

OPINION

# Insensitive photo, headline trivialize Special Olympics

**Editor:**  
It was absolutely shocking to open up the newspaper March 8 and see the cover of the Neighbors North section. The picture was taken at the South Florida Special Olympics and shows two special athletes and a monkey. The Special Olympics is an opportunity for hundreds of special athletes to compete in different events, accomplish personal goals, learn sportsmanship and meet other athletes. This makes the Special Olympics something more than an everyday sporting event in South Florida.

To put a photograph of two children with a monkey on the cover of the Neighbors section with the headline "Monkey business" not only trivializes the importance of this event, but it is also insensitive. It is difficult to believe that out of seven hours of athletic events, you were unable to find an appropriate photograph that would properly represent the spirit of the Special Olympics.

**MARCY AXELROD**  
Aventura

special athletes goes a long way to help shatter the stereotype that mentally retarded athletes can't compete. They also know it helps to dispel the myth that they are sad or pathetic when, in fact, they can show them to be leaders as well as heroes. Neither athlete nor volunteer leaves these Games untouched.

In spite of all this, the North Neighbors March 8 edition chose to depict this magnificent undertaking on its front page with a closeup shot of two athletes separated by a monkey licking a lollipop! The headline blared, "Monkey business." I dare to say the only "monkey" was the editor who thought this was clever. It was not. Moreover, it was demeaning and inappropriate. It was a slap in the face to every Special Olympian and volunteer in the stadium that day. It did show us one thing — our work is not finished in educating even editors about the myths associated with mental retardation. For shame, Herald.

**ALAN 'BUCKY' SINGER**  
Special Olympics  
co-chairman

## Special Olympics no 'monkey business'

**Editor:**

On March 4, the North Miami Beach Optimist Club hosted, for the 18th consecutive year, a qualifying track and field meet for the Special Olympics Summer Games at North Miami Athletic Stadium. Over 2,000 volunteers, mostly students, were on hand to serve as "huggers" and "buddies" for 500 Miami-Dade County Special Olympics athletes. This is the premier event of the year for these special athletes.

It takes 120 North Miami Beach Optimist Club members and others almost four months of preparation to prepare for this day. They are dedicated to this endeavor because they know that the coupling of 2,000 student volunteers with these

## Architect had 'Visions' for Beach

**Editor:**

Tragically, two pedestrians were killed this month in separate hit-and-run accidents along Harding Avenue in North Beach. The same stretch of road was the scene of a fatal accident last year as well. Adding insult to injury (or in this case adding insult to death), these accidents probably could have been avoided.

The pedestrian nightmare on Harding Avenue has been well known to our government officials for quite some time. A viable solution has been in the city's possession since 1994.

That's when North Beach resident and renowned architect Robert Swedroe, along with his architect daughter,

## A DIFFERENT VIEW

DADE DICTIONARY  
FLORIDA MARLINS ~ LOCAL PREDATORS THAT FEED ON TAXES  
MIAMI RIVER ~ CARTEL CHANNEL  
LAWS ~ SUGGESTIONS  
PUNCTUALITY ~ NO LOCAL DEFINITION.

CONSIDER STOPPING ON RED

*Manina Del Vecchio*

Laurie, created a proposed master plan for North Beach. This pro-bono labor of love is titled "Visions" and a copy of it in book form was provided to every commissioner and high-ranking city administrator. In subsequent years, additional copies have been provided to incoming commissioners, city managers and members of the Planning Department.

Although there is no way to be certain, a review of the "Visions" plan for Harding Avenue makes it quite apparent that lives may have been saved if the plan had been implemented. Specifically with regard to Harding Avenue, the plan states:

"Harding Avenue will return to a quiet, orderly residential street, reducing traffic, providing safe pedestrian walkways... Landscape features will provide both visual and actual separation from the street, adding safety and beauty for pedestrians."

Commissioner Nancy Liebman enthusiastically embraced the plan, but too many other commissioners did not have the political will to commit previous resources to North Beach. Unfortunately, as Commissioner Luis Garcia Jr. correctly pointed out at the March 14 commission hearing, it often takes something catastrophic for important changes to be made. Kudos to Commissioners Jose Smith and Garcia for their quick response to last week's events.

## WRITE US

We welcome letters on any topic of interest to our readers.

Letters MUST be signed and include a telephone number or they will not be considered for publication. Short letters are preferred, and all letters will be for length, spelling and grammar. All letters must be legible.

Letters must be received by noon Wednesday for publication the following Sunday.

Mail or bring your letter to:

1 Herald Plaza  
Miami, FL 33132  
or e-mail [jcalderon@herald.com](mailto:jcalderon@herald.com)

It is time for the commission to seize the moment. Break the inertia gripping North Beach, follow the lead of Commissioner Liebman and implement the "Visions" plan. By doing so, North Beach will become a vibrant, fun, SAFE neighborhood instead of the blighted danger zone that currently exists.

**HOWARD S. WEINBERG**  
Miami

## Keep bed tax in Miami Beach

**Editor:**

A few years ago a Homestead mayor "stole" millions of dollars from Miami Beach to build an seldom-used stadium down in the boondocks.

Now comes the city of Miami with a brazen plan to use bed-tax dollars, collected mostly from Miami Beach

hotels, to help fund town Miami baseball.

It's time for the Miami Beach and his sioner-henchmen to ing footsie with the Miami "power broker" them to take a hike.

Mayor Neisen Kattell Miami-Dade County Alex Penelas, Miami Carollo and Marilyn John Henry — "No!"

Aren't there creative minds in Miami Beach use for that bed tax the Electric Island? the city of Miami Beach projects for Miami Beach?

Aren't there intellectual leaders in Miami Beach of standing up for city's needs?

If not, maybe the of Miami Beach should some.

**HARVEY H**