more information on how to make a donation to this amazing and fun event.

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# Sky High News

## HOA Improves Security with Enhancements to Special Taxing Districts in Light of Less Police Coverage in Northeast Miami-Dade

The good news on security is that we understand from our local Miami-Dade police officers that our area has seen a decline in crime over the past year. For those interested in keeping track, we use [crimemapping.com](http://crimemapping.com), which is linked to the Miami-Dade Police Department.

However, local officers have told us that the amount of officers on duty have decreased due to recent budget cuts. Specifically, each day we share the four (4) Miami-Dade officers on duty for our community with a total of over 50,000 residents throughout unincorporated North Dade including Ives Estates, California Club, 163<sup>rd</sup> Street Mall, Biscayne Gardens and Golden Glades. Local officers tell us that covering such a large area really impacts response times.

This decreased police presence has caused several neighborhoods to implement some common-sense security improvements. For instance, Highland Lakes residents have been active in enhancing their Special Taxing District. One of the suggestions that came from a meeting of the security committee this year was to close the Highland Lakes residents' gate from midnight to 6 am. After polling residents, the proposal was tested and ultimately implemented this past year. The security committee coordinated with the county and 50 State Security regarding this initiative so all traffic entering the Highland Lakes community was passing through the visitors lane, to record the tags from all vehicles. This turned out to be very successful.

We are also pleased to report that the Highland Gardens neighborhood has collected enough signatures to hold a mail-in ballot to add cameras to their gate. The security committee is in frequent contact with 50 State Security regarding this initiative and others throughout our community.

Additionally, the security committee is in contact with county officials overseeing the Highland Lakes special taxing district regarding the bougainvillea that was planted along the outside wall of County Line Rd. from I-95 to Highland Lakes Blvd. and inside the wall from Highland Lakes Blvd. to NE 25th Ave. The goal is to ensure these thorny shrubs are allowed to grow and deter criminals from climbing over the this back wall. The county has advised us that additional plantings will occur this spring, particularly for areas of limited growth.

The HOA stands ready to meet with residents from all neighborhoods with or without a special taxing district to discuss how enhancements can be made, surplus funds can be utilized effectively, a special taxing district can be started, and residents can enhance or start a crime watch group.

The HOA security committee meets periodically, and any resident who would like to join or has any comments can contact Marc Hurwitz at [marc@xinvestigations.com](mailto:marc@xinvestigations.com).

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## Nextdoor - Your Community Portal!

Our Nextdoor private network is taking off. Currently we have almost 400 registered users from Highland Lakes and Highland Gardens.

There are also Nextdoor sites set up for Oak Hammock, Oak Haven, Enchanted Lake, and Sunswep Isle.

People are using Nextdoor to do a variety of things:

- Quickly get the word out about a break-in or suspicious activity
- Ask for help keeping an eye out for a lost dog
- Track down a trustworthy babysitter
- Get a recommendation for a best painter in town
- Organize a garage sale
- Be able to know their neighbors by name

This year Nextdoor added a "Nearby Neighbors" feature which allows us to share information with other nearby Nextdoor sites.

Joining is easy. Go to [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) and put in your address to join or start a new Nextdoor Neighborhood.

### How to customize your email settings

To update your email settings on a web browser:

1. Sign in to your Nextdoor account.
2. Click your name in the upper-right corner of the page.
3. Select Settings.
4. Select your desired settings.
5. Any change you make to your email settings will update automatically. After you change an email preference, you will see a yellow bar at the top of the page that says "Your settings have been updated."

Please direct your questions to Mark Greenspan - [mark@thisismark.net](mailto:mark@thisismark.net).

### Leon Gomberg 305-302-1377

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## An Active Year for Traffic and Code Enforcement

This past year has been an active one for the HOA in the areas of traffic and code enforcement. Here are some highlights.

**School traffic and safety.** Last year, the HOA placed a major emphasis on concerns about school traffic and safety at drop off and pick up times. One accomplishment included having the Aventura-Waterways constructed a fence along the east side of NE 26th Avenue running along the parking lot to help curb the jaywalking and parking on the residential property, which has had a positive effect. Another accomplishment was getting the county, after a two year effort, to construct a turn lane at County Line Road and West Dixie Hwy. to help with the east bound traffic and minimize the backup during school hours.

**1-95 Road Improvements.** During the year we remained in close contact with the F.D.O.T. regarding the I-95 express lanes project and kept the residents informed about the progress, changes, and any anticipated road closures. We successfully had F.D.O.T. accelerate their work schedule on part of the Ives Dairy Road southbound exit ramp. We also asked for and are involved with the plans for the beautification that will be done at the completion of this project sometime in late 2014.

**All Aboard Miami.** As you may know, the new All Aboard Miami is in the planning stages with a route from downtown Miami to Orlando which will travel along the tracks at West Dixie Highway. Different vendors who are bidding on a project with the county regarding traffic congestion and future needs at the intersections of Ives Dairy Rd. and County Line Rd. at West Dixie Highway and NE 26th Ave. are reaching out to the community to hear our perspective on the traffic flow and suggestions we may have. As planners expect track closings at least once each hour, we need to address this impact as part of the solution. Suggestions have been provided to the planners to help with the traffic congestion and beautification along this corridor. When we receive any updates we will keep you informed.

**Code Enforcement.** In regards to code enforcement, the committee addressed approximately forty (40) complaints from residents that were all resolved. We will be conducting another inspection in January as part of the ongoing process that volunteers from the HOA do for the community. Additionally, a hazardous pick up event will be held sometime in January where residents will be able to dispose of all toxic material. We will let you know the location when it is available.

We always welcome your comments regarding traffic and code enforcement. Please contact Bill Clayton at [steviern1@bellsouth.net](mailto:steviern1@bellsouth.net) to provide your input.

Please support our neighbors who have placed ads in this newsletter! To include your business in the future, please contact Lynn Wenguer at [lwwgr1@aol.com](mailto:lwwgr1@aol.com).



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# Invoice for Annual Dues

January - December 2014

Sky Lake - Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association

Become a member or renew your membership for  
only \$30.00 per year.

## Top 5 Reasons to Join the HOA

- **Inform:** Receive current and accurate information about security, traffic, commercial development, schools and initiatives impacting you and your family.
- **Educate:** Exchange ideas to maintain and increase home value, enhance home/personal safety, and minimize homeowner costs (e.g., taxes, insurance, utilities).
- **Support:** Enable hard-working community volunteers to maintain communication through the HOA website and newsletter, hold events, and improve our neighborhoods.
- **Network:** Gain support for your business and find others with similar interests by building relationships with other engaged neighbors.
- **Advocate:** Become part of the voice that shares concerns and works to find solutions - increased membership attracts the attention of officials to address our needs.

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Please include zip code)

Email\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* For meetings, issues, events, etc. Only used for HOA communications. Please print clearly!

**Special Interests:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committees:** Beautification \_\_\_\_\_ Code Enforcement \_\_\_\_\_

Crime Watch/Security \_\_\_\_\_ Parks \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_

**CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)** \_\_\_\_\_

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To:

# Sky High News

**General Membership Meeting and Annual Elections:**

**Wednesday, February 12, 2014 - 7 P.M.**

**Highland Oaks Park Recreation Building**

## Proposed Slate of Officers and Directors

### Officers:

President: Lenny Feldman  
Vice Presidents:  
Mort Braverman  
Bill Clayton  
Cristina Hiraldo  
Marc Hurwitz  
Sam Katz  
David Promoff  
Stephanie Ruiz  
Treasurer: Lynn Wenguer  
Secretary: Freyda Hyman

### Directors:

Bari Schanerman - Immediate Past President  
Brenda Auerbach      Jacky Needelman  
Isaac Bendrao      Sid Rabin  
Amy Chafetz      Andrew Rodman  
Ken Friedman      Evan Ross  
Mark Greenspan      Jaci Seskin  
Jose Klahr      Don Shannon  
Madeline Langbaum      Ronald Silver  
Trudy Lechner      Rhoda Stein  
Ed Margolis      Bob Weisblum  
Rochelle Matza

## Important Numbers/ Sites

- New or Replacement Gate Cards 305-375-2702
- Code enforcement - Bulk Pick-up - Illegal Dumping - 311
- Miami Dade Police - non-emergency 305-467-5423
- Highland Oaks Park - 305-932-2164
- Miami Dade County - [www.miamidade.gov](http://www.miamidade.gov)
- Homeowners Assoc. - [www.skyhighhomes.com](http://www.skyhighhomes.com)

## Did You Know:

- You can help the police by reporting suspicious incidents or a burglary, robbery, or other crime that has occurred to your property. Call 911 or for a non-emergency 305-476-5423 and help keep our neighborhoods safe.
- If you have concerns about a specific problem at a specific location you should call 311 to report your concern.
- Lighting up our neighborhoods at night is as easy as using outdoor house lights, path lights, and flood lights in the evening. This makes it safer for pedestrians and more difficult for someone contemplating a crime.
- By joining the HOA and coming to General Membership meetings, you can stay up to date on the facts of what is happening in the community and share your ideas of what you would like to see in the community.
- We are very appreciative of residents that volunteer their time to be on a committee to work with the Board of Directors on projects in our community.