

Cutler Bay NEWS

JUNE 21 - JULY 4, 2016

communitynewspapers.com

305-669-7355

If you're into photography, shop is a local treasure

BY ERNIE SOCHIN



A local treasure! Unless you are a real photo junkie you may not have heard of this place right within our reach.

AAA Photo Fast, owned and operated by Ron Mitro, has been here at 17029 S. Dixie Hwy. since 2005 and originally on Flagler Street since 1979.

Ron was at one time a candidate for office in the town of Cutler Bay. Fortunately for me I won that particular election. In the years since, I have come to know Ron quite well and found him to be a great friend as well as an extremely knowledgeable person with everything dealing with photography — both still and movies — and all forms of electronic transfers. Where else can you go to have a camera repaired or film developed? (Yes, real cameras without a phone attached to it.)

Visiting his store is truly like going to a museum. I have never in my life seen such an assortment of cameras and photography items as I saw at AAA photo. When I needed a Brownie box camera to show people what photography was like at one time, Ron was able to simply reach into one of his shelves and produce one. When is the last time you saw a Brownie box camera?

I use it in my many talks regarding my new book, *When I Was Your Age*, when I show the box camera to young people accustomed to using their various iPhones, etc. When I described taking pictures with this device they seemed quite amazed that this little box could do the same thing and record the images on a piece of film which was then sent to some place in Rochester, NY for developing after which they returned it to you several weeks later. I was even able to demonstrate how I could take self selfies with this remarkable device.

Walking through Ron's store would rival any museum that you might visit specializing in photography. I would bet that he has one of just about anything ever used to produce photos or videos. When is the last time you saw an 8 mm or 16 mm camera or projector? Ron has them both.

He knows that I am a World War II buff and opened up a secret box that he has loaded with various types of hand grenades including the famous German potato masher which some of you may remember from the many World War II movies you have seen. He also had a collection of antiaircraft shells, 40 mm cannon shells, etc.

I could literally spend days there just going through all of his stuff. If you need films developed, a camera repaired or replaced, or anything that might involve photography, this is the place to go and if you want



A photography museum

to bring your children along he also has a collection of live lizard-like creatures, most of which I had never seen before, on display for all to see. Don't ask me what this has to do with photography but that is Ron.

His store has been in existence for over 35 years and hopefully will continue for many more. When I visit Ron's store I noticed a small restaurant nearby called Walters that many people had told me about, but one that I had never tried. When I finally did, I was pleasantly surprised or even amazed at the quality of the food there.

So here are two secrets, just minutes from where you live that many of you have probably never heard of. There are probably more and I'll let you know when I find them. In the meantime please support our local merchants.