

# Dozens violate signals daily

BY PAMELA SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

Some 41 vehicles a day run the red light at the intersection of Palmetto Park Road and St. Andrew's Boulevard, according to a draft report on Palm Beach County's Red Light Violation Enforcement Program.

The numbers from that report are being used by County Commissioner Burt Aaronson and state Rep. Curt Levine, D-Boca Raton, to push for legislation that would allow the sheriff's office to ticket the owners of cars that run red lights.

An activist for the National Motorists Association used those same numbers to discredit the camera campaign.

Florida NMA activist Greg Mauz argued Thursday before the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation that such surveillance cameras not only violate three amendments to the U.S. Constitution, but they also cannot prevent accidents.

"This is not how democracy is supposed to work," Mauz said.

Now, Mauz uses the latest data to argue that not enough people run red lights to justify the expense of a surveillance camera.

According to the draft report released Thursday, less than 1 percent of vehicles passing by the Palmetto Park Road camera ran the red light. In fact, it comes out to two-tenths of a percent.

That's two cars for every 1,000.

At nearly 20,000 vehicles zooming by a day, that's 41 cars a day.

That's the reason Aaronson

## Aaronson: Privacy rights don't apply to people running lights

Lights / from

1A

and Levine are pushing for the legislation. They see that as 41 chances a day that someone could be injured or killed.

"If the state doesn't want to do it, we're asking that we be able to," Aaronson said.

"I don't think any person has any constitutional right of privacy when they're going through a red light at an inter-

section."

State Rep. William "Bill" Andrews, D-DeLray Beach, advised Levine, the sponsor of the bill, to make the proposed legislation more specific, especially in terms of who decides how and where cameras operate.

"It's going to be a tough enough bill to get through," Andrews said. "I think I would make it as narrow as you can draw it."

# Boca Raton News

Sunday, January 23, 2000

## Debate refused on traffic camera

By PAMELA SMITH HAYFORD  
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to cameras capturing red light runners on film, there will be no public debate in Palm Beach County.

A National Motorists Association activist challenged County Commissioner Burt Aaronson and state Rep. Curt Levine, D-Boca Raton, to a public debate over the surveillance camera program.

The lawmakers refused.

Greg Mauz, activist for the NMA, questions the motives of Aaronson and Levine. "If they've got nothing to hide, why are they ducking me?"

Aaronson and Levine say a public debate on the issue is inappropriate on the local level at this point.

Levine will be taking before the Florida Legislature this spring a bill that would allow Palm Beach and Broward counties to use surveillance cameras to ticket red light runners. The photos would capture the car's license plate, and the ticket would be sent to the owner. No points would be assessed to the owner's driver's license.

"I don't have to debate him. I don't have to have a reason to save lives," Aaronson said. "Otherwise I would have to debate everything that comes before the commission."

The proper place for debate, on a bill, Levine and Aaronson said, is Tallahassee.

"We can debate in the committees," Levine said. "I haven't taken him as a credible person because he acts like a stalker. He doesn't want to look at facts."

While proponents say the cameras will save lives, Mauz argues the bill will not decrease fatalities at intersections and that it violates privacy and due process rights. Plus, he charges that money is driving the camera campaign: money from tickets to the county and the company that provides the cameras.

Mauz points out that in November, the company providing the test camera on Palmetto Park Road, Cam Film Works, donated the maximum donation, \$500, to Aaronson's campaign.

The suggestion that the donation and his support of the camera program are connected angers Aaronson, who has been questioned about donations by developers yet supported open space in the Agricultural Reserve.

"Do you think that I would jeopardize my commission seat for \$500?" Aaronson said. "I'm pushing the cameras because they save lives. I was on this way before this contribution."

①

Courthouse records showed:

② ALL camera promoters had cam co. \$\$\$.

Aaronson had at least 5 "donations," including Lockheed Martin.

Liars are cowards.  
Then and now.  
Challenged Retting  
and Blakely, Cam  
Co. CEOs in 2008  
Certified mail.

JSM

① Levine tried to hide from me at the public meeting, did NOT want to look at honest research (facts), lied to the reporter and was later busted for driving 87 MPH.

# Traffic surveillance camera finds its protesters in Boca

By PAMELA SMITH HAYFORD  
STAFF WRITER

The traffic surveillance camera at Palmetto Park Road and St. Andrew's Boulevard saw its first protesters Thursday afternoon.

Two men, one of whom is an activist for the National Motorists Association, passed out about 125 fliers warning drivers, "Big Brother is watching you." They also criticized a bill by state Rep. Curt Levine that would allow such cameras to be used to ticket red light runners.

"Rep. Levine is thinking about putting his bill in any day now, and we're trying to nip this thing in the bud," said Greg Mauz, Florida activist for NMA. "Laws should be made to benefit people. This bill

tramples on people's constitutional right. There's no excuse for that."

Mauz said about eight out of 10 motorists that he talked to Thursday agreed with him.

The intersection was recently equipped with a camera that takes pictures there when cars run the red light.

The device is part of a pilot program created to find out how many people run red lights. It will collect data for 60 to 90 days. Then, that information will be used to promote legislation by Levine.

The bill would allow law enforcement to use the cameras to ticket red light runners. Under current state law, a living witness must see the offense before a ticket can be issued.

## So Big Brother's our buddy now, Burt?

In response to the article, "State rejects using cameras to give out traffic tickets": I did a double-take on a quote by Palm Beach County Commissioner Burt Aaronson: "If Big Brother is used for the good of the people, it's not so bad."



Mr. Aaronson

Pardon me? Isn't this the same thinking that has eroded people's rights and liberties throughout history?

Perhaps Mr. Aaronson could persuade those living in oppressive regimes such as China, Cuba, North Korea and others that things aren't really so bad, that Big Brother has only the good of the people in mind. Talk about a tough sell.

Instead, perhaps he should keep in mind that personal freedom is seldom removed all at once, but usually in small steps, and under the guise of the common good.

Sean Wright  
Boynton Beach



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So our state representative wants to install cameras at intersections in Boca Raton. Fine, that will increase rear-end collisions at those same intersections. Why doesn't he get together with the Republicans, since the Republicans love to know what is going on in the bedroom. Why don't they get together with those other characters and have cameras put into everyone's bedroom? How does that sound?  
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# Palm Beach Post

## Number of red-light runners (of 21,000) perspective!

Almost 50 vehicles a day were caught on camera racing through a Boca intersection.

By **Trebtor Banstetter**  
*Palm Beach Post Staff Writer*

Think drivers are maniacs in New York City? Well, they're tame compared to some Palm Beach County motorists captured on film at a Boca Raton intersection.

A county surveillance camera photographed almost 50 vehicles a day zooming through red lights at the intersection of

Palmetto Park Road and St. Andrews Boulevard during the past month.

Nobody's trying to assert that Palm Beach County has dethroned the Big Apple as home to the world's rowdiest drivers. (At least not yet.) But the statistics are, at the very least, startling.

That one-month snapshot is twice the number of red-light runners that were typically recorded each day in 1998 at New York City's busiest intersections, including the one at 42nd Street and Second Avenue, according to a report released

TUESDAY,

JANUARY 25, 2000

## 'mind-boggling'

Monday by a consultant in charge of Palm Beach County's pilot program.

"The numbers are mind-boggling," said Bernd Rind, executive vice president of Cam Film Works, which installed the camera and analyzes the film. "I don't think anyone realized how big this problem is."

Commissioner Burt Aaronson, who has championed the "camera cop," envisions a countywide network of cameras snapping photos of vehicles that zip through red lights. The owner of the vehicle would receive a ticket in the mail.

"We seem to have people continually running red lights here in Palm Beach County," Aaronson said. "This program is going to save some lives."

He says the numbers demonstrate how pervasive the problem is here.

While Palm Beach County drivers averaged 50 violations each day, New Yorkers logged about 31 violations per day in 1994 — the first year the city started photographing intersections. By 1998, the latest tally available, that number had dipped

Please see **RED LIGHT, 4A**

A mere  
 $\frac{2}{10}$  of 1%  
violate light.

### RED LIGHT

From LA

to 24.

Commissioners hope the data collected in Boca Raton will help convince state legislators to let police issue tickets based solely on the photos. Current state law requires a police officer to witness the traffic violation.

But critics, including the National Motorists Association and the American Civil Liberties Union, have decried traffic cameras as an invasion of privacy. And, they say, the programs can be counterproductive, causing rear-end collisions when camera-shy drivers slam on the brakes.

"This whole thing smacks of fascism," said Greg Mauz, a Delray Beach resident active in the Florida chapter of the National Motorists Association. "Cameras cannot prevent crashes, but they violate your rights in about five different ways."

For example, Mauz says, cameras deprive violators of the right to face their accusers. And they can't identify the driver of a car, only the license plate.

To Aaronson and his supporters, however, those concerns are outweighed by the dangers posed by people racing to beat

traffic lights. They point to county statistics that show an average eight deaths a year caused by red-light runners.

Worst of all, the camera in Boca Raton logged about 10 drivers per day barreling through the intersection more than 2 seconds after the light had turned red.

That can lead to the deadliest kind of crash — when a speeding vehicle smashes into the side of another car coming through the intersection. It was just such a crash, one that killed six people in Boca Raton last year, that energized Aaronson.

"This is the most disturbing finding," said Rind, whose company has operated camera programs in other states for 20 years. "Each one of these represents a possible broadside accident. That's just scary."

Rind's report details the last two weeks of December. He also has collected data throughout January, and said the average of 50 violations per day has remained steady.

Aaronson, who is running for reelection this year, has garnered support from Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Commissioners from all three counties included traffic cameras as a legislative priority at a meeting

Monday. State Rep. Curt Levine, D-Boca Raton, says he'll be introducing such a bill at this year's legislative session.

Cam Film Works is conducting the pilot program, which will continue until the end of February, for free. But the firm is positioning itself to vie for a countywide contract should state law be changed this year.

The company hired influential lobbyist Hugo Unruh last year to represent it before commissioners, according to lobbyist registration records. And in November, it donated \$500 to Aaronson's reelection campaign, according to the Supervisor of Elections Office.

Unruh also gave Aaronson the legal limit of \$500 last year, according to campaign reports.

Aaronson insists the program is about saving lives.

"All I want is for the state to allow us to do this locally," Aaronson said. "If they don't want it statewide, give us the option of doing it here."

But Mauz said the county's real motive is the money it could collect from fines.

"The bottom line here is the dollars," he said. "That's what they're really pushing for."

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Thursday, March 30, 2000

Honorable James B. Fuller  
Florida House Transportation Committee  
Room 418 House Office Building  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300

Re: House Bill 1159 (Camera Enforcement)

Dear Representative Fuller:

The enactment of a law permitting camera enforcement of red-light violations would abrogate two vital traditions that took nearly a millenium to become engrained in the jurisprudence of this nation. They are the presumption of innocence of an accused person until and unless proven guilty, and the burden of proof on the government to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Please refer to my enclosed recent article for elaboration.

Think deeply before you permit these precious protections to be taken away by the stroke of a pen!

I spent 31 years serving my country in the U.S. Navy, first as a line officer, later as a Judge Advocate, to preserve freedom for all of us. Please pitch in by taking a moment to vote "NO"!

Respectfully,

C. Paul Ake  
Captain, JAGC, USN (Ret.)

Encl:

"ERODING FREEDOMS" (article of March 17<sup>th</sup>, the "Boca Raton News")

# Residents offer suggestions on slowing red-light runners

Just mention motorists running traffic lights and some people see red.

Two weeks ago I wrote that I had received calls complaining about the number of people who don't stop for red lights. I asked if anyone had a solution.

A few have taken up the challenge.

One caller suggested changing the timing on traffic signals:

"It seems like the main drags going east-west have a long-green light," he said. "And the cross streets have long red lights."

The caller pondered the reasoning behind this.

"It seems like they want to get traffic out of town real fast."

Another suggested city council loosen the purse strings and spend more on law enforcement.

More police officers, more visibility, fewer traffic violations was this person's reasoning.

Delray Beach resident Greg Mauz, who represents the Florida Chapter of the National Motorists Association, sent me an article from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

"Best safety benefits result from engineering," Mauz notes in the margin.

The article focuses on a program in Detroit in which a number of intersections were re-engineered. Bigger traffic lights were installed. Traffic

## ROAD SAGE



Sy  
**O'Neill**

signals were retimed. New pavement markings for left turns were added.

The cost of the first few intersections was \$35,000 each – "Less than the cost of one camera" Mauz points out.

While the goal of the project was to reduce crashes, there was another benefit: Redesigning the intersections also reduced red-light running, according to the article.

An e-mailer offers a different point of view:

"If people drove in the right lane, not the left, and let the people who need to go somewhere go, they would make the red light and not run it."

This person also suggests that those in the left turn lanes should move quickly when the arrow turns green, so all the vehicles in line can make the turn in the time allotted.

Finally, amidst the phone messages, emails and notes,

there is a call to action:

"The community needs to organize around this issue. If there is enough pressure from the grassroots and the politicians, then maybe the police department will devote more resources to enforcement of running red light laws.

"I would love to see Boca take the lead on this issue. If the community makes enough noise on it, something positive will happen."

Any volunteers?

## Orange barrier blues:

Inspection begins this week on the A1A bridge over Boca Inlet. One southbound lane will be closed from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 1 and Monday, June 5.

Delray Beach's Linton Boulevard Bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway will be closed to all traffic June 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Traffic will be detoured via Route 1, Atlantic Avenue, and A1A to the north; and Route 1, Spanish River Boulevard and A1A to the south.

The right northbound lane on Military Trail will be closed just north of Spanish River Boulevard, from May 31 through June 1.

**Plate du jour: BOCA GUY** – with a woman at the wheel!

You can reach Sy O'Neill at 893-6618, or by email at [Bocaroadsage@yahoo.com](mailto:Bocaroadsage@yahoo.com)