

MIAMI BEACH

Artist upset his commissioned work was placed in a dog park

■ Artist Tobias Rehberger wrote he would not have designed a sculpture for a 'dog park.'

BY DANIEL DUCASSI
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When Miami Beach commissioned German artist Tobias Rehberger to design a \$500,000 sculpture for South Pointe Park in 2010, he

envisioned his *Obstinate Lighthouse* rising five stories above an open lawn, unobstructed on all sides.

In May, when he found out the City Commission made his sculpture the cen-

terpiece of an off-leash area for dogs, he wrote to the city's planning department complaining: "If the public art project was for a dog park I would not have considered the invitation."

The city's Art in Public Places Committee shared similar concerns, telling the

City Commission last month that surrounding the off-leash area and sculpture with a planned landscape buffer would compromise the integrity of the artist's intent and concept.

However, the city's Design Review Board on Tues-



ALLISON DIAZ/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

RESPECTING AN ARTIST'S WORK: Dogs are allowed off-leash in a part of South Pointe Park on Miami Beach only during certain hours.

EVEN ON VACATION, DOCTOR IS PREPARED TO SAVE A LIFE



ALLISON DIAZ/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

Dr. Robert Goldszer, chief medical officer, honors Emergency Room Resident Benjamin Abo, M.D., center, and Emergency Room physician, Dr. David A. Farcy, at Mount Sinai Medical Center on Miami Beach, on Wednesday. Abo was honored for his heroic acts on June 19 in New York City, when, while on vacation, he rescued a man on the subway after the man suffered a seizure and fell onto the train tracks. Abo and another Good Samaritan pulled the man from the train tracks seconds before a subway train zoomed into the station. The victim regained consciousness after being lifted back onto the platform and was taken to a local hospital.

NORTH MIAMI

Israeli official grapples with how media covers nation

■ The general consensus in the audience was that most of the press Israel gets is bad press.

BY SAM ABBASSI
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A senior Israeli foreign press officer made the final stop of his U.S. tour in North Miami last week, getting an earful from his Jewish audience who perceive a pro-Palestine sentiment in Mid-east news coverage.

Speaking at the Dezer Auto Museum in North Miami, David Baker, senior foreign press coordinator in the Israeli prime minister's office in Jerusalem, shed some light on the purpose of his role, the difficulties that come with it and the challenges that Israel faces.

"There are pitfalls in the foreign media regarding how they portray us in a

negative light — there are a lot of misconceptions regarding Israel," Baker said.

The general consensus in the audience of approximately 100 guests was that most of the press Israel gets is bad press, and more effort is needed to change that.

Mirit Mendelson of Mendelson Global Consulting said the media report what they believe will grab the most attention, not necessarily the holistic aspect of the story. "The media are sensationalists; they care less about the real stuff," Mendelson said. "It serves their purpose."

Mendelson was referring to what she considers an increasingly pro-Palestinian stance in the media.

"Reporters in Israel usu-

• TURN TO ISRAEL, 28NE

CRIME WATCH

Scammers are striking close to home

BY CARMEN GONZALEZ CALDWELL
Special to the Miami Herald



CALDWELL

My mother-in-law and my father were confronted with two different scams recently. I just want to tell you about them.

My father was outside in front of his house in Miami Beach. A young woman approached him and said she was collecting for an organization, something to do with the United Nations. My father is so giving — let's just say that all the homeless people in Miami know him by his first name — so he went inside and told his wife to give the woman a check for her

organization. As his wife was talking to her, she asked what organization she should make the check out to. Guess what? They do not take checks. The woman explained that they wanted their bank information and would withdraw the money directly from their account for deposit into their organization's account. They told her to leave.

My mother-in-law was looking for a parking spot at the Navarro in Sunny Isles Beach. She noticed a

motorcycle about to leave a handicapped space and she drove near the spot to wait.

As the biker pulled out, he told my mother-in-law to roll down her window. She did, and he accused her of hitting his motorcycle. She was waiting for the spot, so she was never near his cycle.

He asked for her papers, and she wouldn't give them to him. He said he was going to call the police, and she said "good idea."

So she waited and waited; he approached her again and said the police were taking too long, that she better stay there and he would come back with the police. After a while, a

Navarro employee asked what's wrong, she told him and they called the police.

We think he was trying to see if my mother-in-law would give him money so he wouldn't "call" the police. The biker never came back, and the police, who came pretty quickly, said they never got a call about this.

Just when you think you heard it all, here is a scam that came to me from Scambook.com, the online complaint resolution platform:

With many people moving during the summer months, scammers are exploiting this confusing time by offering unneces-

sary "change of address" services. Third-party companies claiming to represent the U.S. Postal Service offer to help consumers register a new residential address, resulting in unexpected monthly charges of \$17 to \$24.

Scambook has received more than 300 complaints about "change of address" sites from consumers across the country, centralized in Florida, California, Arizona, Oregon, Washington state and Texas.

Individuals are receiving an initial processing charge of \$1, followed by unwarranted monthly charges for additional services they did not knowingly purchase.

Many have also experienced difficulty contacting the sites' customer service departments to cancel the unwanted subscriptions.

To avoid doing business with these third-party services during a move, Scambook recommends consumers only to use the official U.S. Postal Service change of address site by visiting <https://movers.guide.usps.com>.

Carmen Caldwell is executive director of Citizens' Crime Watch of Miami-Dade. Send feedback and news for this column to carmen@citizenscrimewatch.org, or call her at 305-470-1670.

NORTH MIAMI

Official: Dealing with world's media is 'energetic'

• ISRAEL, FROM 4NE

ally find it easier to convey the most vivid pictures they can," Baker said. "And the Palestinians seem to have a knack in being able to do that, with quite a bit of distortions."

Baker, a native of Queens, New York, has served at his current post since 2000 — under the past four Israeli prime ministers — and marked his fourth trip to South Florida, home to the second-largest Jewish community in the United States.

"My job is to be the interface between the prime minister's office and the foreign press," Baker said. "There are over 400 foreign journalists in Israel — some call it stressful, I call it energetic."

Baker's mission on the

tour, which began in New York and New Jersey, before stops in Boca Raton and North Miami, was to hear residents' comments on issues confronting Israel and listening to their proposed solutions.

The Bnai Zion Foundation sponsored the three-state trip.

Michael Kaplan of Welcome & Bienvenidos Magazine said Israel needs to ingrain "uber-pro Israel views" among its young journalists to counter anti-Israeli coverage.

Baker countered that journalists should never be trained to take one side over another, and that is not the government's place to dictate.

"We are the printing press, not the mailmen," Baker said. "We put out a lot



SAM ABBASSI/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

'WE ARE THE PRINTING PRESS, NOT THE MAILMAN': Israeli official David Baker takes questions from members of the audience regarding the topic of Israel's portrayal in the foreign media.

of stuff out there but we don't decide what gets in the story. The press is a free enterprise, they are allowed, should be and will be al-

lowed to report on whatever they want."

Another topic was the expansion of the Al Jazeera news network to the United States, including the 800 jobs that come with it.

"We work with Al Jazeera, they have an office in Jerusalem," Baker said. "We are quite put off with most, if not all, of their content, especially the Arabic language part, but we work in an intensive basis with them because people watch it," he said.

Baker also addressed a concern regarding the polarity between the cultures of Israel and Palestine and the violence that is attributed to it. "There are gaps between both peoples and there are gaps in the way we perceive things," Baker said. "Certainly, the Palestinians have spent a great deal of effort injecting terror into equation. We have to look ahead and see what we can do to

bring an end to this conflict; it is made harder when you're dealing with people who have a different take on things, including the readiness to use terror as a weapon."

On the topic of the settlements in the West Bank, Baker said to have a proper peace process, both sides need to come to the table and be prepared to negotiate — without preconditions.

He added that peace is at the forefront of the Israeli government's priorities and to allude to anything but that is misguided.

"It's a central part of our existence and our religion," Baker said. "We wish peace upon each other, *shalom aleichem* — we do not wish upon you a long and protracted conflict that is unending."