

# Cutler Bay NEWS

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## I sometimes wonder: If I Were a Rich Man

BY ERNIE SOCHIN

*Dear God, you made many,  
many poor people.  
I realize, of course,  
that it's no shame to be poor  
But it's no great honor, either.  
So what would have been so terrible  
if I had a small fortune?*



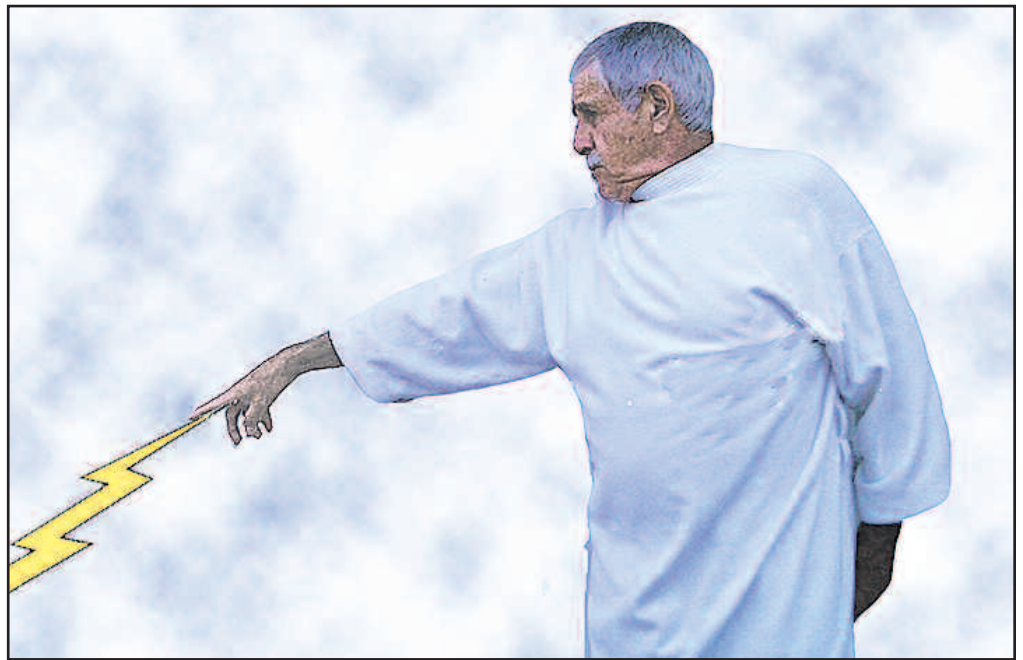
These famous lyrics, of course from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, have a special significance to me. As a child, when my father would be telling me all of what life was like in the *shtetl* (small town, village) that he lived in as a boy, I developed my own images of this place, and when I got to see *Fiddler on the Roof* for the first time it was like *déjà vu* to me.

Of course like many people, I dwell on what it might be like to really be a rich man. I thought perhaps that day had come when at our recent Fourth of July celebration a lovely woman handed me a new \$1 million bill with an actual picture of Ben Franklin on it. Lucky me.

Only there were some quid pros with accepting this huge bill, one of which states that "whoever looks at a woman to lust for her is already committed adultery with her in his heart." If you have done these things, God sees you as a lying thieving blasphemous adulterer and the Bible warns that one day God will punish you in a terrible place called hell.

The bill goes on suggesting that I repent and trust Jesus. Being Jewish this might be a little hard for me to do. Being an agnostic bordering on atheism would make it even more difficult.

I honestly wish that all of these beliefs were true in particular so that I might meet my father once again in heaven where surely he resides and tell him just what a wonderful father and idol he was for me. As for my mother, it wasn't until I went into the Army that I realized that beds do not make themselves and clothes remain dirty until you wash them, and floors



Imagine dealing with an entire universe of problems.

need to be scrubbed and washed on occasion.

I remember once being asked or rather ordered, to mop up a large hall used for Army training purposes. When it became obvious to my sergeant that I had no idea how to go about this, he said to me, "whasa matter wid you boy... Ain't you ever washed no floors before?" You know the answer to that one... That's what mothers were for!

With all the nonsense that has been taking place in our country as of late I can't help but wonder who really is in charge. I know that that big man in the sky that everyone seems to pray to is not doing too great a job right now. I simply cannot understand all the shooting and killing that takes place in the Middle East and now in our own country. People are dying and being maimed in the worst possible way and for no reason that I can see that makes any sense.

I watch too many of these science shows describing the universe and what a totally insignif-

icant part of this our little planet is. To look at all the commotion here that this man in the sky has to deal with and extrapolate that what must be happening in the billions of other planets under his control you must wonder.

I am the vice mayor of a small city with close to 47,000 people and I honestly would not want to be the man or woman totally in charge. So imagine what it must be like when you have gazillions to deal with.

Will there ever be peace on earth and goodwill towards men? I sincerely doubt it. If anything, things seem to be getting worse and, even if I were that man in the sky with the long flowing white robes, I doubt that I would know how to fix it. Maybe that is why glaciers are melting and we may soon all be living and dying underwater.

That ought to teach us! Well, Tevye, you are right. It's no great shame to be poor, but it is no great honor either. So would it have been so terrible for me to have a small fortune?