

This Week's Stories



Big Fish

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Please in My Back Yard

While the New World Symphony Project Gains More Support, Commission Stays Hesitant

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Crime Stats

Homicides Climbed by One in 2006

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Multimillion-Dollar Face Lift

City Commission Gives Final OK to Westward Expansion of Lincoln Road Pedestrian Mall

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Class-A Wynwood Development

Opposition Is Nearly Nil for 29-Story 'Midtown' Area Office Building

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Murmurs

The Mark of the Beast or Salvation? Depends on whom you ask.

"The purpose of my life is to live for him."

Photos: Angie Hargot



hugging each other after getting a tattoo.

Had they stopped to inquire they would have discovered this was a **coming-out celebration** of sorts for the **Antichrist**. "Men, women and kids alike will **mark themselves with the number of the Antichrist**, as a result of the historic announcement made recently by the **Man Christ Jesus** as being the Antichrist, where he showed the 666 and SSS tattoos on his arm," stated an e-mail forwarded by the **Government of God Press**.

The "Man Christ" the e-mail referred to is Dr. **Jose Luis De Jesus Miranda**, who heads a different sort of ministry known as **Creciendo en Gracia**, or Growing in Grace International Ministry. According to a February 2006 Miami *New Times* article, De Jesus, originally from Puerto Rico, said he received a vision when he ran a Bible-based treatment center in Massachusetts in 1976 that told him he was "dead to sin." In 1986 another vision told him to move to Miami, where he founded Creciendo en Gracia. His group would grow from 500 people in a Hialeah warehouse listening to his sermons to as many as 100,000 followers spread throughout 30 countries. In a nutshell, De Jesus preaches that the devil is dead and there is no such thing as sin. Such messages are taped at his current headquarters in Doral and broadcast to various "education centers" globally.

Your Own Personal Man Christ Jesus

"Where are the girls at?" a tall man standing on a Washington Avenue sidewalk asked. His buddy, leaning on a parallel parked car, only shrugged.

Such was the scene on **Washington Avenue** early Tuesday evening as people went about their lives, running errands, shopping for essentials, dining out and scanning for eye-candy. Most of those walking by **Tattoo Gallery by Luiz Segatto** at 1323 Washington Ave. hardly spared a glance at the **television camera crews and photographers** capturing the image of gleeful individuals

Columns



The 411

Editorial

With housing budgets being slashed by the U.S. government and the Miami-Dade Housing Agency still reeling from its own recent scandals, HUD would do well to appoint an impartial observer with no ties to the area.

Murmurs

Flocking to tattoo themselves with the mark of the Beast on a Tuesday afternoon were followers of a guy who calls himself the Man Christ Jesus, as well as the Antichrist, who heads a, well, different sort of ministry. Also, Biscayne Boulevard turns 80, but continues losing its palms.

Wakefield

The Public Health Trust, our local safety net, could lose major bucks if President Bush's proposed cuts go through.

Bound

Damn it, Mamet, where's your humility? The American playwright pits *Bambi vs. Godzilla*, and John Hood is there to call the fight.

Always Be Foreclosing

Two Commissioners Propose Foreclosing on Abandoned Properties

AVENTURA

Green Light For Performing Arts Center Project

\$4.71 Million Bond Will Be Diverted To Help Pay For \$10 Million PAC's Construction

BAY HARBOR ISLANDS

Sidewalk Talk

Town Gets Moving on Plans to Change the Look of Kane Concourse

MIAMI BEACH

Campaign Reform Rejected

Mayoral Candidate Brings Up Topic of Public Campaign Financing

By 2004 De Jesus would declare himself to be the second coming of Jesus Christ. Roughly two years later he would declare war against all **other organized religions**, encouraging his followers to protest against their teachings. Then, last month, De Jesus announced he was also the Antichrist and showed that he had tattoos of 666 and SSS on his arm.



By the time Murmurs arrived, television crews and photographers were angling to get a shot of **smiling people as they received what the New Testament's Revelation would call the Mark of the Beast**. Among those who were 666ed and SSSed (standing for "Salvo Siempre Salvo," which means "Saved Always Saved") were De Jesus' daughter Joann; Guatemalan pop icon and actress **Martita Roca**; movie producer, director and designated "entrepreneur of entrepreneurs" **Alvaro Albarracin**; and 65-year-old "Cachi," who, after receiving a 666 tattoo on each of her wrists, referred to De Jesus, 61, as her father.

Axel Poessy, a model, fashion designer and publicist for the event, claimed that angels pointed her in the right direction to have the event held at Tattoo Gallery. Also: It was the only tattoo shop that agreed to accommodate them. Besides the media, Creciendo en Gracia was also recording the proceedings so that members in other countries could imitate the event at their respective ink parlors if they so desired.

"We know he is the Christ. We know he is the Antichrist. **Religion has lied to you**," said the 26-year-old Poessy. She claimed that 11 of the apostles, excluding Paul, conspired to have Jesus killed, and that Revelation, which foretold of a Satan-spawned false prophet who would take over the world and force mankind to wear the 666 mark, is waaaaay wrong. "They **mixed Christianity with Judaism**," she said. "They are **forcing you to live like a Jew** although you are not a Jew." Not that she is against Jews or anything, she insisted, just organized religion outside the Government of God.

Poessy grew up in Creciendo en Gracia, having been a member since she was 8. Her father is the movement's bishop in Canada (Poessy resides in Kitchener, Ontario) while her mom is an entrepreneur. Creciendo members, incidentally, are encouraged and even assisted in setting up their own businesses. They are also encouraged to give **generously back to Creciendo and De Jesus**. Not that they are necessarily *required* to do so, Poessy said, but "**the angels are watching**." (Various media reports tell how members divert virtually their entire incomes to Creciendo and gifts for De Jesus.) She credits De Jesus for whatever success she has achieved (her fashion company, Nocce, hosted a Super Bowl-sanctioned fashion show in Miami recently) and awaits the day when humanity will be transformed, i.e., given bodies by the Man Christ Jesus that will never falter or fail. "The purpose of my life is to live for him," she said.

Poessy was content to receive a 666 mark on her ankle. But she proudly displayed to Murmurs her friend **David Rivera** of Puerto Rico (whose father is in charge of De Jesus' security). Rivera elected to have 666 tattooed on his neck. Slowly removing the white gauze from Rivera's neck as Murmurs pointed a digital camera at the still bleeding flesh, Poessy cooed, "**Tell me that's not hot. Tell me that's not hot**. David, I admire you.... That's beautiful."

Free Sustenance

Art

Photographer Silvia Lizama is the voyeur and the manipulator. Her current exhibition peers into the windows of contemporary middle-class homes in North Miami.

Groundwork

The condo-hotel concept has a lot going for it, but may have run out of steam. As a result, new Miami Beach projects are reported to be switching to hotel-only. Also, affordable condo housing is coming to Little Havana.

Letters

Calendar Girl

Culture

Film

Employment

MySpace

Film Capsules

Musical Archive

Wakefield Archive

Special Sections 2006

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Under a gray, rainy sky, **Teri D'Amico, Elvis Cruz** and **Sean-Paul Melito** created a small crowd on Biscayne Boulevard and 69th Street two days before Valentine's Day.

Even the **cops came!**

The occasion: **Biscayne Boulevard's 80th birthday.**

D'Amico, Cruz and Melito, who planned the party, have voiced strong opposition to the Florida Department of Transportation's **removal of royal palm trees** as part of the Biscayne Boulevard renovation project. Dozens already have been uprooted, and while a December 2003 Upper Eastside Council resolution called for the palms to be replaced with shade trees, by the time FDOT is finished there **may be 83 fewer trees along the Boulevard** than before the project started, according to Miami Commissioner **Marc Sarnoff**.

And so they met to mark the occasion by **passing out blue-frosted cupcakes and pieces of a cake** that read "Happy 80th Birthday Biscayne Boulevard."

"I've been in the neighborhood since 1977. ... The royal palms have been an important part of this neighborhood," says Cruz, adding that Biscayne Boulevard was declared a veteran's memorial on Feb. 12, 1927, and the palms played a major role (a fact that has been hammered many times by Melito, who started the Web site www.SavePalms.com).

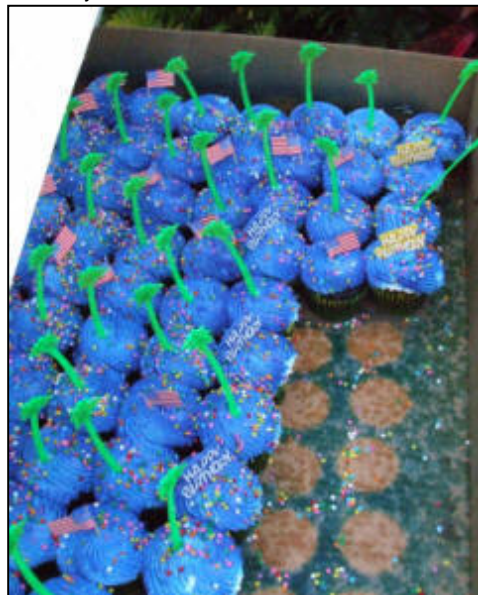
"It went well," Cruz says of the event. "People attracted a fair amount of local attention.

The police showed up ... and I know all those guys. ... They wanted to make sure we weren't holding up traffic. ..."

What about the problem of people loitering, trying to get multiple cupcakes, decorated, of course, with tiny plastic palms?

"We had some of those. ... At least five, I guess you could call them street people, were there and we gave them cupcakes and water and they were happy to have it," says Cruz.

Photo: Ryan Brown



But possibly the most interesting fact that Murmurs will reveal is this: Miami citizens have **no reservations about taking food from strangers**. Within two hours the group distributed **150 unwrapped cupcakes to people in cars**.

Sarnoff, whose district includes the Upper Eastside Boulevard corridor, told Murmurs that FDOT will hold off on removing any more palm trees, at least until after a formal meeting between **FDOT representatives and Mary Conway**, the city of Miami's chief of operations. "They [the representatives and Conway] are both engineers," he

said. "They speak the same language."

Got a murmur? E-mail editorial@miamisunpost.com. Comments? E-mail letters@miamisunpost.com.