



INSIDE HILLCREST

CONNECTING NEIGHBORS TO NEIGHBORS

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MARCH INSIDE HILLCREST

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The following letter was recently sent to our Inside *Hillcrest* email subscribers. If you're fortunate to live in a building where the board keeps residents informed, you may already be aware of some of these important issues. But now, more than ever, **all** of Hillcrest and Parkview must come together to protect our shared quality of life.

Hillcrest has long been known as the *Hidden Jewel of Hollywood*—and for good reason. Our buildings and surroundings are meticulously maintained, creating a community that feels like a true oasis. Traditionally, Hillcrest building boards have not only prioritized financial and structural stability but have also fostered a warm, inclusive environment for residents. Our Parkview neighbors share that same commitment.

As the city around us changes—becoming more reminiscent of Miami or Fort Lauderdale rather than the Hollywood of just a decade ago, our unity and dedication to preserving the character of our community are more important than ever.

Urgent: Fight Back Against Rental Overdevelopment in Hillcrest

If you are not already concerned about the flood of rental buildings being pushed into our neighborhood, you should be. We do **NOT** want more rentals in Hillcrest. Developers are aggressively pushing their agenda, trying to convince us that their so-called “affordable housing” is meant for our hometown heroes—medical personnel, police officers, and firefighters. **How dare they!** These developers are receiving tax exemptions and special treatment from the City of Hollywood and Broward County.

Yes, we need affordable housing, but **rentals are not the answer**. Instead of trapping our essential workers into a cycle of rent payments, why not build reasonably priced condos with special financing options—giving them the **equity, stability, and pride of ownership** they deserve?

The Hillcrest PUD: Broken Promises and Questionable Deals

The Hillcrest PUD (Planned Unit Development) was supposed to be **capped at 3,000 units**.

So why are more being added? 2,355 condos were built and 645 homes and townhomes, so we are capped. But without a **Master Association**, we have **no unified voice**—and we are being taken advantage of. Our elected officials should be protecting our interests, but it looks like **we have to fight for ourselves**.

We may not be able to stop the **620 rental units already approved** next to Hillcrest 25, but we can and **must** fight the **additional 120 rental units** being forced into the heart of Hillcrest. Developers are likely using rental units to **sidestep PUD regulations**—this deal **doesn't pass the smell test**.

We Need Strong, Smart Voices—Now

Hillcrest board members are stretched thin, but each building has people who care. **If you are intelligent, well-spoken, and committed to protecting our community, we need you.** Email me at info@HillcrestLC.com to join the fight against developer overreach. Let's take back control of our neighborhood—before it's too late.

It has been recommended that we engage legal counsel, specifically a land use attorney, and we have an excellent referral. The Hillcrest buildings are considering a fair and equitable contribution model, with each building contributing at a rate of \$10 per unit. Under this structure:

- Low and mid-rise buildings would contribute between \$330 and \$650, depending on the number of units.
- High-rise buildings would contribute between \$1,800 and \$2,350, based on the same criteria.

This approach would generate \$23,550. If the President's Council contributed an additional \$10 per member, we would reach the \$25,000 necessary to move forward.

Additionally, the Parkview at Hillcrest HOA shares our concerns, and a collaborative effort would strengthen our position in addressing this issue and protecting our community. We

encourage all stakeholders to work together in fighting excessive building in our neighborhood. For those of you who want to be proactive and let City Hall know your thoughts and feelings about this issue, these are the email addresses for the members of the City of Hollywood Planning and Development Board:

dick@dickblattner.com; tara.jafarmadar@gmail.com; morales@plus-designs.com; mena.morgan.hollywood@gmail.com; jstadlen@outlook.com; robertvargas201@gmail.com; parksideken@aol.com; bobglickman@att.net; dianapitt@yahoo.com

These are the email addresses of OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS, our Hollywood Mayor and City/County Commissioners

lquintana@hollywoodfl.org; bfurr@broward.org; jlevy@hollywoodfl.org; kbiederman@hollywoodfl.org; phernandez@hollywoodfl.org; tcallari@hollywoodfl.org; cshuham@hollywoodfl.org; agruber@hollywoodfl.org

The email address for Andria Wingett, Director of Development Services is awingett@hollywoodfl.org.

WHEN WE ELECT SOMEONE, IT IS TO REPRESENT OUR INTERESTS

When it comes to electing representatives, we must also ensure that our own building board members take this issue seriously. One building treasurer told me, “I don't care about the development.” That response is simply unacceptable. This will be a key test of whether we elected the right individuals to serve on our building boards this year—those who are willing to step up when it matters most.

To address this concern, we called a special HLC meeting to inform building leaders about the situation. It's worth asking your building board who attended on behalf of your building—or if anyone from your board ever participates at all. At least three buildings would be dishonest if they claimed their board members ever attended an HLC meeting. And not one of the three would I rank in the top 20 of well-run buildings.

Additionally, a critical sidenote; **all of us** are supposed to receive notifications from the City of Hollywood whenever the Planning and Development Board or City Commission schedules discussions on these projects. Have you received these notices?

On the next page are the Minutes from the March 6, 2025, HLC that dealt specifically with this issue.



Building A Better Community

MARCH 6, 2025, HLC MEETING – by Steve Schneider

The March 6 meeting of the **Hillcrest Leadership Council** focused on one main issue: how can the community deal with the proposed construction of 120 units of “workforce” and “affordable” housing rentals at 1101 Hillcrest Drive. The developer also wants to put some office space on the property, as well as 136 parking spaces. The meeting was held at Rec Room II, 1151 S. Hillcrest Court.

District 6 Commissioner Idelma Quintana attended. Ray Chait, the president of Building 16, across the street from the proposed project, led the meeting, which occurred a night after developers addressed about 40 concerned citizens via a Zoom meeting. Inside Hillcrest is also publishing an article on the Zoom meeting in this issue.

Early on at the HLC meeting, Chait distributed copies of a 2016 “Declaration of Restrictive Covenants” that is recorded with Broward County. He cited item 15, which states that the permissible amount of housing in the Hillcrest PUD (Planned Unit Development) can only be changed if “at least 80% of the residential unit owners located within the Hillcrest PUD agree to the change.

But the 1101 Hillcrest Drive developers and the City of Hollywood are working independently of this Declaration of Restrictive Covenants to determine whether city leaders will approve a change to the Hillcrest PUD this spring.

Commissioner Quintana was given a copy of the Covenants at the meeting. She said she will study it and learn what role it plays in connection with the ongoing proceedings at City Hall. The city Technical Advisory Committee has already held several meetings on the bid to place affordable housing rental units on Hillcrest property. It is not clear if the TAC officials knew about the Declaration of Restrictive Covenants.

However, Chait told the HLC audience that he spoke with the attorney for Building 16. According to Chait, the attorney advised him the Covenants are binding, and give people who live within the Hillcrest PUD the right to say yes or no to the proposed development. The Hillcrest PUD is comprised of units in Hillcrest and Parkview at Hillcrest.

Hillcrest leaders also learned that the developers are speaking with city leaders because the maximum number of housing units has been reached in the Hillcrest PUD. This means either people living in the Hillcrest PUD, or the City of Hollywood, depending on how the law is interpreted, has the power to expand the number of permissible housing units here. And because the law is complex, Chait and **Cindy Abraham, the secretary of the Hillcrest Leadership Council**, suggested building leaders need to speak with the people who live in their buildings

The goal is for the 24 buildings to pool financial resources to hire an attorney who will represent Hillcrest interests with the developer and the City of Hollywood. Abraham floated the idea that we could get a strong legal advocate if we came up with \$25,000. This could happen if each building pitched in \$10 per unit.

Abraham was particularly unhappy with the fact the first proposed development – the 620 units next to Hillcrest 25 and now these 120 units behind Hillcrest 20 – are both using the argument that these “affordable rental units” are geared toward first responders, medical personnel, police officers and firefighters. As a realtor, Abraham believes that offering the sale of affordable residences would better help our hometown heroes, instead of taking their hard earned money in the form of rent payments which gives them no equity or future security.

But apparently, that helps the developers get “tax exemptions” which benefits them also. The next step is for the City to approve the Site Plan. And more unsettling is the fact that The Housing Trust Group is asking the City of Hollywood to change the Flex Unit Allocation here. In a follow up email interview, **Commissioner Quintana, our representative at**

City Hall, explained the Flex Unit Allocation this way:

“Here is what the City of Hollywood Municipal Code Publication had to say...

“§ 3.20. Rules of Flexibility and Reserve Units.

1. The Broward County Land Use Plan contains policies comprised of “Rules of Flexibility.” These rules address density for residential areas and uses, and intensity for non-residential areas and uses. The rules are designed to allow for local governments to make relatively minor changes to their adopted land use plans without a corresponding county action on the County Land Use Plan, which would otherwise be required to maintain consistency between the city and county plans.”

Finally, developers want the city to amend the amount of land that can be filled with substances such as concrete. City law holds that developers can use 65% of the land as an area that can’t absorb water. But the developer wants that number increased to 70%.

At the Zoom meeting, developer representatives said we will be protected from flooding caused due to the construction because government insists on increasingly strict water treatment systems being placed on the property. The request to increase the area that can’t absorb water from 65% to 70% happens at a time when Hollywood is dealing with increasingly heavy rainstorms and a corresponding increase in flooding.

Attendees of the March 6 meeting brought up issues that were also discussed the night before at the Zoom meeting with developer representatives. One Hillcrest resident offered a pithy observation when he asked why the developer would spend money to try to get the project approved unless they suspected their request would be granted.

Commissioner Quintana, also in her email, provided the name, title and email of a high-ranking city official who can help us get information about how the City Of Hollywood’s development policies and procedures work. Quintana said we can contact **Andria Wingett, who is the Director of Development Services. Her email is awingett@hollywoodfl.org**. Wingett, in turn, will ask people in her department to give us the information we request.

HLC meeting attendees also heard from **Hillcrest HPD Neighborhood Team Leader, Officer Josh Grotenhuis**. He said HPD officers stationed in the parking lot of a Hillcrest building arrested some youngsters in connection with trying to break into cars. Grotenhuis reminded Hillcresters that crooks are targeting Hondas, and, to some extent Toyotas right now. He encouraged residents to buy a “Club” or club-like device to lock the steering wheel of the car. The officer believes people who steal cars want to act quickly and will probably move on to another car that doesn’t have a locking mechanism on the steering wheel.

He also reminded residents about the upsurge in fraud, urging us to be careful about emails and phone calls, in particular, that seem suspicious or request personal data such as social security numbers or bank account information. Police and Firefighters NEVER solicit money over the phone, which is a common con. Nor do veteran agencies. The bottom line is to NEVER give money or personal information to ANYONE over the phone. Tell them to send you their request via the US mail. This will give you time to think about whatever issue they bring up, or you can even look up the company/bank/agency phone number and call them back yourself.

As for emails, NEVER click on anything that comes from a company, bank, charity or government agency.

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HARWIN-TOBIN 1101 LLC MEETING RECAP – by Steve Schneider

About 40 people who attended a March 5 Zoom meeting with developers learned about a proposal to build 120 units of “workforce” and “affordable” housing rentals in Hillcrest. The plan also calls for some office space, and 136 parking spaces in the back of the building. The rental building comes with amenities, including a pool and fitness center, according to the representatives for the developer.

They added it is illegal to prevent people from outside of Florida to apply for the affordable housing slots, although it is likely most units will go to people already living here. The developers gave examples of the types of people they will reach out to. The recruitment effort will include Memorial Hospital, senior groups and firefighters and police officers, although people who stock shelves or operate cash registers at Publix may also qualify.

A slide show broke down how the affordable housing units will be allocated. It read: 20 units of 1/1 apartments will go to people at 80% AMI; 45 units of 1/1 are reserved for people at 60% AMI; 10 1/1 units would go to people at 30% AMI.

AMI stands for Area Median Income and is calculated yearly by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The costs for the AMI-based units is estimated on where things will be in 2026, with estimated rents ranging from \$646 to \$2,071 a month.

The breakdown for the 2/2 units is as follows: seven units for 80% AMI; 30 2/2 units for 60% AMI; eight 2/2 units will go to people at 30% AMI.

Grants, government incentives and possibly even Section 8 vouchers could help fuel the development, according to developer representatives who addressed the Zoom audience.

If approved by the City of Hollywood, the eight-story building will rise at 1101 Hillcrest Drive, across from a charter school, near an elementary school, and adjacent to several mid-rise and high-rise Hillcrest buildings, as well as part of Parkview at Hillcrest. The land currently serves as a parking lot with a temporary modular office for the Tobin family. Developers stressed that Jason Tobin is part of the affordable housing plan, adding his family has been involved with Hillcrest for years, and knows the area well. The Housing Trust Group, which has already worked on affordable housing deals with the City of Hollywood, is also involved.

But the Tobin family familiarity with Hillcrest didn't stop Zoom attendees from voicing their concerns. Briefly, here are the main points raised at the meeting.

1. Overcrowding Concerns – Hillcrest and Parkview at Hillcrest are already crowded. A new development next to Hillcrest 25 will add approximately 630 rental units and retail space. This project, located between Park Road and Pembroke Road, comes alongside the city's plans to permit 750 high-rise units near I-95 at Pembroke Road.

2. Increased Traffic – More residents mean more cars, further straining roads already burdened by increasingly heavier traffic.

3. Parking Shortages – The proposed development lacks sufficient parking spaces. If renters and guests have nowhere to park, where will they go? Hillcrest buildings already face parking shortages.

4. Noise Pollution – Construction will bring significant noise to the area.

5. Building Structural Concerns – Part of the building will be supported by just three columns. A Hillcrest resident questioned if this is adequate. Developer representatives promised to follow up by email with answers to this and other unanswered questions from the meeting.

6. Green Space & Drainage Issues – Developers are requesting a city variance to allow the project's building and parking area to cover 70% of the land, exceeding the city's 65% limit on impermeable surfaces (which don't absorb water). However, representatives assured residents that stricter regulations require proper drainage systems. The meeting was recorded, allowing residents to hold developers accountable if issues arise.

7. Planned Unit Development (PUD) Limits – Developers want the City of Hollywood to modify the PUD to allow 120 more rental units. A Parkview at Hillcrest resident argued that the PUD limit has already been reached.

8. Potential Costs & Rule Enforcement – Residents asked whether the 1101 Hillcrest Drive project would impose costs on Hillcrest or Parkview at Hillcrest communities. They also questioned how new tenants would be prevented from violating community rules. Developers said they needed to research these concerns and would provide answers via email.

9. Affordable Housing Question – A resident suggested building affordable condos instead of rental units to help working families and first responders invest in homeownership. Developers responded that Housing Group Trust only builds rentals.

10. Tenant Screening – Developers assured residents that future tenants of 1101 Hillcrest Drive must pass a strict background and financial screening.

Meanwhile, developer representatives said construction could start in the first quarter of 2026, pending approval from the city Planning and Development Board and then the Hollywood City Commission. The commission is expected to vote twice this spring, officials said at the Zoom meeting. Developers expect construction to take about 16 months. The city Technical Advisory Committee has already reviewed the plans.

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- ✓ **Marine Environmental Protection** - promoting clean waterways through marine pollution awareness programs that help to recognize, protect, and assess the environment.
- ✓ **Recruiting** - building a stronger Coast Guard team by promoting awareness of career opportunities for service.

“I would venture to say that patriotism, doing something tangible for my country, comradeship, being part of a whole that is greater than its parts, sharing in the exultation of a successful mission, pride in wearing the uniform, and gratitude for the personal recognition received are the reasons I joined the Auxiliary.”



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STATE OF THE COUNTY - County Commissioner Beam Furr - District 6



Greetings Hillcrest Residents.

This month, I had the opportunity to deliver the State of the County to residents and business leaders in my capacity as Mayor. There are many things you could say about how our County is succeeding – from the growth of our Port and Airport, to the debut of our new Convention Center Expansion and Headquarters Hotel, to our leadership on issues like resilience and free expression. But perhaps the most telling thing you can say about the State of Broward County is what we can say about how we treat each other. At a time of partisan rancor, when federal employees have to summarize their jobs in bullet points and where it so often it feels like we are talking over each other, Broward County is proud to create a culture of appreciation for our employees and of unity for our community. This ultimate value is shown in how we protect our libraries, act as stewards for our environment, and take care of our citizens from young to old.

The State of Broward County is strong not because we are “great”, but because we are good. We take care of each other. We catch each other when we fall, and celebrate each other when we win. Communities like Hillcrest exemplify the best of us. We are fortunate to have residents like you taking the lead during this inflection point for our County and Country.

Vulnerability Assessment Workshop

Over the past two years, Broward County has engaged a consultant to develop a comprehensive Countywide Resilience Plan that outlines

the future impacts of climate change and possible solutions to help address this crisis. This month, the Broward County Commission held an extensive workshop to discuss the release of this Resilience Plan. The Resilience Plan features detailed modeling of economic impacts, exhaustive examination of future impacts, and suggestions of multiple scenarios to begin to build the resilience needed for the future. This Plan was developed in conjunction with Broward County residents who gave public input, including many in District Six. The next step is for Broward County and our Commission to engage with each municipality as well as the business community and other stakeholders in order to prioritize which projects should come first and begin taking steps to implement them. Thank you to our Resilient Environment Department, including our Chief Resilience Officer Dr. Jennifer Jurado, for their diligent work in putting this workshop together and leading the discussion.

Contact Us

Our District office is conveniently located within the lobby of the Hollywood Branch of the Broward County Public Library at 2600 Hollywood Blvd, next to Hollywood City Hall. My District office staff is available to you from 10 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Friday. Due to an accident at the Hollywood Library, this location is currently closed. My staff is also working from my office in Fort Lauderdale and from other locations within our District. The Fort Lauderdale office is open for your convenience Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call 954-357-7006/7790, or email me at bfurr@broward.org.



MARTY KIAR BROWARD COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER



Qualifying for the Limited-Income Senior Exemption - Does Your Social Security Count?

To qualify for the 2025 Limited-Income Senior Exemption, an applicant must be at least 65 years old as of January 1, 2025, and have a combined household adjusted gross income not exceeding \$37,694 for 2024. Many seniors believe they do not qualify for

this exemption because their social security payments exceed this amount; **however**, applicants who file income taxes should look at their adjusted gross income amount (line 11 on the IRS 1040 form) to see if they do qualify for this additional savings. If you are not required to file an income tax return based on your age and income, you would qualify for this exemption. Please visit our website to apply for the additional **Limited-Income Senior Exemption**.

If you are already receiving the Senior Exemption and have not moved to a new home, your exemption will automatically renew for the 2025 tax year unless you notify our office that you have exceeded the income threshold for the current year.

BCPA's Tax Estimator - An Online Tool to Help You Plan for Your New Home

While the Property Appraiser's Office does not set or collect taxes, we know the importance of understanding what the property taxes will be on a new home. Before purchasing your new home, you can use our online **Tax Estimator** to estimate what the property taxes will be using your purchase price and the current tax rates available. It is important to understand that this tool is simply an estimate and does not include any nonad valorem (city) fees associated with the property. The non-ad valorem fees are shown on the property's previous tax bill or TRIM Notice also available on line.

If you currently own a home with Homestead Exemption, our **Portability Estimator** will help you estimate the taxes on a new home using any portability you may have on your current home. If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at martvkiar@bcpa.net.

Take care,

Marty Kiar, JD, CFA
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In 1980, Ted turned his passion for helping others into a business, founding Ted's Moving. Today his eldest daughter Tracy, calling it "an honor", helps him run the office and continue the legacy he started. The Freeman family holds the special needs community close to their hearts, as Ted's oldest grandson has autism. That deep connection fuels the family's dedication to serving everyone with kindness and understanding.

Ted takes great pride in his fairness and commitment to every customer, always going the extra mile to ensure their moving experience is as smooth and stress-free as possible. When you move with Ted's Moving, you are not just another customer—you are part of the family.

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What's Happening In The Real Estate Market in Hillcrest and Parkview?



Cindy Abraham

Brian Gaiefsky

In 2024 we saw prices fall as demand slowed and inventory continues to increase.. Affordability issues from high prices, high mortgage rates and rising insurance are the biggest factors for the market slowdown. It takes an average of 57 days from list to close when a property is priced right.

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ATTENTION BUILDING LEADERS AND SELLERS

- by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams Realty Professionals A Team Florida

The following questions have been added to Page 3 of the Condominium Seller Disclosure, which must be completed and signed by the Seller. This disclosure must be provided to the Buyer within three days of executing the contract. Additionally, Sellers are required to provide a copy of the Structural Integrity Reserve Study (SIRS) report and the results of the 40- or 50-year safety inspection.

To facilitate compliance with these new regulations, it is recommended that these reports be made available on your building's website, ensuring easier access for unit owners who plan to list their condo for sale.

8. Milestone Inspection & Structural Integrity Reserve Study (F.S. 553.899)

(a) Has anything appeared in the Association Agendas and or the Minutes regarding Milestone Inspection & Structural Integrity Reserve Study for your complex? _____

Yes No Don't know

(b) Has the Association budgeted for the cost of hiring an engineer to complete the Milestone Inspection and Structural Integrity Reserve Study? _____

Yes No Don't Know

(c) Has the Association hired an engineer to complete the Milestone Inspection & Structural Integrity Reserve Study Yet? _____

Yes No Don't Know

(d) Has the Association passed or discussed raising fees or doing a Special Assessment to pay for costs associated with complying with the Milestone Inspection and/or Structural Integrity Reserve Study? _____

Yes No Don't Know

If yes, explain _____

(Note: Further information may be disclosed b using the Milestone Inspection and Structural Integrity Reserve Study Disclosure)

FEBRUARY MARKET REPORT FOR HILLCREST AND PARKVIEW AT HILLCREST

by Cindy Abraham, Keller Williams A Team Florida



We have seen a noticeable increase in showings for our listings over the past few weeks. Feedback from buyer agents confirms that **price and degree of remodel are still the top priority for buyers** in today's market.

For condos, there are still too many overpriced units on today's market, especially those that have not been remodeled. It is tough for some sellers who love their condo, to see it through the eyes of a buyer.

Currently, there are **85 Hillcrest condos, 8 townhomes, and 11 single-family homes** available for sale. In February, **10 condos and 3 townhomes went under contract, while 6 condos and 1 townhome closed.**

The new commission rules continue to be a point of discussion. We still recommend that our sellers offer some form of incentive to buyer agents. Since commissions are negotiable, we can adjust accordingly once we receive an offer, review the buyer's broker agreement, and determine what compensation the agent is already receiving from their client.



CLOSED SALES DURING FEBRUARY (R-Rental building, C- Corner unit, T – Townhome, S – Single Family)

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
C-25	3800 Hillcrest Dr. #102	1344	2/2	249,000	220,000	102
9	981 Hillcrest Ct. #212	980	2/2	239,000	230,000	88
C-21	4400 Hillcrest Dr. #710	1132	2/2	159,000	165,000	209
25	3800 Hillcrest Dr. #1208	844	1/1/1	145,000	140,000	53
22	4350 Hillcrest Dr. #205	844	1/1/1	114,000	110,000	82
8	1101 Hillcrest Ct. #306	672	1/1/0	109,900	80,000	102
T	1426 Silk Oak Dr.	1769	3/2/1	739,000	729,000	190

HILLCREST / PARKVIEW FEBRUARY RENTALS

Building	Address	SF	B/B	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
16	950 Hillcrest #307	700	1/1/0	1,700	pending	143
S	1033 Eucalyptus	2104	3/2/1	5,400	pending	29
T	1240 Eucalyptus	1421	3/2/1	3,499	pending	177
S	4426 Greenway	2501	5/3/0	9,000	9,000	65
T	5175 Eucalyptus	2049	3/2/1	4,400	4,400	40
T	1253 Eucalyptus	2049	3/2/1	4,100	4,100	94
T	5182 Eucalyptus	1421	3/2/1	3,200	3,200	37
19	901 Hillcrest Dr. #605	1100	2/2	2,300	2,300	50



March Kitchen Korner - by Cindy Abraham



It's been a wild month—crazier than a squirrel on espresso. Between the bombshell announcement about stuffing our neighborhood with rental apartments and the never-ending list of issues plaguing our Hillcrest community, I've been coping the only way I know how: by cooking... a lot. Some people do yoga, I wield a whisk.

I experimented with a ton of new recipes, and let's just say my trash can has never eaten better. Were they inedible? Maybe not. But were they worth a second round? Also no. So, I fell back on some tried-and-true favorites—except my stress-fueled creativity got the best of me, and I started tweaking them. And guess what? They actually turned out better!

Once the prep is done (which, let's be honest, is just me procrastinating under the guise of productivity), the dish cooks in less time than it takes to argue over red vs. white wine. Plus, my #1 rule? No phones or computers after 5 PM—because that's when happy hour begins, and I refuse to let technology interfere with my sacred right to a well-earned drink and dinner!

So, while these dishes might seem familiar, trust me—the ingredients and methods have gotten a little glow-up. Here we go!

Creamy Garlic Tuscan Scallops w/ Fettuccine (goes great with a small salad)



- 10-12 sea scallops
- 1 TBS olive oil and 1 tsp sun dried tomato oil
- 1 heaping tsp minced garlic
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1/4 cup sun dried tomato strips in oil, drained and sliced
- 3/4 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup sliced baby spinach leaves
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan
- 1 tsp dried Italian herbs
- 1 TBS fresh parsley chopped
- 3 oz. cooked fettuccine with 1/4 cup reserved pasta water

Thoroughly pat scallops dry with paper towels. Heat the oils in a large pan or skillet over medium-high heat until hot and sizzling. Add the scallops in a single layer without overcrowding the pan.

Season with salt and pepper to taste and fry for 2-3 minutes on one side (until a golden crust forms underneath), then flip and fry again for 2 minutes until crisp, lightly browned and cooked through (opaque). Remove from skillet and transfer to a plate.

Lower heat to medium. Melt butter in the pan. Sauté onion until soft (about 4 minutes). Add the garlic and sauté about 30 seconds. Pour in the white wine, and allow to reduce to half, while scraping any bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the sun-dried tomatoes with oil and cook for 1-2 minutes.

Reduce heat to low, add the heavy cream and bring to a gentle simmer, while stirring occasionally. Season to taste.

Add the spinach leaves. Wilt in the sauce and stir in the parmesan and herbs. Simmer for a further minute until cheese melts through the sauce.

Remove pan from heat and add the scallops with their juices into the pan. Mix through slightly before serving. Add a pasta water. Stir and serve over pasta.

CREAM CHEESE AND GUAVA CHICKEN (Publix has guava paste)

- 2 large skin-on chicken thighs
- 1/4 cup EVOO
- 1 TBS fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1 TBS chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 2 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons guava paste
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 2 TBS butter
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 cup low-salt chicken broth



Whisk the first 5 ingredients in large bowl; add chicken breasts & turn to coat. Cover and chill for an hour or longer. Whisk cream cheese & guava paste in medium bowl to blend. Stir in spinach, cover and chill to firm slightly, an hour or longer.

Remove 1 chicken breast at a time from marinade, scraping excess marinade back into bowl. Loosen skin and insert 1/2 the spinach/guava mixture. Close openings with toothpicks.

Heat 1 TBS oil in a skillet over medium heat until oil is shimmering. Add chicken thighs, skin side down and cook until brown about 3 minutes, turn and cook 3 more minutes. Add wine and broth, bring to a boil.

Cover skillet, reduce heat to medium and simmer until chicken is cooked through, basting occasionally, about 10 minutes. Transfer chicken to work surface - let stand 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, add butter to skillet and any juices on plate. Boil until slightly thickened and sauce is reduced to 1/4 cup, about 3 minutes. Drizzle sauce over chicken and serve with your favorite potato side dish.

EASY POTATO SIDE DISH

(if you can't find diced prosciutto, I go to any grocery deli and have them cut me two 1/2" thick slabs of prosciutto, dice it myself and store in 2 oz. portions - freeze until you need it).

- 8 oz. baby potatoes halved
- 1-2 TBS EVOO
- 2 oz. diced prosciutto
- 1/4 tsp salt, pepper and dried sage



Toss everything together in a medium bowl. Spread on a greased baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees, turning once, for about 20 minutes or until brown and crispy.

BACK TALK – by Cindy Abraham

Low back pain can make simple tasks, like bending over or getting out of bed, feel terribly difficult, especially as we get older. Yet back pain is surprisingly common, with as many as eight out of 10 people experiencing at least one episode during their lifetimes. Back pain can be caused by a long list of things — muscle or tendon strains, arthritis, structural problems or disc injuries. The number of hours most Americans spend sitting also contributes to the problem. In older adults, pain is often caused by degenerative changes to the discs in the spine. Simply put, wear and tear happens to our bodies also.

If you experience severe back pain that persists for more than a few days or if it's accompanied by symptoms like numbness, weakness or tingling, difficulty urinating, fever or unintended weight loss, federal health guidelines recommend seeing a spine specialist who can pinpoint the problem.

Persistent back pain lasting longer than six weeks is also a reason to consult a specialist.

Research reveals that the key to relieving back pain isn't doing "back" exercises but focusing on activities that strengthen your core. Indeed, a 2022 review of 118 trials published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy* found that core-based exercises are among the most effective interventions at easing low back pain and disability.

When your abdominal muscles are not strong, your postural alignment is thrown off and your spine must work harder to keep your body in balance, Hansraj says. Strengthening the core muscles provides extra stability and support for your spine, creating "a sort of an internal brace around those painful areas," explains Rojeh Melikian, M.D., an orthopedic spine surgeon at DISC Sports & Spine Center in Newport Beach, California. Hansraj and Melikian recommend starting with isometric core exercises that minimize bending or twisting, because too much movement can aggravate problem areas and worsen pain.

One of the easiest, safest and most effective moves to try is a simple pelvic tilt, Hansraj says.

A pelvic tilt can help relieve pain and tightness in your lower back by bringing motion back to your spine and firing up your hip flexors and hamstrings, which often are tight in people who sit all day, Hansraj says. It's also a safe way to strengthen your lower abdominals.

"Here is this one keystone stretch that stretches the pelvis, stretches the lumbar spine, stretches the hip flexors and stretches the hamstrings — ever so gently," Hansraj says. "With one maneuver, you are not only moving your pelvis, but you're giving a range of motion to your lumbar spine."

Always consult with your doctor before starting any type of exercise to be sure it is right for your body and of course, if you feel pain with the movement, that is your body's way of saying, "Stop it!"

1. Lie on your back with both knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your arms can be resting by your sides, on your stomach, or behind your head, whatever is more comfortable.

2. Keeping your shoulders pressed to the floor, tighten your abdominal muscles and press the small of your back to the floor.

3. Hold the contraction for 10 seconds, then release and take a few deep breaths to relax.

4. Repeat 10 times.



LOVE YOUR LIVER

Your liver works hard to keep you healthy by filtering blood and aiding digestion. However, some medications can harm it, a condition called drug-induced liver injury, says Dr. Udoka Ikezuagu. While most drugs are safe when used properly, older adults are more vulnerable due to multiple prescriptions.

10 Medications That Can Harm the Liver

- **1. Acetaminophen (Tylenol)** – Safe in recommended doses, but overdosing, especially with alcohol use, can cause liver damage. Maximum daily dose: 3,250–4,000 mg.
- **2. Statins (Lipitor, Zocor, Crestor)** – Can raise liver enzymes but usually not to dangerous levels. Routine liver function tests may be required.
- **3. Amoxicillin-clavulanate (Augmentin)** – May cause liver issues due to allergic reactions. Watch for jaundice, fatigue, or dark urine.
- **4. Antiseizure Medications (Dilantin, Tegretol, Depakene, Lamictal)** – Can trigger immune responses harming the liver. Regular monitoring may be needed.
- **5. Methotrexate (Trexall, Rheumatrex)** – Used for arthritis and cancer, long-term use can cause liver fibrosis or cirrhosis. Avoid alcohol.

- **6. NSAIDs (Advil, Aleve, Voltaren)** – Prolonged use or high doses can stress the liver, especially in those with pre-existing conditions.
- **7. Certain Herbal Supplements (Kava, Black Cohosh)** – Can cause severe liver damage. Since supplements aren't FDA-regulated, consult a doctor before use.
- **8. Antifungal Medications (Fluconazole, Ketoconazole)** – Typically safe short-term, but can sometimes cause liver failure. Monitor for jaundice or fatigue.
- **9. Amiodarone (Cordarone, Pacerone)** – Used for irregular heartbeats, it can cause liver scarring. Regular liver tests are recommended.
- **10. Isoniazid (Nydrizid, Rifater)** – A TB treatment that can inflame the liver, especially in older adults or alcohol users. Watch for nausea or jaundice.

Risk Factors

- Liver disease history
- Frequent alcohol use
- Taking multiple medications

Protect Your Liver

Follow prescriptions exactly, avoid self-medicating, and consult your doctor before mixing drugs or supplements.

THE HABIT OF BEING SELF-ISH – by *Cindy Abraham*

“I’m too old to change.” That is the best admission of needing to change ones ways that I have ever heard. When did we start thinking that self-improvement has an age limit? The answer is different for everyone. And that’s the beauty of self-improvement, it is personal. There’s no one-size-fits-all formula, but it takes creating habits that elevate our lives.

Parts of our bodies may be “spongy looking” but our brains are still like sponge too, so soak up something fresh! The world is full of fascinating things to discover, and learning doesn’t have to feel like homework. Always wanted to try painting or pottery? Take a class at a local studio. Love cooking? Challenge yourself to master a new recipe. Or do like the ladies in Hillcrest 22, they have turned their passion for art into monthly classes for their neighbors.

Curious about space, history, or how to train your cat to do tricks? Dive into books, podcasts, or even the occasional deep-dive YouTube binge. Learning expands your world. And who knows? You might stumble upon a new passion—or, at the very least, become that person with random but impressive fun facts. (Did you know there’s a whole science behind why popcorn smells so good? Now you do.)

Which self-improvement habits can help me become my best self? There’s no one-size-fits-all answer to this question. After all, your vision of your best self doesn’t look like anyone else’s. But there definitely are some habits that virtually all of us can benefit from practicing.

And you never know, you might end up learning something that can change the course of your life. Knowledge can open doors and create opportunities you never knew existed. Being a continual student of the world is a great self-improvement habit to have. Learning and developing growth habits are essential parts of a well-rounded life. Here are a couple more ideas to make life more interesting:

1. Practice gratitude. Yeah, yeah, yeah...but it works! Intentionally pausing for a moment each day to focus on the positive and appreciate the blessings in your life doesn’t take much time or effort – and you’ll reap big rewards. Practicing gratitude has been proven to help reduce depression, minimize stress and anxiety, improve sleep, and more. And this is easy to do. You can do it in the shower, while washing dishes or folding laundry. Think of 3 things you bare grateful for and why. It helps the time pass, and you will feel better if not great.

Some people keep a gratitude journal. If you enjoy writing, this one’s for you. Nothing fancy or time-consuming. Five minutes a day can do the trick. It is even more fun if you involve a friend. Get together and share your thoughts on the phone or in person. It will be uplifting for both of you. This is a great way to increase accountability and help your practice stick!

2. Create new habits can be an important first step to improving your life. Only you know what you would like to do more of...or less of. Tackle one goal at a time and remember it takes time to create, change or break a habit. We have all told ourselves, “I wish I could start...” or “I wish I could stop...” or even wish to do something a different way. I remember that a woman in our building who could be counted on to say something negative about almost everyone, told her neighbor she was going to stop gossiping. When I heard that I laughed – as did her neighbor. Here we are, two years later, and she is one of the nicest people in the building. That one blew me away and I truly admire her.

Remember that you are the one who determines what your definition of success is. Self-improvement habits help you to get there, but it’s not about comparing yourself with anyone else.

And it is possible to be content with what you have while pursuing what you want. You can find a balance between being happy while also continuing to grow.

3. Prioritize your health. If you have not made changes in your diet, exercise or hygiene habits as you age, you are making a big mistake. I can’t believe how many people have major dental issues because they stopped going to the dentist. I thank my mom for making it a habit that I get my teeth cleaned twice a year. I remember when my mother-in-law was alerted to a heart condition by her dentist. And I swear, back in the day, my dentist asked me if I was pregnant when I wasn’t even sure myself. I just googled dentists and health conditions and found: “A routine dental exam may reveal unknown problems with your bones, heart, blood sugar, or digestion because certain warning signs live inside your mouth.” Oh my.

You can’t be the best version of yourself if you’re feeling sluggish, tired, or unwell. And what you consume daily plays a major role in how you feel. This applies to the foods and drinks that you choose as well as the things you listen to and the people in your life.

Many of us don’t think about our diets as a habit, but what – and how – we eat influences our lives. Snacking as you watch television and grabbing fast food instead of cooking are habits. So are meal planning and enjoying a nice dinner alone or with a friend or family. Notice everything goes back to cooking with me... Food affects your energy levels, your moods, your immune system and can even affect clarity of thought. Changing your diet doesn’t have to be about giving up your favorite foods but **adding more of the healthy foods you like to your daily diet.** I can personally testify that this one works.

4. The word “movement” is very important in later life, and not just when it comes to...well, you know. It is also important to consider how much you move around every day. We all have access to a pool. Walking in the pool is very low impact, and the fresh air doesn’t hurt. I admire my neighbors who make it a habit to read by the pool or stroll up and down the hall and chat every day. Walking is an easy and affordable habit to get into. As for social interaction, there is nothing wrong with avoiding it but at least spend some time daily with the people you enjoy. We are lucky to have a lot of intelligent, funny, kind, interesting people in Hillcrest. I am pleasant to everyone I meet, but very selective when seeking company, and yes, phone conversations count.

Bottom line: There is no right or wrong answer here. Just focus on one thing at a time and practice self-compassion in the process. Don’t beat yourself up for how things have gone in the past. Focus forward on what small changes you can make now to improve your overall well-being. Self-compassion also means “letting go”. The past is past; we all made mistakes that may even have changed the course of our lives. It is hard not to look in the rear-view mirror and wish we had done things differently, but here we are. We can’t go back and change course, so moving forward is the only option. Easier said than done? No, but if the regrets affect your happiness, it may be time to talk to a therapist. Especially when we finally reach the stage in life where we finally realize that health and happiness are the ultimate goals, and that one step at a time is okay.



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FINDING THE DIAMOND WITHIN

by Aruna Ladva, Brahma Kumaris London, England, submitted by Etta Stevens,



Well-being cannot be rushed. Nature has perfect timing in life for healing. Often when we get trapped by all the external show, we fail to appreciate the real qualities and virtues that fundamentally underpin our life. But the Universe will always give us a sign and signal to remind us.

Lately I have been influenced by a story that I heard, and since then I have been using the essence of that story and applying it to my life. The story goes like this ...

One day two friends planned to go out for a long hike together. At some point they stopped in a nice spot somewhere for lunch. As they were getting out their lunch packs, Rodi noticed that Muskan had a beautiful 6 cm diamond in her bag. So Rodi, on seeing Muskan's diamond decided to ask:

"Wow! Where did you get that?"

"Oh! Somebody gave it to me."

"It's beautiful. May I see it?"

"Sure ... Would you like it?"

"Really?"

"Yes, you can have it if you like it. It's a real diamond."

"That's really gracious of you. Thank you so much. Are you sure?"

"Definitely!"

The two friends continued walking and chatting and then later separated and went home. A few days later, Rodi called Muskan, and said she wanted to meet her. Muskan agrees to meet. Rodi brings the diamond with her and returns it to Muskan, who was quite surprised to see the diamond returned.

"I'd like to return this diamond."

"But why?"

"I don't want the diamond. I want what made you give up the diamond!"

One can see how this works in so many ways in our life. Is it the thing (diamond in this case) that we need, or is it the bliss, contentment and peace of mind (that Muskan had) that we seek? The key thing is what lies behind the action and motivation.

This is applicable to every area of our life. So, when we are stuck in any queue; when we are impatient; when we are intolerant; when we seek attention and respect, when we run after money and things

... keep in mind ... what is the real thing that we are after. If we were to get to the root of that, imagine how happy and blissful and content we would be?

Many people chase after position and power, without ever realizing what they would do with that once they had achieved their aim. Is it just to be seen to have power? If I do not know how to use that power wisely, then holding that position and power, is not really of any use to myself and no use to anybody else.

That's why the path of spirituality and meditation teaches us the importance of being able to master the self. Learning how to master the senses is the way to master the world. We must be able to control our inner world of thoughts, long before they extend out into the world through our words and actions. This is attained through self-discipline and self-management, because it all starts with the "self". As we begin to lose the plot then we try more desperately to control everyone and everything on the outside, and we all know how badly that works out for everyone.

I love how this spiritual path alone makes us so rich from the inside out. I do not need a penny, praise or a position to turn me into somebody. I do not need to seek validation from the external world, because I am the master making myself from the inside out. How? With every choice and thought I create, and with every decision I take, I am making myself the master of my life. I am my own best teacher. I am my own best guide. I am my own best friend. You will not get a better friend than yourself to befriend you. When you actually love and respect yourself, then you are Powerful. And here I do not mean in the ego sense, but from recognizing my own self-worth.

Back to my topic ... wellness cannot be rushed. I say this because this is our REAL and 'REEL' work and it takes time and patience, and a lot of self-love. You cannot just think you are doing the yoga; doing the exercise; eating well and having good thoughts. It is not about ticking all the boxes; it is about mastering the self quietly from the inside. This is what gives one a sense of self-respect and self-confidence. And this is what creates our stage of mind. Yes, stage of mind not state of mind. A stage is something I stand upon, with faith and confidence. It's a stage of mind from where I act, just like an actor on a stage in their role. So, what is your stage of mind? What is the basis and foundation of your stage? Is it your values, your virtues, or is it something else.

Let's take time to be with the self, to be in solitude to reflect on what is really going on in the soul. Let's appreciate the real effort of returning the soul back to its original, diamond like pure and powerful stage. **It's Time...** to be content ... from the inside!

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