

Cutler Bay

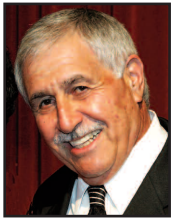
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SERVING SOUTH DADE

Sometimes you can turn 'swords into ploughshares'

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Councilmember



Turn "swords to ploughshares" as in the *Book of Isaiah*?

No, I have not become a biblical scholar. I hardly ever turn to the *Bible*, but once in a while if I am behind Love-40 and serving

my last tennis ball, I do look to the heavens. It doesn't usually help but at least I try. I also try to make friends out of potential enemies, hence the saying.

Example: Some time back after returning from a series of trips out of Miami International Airport, I just got completely disgusted with having to walk back and forth from some gate at the end of nowhere in the American Airlines terminal. I do have a titanium hip replacement and sometimes a walk like that is tough.

I decided to send out a bunch of nasty emails complaining about this and hope that someone would listen. I described how nice airports all over the world were compared to ours and how embarrassing it was when I had to pick people up at MIA after they walked miles to get from their plane to a pickup area. I compared how great the shops and restaurants were at other airports such as Atlanta or Las Vegas.

I finally got an email response from the Miami Airport director, José Abreu, which read, "For Christ sake have a little empathy."

I replied, "Have some empathy for me having to walk that mile and a half with my fake hip every time I leave Miami."

We continued back and forth with this until my household counselor told me to stop pestering this guy who was only trying his best on an impossible job.

José finally told me that the Skytrain would



Councilman Ernie Sochin (left) pays off his bet to Miami International Airport director José Abreu.

be operating this fall and I would no longer have to walk.

I said, "Yeah sure...the cars have been rusting away somewhere in Japan for several years and I don't think we will ever see them in Miami."

He offered to make a wager on this. Being the inveterate gambler that I am I accepted the bet. We each checked our resources to determine the amount of the wager. He checked his budget from Miami-Dade County, and I checked my latest tax bill and we arrived at 25 cents as the most we could afford to risk. The bet was on!

Several weeks ago I received an invitation to be one of the first to ride on the new Skytrain at the airport. There goes my quarter. I had to present it to Mr. Abreu in front of several hun-

dred people, and I was glad to do it.

José then took me on a personal tour of MIA and showed me all the new features being added like...get this...a Shula's Steak House. Wow. The views from the Skytrain were spectacular. Miami never looked so good.

I have never seen such enthusiasm from a county executive or any executive, about something that he has been struggling with for several years. It was good to see.

Guess what? José and I have become good friends from what started out as an adversarial relationship. That is the way things are supposed to work. By the way, I got for my quarter a nice lunch *plus* a beautiful model of the Skytrain. Can't beat that.

See, everything in Miami-Dade is not so bad.