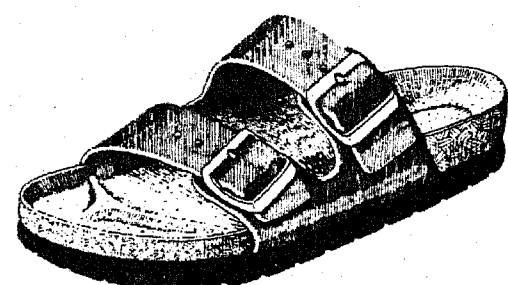


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## FROM THE EDITOR

Hello,

Many thanks to everyone—especially the most generous advertisers—for a splendid 10th anniversary issue. At some point I'd like to put together a "Best of Solares Hill" and this past issue reminded me anew of some of the treasures we've had in the paper.

My apologies to Benton Hooten who wrote the piece on the cockroaches in April's issue but was denied her by-line.

The following is a letter to the editor.

Dear Editor:

*Who's the Guru and who's the parrot? On two succeeding days last week, (Wed. & Thurs. Apr. 17-18) there appeared a letter to the 'People's Forum' concerning the reputations of residents on Houseboat Row. Although almost identical in content, the first was signed by 8 of the residents (apparently) and the second by George Murphy. It reminds one of the old saw, "which came first, the chicken or the egg?" It seems that George Murphy is the author of the one-sided, biased and highly prejudicial attacks on the RDA and one of our loved and highly respected Commissioners, Emma Cates. It appears that the owner/editor of this specialty publication abdicated his editorial privileges and passed them on to the very reporter doing the story. Letters addressed to the Editor were answered by the reporter. Being a former Editor/Publisher myself, I wrote my own editorials and left the writing and reporting to my staff. When one has a monthly publication that is not timely enough to keep up with current events, it is unfair to produce such one-sided reporting, which in some circles is known as "yellow journalism." The liberal views of some hippies-turned-yuppies is one thing, but I want to go on record as saying I wish to offer my complete support and praise to Emma Cates and I resent such unwarranted statements by the reporter which should have been stricken from the story by any responsible Publisher/Editor. Good luck Emma.*

-Vic Dahn Jr.

Dear Vic Dahn,

Since the first part of your letter involved letters to the editor of The Key West Citizen and not to Solares Hill I had to check with George Murphy. He replied that both letters were handed in simultaneously to Jim Tucci at the Citizen & Jim chose to run them on two succeeding days as is his prerogative. George did not write the first letter and chose to write his own because he wanted to amplify on the remarks in the first.

The only letter to the editor in recent issues I can recall was a mammoth letter written by Steve McDaniels taking George Murphy to task for what McDaniels saw as numerous errors and misstatements in George's series on the RDA. As customary in these matters the author of the series responds and George did so effectively.

George and I are puzzled about your remarks on his attacks on Commissioner Emma Cates. The only time in a 7 part series he remembers even mentioning her was to quote her, not write any "unwarranted statements" about her. I took issue with Emma in my column and I hope that you don't think that George writes my columns—he's a much better writer than I am & he'd be annoyed to be so accused.

Finally George's series in the RDA is the best job of investigative reporting this paper has ever undertaken and I'm proud of it. George calls his articles "commentary" and therefore they contain his point of view. This point of view or "bias" as you call it, we call good reporting. His columns have, among other things, cited numerous problems with the lease which were later verified by independent study, helped lead to the removal of 2 board members who did not meet residency requirements, & raised issues about the performance of their legal counsel who also is no longer serving.

It would seem we were right on target.

Our cover this time is by Jason Goodman.

Solares Hill is a community newspaper published every month on the slopes of Solares Hill, Key West's highest point, by Solares Hill Company, 513 Fleming Street Room 4, Key West, Florida 33040

Editor ..... Bill Huckel  
Editorial Consultant ..... Bill Westray  
Art Direction ..... Walt Hyla  
Digital Typography ..... TypeTech, Inc.

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THANK YOU

## JEANE PORTER

by Valerie Ridenour

Mention Jeane Porter in Key West circles and for sure you'll be bombarded with such a variety of opinions, you'll wonder who she really is. Some think of Jeane as an astute businesswoman, running her properties from some lofty social plane untouchable by mere mortal beings. Is she the grande dame of Caroline Street or just another resident of paradise? The answer is both. Those who are close to Jeane will quickly tell you that behind those sweet, brown eyes exists a loving, caring woman, whose heart is open to anyone who needs her. The two sides of Jeane Porter come from her impressive heritage combined with a rich experience of living in many exciting environments most of us only read about. Even so, none of the foreign countries and continents where she's visited have stolen her heart, which remains tied to Key West. She says, "You can take the Conch out of Key West, but you can't take Key West out of the Conch."

Being a caretaker of history is no easy task. Somebody has to care about our past to assure its preservation for our future generations, whose historians will be enthralled with things from times long gone and forever changed. You might someday gaze in awe at a wedding dress worn by Jeane's great grandmother, realizing both the artistry and integrity that went into the seams and the abundance of time that was available to the seamstress.

Jeane's travel through this particular universe began in New York. "I wanted to be close

to my mother," Jeane quipped as she began to relate her journey through time, "but I was brought back to Key West within the first month and baptized here in the Episcopal Church. My



Jeane Porter

father was an engineer in New York. We lived in New York City and Brooklyn. As a little girl I can remember the day and age of the bank robberies and hoodlums. I think to this day I'm afraid of violent noises because a bank was held up very near where I lived, and my nurse pushed me frantically into the doorway of a brownstone for protection and the machine gun bullets ricocheted off the walls. We got out of it without damage, but this has always affected me."

Photo by Sharon Wells

One morning Mother (Jessie) and I were walking down Telegraph Lane on the way to the telegraph office. Standing on the sidewalk under a cork tree was an older gentleman with shaggy white hair and wearing white shorts and shirt torn off at the sleeves. He was watching a procession of bugs that were hourglass in shape and marked with red and black diamonds. As we passed he looked up and said, "Excuse me, do you know the name of these bugs?" Mother did, and said, "Yes, they're --- bugs and they live on the cork tree." He asked, "Do they always do this?" What they were doing was travelling across the sidewalk in a long procession, marching up the cork tree and collecting themselves at the end of a limb in a large bunch and then, because of sheer weight, dropping off to the sidewalk again. He (John Dewey) shook his head and said, "Looks just like civilization to me: getting itself out on a limb in a bunch and then dropping off." That comment enthralled her, so they introduced themselves to each other and she invited him to come for a drink in the garden, and this became a wonderful long friendship.

One of the most interesting aspects of growing up in Key West as a child was the fascinating people from all over the world who came down here—many on their yachts: the Johnstons, the Cramers (who was the father of air conditioning), the Bentleys and many others. During the early '30s in the deep Depression, Key West became the pilot town for the WPA and FERA (all the alphabet jungle of Roosevelt's New Deal.) Some of the leading artists in the country, ones later called "The Ash Can School of Art" who became nationally and internationally famous came down here to live and work and

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established the Art Center on Front Street. Grant Wood was one of its first directors—and one of my first teachers. Adolph Dane, John Marin, Sheeler, Anton Refrigier, Doris Lee and Arnold Blanch, to name a few, all lived and taught and worked here. The Garden and 410 were always full of interesting people—Hemingway and Pauline, his wife; Dos Passos and his wife, Katy. Later on, before and during WW II, many Washington politicians and newspaper people—Elmer Davis, Emie Pyle and others—and of course, Robert Frost, who used to come for visits and stay in the now named Frost cottage; and Gloria Swanson, Tennessee Williams and his grandfather, whom my mother adored, were regulars. Tennessee would bring over all the young playwrights and actors—Tallulah Bankhead and others. Sally Rand, who was an adorable light spirit liked to come and just sit in the Garden—she said it was so peaceful. Part of her act, other than the one with the fans, included a huge seven- or eight-foot python that she'd wind around her shoulders while she danced. One morning she came over wringing her hands. 'Henry' the python had disappeared. It was winter and we were having a cold spell and she was distraught. "What will I do?" she moaned. "He'll catch cold and he's so timid and shy people won't understand him." Well, Henry turned up in gardens all over town. He appeared under breakfast tables. During cocktail parties he would crawl out from under the greenery and people would fly in all directions. Henry, of course, was finally recouped and returned to his famous owner—and back to his 'grind.'

In the early '30s my parents bought 410 Caroline, in terrible condition and neglected, as were so many fine old houses on the island. My

father started to restore it with Joe Hannibal, one of the finest black carpenters on the island. It can be said that this was the real beginning of Key West restoration and preservation, which mother continued for the rest of her life.



Grandfather William R. Porter

Joe Hannibal was also a talented musician—there were wonderful native musicians on the island then, and always have been. Pauline Hemingway had given Joe a fine guitar and took lessons from him. He had a friend named "Baby" who lived across the street and played the violin—age 84—and the three of us used to play together on Joe's porch on Thomas Street. I loved it! Joe was my "folk hero" along with

Albert Atwell and Mike Coons. Albert taught me to swim and sail and knew all about the sea and fishing and sea crafts. Mike was caretaker of what was then called "The Biological Station," at the head of the island where my family kept a houseboat. Mike, an old bachelor, was full of stories about how he'd been captured by 'the Mexicans' and taken up in waterspouts and he was in love with a mermaid. One evening he said he'd been out checking his traps off Cow Key. It was low tide—a bright, moonlit night—and there sitting on a low bank was a mermaid. She was combing her hair. Her back was turned toward him, he said, so he put his oars deep in the water and very quietly rowed over to her, grabbed her and pulled her into his dinghy. She was beautiful, but began to plead with him—"so pitiful like"—that she'd die if she lived on land that finally he couldn't resist, and lowered her gently back into the water. I can see that mermaid still so vividly, disappearing down into the water, arms upstretched and face moon-luminous and smiling up at Mike as she sank into the depths.

"There was another story teller," Jeanie continued, "Miss Irene Johnston, who lived next door on Whitehead Street. Miss Irene was the wife of Braddish W. Johnston, king of the wreckers—known as 'Hog' out of envy, because he always got to the wrecks first. They were an extraordinarily handsome couple. Miss Irene still had sea chests full of fascinating things Hog had brought back to her from wrecks and philobustering (a term then used for selling arms to both sides in South American revolutions.) In the 1880s international chess games were held here at the Cuban Club on Duval, which had a big central ballroom of black and white tile

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floors and was surrounded by a second floor balcony. Human pawns were used in those days, all dressed in elaborate costumes. The champions would stand on the balconies and call down the moves. Miss Irene was always one of the queens and my grandfather (William R. Porter) as a boy was her page. He said he never minded the long hours of holding the queen's train because she was so beautiful it was a pleasure to stand there and look at her.

Miss Irene told Jeanie that she had seen two old pirate maps that located treasure buried in the Garden and showed her a pirate grave dug into the coral rock that had contained human bones, two doubloons and a Spanish dagger. Jeanie laughed, "I dug two foot holes all over the back yard as a child. We found coins and crockery from all over the world but never a trove." With twinkling eyes Jeanie claimed "That's waiting for my grandchildren."

"I think the Old South was marvelous in the way it passed on history and wisdoms. I was raised with quotes that I still live with, like 'Willful waste makes woeful want' and about drinking, 'It's not the use—it's the abuse,' and 'Make the most of what you've got before you ask for anything more.'"

As memories came flooding back, Jeanie told me, "I think one of the interesting bits of forgotten history is that we had an African Queen on this island. She was called 'Conga Julia' (pronounced with an 'h'). She was an herbalist and famous on the island for her remedies and medi-

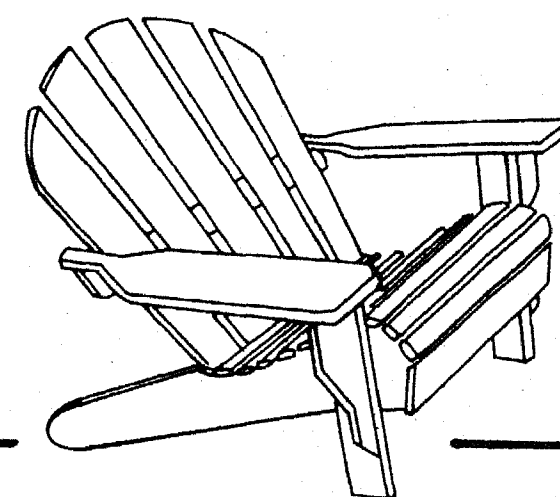
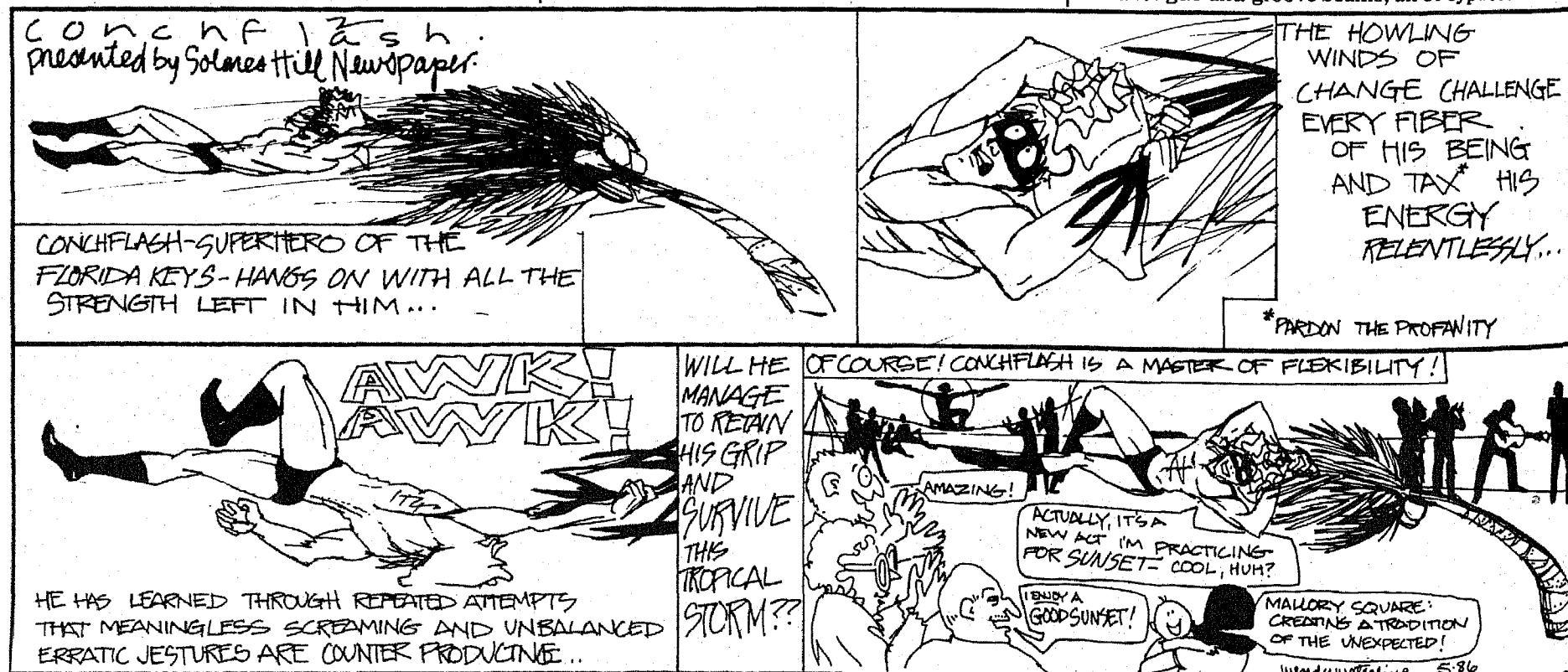
cines. She lived in a little house . . . I see it somewhere on Solares Hill . . . and its door and windows were all painted what was called 'Hail Mary blue.' This to keep out evil spirits. She was a very tall, slim austere looking woman and very proud and upright in bearing. Jeanie explained



Jeanie's children: Suzanne, Porter, Renee that island mothers found that 'getting Conga Julia after you' was an effective threat to control, because voodoo was practiced on the island. One gathering spot was a high-grown grassy lot with an indigo tree and Gumbo Limbos in what is now a part of the Fort Taylor property. Conga Julia had been captured as a young queen with almost her entire tribe intact, brought off the coast of Florida by slave ships and then recaptured by Union forces during the Civil War. All the Africans on board were brought ashore and kept in barrackoons (primitive houses) in Fort Taylor. When the war ended they were all

released and so were never sold into slavery. Many of the old black families on the island come from this source. They had a great deal of pride and wisdom. It is claimed that Conga Julia lived to be over one hundred and twenty years old. When she died they buried her with many of their African totems and drums, which they had copied. As a child, when drums started beating from that area (near the Hemingway House), we always knew we were in for a really bad storm. They would beat drums to lower the pressure. I think it's wonderful the way whites and blacks on this island have always gotten along and respected each other and shared love for each other and their families.

"My father had a heart attack and had to retire. We moved down to Key West in the early thirties and bought 410 Caroline Street, which was just around the corner from all the family houses on Duval and Caroline, and started to restore it. From the earliest times I can remember scraping off layers of paint on banisters and mouldings (my job)." Jeanie's residence is one of Key West's oldest and finest. "This house belonged to a wrecker named Captain Carey, whom Mother referred to politely as, also a 'spirit' (liquor) dealer. He was evidently very prosperous, because the house is built in two, really three sections. The original small house is where the dining room is today. Then he added the front part of the house in the late 1830s. It was built by sea carpenters, with wooden pegs and tongue-and-groove beams, all of cypress and



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mahogany and the first virgin pine."

About her schooling Jeanie stated, "I went to the Convent here on the island, where my mother had gone before me. We had wonderful friends there, Sister Louis being one of them who had been there since my mother was a little girl. I went there for nine years and many times boarded while my family took trips. In many ways I was imbued with several different religions. The family had been Episcopalian traditionally, but they were not really straight-laced people . . . high Episcopalians by nature. Catholicism certainly added tranquillity when I was a little girl . . . the idea of sitting peacefully and meditating had a lot of influence. Then there was Scotch Presbyterianism, so I've had an exposure to just about everything."

Jeanie was sent off to boarding school at thirteen (a family tradition) to Stuart Hall in Staunton, Virginia, which was, "an old school that

had been there since before the Civil War, terribly straight-laced, rigid and conformist. I had an awful time. I spent the first year in restriction for one infraction or another. I realized that if I wanted to get out of it, which I desperately did, I had to make very good grades, so I studied day and night. The third year my family picked out what they thought was a more liberal school: Fairmont Junior College in Washington, D.C. They moved for the winters down to Ormond Beach where all the WAC military training was going on. It turned out to be a country club and wild as could be . . . the other extreme." Jeanie's final year of high school was spent at Miss Harris's in Miami, her own choice. "After graduation Miss Harris encouraged my family to let me go to Mexico to study art and archaeology at the University there. It was my first burst of freedom." A year at Stetson University where Jeanie amazed her family by making the honor

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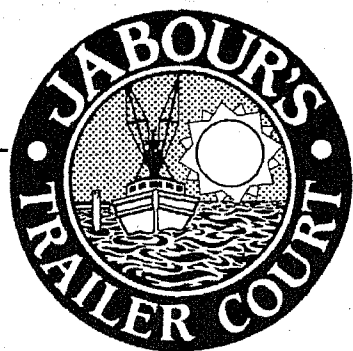


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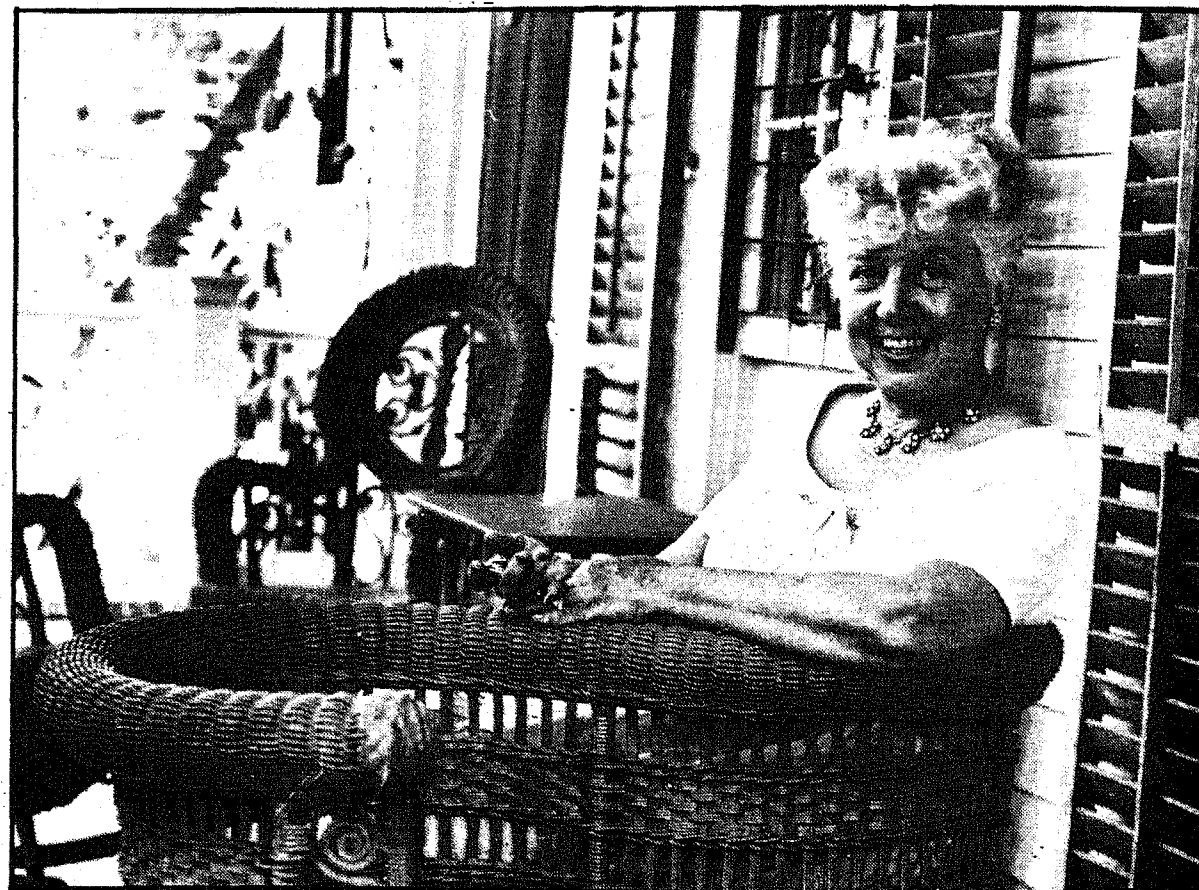
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roll caused them to allow her to follow a cousin's suggestion and enroll at the University of California at Berkeley. "I really loved Berkeley," Jeanie remembered, "it was in the mid-late forties, and most of World War II had finished. Berkeley was a wonderfully stimulating world."

less restricted, however well intentioned the restrictions. Berkeley was certainly a fine proving ground for the gifted young Key Wester. Escape was not 'running away from home' for Jeanie Porter, far from it. She was proud of her father, Wallace Kirke, an engineer with Stein-



"Miss" Jessie Porter Newton

Escaping from the family was something of an accomplishment. It is harder for a child of highly motivated, intelligent and powerful parents to grow into individuality than for those

metz in Schenectady, of whom Jeannie recalls, "He helped design all the underground wiring in New York, but with the stock market crash and all the anxieties . . . had a heart attack.

One reason we came down here was to help him recuperate." Jeanie's mother, Jessie Porter was born in Mobile, and like her daughter was brought back to Key West. "She was the daughter of Grace and William R. Porter. This was an old, old family on the island. I don't think Key West has existed without Porters, Randolphs and Currys." Wallace and Jessie had two daughters, Jeanie and Caroline; and Jessie was an only child. From the grandparents' large families, only a few remain. "This generation has thinned out." After majoring in journalism and English at Berkeley for three years Jeanie realized, "I desperately wanted to paint again. I had stayed away from that temptation, but this was my last year in college. I went to the dean and told her the problem." The dean told Jeanie she really belonged in an art school. With the courage to do so thus supplied, Jeanie dropped out just before graduation to enroll in the California College of Arts and Crafts. "I stayed there a year and a half and took everything I could as fast as I could. My grandfather had supported all my earlier schooling, but being a Southern patriarch, he felt too much education would ruin a good woman, so I went to school on an inheritance from Godparents, the Jones. I had to weigh and balance every penny I had. That's one reason I didn't go after degrees, but after things I really wanted to learn. I never knew how much longer I could go to school. You didn't just get jobs and work your way through then, especially in the California region. There were so many people who needed work after the war."

In the height of the McCarthy era, 1948, Jeanie Porter returned to her Key West home and to her first exhibit. "I was to have a show at the Women's Club," Jeanie explained, "which was the only place to exhibit on the island at the

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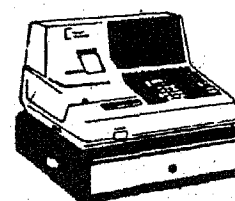
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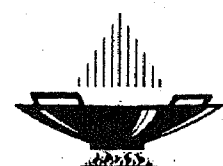
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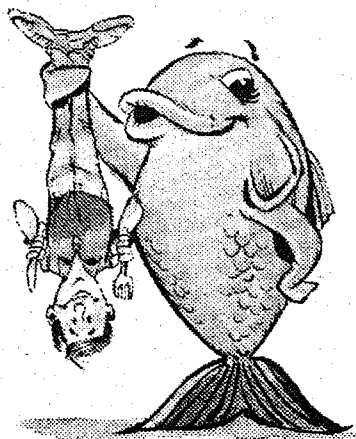
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ment with us. My grandfather had said if I could prove I could earn a living for a year, he'd give me a thousand dollar war bond. I worked for almost a year, and then, through the firm I was working for, that exported to Europe, I was able to get tickets on a freighter. At that time there was little or no trans-Atlantic tourism. I went over with two friends and we spent the summer traveling through Europe that was just beginning to recuperate from the war. In New York I had known and worked with William Hayter, who was the father of modern gravure. He and his family had moved back to Paris and helped me find a studio across the street from them on the Left Bank, and near the Cafe Dome . . . a wonderful neighborhood! It had a skylight, and even it's own bathtub (a luxury). A Guggenheim Fellowship painter from Peru, and his wife, shared the kitchen with me." Jeanie made her thousand dollars last. "Once you got settled there, your rents were very reasonable, and you learned how to shop and how to do. I made the thousand dollars last over two years, and came back with some money to face New York."

Before Jeanie returned from Europe she studied design in Sweden. "I learned how to do repeats and studied design trends. I sent Swedish fabrics and designs back to my boss in New York and it started a Swedish fashion trend in the Fifties." Jeanie graduated from the Village to a Penthouse of "a little hotel" across from the RCA building at Rockefeller Center. It was prestigious to have this kind of location, so I did," Jeanie laughed. "I met my future husband, whom I'd known during the war here, and we were married in Key West in 1956." Mr. and Mrs. Art Poirier moved to Australia, where son Porter and daughter Renee were born. After three

delightful years down under, the young family came home, only to be sent to Paris, where Art's employer, Chevron, was looking for oil in the Paris basin. "It was the time of de Gaulle, and they were having all sort of upheavals. The French were in the last death throes of giving up their colonies in Algeria." After the Poirier's second daughter, Susie, was born, the family moved to Veaucreson, outside Paris. After another trip back and forth they moved to Holland . . . "bag and baggage, gerbils and canaries. The children always acquired animals. We moved to the Hague and found a nice house right on a canal."

"In the winter we'd watch all the children ice skating. They'd blow a hole in the ice for the wild ducks to get water. You'd look out the windows and see everybody skating on the canals and jumping over the water holes. Every now and then somebody would fall in and be fished out, frozen stiff, but surviving. Holland was fun. It was centrally located to get to the rest of Europe easily . . . while I was there I took an archaeological tour of Greece. In 1965 we moved to Connecticut, to the first house we ever bought. It was a lovely old pre-revolutionary house, full of atmosphere. We loved Connecticut. I've enjoyed almost every place I've been, really." As the family moved about the world, Jeanie returned to Key West every year or so, always keeping closely in touch with her island home. "With my sister I had inherited the Joseph Yates Porter (great-grandfather) house in '55. I've owned it now for over thirty years. I'd come back to paint or fix it; it always needed fixing. We'd come back with the children to touch base and family roots. Art was transferred back to the U.S. We bought a place in California

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in what is now Silicon Valley, in San Carlos. I always seem drawn back to California. It has such variety as a state.

After three years in California Jeanie and family made a truly exciting move to Madagascar, which lies in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa. "It was a do-it-yourself world," Jeanie explained, "a poor but really beautiful one. Antananorivo, the capital, is five thousand feet up on the spine that runs down the center of the Great Red Island. The Imarina tribe that had settled it in the high plateau region were part Indian-African. They were almost idyllic looking South Sea Island people. It had a matriarchy and a caste system. Madagascar today has twelve queens! It was a very developed and colorful history. They had palaces and had reached a high cultural level. They had running water and aqueducts. They had spices that the French and English needed, and the trade with China went by." One of the interesting connections between continents was that the same pirates that inhabited our Caribbean waters also sailed the coasts of Madagascar. "It was like a seasonal thing; preying on the ships over here or over there. There is as much sunken treasure in the waters over there as off the Florida coast—or more."

Jeanie was once again in California when her

mother's illness called her home to Key West for good. One might wonder how Jeanie sees the town that has always been her home now, as opposed to the Key West of her childhood. "I think Key West has developed for the better except for high rises coming in, which is terrible and must be controlled and stopped. You know Nantucket is three times the size of Key West, and they haven't allowed any more high rise growth for over ten years. They realize they can't have that kind of development and keep their quality and their history. Once you've got these places (large hotels and condos) the quality goes, and you can't recapture it again. New England knows this."

Jeanie Porter had a difficult choice to make with her return home. Her husband did not wish to return to Key West. With retirement he didn't want to be tied down. Divorced now, Jeanie decided "I realized I wanted to come back to my roots for this latter stage of my life and do something with property that could be challenging; to use old property in a creative way. I'm in the process of doing that with the Commodore Porter—my great grandfather—House, something that will sustain the house and give to the island as well. I've had to do it little by little, because whatever comes in from the property



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I've put back into it to pay the way." Key West may be surprised to learn that Jeanie Porter is not a wealthy woman. Like her fellow Capricorns, she has a talent for business that enables her to maintain her lifestyle by using and recycling the income generated by her holdings. Jeanie knows the old Key West patch as long as possible, repair but don't replace techniques well. They enable her to maintain her heritage, which is also Key West's, without a great deal of capital. "To have the buildings support themselves with mounting taxes and mounting costs is difficult. There are so many outside interests that have come down here who have money from the outside and can afford to do something expensively, but I don't have that. What I have is right here. It belongs to my children with me,

now for seven generations."

Managing her property has taken so much of Jeanie's time, little is left for her true love, art. But Jeanie believes that when her plans are realized, that time will come to her. "I want to turn 410 Caroline and its gardens into a cultural center, which I would do in Jessie Porter's name. I would like to have her remembered in this way. It's something I think she has earned." Jeanie has directed her energies into creating a place in the Commodore garden for small shops and gazebos in the conch style that sell unique crafts and art works. The China Clipper, owned by Nicholas Miller and Hugh O'Callahan has turned the carriage house into an Oriental Import store of the quality Gumps in San Francisco was once known for.

There's Joe De Vito with his hand screened shirts and shorts in the Cookhouse cottage. Gina Barker's Sunshine Jewelry. Richard Perriman's delightful puppets, the KW Glass Blower Michel Dennis, a pastel portrait artist Darrell Blanton who comes for the season—all of these products represent high standards of workmanship and quality at reasonable prices. Jeanie is planning to add an attractive food unit to the Garden soon featuring fresh salads, sandwiches, fruit juices and desserts. "It will provide tourists and local shoppers a place just off the street to come in, browse and be refreshed in a garden atmosphere." A future development is to have a really fine book store in the large cellar of the Commodore Porter. "It's needed and would be a natural," Jeanie projects. "I'm sending out vibrations for this to happen." Another possible dream for the future, one Jeanie shared with her mother Jessie Newton: to develop 410 Caroline

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Jeanie at 25

into a Cultural Center. "There is so much talent here on the island," Jeanie feels, "artists, writers, poets, historians, journalists, as well as those that come down to visit. I would like to see 410 used as a Center and forum for courses and lectures in all these fields; i.e., a Body, Mind and Spirit Center.

Key West has always been a Mecca for the intellectual—the 'doers,' not just escapists. Thomas Edison was here experimenting with anti submarine warfare during WW I and of course, so many presidents—starting probably with Ulysses S. Grant and going down through Teddy Roosevelt in the Spanish American War, to Franklin Roosevelt who used to come here and fish when he was Secretary of the Navy. One of the unsung heroes of this island has been my grandfather William R. Porter, who knew Roosevelt and persuaded him to bring in the WPA and FERA when the island was so down and out in Depression times. "Pop" gave the land to the county to make the Boulevard and its bridge path. He was also the driving force in getting the Overseas Highway and bridges built. Before that he saw Key West as a deep water port and got government and local interests to deepen the waterfront area for commerce."

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Her grandfather, Dr. Joseph Yates Porter, who helped wipe out yellow fever, and was a pioneer in preventative medicine, she says would turn over in his grave seeing the 'cess-pool' caused by inoperable storm drains on Caroline Street and Duval just across from his house and in other areas of town. These areas must be cleaned up along with the new sewer lines. The Doctors' home—called the Commodore Porter—now has two very unique shops: the Commodore Antiques, owned by David Newton and Berle Weinstein, offering museum-quality and collectors' pieces, and Don Walker's 'Yuzen,' on the Duval Street side with beautiful Japanese kimonos and jackets. Both shops are high quality and tasteful and reasonably priced. "It's a wonderful way," Jeanie says, "to have this fine old house, a National Landmark building, continue in use

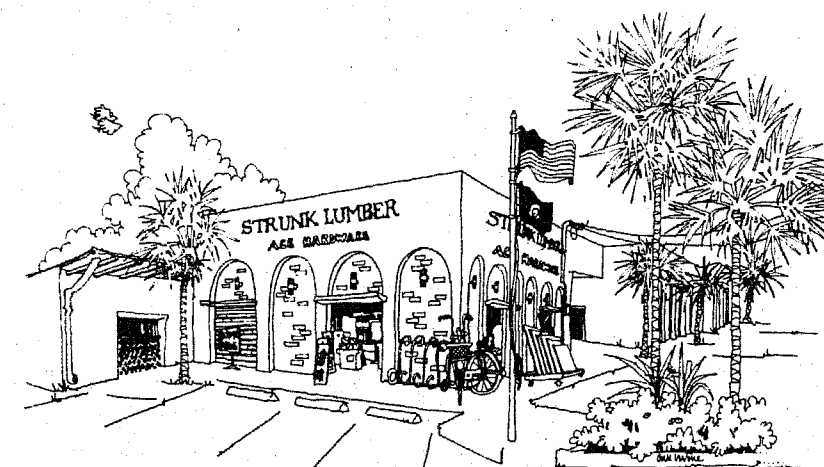
and style.

Jeanie Porter is a deeply spiritual woman, attuned to the universe. "Unity has been a wonderful source of strength and spiritual nourishment for me, especially during the last few years. I'm glad there is a Unity group and Church here on the island now. My mother and my grandmother and I have always been drawn to the metaphysical. I try not to do anything that doesn't have a spiritual base, not just a material one. Material wears very thin after a while, and if there isn't a spiritual reason for something there's really no reason to do it. Our Western world has become much more materialistic and left-brained in its attitudes and pursuits. I think we've neglected the spiritual side of our own growth. America did have a spiritual base when it started out. I think we've lost sight

of this. If we don't combine the mental and spiritual sides of our natures I think we're finished as homo sapiens. Key West is a magnet for power. It has always attracted some of the most powerful people on the globe, but Key West has always been built on small enterprise, mom and pop businesses, brothers, i.e., good ethical family businesses... that's what built our island. Key West has always welcomed people and new ideas from the outside while retaining the personal feeling and individuality.

Jeanie Porter sees a brighter future for Key West because, "We have people in our government who want to do things for the island, not just take from it; people who can see Key West as more than a material grab bag. I feel optimistic about our future."

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## MORPHEUS ASCENDING

by Helen R. Chapman

When it comes to rising from one's bed to greet a new day, there are the fast starters and the slow starters. I belong to the latter group, the zombies. Now, it isn't that I object to greeting a new day—on my terms, of course. It's just that I have sluggish adrenalin. First I have to figure all over again who I am. When I have decided that, I sidle to the bathroom, bumping into furniture. Then I plod on to the kitchen to make coffee. I open the newspaper and glance at the headlines, most of which I misinterpret by transposing letters. So I forget the paper for the time being. I try the television news show, but those people have been up for hours and are bubbling over like game-show contestants. Yuck! Off with the TV. After my second cup of coffee, I am ready to greet the day, once I've concluded what day it is. If it's Sunday and I got up to go to work, suicidal inclinations set in.

When I was a kid, I begged my mother not to talk to me at the breakfast table. She never learned and I never remembered a word she said. It took her a half hour to get me up in the first place so her adrenalin was flowing torrentially. She couldn't understand why I was bouncing off the walls.


Those of you who suffer from unenthusiastic

adrenalin as I do know never to live with someone of the opposite persuasion. It's bad enough to see them whisking breakfast onto the table, whisking off the dirty dishes, whisking to the shower, and probably whistling. Whisking and whistling, whisking and whistling! It's enough to drive a sane person back to bed. But—and this is an important but—if they talk in addition to all this activity, don't hesitate. Get a divorce, break a friendship, move out—anything! My favorites are the ones who outline their entire day, minute by minute, while I'm still trying to decide what day it is.

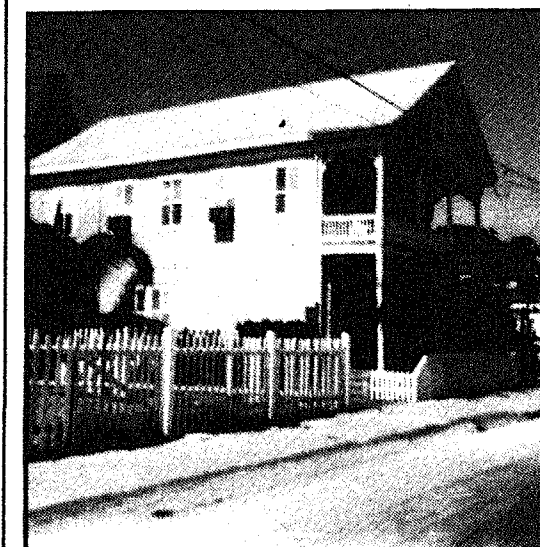
I once read an article in the paper which gave me hope. It was written by a doctor who stated that because sleep is rejuvenating, a period during which the body renews itself, people who sleep heavily and awake with difficulty are healthier than restless sleepers who leap out of bed full of energy. I never argue with doctors who are on my side.

By noon, I'm totally rejuvenated, ready to take on the world, and by ten that night, I'm really hitting my stride, just when everyone's going home to bed. Ah, the pitfalls of being a healthy zombie!

Oh, and by the way, can someone explain to me what a sunrise looks like?



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## GOOD OL' BOYS

by George Houtte

Conehead told me again—for at least the sixth time—about the big one that would always break lines. As usual, I was at Herbie's, sippin' beer and workin' on a plate of steamed shrimp.

Conehead said, "Ain't nobody gonna catch him, cause you couldn't drag that sucker out of his hole with a rope. You'll have to go down and spear him."

Well, I could have cared less but Fat Frank—who was bored now that the dolphin season had passed—must have had his ear cocked from about five stools over, said, "Me, I don't care for divin'. I can't hold my breath long enough to do any good."

Cone turned to look. Cone always wears a cap to hide his pointed head. His latest was a bright yellow orange one with 'HAWKER POOLS' in large black print on the front of it.

Fat Frank continued, "I'll bet you a case of cold ones I can get him out of that hole with my Yankee rig . . . I'll winch him right out of there."

At the time I had an old thirteen foot Boston Whaler, I'd bought from Mike Chase, that was a complete disaster. The transom was loose until I banded it with cloth and resin. I also bought an old hundred horse Johnson from Eddie Cribbs, which I overhauled. The motor ran nice and the only thing wrong with the boat was a few small cracks in the transom where I'd made the fiber glass patches.

"You're gonna have to spear him, Frank," Cone said.

"Naw . . . You don't have to spear him." And so predictably we went in my little whaler,

out to about a mile and a half North East of Sombrero Light. It was flat calm. Cone found the spot easily, having fished over it every day for the past six months, while working as a mate on the Captain's Baby out of the Marathon docks.

Frank rigged his Yankee special—two big shark hooks chained to three eights inch nylon rope. He clamped a winch—one he'd salvaged from a rusted out boat trailer—to the bow of my whaler.

Cone peering into the water, between sightings on some landmarks, waved me to slow down. "We'll anchor on the otherside of that patch."

I steered to the dark area and Cone threw out the anchor. Fat Frank baited each hook with a nice fat fresh mullet. He heaved it over toward where Cone pointed. Fat Frank pulled a little more line free of the winch, then locked it.

I started bottom fishing with live shrimp on a light spinning rig. I soon had a snapper on. He ran around down there towards Fat Frank's bait and back again.

As I worked the fish up near the surface, Fat Frank yelled, "He took the bait, he took the bait."

Cone yelled, "Let 'im take it, let 'im take it."

Fat Frank reared back to set the hook. Suddenly he was snapped forward almost overboard, and let the line, burning through his hands, loose.

"God! He's a big one," Fat Frank yelled.

Cone threw on a mask and stuck his head down in the water. He came back up. "That's him. That's him. Crank 'im up, he just can't reach his hole."

"I'm crankin', I'm crankin' . . . I got him. He's comin' up."

I got my snapper in, then peered down in the water where the grouper worked from side to side. He was huge. I fell over backwards when the anchor suddenly let loose and we were dragged over to the hole.

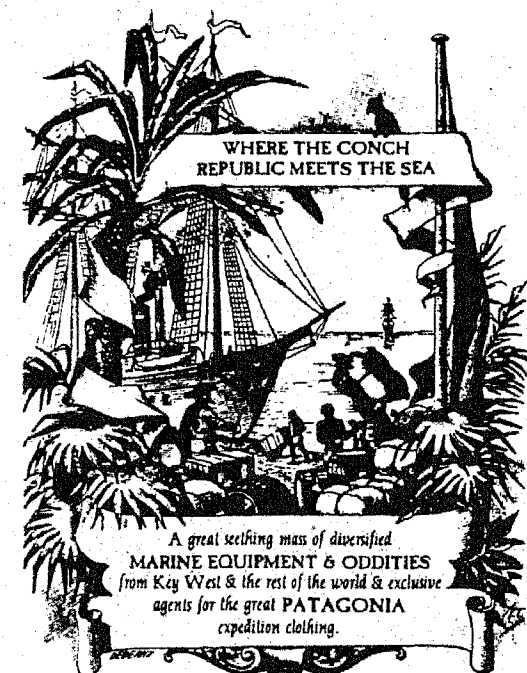
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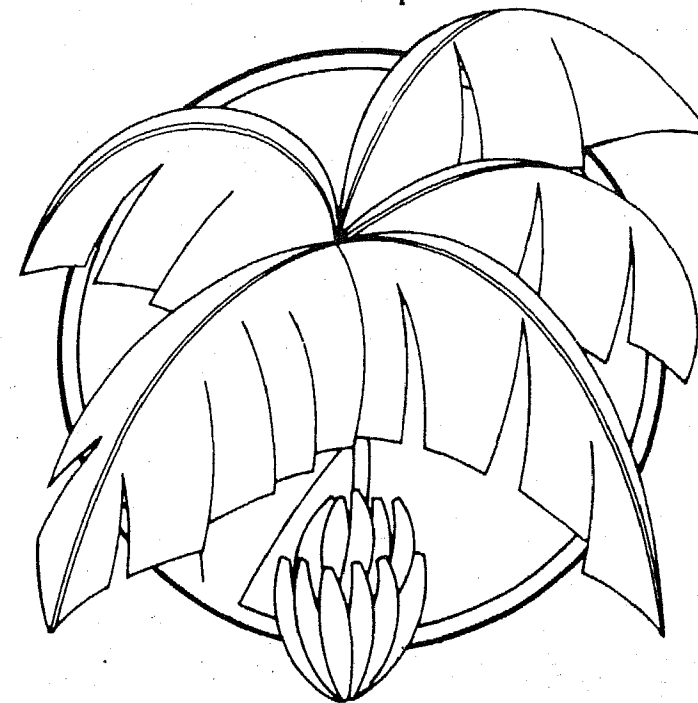
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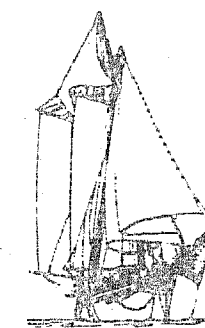
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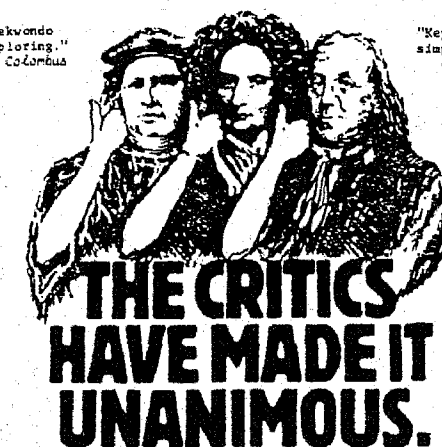
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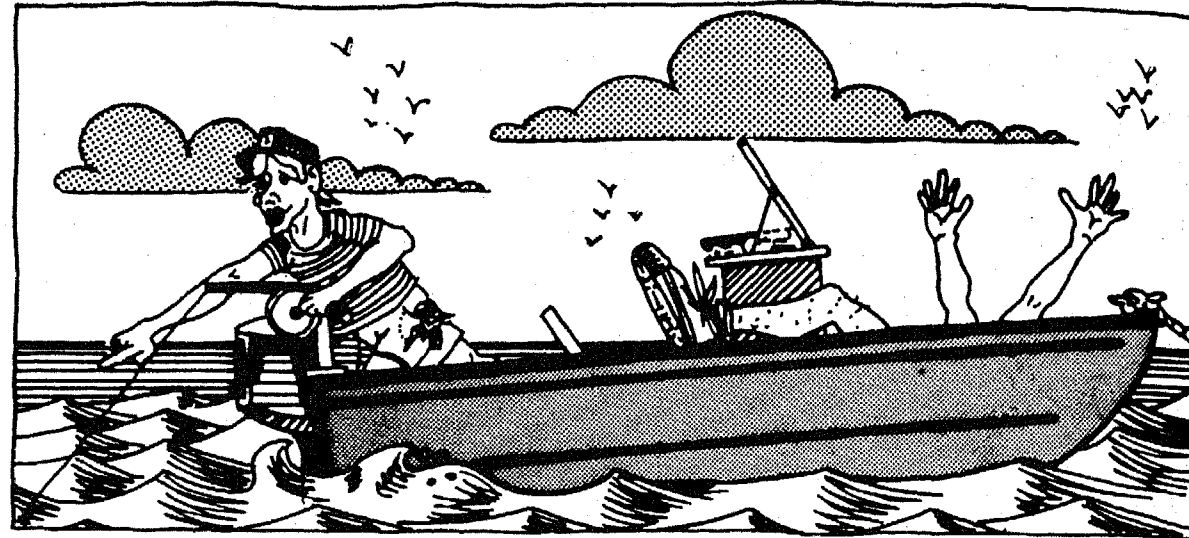
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Fat Frank cursed while he cranked like a maniac. He cranked us over the hole, wheezing all the while.

"Damn," he screamed, "the mother's in the hole ... crank the motor and back off. We'll pull that



"Stop, Frank, stop," I yelled. "We're gonna go under."

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sucker out."

"I don't know, Frank? I don't want to screw up my boat."

Cone, with a mask and fins on, went over the side.

"Naw, it ain't gonna hurt your boat. Back down slow, an' when I yell, goose it for all it's worth."

"Okay," I said. "Pull up the anchor."

Even knowing better, when he yelled, I did it. I gave it all the hundred horse had. Nothing.

Cone came gasping up from his dive. "I can see 'im in there."

He pointed in the general direction of Sombro.

"You've got to pull in that direction. Give it all the slack you have on the winch, Frank."

When Fat Frank had all the line paid out, Cone pushed the boat around for the bow to point directly at the light. As he pushed himself clear of the boat, I gave it full throttle. She leaped up like when she's goin' off on a plane and stopped dead in the water. I kept revin' the engine. Nothin'. Then we tried backin' down again.

"Hand me a spear," Cone said. "I'm gonna go down and pry him out."

He was back up in about a minute. "That sucker's sure in there."

I shut down the motor. Cone pulled himself aboard, put on his cap, and we took a beer break.

About half way through the third or fourth one, Cone said, "I'm gonna go down and put a spear in that mother. Then he'll come out. When I jerk on that line you give it all she has."

So we sat there. The bow pointing toward the grouper hole, and the stern pointing toward the light. It seemed a long time—but less than a minute—before the line jerked and I poured the gas to her in reverse gear. I thought I felt the fish comin' out so goosed her a couple of times for good mea-

sure, when the transom was ripped clean from the boat like a cap from a bottle of beer. Geez! I can't believe what I'm seein'. The motor's gone, just hangin' down a few feet under water by the steerin' and battery cables.

Oh geez! I yell. "Frank, you ruined my God damned boat."

It was the damnest thing I ever saw. You know, everyone says you can't sink a whaler, and thank God, it's true.

Frank laughed hysterically.

"Geez, Frank. My boat."

Frank sobered for a moment, then laughed again and gasped, "You sure look foolish sittin' there with nothin' behind you."

Cone came up out of breath and swam around to the stern. "Holy geez, what a mess, what happened? Damn ... well, I got a spear in that sucker."

What a revoltin' development! All I can think of is I got my last buck into that overhaul on the motor.

Cone climbed back on what was left of the whaler. Luckily we had a cooler full of cold ones or it would really have been a disaster. I sat looking forward, sippin' my beer, hopin' I was on a drunk and had just imagined what had happened.

Nobody was countin' how many we'd downed when Cone said, "you can have my share."

"Mine too," Fat Frank said. "I'd say he weighs over three hundred pounds. At a buck a pound you can get your motor fixed."

I'm not the kind to hurt someone's feelin's but I'm tempted to make some derogatory remarks about the kind of jokers I listened to, but didn't. I just kept sayin' to myself, 'you're stupid an' it's your own damn fault.'

It was about six hours since we left the dock, when Cone opened the last one. Fat Frank and I both refused a swig on it. The wind had picked up and there was a slight chop on the water.

Then, the boat started to move, draggin' the motor behind. The big fish knew where he was goin'. He was on a course headed out to the gulf stream.

"Throw out the anchor," Cone said.

"No," I said, "the anchor'll get hung up and he might pull us under."

"What the hell are we gonna do then?" Fat Frank said. "He's headed straight out ... want me to cut the line?"

"Geez," I said, "nobody'll ever find us once we get out in the stream."

Cone shrugged. "Well, we only got about a quarter of a mile left before it's too deep for your short anchor line ... why don't we drop the hook, and Fat Frank can cut the fish loose if the anchor hangs up on a head and it looks like we're gonna go

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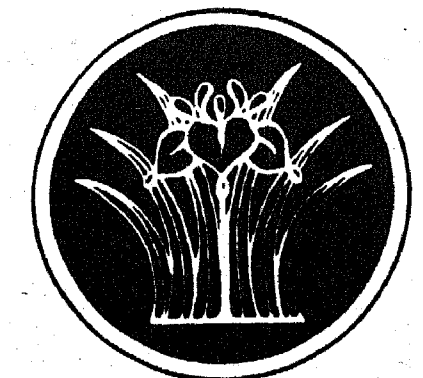
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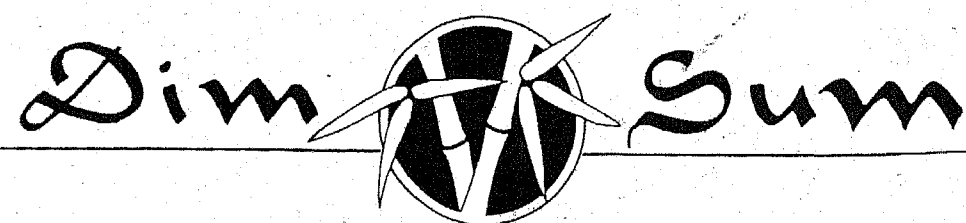
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under."

"Hell, throw it over," I said, (cause by then I'd had it and I didn't care,) "let that big sucker pull."

So Cone threw th anchor over the side and it dragged awhile, then caught, and the little whaler stood on its end like a bobber on a trout fishing rig. Me and Cone hung on and Fat Frank's under to above his waist, flailing his arms around in the water.

Cone yelled, "cut the rope, cut the God damned rope."

Frank got too busy hangin' on with both hands. He gasped as the fish made a do or die

attempt to pull us down. His eyes bugged out as he spit out a stream of water. Then what was left of the boat popped out of the water.

Fat Frank yelled, "we got 'im," and stood up wavin' his fat chunky arms. Cone leaped into the water to retrieve our only paddle and the empty cooler.

As the whaler veered off on a new tack, Fat Frank almost waved himself overboard, yellin', "I bet we got a friggin' world's record fish here."

The anchor line tightened, we started going around in a circle, and finally slowed down.

When the fish stopped swimming, Cone went

down to take a look see.

He came back up after a minute or so. "He still has my spear in his neck. He's just restin' on the bottom. Why don't you try winchin' him in slow, Frank?"

Frank started crankin' real slow so as not to excite the grouper.

I saw a lobster boat coming toward us hauling pots in the distance and figured it might be Eddie Cribbs, as we passed many lobster pot bouys with his markin's on them.

Fat Frank finally got the fish to within about five feet of the boat. "He's dead. I think Cone's



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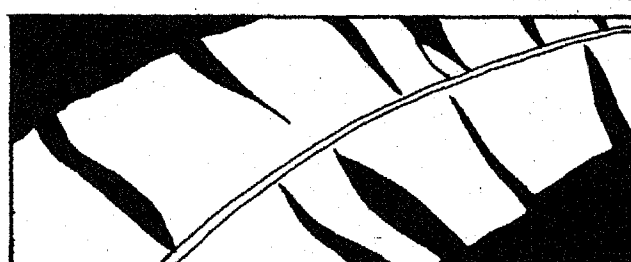
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spear must have finally killed him."

Cone came aboard, put on his hat, and took  
off his fins. "Boy, that's some fish."

So we sat, watchin' the sunset.

Soon I was sure it was Eddie Cribb's boat  
comin' toward us. I wished it would have been  
someone else as I had recently quit workin' for  
him when he quit drinkin' and let his wife talk  
him into gettin' born again. Him that could  
really down it. Well, I wasn't about to give up my  
beer, and when he said we couldn't carry beer on  
the boat anymore, that was the last straw. He  
didn't get mad or nothin'. I think he understood.Well, it was Eddie. He had his I told you so  
smirk all over his face as he looked us over.We sure attracted a lot of attention as we were  
towed up to the Johnson Fish House dock. They  
weighed our fish in at four hundred and twenty-  
two pounds and said it was only good for animal  
food. So at thirty-five cents a pound, I got a  
hundred and forty-seven dollars and change for  
it.But let me tell you, Cone and Frank, are good  
ol' boys. They stayed up with me all night tearin'  
that motor down and cleanin' it all up. Pat Frank  
helped me fiber glass the transom back on the  
boat. Now it looks like a whaler with the scabies,  
but I'll tell you, that little boat sure can go.

The Art Department of Florida Keys Community College will sponsor the first of what is hoped will be an annual happening—an outdoor art and craft festival of work done by students and faculty of the Art Department of the Community College. Location of this year's event will be the Key Lime Square area, the new location of the College's "Downtown Center." The show is open to the public and there will be a range of art and craft items for sale—oil paintings, water colors, drawings, prints, photos, pottery, and sculpture. There is no fee to set up but exhibition is limited to art faculty and students who are currently registered in courses at the community college. The festival will be held on Friday, May 2nd from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and spaces will be given out on a first come first served basis. Anyone interested in participating in the festival should contact either Gloria Shaw at 294-7333 (or 296-9081 Ext. 223) or Malcolm Ross at 294-8301 (or 296-9081 Ext. 313.)

Starting the 1st of May the Community Pool will be instituting and Aquacise class for adults under the tutelage of Lee Thompson with Claire Lacy instructing every weekday from 12:15 P.M. through 12:45. Knowledge of swimming is not required and the exercise class is free to the public. The Community Pool is open seven days a week from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. at 300 Catherine St. Telephone 294-5490.

BOCA CHICA  
BEACH ROAD

by Mary Beaver

The threat of two widely disparate T's—terrorism and trash—is being invoked to deny public access to one of the few remaining natural beaches in the lower Keys.

It's not much, just a few thousand feet along Old Boca Chica Road behind the Naval Air Station, but it has a history of use by local Conchs going back several generations. The beach is a bit seedy, much like everything else in the Big Coppitt-Geiger Key-Boca Chica area. There are a few tourists. You can't buy food or drink. You can't rent a float or snorkle. There's not enough space to play volleyball and watch the girls jiggle. As a group of locals know, however, you can have a picnic, find coral heads within snorkling distance of the beach, explore some of the best tidal pools in the Keys, fish from two tidal creeks, enjoy bird watching, and be on a real beach. The beach is small and sometimes splashed with seaweed, but it is real—not trucked in or dredged up at great expense. It's been there for decades and represents the original Keys in microcosm.

In the old days cars headed for Miami from Key West crossed a causeway from Stock Island and used this State Road 941 on their way north. Since U.S. 1 was built, of course, it has seen much less traffic and when the Navy built the new ordnance magazine in 1968 the western

part of the road and beach was closed to the public. Hurricane Kate gave it a swipe last November that undermined a short length, and in a few spots a couple feet of the the shoulder collapsed which required closing it temporarily. But why close it permanently? The Navy said that it is a dagger aimed at base security—a highway for terrorists. The federal government recently bought what little property remained around the roadway, but since the road itself was not in the purchase Base Commander Captain R. L. Sullivan, referring to "recent events in the Mediterranean," asked the County Commission to close it.

Sullivan's first letter, dated December 4, 1985, asked that the road be blocked just east of the Navy's back entrance gate onto the road opposite runway 13/31.

The terrorist main target that Sullivan mentions in his letter is the complex of ordnance bunkers located at the westernmost point of the road, almost three miles west of the barrier. The rest of the base is separated from the road by a chain link fence, which is backed up by salt ponds and mangrove marshes.

A neighboring family who live on the road almost opposite the back gate and proposed barricade, wrote Sullivan and asked that for the sake of the many people who use the area, the barrier be moved further west so that civilians could still use the beach area. The wife pointed out that a petition to keep the beach available had been signed by over 1300 people. With the barrier in the location she proposed, the buffer zone to the ordnance bunkers would still be over two miles.

The Captain responded by agreeing to move further west, with two barriers—the first to limit

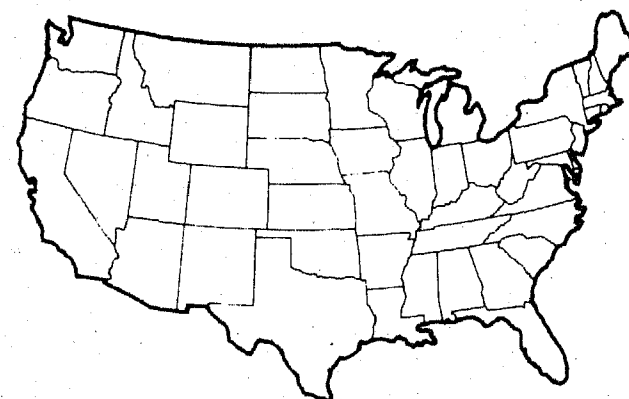
vehicular traffic, and a second to close the road off completely. His proposal would move the closure 3000 feet to the west, but, unfortunately, would still close the best parts of the area including the two creeks. Those parts begin where he proposed his final barrier, and run west another 1500 feet to where the road peels away from the beach.

The Captain's compromise suggests that he is not worried about an attack on runway 13/31, since it is quite open to view from his proposed vehicle barrier. Why he was willing to compromise as he did but decline to go the extra 1500 feet is unclear. The residents' proposal would still provide a buffer of over two miles between the barrier and the ordnance magazine area, would prevent vehicular traffic over that portion of the road damaged by Kate, and would keep open that portion of the shoreline with the greatest appeal to the public.

While the Captain has the major problem, he has been willing to listen to and reason with his neighbors. Not so the County Administrator. The neighbor's letters to Sullivan and the commissioners are models of clarity. Her position on the whole issue is likewise clear. But in a surprisingly testy memo to the County Commission members, the Administrator accuses her of "completely confusing the issue."

The memo stated that the land around the road belongs to the Navy, that civilians using the property could be accused of trespassing, that to repair the damage from Kate would cost \$200,000, and that the road material when dug up could be used as cover at the Cudjoe landfill and save the County \$100,000 in fill costs. What a beautifully simple package, eh? The memo therefore recommends that the County, when

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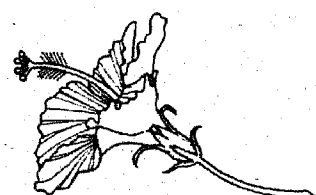
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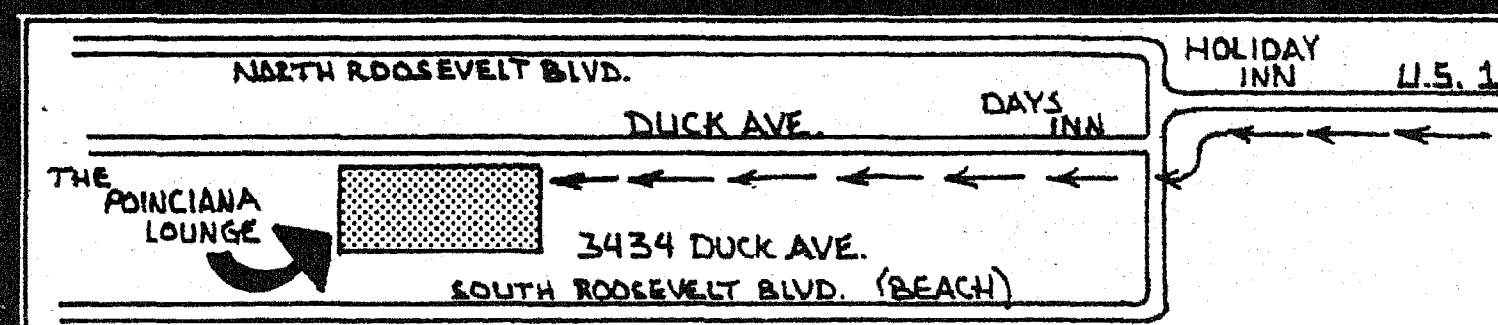
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awarded ownership of the road by the Florida Department of Transportation, should immediately transfer it to the Navy. According to the County, a public hearing on such a transfer will be held in the near future. But it doesn't appear to be quite that simple. One problem with the Administrator's position was uncovered by residents in consultation with legal authorities. It appears that the road has right-of-way of 50 feet, or 25 feet on either side of the mid-line. The road is so narrow, and so close to the water along most of the stretch under discussion, that the mean high water (MHW) mark falls within this 25 feet. By state law and constitution, the land below the MHW line belongs to the people. If the road remains County (and therefore public) property, civilians could use this stretch without trespassing.

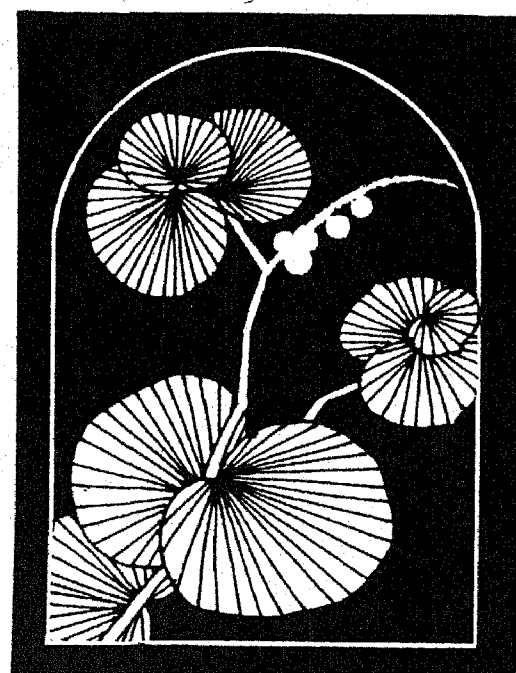
Another problem with the memo is the contention that the County can give the road away and then dig it up. Sullivan's proposed barriers are gates which could be opened for Navy use, which indicates he still wants the road for patrol use and as a quick way to respond should there be some sort of intrusion.

The biggest problem with the County memo is the refusal to address concerns of the people of the County. This attitude appears to be that if the Navy wants it and the County budget will benefit, nothing else should be considered.

In his letters, Captain Sullivan also voiced concern about trash dumping, and about crime that occurs because of the remoteness of the

area and its thick vegetation. Everyone agrees that these are problems, but if Monroe County begins to close roads based on these factors, it would have to close many, many miles of back roads. In fact the people who live along the Old Road are now keeping a close eye on the traffic, and taking license numbers of those who dump refuse there. They are prepared to help clean up what is there and help prevent dumping in the future. Sheriff's cars must patrol the area anyway and their presence would add to Navy security. Many people now picnic there. Many snorkle, many bird watch, many fish.

There seems to be a new sense of community and shared concern among those who spend time there, an increased awareness of just how much the area means to them. An aware and watchful citizenry along with Sheriff patrols are more effective than fences in keeping out criminals, trash and even terrorists. The Navy has accomplished part of its program already, and moving the final barrier another 1500 feet westward would make everyone happy. Let the Navy have the road west of the beach but let's keep this very small remaining section of natural beach open to residents and other citizens.



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## What's So Great About Key West An Ex-Patriot Ponders the Impossible

By Kathleen J. Hargreaves

It's been over two years since I left Key West with a truck full of furniture and a car full of cats.

I love in New England now. On the New Hampshire border in a 100 year old "saltbox" farmhouse that's a stiff walk from its nearest neighbor. Quite a change from claustrophobic Key West. My house sits at the foot of a hill and is shaded by giant oaks and sugar maples that dance through the seasons in skirts of lemon and lime and copper and crimson.

When spring arrives with its unexpected splash of soft sun I plant early peas and iceburg lettuce, acorn squash and hybrid corn. Summer brings with it bouquets of wild flowers picked

from riverbank fields and overgrown meadows. Autumn is wood fires of fragrant pinebow kindling that chase the damp and turn cheeks sweet cherry red. Winter is . . . winter; some good, mostly not so good except those rare late night blanket snowfalls and all-day ice storms that coat the road and trees and telephone lines with crystal all the more brilliant in the next day's clear sky.

I am, as it sounds, content with nature's toy box in New England. And yet sometimes (I never know when until it happens) I grow so lonely for Key West I wish I'd never left. It took seven years to give it up and even then it was tough. My walking shoes were hard to find that time. My enthusiasm for what lay ahead was greatly diminished by the knowledge of what I was leaving behind.

I left Key West, because I ran out of reasons to stay. Always before, when I thought of leaving all I had to do was play the pro and con game. As long as there were pros the inevitable departure was indefinitely postponed. But as the years went by so did my reasons. They became harder to find and harder yet to justify.

At first I was willing to stay for no better reason than the climate. It was always warm in Key West. But that changed. Somewhere down

the line I decided it was only warm *some* of the time. The rest of the time it was hot. Looking back I realize I spent fully half my stay trying to escape the heat.

I took a job with the County and worked through lunch and often well after five because the office was air conditioned. From there I went to *The Citizen* where the computers, much like the staff, refused to function when the temperature rose above 80. At night instead of bettering my bank account with an occasional freelance article, I dropped at the Hukilau, the Moon, the Frog Pond at the old Sands and just about anywhere else that promised cool air, breezy conversations and iced drinks. Ah yes, there was one more place: Tony's; dark as a cave, it was the best spot I ever found to kick back and chill out.

Hard as I tried to avoid it, the truth ultimately won out. Maybe there was something great about Key West. But the weather wasn't.

I arrived at that conclusion one sweltering mid-summer night when the electricity went out—as always, for no apparent reason. Laying in bed, staring up at a useless ceiling fan I admitted that not even I could swallow my Pollyanna attitude about the glorious weather any longer. I either had to move on or find a better reason to continue hanging my hat in Key West.

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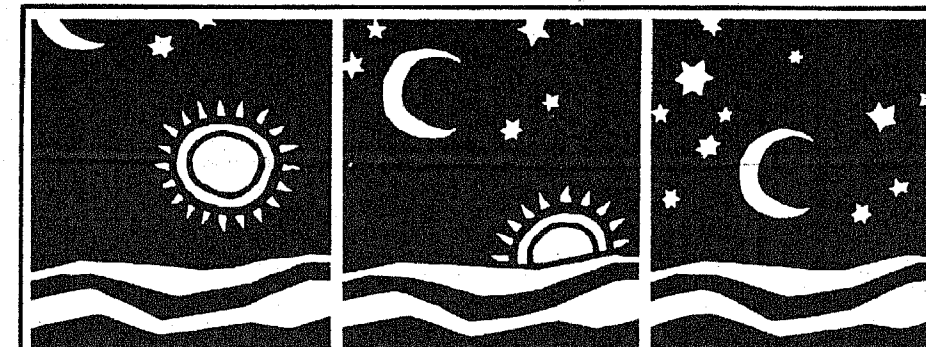
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...the best Motel-Restaurant in town, The Queen's Table, N.Y. Times (Jan. 31, 1982)

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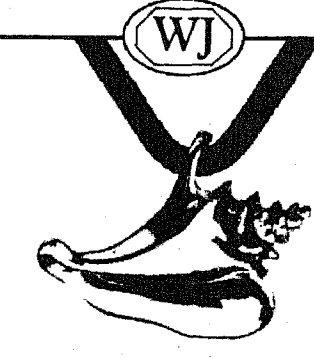
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Unable to sleep I sat on the front porch, swatting mosquitos and watching a huge pumpkin-orange full moon rise over a pitch black Garrison Bight. The moon was well overhead before I seized upon a new rason d'etre. Key West was a great place to live because it made people into survivors. I turned the idea around and around in my head, looking at it from every angle before concluding virtually everyone I respected was a survivor. I presumed those who weren't fast asleep were sitting there in the dark cursing CES just like me.

Who said no man is an island. Look at us. Granted we hadn't fine tuned every point but we certainly were capable of generating our own electricity, catching our own food, even making our own clothes (assuming we were willing to pay the price at Key West Hand Prints.)

Unfortunately, self-sufficiency—the answer I thought would save me—fell by the wayside Christmas Day, 1981, the day I invited 50 people over for a traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings. I distinctly remember that the power went out (again) before the birds went in. I lost many friends that holiday. But I survived.

For the next few years I rolled with the punches. I took life as it came. When it gave me lemons, I made lemonade (with bottled water because the stuff that came out of the tap in those days could poison a catfish.) And every June 1 was growing one year older.

Strangely enough the island was doing just the opposite. Everywhere I looked there were new hotels, and modern designer houses hidden under the shell of tin-roofed cottages that for nearly 200 years sheltered families who had inter-married so long and so frequently that it was no longer possible to separate one clan from

another. Before I left Key West I began to make frequent, solitary trips through the streets of Old Town. I think I was trying to memorize things as they were so I had a solid image of what I was leaving behind.

In quiet times I compiled mental lists of people who, for one reason or another, I thought exemplified that unique, intangible quality that made Key West so different from anyplace I'd been. People like Norm Berg, Asta Snider, and Martha Menendez. Willie Ward, Marion Stevens, Tony Terracino, Walter Ashe, Kim Romano, Bill Manville, George Carneau, Julie Perrin, Larry Thompson and Barbara Bauer. Bill Huckle, too. But knowing Bill he'll take a red pen to his name long before this piece ever sees print. Some of those people were my first introduction to the island. They made a lasting impression. Many of them still live there. Others left for good, for a season, for better pay, or a better foothold.

Still others, like Stan Windhorn, Gitta the Seamstress and Peter Webber left Key West only when death forced it upon them.

Ultimately tapped out, I turned to less complicated forms of life—homeless kittens, malnourished dogs, and two-legged lizards. I marvelled at bougainvilleas and wild orchids that grew unencouraged into towering trees. I savored the scents of night blooming jasmine and ylang-ylang as if I'd never smell them again. To this day I cannot think of the island without also remembering the philodendron, king of Key West plants; their leaves as big as dinner platters and roots so massive they reminded me of the beanstalk Jack climbed to escape into the clouds.



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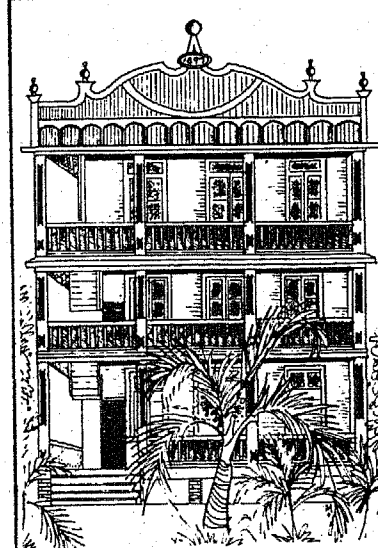
In their own disjointed ways all these things were important, but none was strong enough to bind me to the island. In the end I had to go.

I live nearly 2,000 miles away today, near the northern terminus of A1A. I have almost adjusted to the brusque northern attitude and its no-nonsense work ethic. I enjoy sleeping under quilts and sharing my bed on cold winter nights with my Key West cats who, too, have made friends in New England. I can travel hundreds of miles on a dozen different highways and never end up in the same place twice. I have all the diversions I lacked in Key West; concerts, mountain scenery, 50 different movies to choose from on any different day, the country, the city. It's all there for the asking.

Yet sometimes, like today, I am filled with a melancholy that only a trip to the island can cure. I look up from my work. My mind relaxes and wanders like the river out my window and comes to rest on the swallows and hawks and ravens that travel in seemingly purposeless flight from one perch to the next.

And I realize I am still asking myself the same weary question I have for nine years. What's so great about Key West? The most I can say is that there's something magic about the place. It's not much of an answer but it's the best I've come up with yet. Until I can think of something better I'll settle for that. I know it's vague but at least it begins to explain my fascination with a place I've loved and sometimes hated since the first day we met. It helps me understand why I can't wait to go back every opportunity I can.

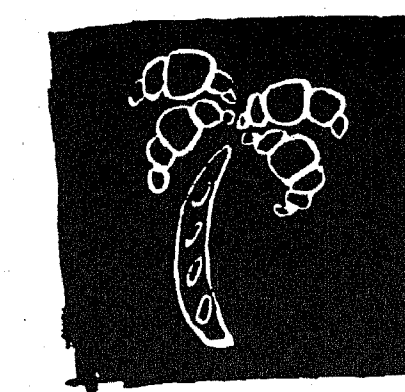
Maybe I keep returning for the same reason I left. Perhaps I'm still looking for an answer that can't be put into words.



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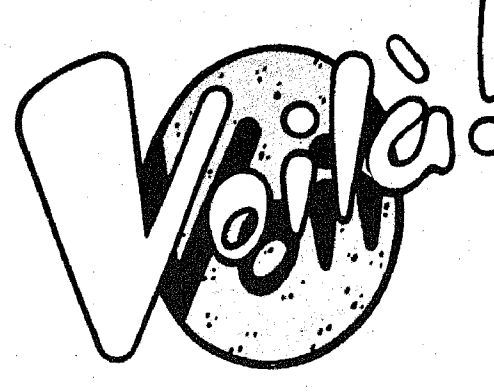
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## Commentary

### The Key West RDA, Part VII: Back to 'Square One'

by George Murphy

Since 1981, the Key West RDA has been working with Sarasota attorney John Dent and Key West Harbour Development Corporation toward the transfer of the Truman Annex Naval Base back to the city. For the past month, the development corporation has been unwilling to commit itself to the purchase, citing impending changes in city zoning densities and the possibility of a Rate-of-Growth ordinance which would severely limit its plans for high-density condominium and commercial construction and curtail its plans for a 500 room convention hotel.

Last Friday, the RDA board voted 5 - 0 to find KWHHD in default of its agreement with the RDA and the GSA to make the downpayment of the property by the 24th. As late as last Friday's RDA meeting, no word had come from John Dent and, as a result of that lack of action and communication, KWHHD lost its rights to the development and to a lease.

As a result, the RDA does not have sufficient funds to purchase the property.

With the GSA deadline set at April 30, it does not now seem possible that the RDA, currently without legal counsel, could sufficiently review development plans or subsequently approve any alternative lease proposals.

According to RDA boardmember Lou Hernandez, "we are back to square one."

Hernandez added, "that may not be a bad thing."

### The Cruellest Month

In April, as the GSA deadline approached, the city saw some major changes in the RDA board. Two new boardmembers Robert Kruse and Lou Hernandez stepped in to replace outgoing members John Magliola and Philip Dobert.

The RDA's attorney, Michael Halpern, also departed.

Halpern, saying he was sick of the recent controversy surrounding his contract (or lack of one) with the RDA, sent a letter to the RDA board asking that they agree to allow him to withdraw his contract. They voted to accept the withdrawal and to advertise for a new attorney.

Though Halpern claimed that the contract was legal and valid, there were a number of issues concerning the document which led city commissioners and RDA boardmembers to question its legality.

Among those issues were the lack of a date, the lack of the proper, legally-required signatures, the absence of any public RDA board discussion or approval, the insertion of unapproved fees and payments, and the assertion of RDA executive director Steve McDaniel that no contract had ever been drawn up.

RDA boardmember Gus Mirzaoff, who had gone on record in the past saying that Halpern did not represent his views, said that the contract was irresponsible, invalid, and illegal. "There was no copy on record and the board has never discussed or approved one," he said.

April was also a month of very little public action.

National Property Disbursement Director Jim Buckley said at a meeting in GSA National Headquarters in Washington D.C. that the February 7th letter from Joe Crenshaw of the Atlanta GSA office in which he threatened the possibility of the GSA entering into a joint venture with the developer so that "the project could go forth . . . without regard to local zoning" was "an absolute violation of GSA policies and the city 'shouldn't worry about it,' but would not indicate whether any action would be forthcoming in regard to this policy violation.

As the GSA deadline of April 30 approached, representatives of KWHHD were unwilling to give either the city or the RDA an indication as to whether they were planning to go ahead with their contract.

In March, Dent sent a letter to the RDA expressing his belief that the city's actions rescinding the 1980 Community Redevelopment Plan (on which the development plans were to

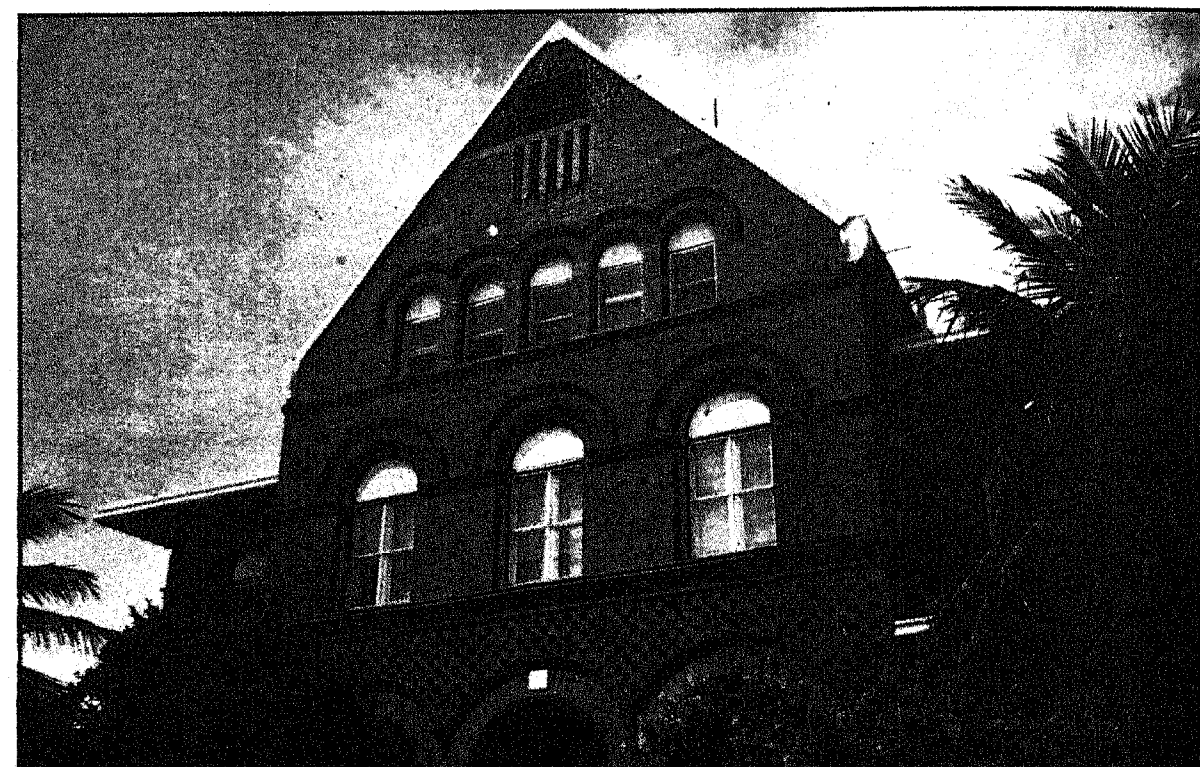
RDA board, addressed the commission saying that she had made numerous phone calls around the country at personal expense and had located a possible sub-investor: Occidental Securities Group of Santa Monica, California.

Shortly thereafter, RDA director Steve McDaniel said that Occidental had been well informed of the risks in taking over the development from Dent. However, on the 17th, George Perrin of KWHHD said that they had backed off from their proposed deal to buy out Dent's rights for a reported \$1.4 million.

Perrin cited the unprofitability of the 600-unit restrictions which seem likely to come from the city as the source of their reluctance. Perrin further reported that KWHHD was also in negotiations with other investors, though he refused to identify them.

Two days later, Occidental claimed that it was still in negotiation.

Occidental Securities was identified as a firm dealing in "sales of precious metals." *Solares Hill* has learned that those sales often "involve telephone solicitation techniques."



Customs House

be based) constituted a breach of KWHHD's contract with the RDA. Dent wrote that, "it is our opinion that the City and your Agency have breached our agreement."

The RDA responded by saying that a valid contract indeed still existed and requested a determination of the development corporation's intent as to going forth with that agreement by the April 30 deadline.

Since KWHHD, by lack of action, is now in breach of its own contract, it seems unlikely that Dent will have any legal recourse against either the city or the RDA.

### Occidental Securities

While KWHHD continued to assert that the proposed new zoning regulations and Growth Management Ordinance would make it financially impossible for them to turn a sufficient profit on the planned development, the idea of the purchase of sub-portions of the property by other groups was mentioned at numerous workshops.

At a City Commission/RDA workshop last month, Dr. Debra Flynn, a local chiropractor who had been an unsuccessful nominee to the

Though Occidental President Steve Williford and representative Malcolm Luckin were in Key West recently to examine the property, RDA board members claim that the corporate representatives had not had the courtesy of meeting with the board so that they could learn more about the corporation, its intentions, and its financial capacities.

Though Occidental Securities' Malcolm Luckin said to the Miami *Herald* that Dr. Flynn had no interest in that company, within a week, a new company coincidentally named *Occidental Land Development Group (OLD)* had been formed and Dr. Flynn's boyfriend, Lynn Kephart, announced at last Friday's meeting that he did have an interest in the new company and that he'd been negotiating with KWHHD "down to the last minute" for the purchase of their development rights.

Board member Lou Hernandez said that he suspected that "they are, like Dent not land developers. And we don't know who they are. Over the last week, they were changing personnel as well as changing the names of their companies."

"I went to the library to see if they were listed with Dun & Bradstreet. The might be—but I

couldn't find it."

Naturally, the RDA board in its efforts to protect the best interests of the city would need much more information before seriously considering an Occidental lease. "When I think of developers," said Hernandez, "I think of corporations like Rausse and Oppenheimer, companies with proven track records and solid reputations. Here we seem to have a group of investors who are interested in making money but we don't even know who they are."

At the very least, because it is newly formed, it can be said that OLD has no track record at all. Numerous telephone attempts on the part of *Solares Hill* to obtain information about the new corporation from Lynn Kephart or Dr. Flynn have been in vain.

### Board Frustrations

Doing their best to work against the impending deadline and to try to salvage a deal for the city, some board members have expressed a number of frustrations.

Robert Kruse has been frustrated by his inability to get extensive documentation of the history of the proposed lease with KWHHD. As well, upon showing up at RDA headquarters to put in some serious hours of work to salvage whatever might be salvageable, claims to have found confusing and insufficient information of the history of the proposed deal and of the precise terms of the arrangements for the sale of the property as well as the potential arrangements regarding the lease. "We're under super-pressure to make a decision based on logical and thorough information. I haven't found that the information regarding the subject to be sufficiently clear and explicit enough to allow me to do the job I'd like to do. For example, we keep hearing about infrastructure problems but, unless I see evidence to the contrary, it seems to me that there are many facilities over there ready for use now."

This inability to obtain information may be connected to what Lou Hernandez calls "a distrust in the new members creating an obviously new majority attitude . . . a suspicion that perhaps we'd come onto the board to start firing people."

Hernandez feels that KWHHD has not been acting in good faith in that the board has been kept in the dark and not apprised of day-to-day negotiation developments. He said, "I don't know that they ever really wanted to negotiate a deal with Occidental because they've had others in the wings which they didn't tell Occidental about. With the deadline so close, they behaved in an illogical manner. Everyone was kept in suspense. This is not good faith."

Hernandez added, "I'm not sure I can understand their behavior. With the Occidental buy-out, they could have at least recouped \$1.4 Million of their losses. It was obviously a decent deal."

Gus Mirzaoff expressed frustration in the lack of speed with which the agency placed newspaper ads for a new attorney, pointing out that the placing of such an ad, especially in the local newspaper should not have taken 5 days, especially under the emergency situation of the impending deadline.

### What Next?

Apparently, almost anything is possible.

On April 9th, Captain Ray Sullivan, com-

continued pg 51

## Solares Hill ANNOUNCES

### A New Column

### "Sixty-Eight Eighty"

by George Murphy

Since its inception ten years ago, *Solares Hill* has maintained a commitment to public service with the news and the opinions which affect our lives and our community.

This month, we are taking what we hope will prove to be a giant step forward in public service with the institution of a new column "Sixty-Eight Eighty," with our investigative reporter, George Murphy.

We've installed a *Solares Hill* telephone "Hotline" which will be available to all, 24-hours-a-day.

The contents each month of "Sixty-Eight Eighty" will be based on the issues that *you* consider important: *your* concerns, *your* questions, *your* ideas.

If there's a question you want answered, an issue you want us to look into, a local problem you can't seem to resolve,

**CALL 294-6880**

and leave your message and, if you want, your name.

We'll see if we can help.

We obviously can't guarantee to the concerns of each caller but we'll do our best to attend to those matters most important to our readers and our community.

### How does the proposed Cultural Preservation Society lease for "Sunset" at Mallory Square Compare with other city leases?

The proposed C.P.S. lease for "Sunset" hours is for \$264/year with additional requirements that they pay a security officer to be present daily (estimated at \$60/day) and that they maintain insurance (estimated at \$5,300.) As such, the city's requirements would cost C.P.S. in excess of \$27,000.00/year.

According to information provided by the City Clerk's Office, some of the current city leases are as follows:

Lessee	\$ per annum
Conch Tour Train	10% of gross revenues (or 20,000 minimum)
Key West Buggy Bus	5% of gross revenues
Jan McArt Theatre	\$7,600
Steadman's Boat Yard	\$6,000
Key West Handprint Fabric	\$3,600
Chamber of Commerce	\$120

As well the following have city leases for \$1/year:

Key West Art Center	Key West Yacht Club
Key West Power Squadron	K.W. Garden Club
The Center of Hope	Botanical Gardens
	Fraternal Order of Police
The Rotary Club	Monroe County
	Mosquito Control
Monroe County	O.I.R.F. Hospitality House
Translator Tower	

### A question I'd like Commissioner Halloran to answer: "How do you feel about the contention that impact fees may make low-to-moderate income housing projects difficult if not impossible?"

The impact fees passed by the City Commission

were long overdue and are an absolute necessity to help solve the long-range sewer, garbage and traffic problems we now have, which were created by years of neglect.

We are trying to design these laws so as not to harm young people starting out in life. For example, a couple building a one-bedroom "starter" home would pay no sewer impact fee at all. Neither would a family remodeling an existing house.

Any honest attempt by a developer to build housing units that he guarantees will be used for low income housing and families could be exempted in some manner from city-impact fees. I would personally support this.

But phony programs to build so-called "affordable" housing which are only another way to package major developments and make rich men richer, don't deserve any breaks.

What has made new low to moderate income housing difficult are the high prices of labor, materials, utility hookups, and especially land, and as long as the T.D.C. spends over a million dollars per year telling the world to come to Key West, more people *will* come, like what they see, buy a piece of the rock and help drive land prices even higher. It's a simple matter of supply and demand.

I believe a young family can still build a new house or remodel an old one at a reasonable price the same way it has always been done: by doing the work yourself with the help of friends and relatives, by taking advantage of the free or inexpensive building materials that abound in Key West, and by starting with a smaller house or one that is not completely finished before you move in. I know it can be done, and is being done today.

Yes, the impact fees make it a little tough, but they are the medicine we have to take because we didn't look after our city's health. There is no use crying about the taste. One example is the \$500,000 fine we are now paying E.P.A. for failing to build a sewer plant and continuing to dump raw sewage into the ocean. We ignored their requests, lawsuits and consent orders for years, and played loose and fast with their grant money.

continued pg 48



## MEMORIAL TO JOHN CIARDI

Shortly after the death of John Ciardi, David Jackson organized a memorial tribute to him at the Monroe County Library. It was a splendidly realized happening that imbued all present—friends, acquaintances, admirers, passersby—with a fine sense of this most worthy man. I heard that someone who was present later said, "I didn't know I loved that man so much." Perhaps this is apocryphal but, uttered or not, everyone present felt a special warmth for John.

Unfortunately the remarks of his friends and colleagues went unrecorded. With a few exceptions, (Elly Welt had to abridge for us her remarks due to contractual obligations with her publisher and a few extemporaneous thoughts may have been lost), the following is pretty close to a word for word facsimile of what transpired. David Jackson, to whom we are all indebted for arranging the tribute, has a few words now.

"Remembering John Ciardi, as friend and neighbor, here in Key West, is both sad and rewarding, for hardly a day goes by we don't recall a Ciardism and smile, nostalgically, and wish he were still just around the corner. So on the Thursday after his death, in New Jersey, we got together, in the library auditorium, and spoke about him. Leading off, Elly Welt read letters she'd received from John over the years, and a small sardonic excerpt from a mock autobiographic piece; Richard Wilbur then talked about Ciardi as longtime friend and fellow poet

and read two Ciardi poems, moving us all. Next Philip Burton spoke about his long friendship and weekly meetings with John, and read Ciardi's poem about his own dead Uncle Alec. Then John Hersey read John Ciardi's poem to his wife and joys of marriage, and also remembered John as fellow resident in Windsor Lane compound; Arnold Sundgaard rose and recalled John's splendid voice on radio and how he had fantasized about John's voice doing various great arias from opera; finally, Tom Sanchez spoke (quoting Lorca) of the act of creating poetry and prose. A fine audience responded, and we all left that room feeling we'd properly and meaningfully remembered a great poet, etymologist, essayist and teacher. And, so, we said goodbye to John.



John Ciardi

ELLY WELT

When David Jackson asked me to participate in the Writers' Memorial, I was grateful, for John

Ciardi had been almost daily in my life as mentor, and he and Judith dear friends to me and to my husband Peter.

David told me that others—Richard Wilbur, John Hersey, and Philip Burton—would be reading from John's poems. I, too, wanted to read his own words. He was an inveterate letter writer, and his letters are as brilliant and witty as everything else he wrote, and, they revealed, more than his conversation, what was on his mind.

So for two melancholy days, I sorted through our correspondence and put together a ten minute reading of excerpts from our letters to each other. I began with a letter dated November 9, 1980.

Dear Elly:

I relax into old age, bracing myself for incipient Senior Citizenship. As it says on the greeting cards, my back goes out more than I do, and when I sit in the rocking chair, I have trouble getting it going. But when I am not being a visiting poop . . . I have become a happy hermit of my own attic and . . . have the happiest sense of having survived ambition—and I like it; nothing is done for any reason except that I am engrossed in the doing. If that doesn't sound too dreary, let me wish you as much.

I felt it important, at one point, to refer to his love of words:

April 18, 1982  
Dear Elly:

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give a kerse" to be "I don't give a damn."  
How can one resist such stuff?

May all your curses turn into fresh crisp  
watercress and damnation shrivel like the  
late weeds. My admiration and high regard  
to Peter. My love to you both.

John

Goodheavens! That sounds as if I excluded  
you from admiration and high regard. I  
do not.

John would invent a limerick at the slightest  
provocation:

March 5, 1984

Dear John,

My Ciardi disc is in the TRS-80, and the  
file today is named "John/M84:1" . . .

April 2, 1984

Dear Elly:

There once was a gal from Kaintuck  
Whose TRS-80 got stuck  
On an X-rated scene  
And became so obscene  
She screamed, "Peter! It's running amuck!"

He was dedicated to his wife Judith and their  
children, Jonnel, Myra, and Ben, wrote volumes  
of poetry to them and about them, and, always,  
they were in his letters:

JUDITH IS ON THE VERGE OF HAVING  
another wedding anniversary. God, wives  
get married for a long time! I woke recently  
on my birthday and found myself trapped  
in a 67 year old body. My first thought was,  
"Help! What am I doing here/somebody  
get me out. But there was no answer.  
Probably a good thing.

I ended with a quotation he sent from a 12,000  
word autobiography he was trying to write for  
Gale Research:

The actuarial tables give me plus or  
minus ten more years, perhaps a little  
longer if I stop smoking, but having been a  
chain smoker for almost fifty-five years  
now, I am satisfied to die of my own bad  
habits and pray only to escape my death as  
a result of someone else's. Beyond prayer, I  
claim survivor's rights, at least some of the  
rights would in any case have been mine  
had I been the one to wave from that smok-  
ing bomber forty years ago. I am an obso-  
lete word freak with all debts paid up and a  
little time left—my time. It need not come  
to much to be all there is. I wouldn't have  
missed it.

RICHARD WILBUR

I first knew John Ciardi when he was 30 or so  
and I was in my middle twenties. We taught  
together at Harvard as assistant professors of  
English; in our leisure, we took each other on in  
bitter games of anagrams; we showed our early  
poems to each other, hoping for unqualified  
praise but consenting to be criticized. During the  
early 1950's we lectured on alternate summer  
days at the Bread Loaf School of Writing, pre-  
tending to differ more than we really did. He  
played it earthy, and I played the aesthete. After  
those years, Charlee and I were always in loving



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touch with John and his wonderful wife Judith, and for the last decade we were near (and close) neighbors during the Key West winters.

With such an old friend one develops a habit of almost daily inward conversation. In any week of my latter life, I have often felt moved to talk or write to him about some matter of taste or fact or language (especially language) and see what he might say. During the days since his death, that has continued, and I have repeatedly had the experience which Wordsworth describes in his sonnet "Surprised by joy"—I've turned to speak with him, and he has not been there. I suppose that this will go on for as long as I live.

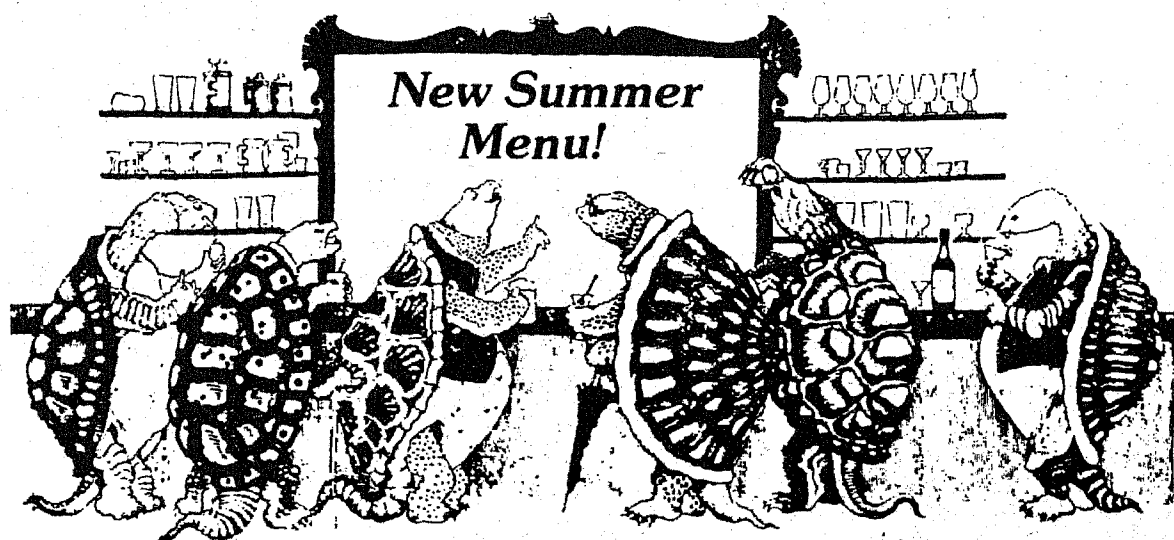
When a man's life ends, and he stops changing, it becomes safer to generalize about his qualities and achievements. Let me say one or two little things about him. He often came on as a hard, aggressive guy with a big voice. Sometimes the aggression was real: he didn't agree

with everybody, he didn't love everybody. Yet those who knew him knew that he had the softest of hearts, the most loyal and remembering of hearts. To his great credit, John did not moderate his strong-voiced assertiveness during the late 1960's, a period in which babes and sucklings were thought to know it all, and persons of authority were expected to hang beads around their necks and be concessive. It did him honor to lose the directorship of the Bread Loaf conference through a refusal to muffle his convictions and appease the times.

John did not present himself as an ethnic type, but he preserved in himself the best of his inheritance. He had the lapsed Catholic's serious and wistful view of faith; the Italian acceptance of death; a joy in Italy's language, arts, and literature; Italian feelings about how food and drink and friends should be treated; and Italian devotion to his family.

Sometimes he liked to play Mafia. I used to say about him, and to him, that he had a romance with practicality and tough realism. Many of us have heard him say that poetry was a racket, and that he meant to get rich in it. Well, he did make some money, honest money, in certain spin-off activities like lecturing. But let it be said that he was really a stubborn purist. He never cheapened one line of his verse in the hope of pleasing the great public and swelling his sales.

John was good to hear on public radio—the voice was splendid, and the substance charming. He was to the end a deservedly popular figure on the lecture and poetry-reading circuits. He wrote a good column. He put together a truly stimulating text book, a fresh anthology of his contemporaries, a number of delightful and curious ventures into etymology. He earned his prizes as a prolific writer of children's verse; he was always one of the best poets of his genera-



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tion; and he gave the English language its very best translation of Dante's *Commedia*. If it were human to be satisfied, John might have been well satisfied.

I want to end by reading one of his short poems—and then by reading another short one which caught my attention as I was waiting to speak, and which is perfectly attuned to this occasion. The first poem is the best from his last book *The Birds of Pompeii*. He knew it was the best poem in that book; I know that because he had it printed on the back of the jacket. As he said of the latter poems of Wallace Stevens, this poem is metrically limber, and based "on a reminiscence of the pentameter." It has the natural movement of developing thought or unfolding talk. Its language is about how the most precious truths cannot be proven; how we miss out on them if we ask for proof, since such truths call only for belief.

"True or False"

Real emeralds are worth more than synthetics  
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the real one shatters.

I have no emeralds.

I was told this about them by a woman  
who said someone had told her. True or false,  
I have held my own palmful of bright breakage  
from a truth too late. I know the principle.

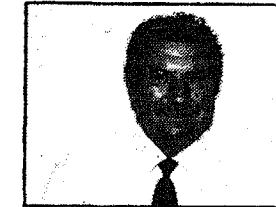
That is beauty. The other poem is called simply  
"Poetry," and it ends with the gutsiest possible  
definition of poetry—as an "echo from the ice."



Anita



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"Poetry"

Death is everywhere. Yet  
it may be the most act of not-  
dying. Listen when there is time.  
Make time till it is still enough  
to hear across water and time  
the tilting band of the Titanic.  
nearer my Oom to Pah! The tuba  
pumping behind prayer over  
and over. The North Atlantic

already in their shoes. But one more  
time long as there is time over  
and over, the music holding  
to itself, holding everything  
not long, but for its while,  
forever. The comets throwing  
their lifeline high and clear  
over the cold bald misted curve  
nowhere, the tuba pumping

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*the prayer behind the prayer,  
an echo off the ice.*

*Oompah!*

PHILIP BURTON

One of the privileges that has been mine as a result of living in Key West is that I have come to know in person some distinguished authors most of them only winter-residents, and the one with whom I have spent most time was John Ciardi. For a few seasons it became customary for him to come over to my house for an after-

noon most weeks, but in this season which is just ending he came for only one afternoon, because he was leaving to go on a lecture-tour.

I always enjoyed his visits. He inscribed the copies of his books which he gave me. It would make me blush to read some of those inscriptions, but in one he wrote of "the pleasure of touching minds." John always had to have an audience. Even when he grumbled—and he grumbled a lot—he did so with such wit that my response was not a sigh of sympathy but a chuckle.

His brilliant extempore wit was the secret of

his success as a teacher and lecturer. Some of you were probably here when he gave a lecture in this very hall early this season; you will remember how entertaining he was as he revealed some of his astonishing discoveries about the English language.

I knew some of John's work long before I met him. More than thirty years ago I read his translation of Dante's *Inferno*, the first volume of the complete translation of *The Divine Comedy*. I knew two other translations, those by John Sinclair and Dorothy Sayers, but for me John Ciardi's surpasses them. He was uniquely equipped for the task, for he was a master of both Italian and English, and in addition he had the sensitivity of a true poet.

In recent years his main interest had become words, their origin and meaning, but he was an etymologist of a curious kind. This is what he says about it:

"I became an obsessive etymologist when I realized, after forty-five years of trying to write in the American language, that I simply did not know enough about my own tongue. So far, I have compiled my findings into two volumes, of which this is the second. If I am left time, I hope to compile at least a third, and perhaps a fourth. If I have had no serious purpose, I have piddled away more than ten years. Yet I have no serious claims I care to assert. I may have been doing nothing more than beachcombing to see what shells I might turn up. When the shells were ordinary or badly broken, I tossed them aside. The inner directive has been simply, 'Hey, look at this one!—and this one!—and this one!' This beach is covered with specimens too good to leave ungathered. Nor have I any ambition to be a conchologist, and to give up collecting in order to classify what I have collected. The longer I beachcomb, the more I sense what the sea is doing and has been doing inside itself. But the collection is for its own sake."

The result of this search was *A BROWSER'S DICTIONARY*, which he describes as "A Compendium of Curious Expressions and Intriguing Facts." It was a surprising success, so much so that *A SECOND BROWSER'S DICTIONARY* was published, and this he described as a "Native's Guide to the Unknown American Language." It didn't sell as well as the first volume, and for this John blamed the publishers; they had assumed

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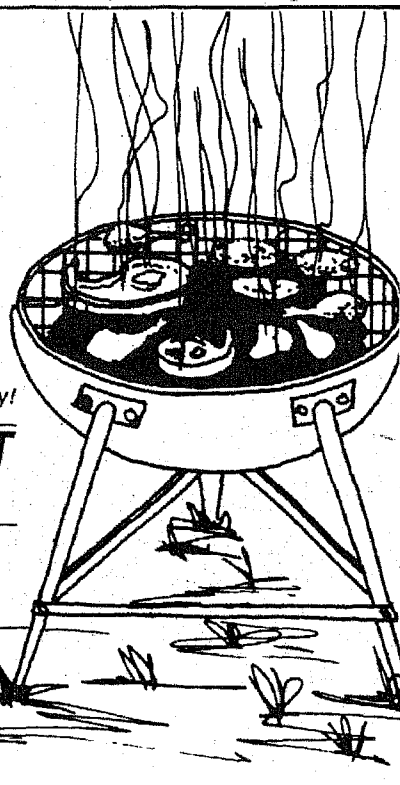
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that the success of the first volume would ensure the success of the second, and so they cut back on advertising. Still, it sold well enough to call for the publication of a third volume, and that is due out soon. John was already collecting words and phrases for a fourth volume.

I will end with a poem of John's. I told him how much I liked it, and he asked me to read it to him; I am happy to do so again. It's in a book called *FOR INSTANCE*. On the fly-leaf of the volume he speaks of his poetry: "I write only unimportant poems. The smaller the better. Perhaps small enough to be life-size. That is never much, but all there is, and therefore everything." The inscription on the copy he gave me is characteristic of him: "For Philip Burton, probably to bored by, but let me spare you by

insisting that you make no comment—then if you choose, reasonably, not to read, I will not know . . . With respect and admiration."

The poem I'm going to read is entitled *ALEC*. It's about an uncle of his and reveals John's respect for his Italian roots. He has a word about Uncle Alec in the introduction to the first *BROWSE'S DICTIONARY*:

"My uncle by marriage, Alessio DiSimone, migrated to America at age seventeen. He lived to ninety-seven without acquiring more than rudimentary broken English. Yet with it he invented the fascinating all-purpose tense *was-be*. 'Gian,' he would say to me, 'you was-be good boy.' Depending on the context—and in context it was always clear—that could mean 'you are/you are being/you have been/you had damn well better be a good boy.' There was

even a conditional tense. If I looked up at the sky and said, 'It looks like rain,' he would squint at the sky and answer, 'Could was-be.' The language convention allows us to know who is native; any workable language solution, in or out of the convention, allows us to know there is a mind at work."

Here's the poem:

*At nintey-seven my uncle found God heavy.  
"My legs," he sighed, "May I go before they do."  
So small an ambition: could it be asking  
too much  
even from a universe? It or luck*

*spun him the answer he wanted. Sometimes  
we win.*

*I was in Asia and missed the funeral,  
all but a postcard C/O AM. EX. BANGKOK  
I bought a gold leaf and rubbed a Buddha for him,*

*My shoes at the door, with feet left to put  
in them.*

*His name was DiSimone, which is "of Simon."  
He could not read, but his family legend  
whispered  
of a turned Jew centuries back. He married*

*my mother's sister and passed as Alec the Barber,  
though really Alessio. The gold leaf crumbles.  
It makes sparks on the floor like lathe-curlings.  
But some of it sticks. In time the God turns gold*

*and we are all one family. Back in my shoes,  
I fed beggars in his name for the plains-wide days  
he walked me for quail or pheasant or  
what comes  
in or out of season "God," he would say*

*"sends birds, not calendars." He was right  
a while,  
but calendars come, too. I must have loved him,  
and did not know it till I fed beggars for him  
and gilded an unfinished god in its vault.*

JOHN HERSEY

I thought it would be appropriate this morning to honor Judith, John's beautiful, lively, warm-hearted, cool-weather wife of many years, by reading a poem John wrote in her honor. It is entitled "Men Marry What They Need."

*Men marry what they need. I marry you,  
morning by morning, day by day, night by night,  
and every marriage makes this marriage new.*

*In the broken name of heaven, in the light  
that shatters granite, by the spitting shore,  
in air that leaps and wobbles like a kite,*

*I marry you from time and a great door  
is shut and stays shut against wind, sea, stone,  
sunburst, and heavenfall. And home once more*

*inside our walls of skin and struts of bone,  
man-woman, woman-man, and each the other,  
I marry you by all dark and all dawn*

*and have my laugh at death. Why should I  
bother  
the flies about me? Let them buzz and do.  
Men marry their queen, their daughter, or their  
mother*

*by hidden names, but that thin buzz whines  
through:*

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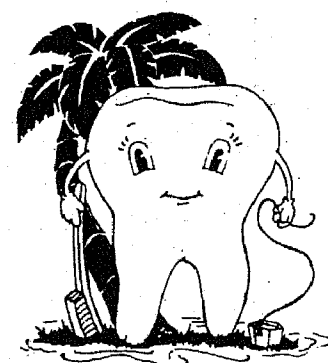
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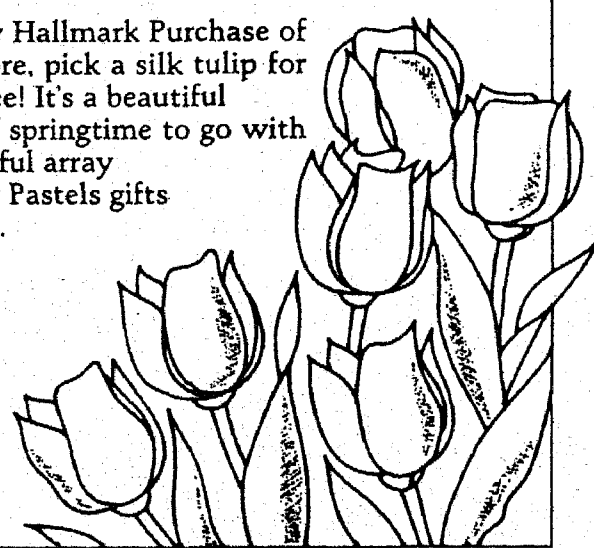
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where reasons are no reason, cause is true.  
Men marry what they need. I marry you.

ARNOLD SUNDGAARD

Over the years one hears literally thousands and thousands of voices on the radio and television, but the voice I remember most vividly was John's voice on National Public Radio speaking from Chautauqua on a summer afternoon some years ago. We turned on the car radio and the speech was already in progress, but instantly, as if electrified, we both shouted, "John Ciardi!" And we listened to him all the way to Albany where we had gone to meet a friend.

On the way back to Williamstown the radio had turned to opera, and we cast John in some of the roles we thought he would have been good for if he had chosen a career in *bel canto* instead of that of poet, etymologist, and writer of children's books. Falstaff was our first choice because in his later years he had both the stature and the wit for it. Boris Godunov was another. And for some reason I can see him now as Rasputin mesmerizing the Romanoff's deep within the Kremlin. His tracking down the origin of just one word—revolution—would have held them spell-bound. And then by connotation I am reminded of Sharmayev speaking the first act of *The Sea Gull*. He tells of going to the Moscow Opera to hear the basso-profundo, Silva, in one of his greatest roles. When Silva hits his lowest note there is great applause, and then from the gallery a singer from a local choir shouts out, "Bravo Silva"—one whole octave lower.

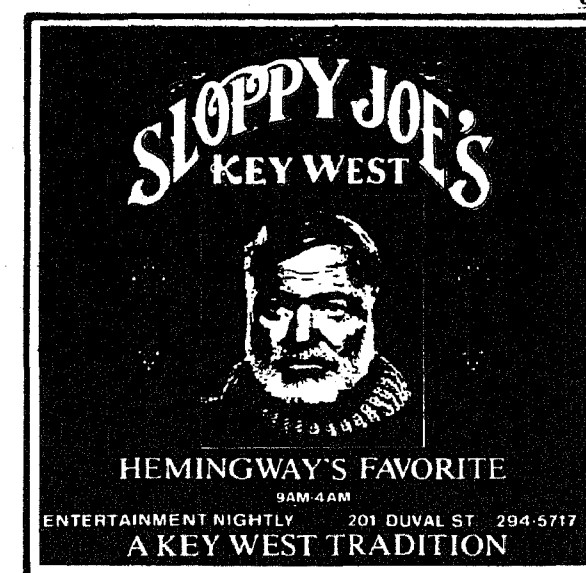
John was the only man I knew who could actually have done that. It was the deep, resonant music of his voice that I will always

remember. I wish I had the power to say, "Bravo John!"—one octave lower.

Jonathan Swift wrote his own epitaph in Latin, and Yeats once said that single line might prove to be more immortal than all else that Swift had written. The line is: "He has gone where fierce indignation will lacerate his heart no more." I recall John's column in the Saturday Review many years ago. Often it was written out of fierce indignation. I hope he has gone to join Swift—and perhaps his beloved Dante—where fierce indignation will lacerate his heart no more.

THOMAS SANCHEZ

I was not a close friend of John Ciardi's, having only met him five years ago, but I do consider myself an intimate member of his large audience. I tracked John for twenty years before meeting him in Key West, stalking him through the pages of his own poetry, his masterly translations, and his essays in the Saturday Review. When I finally did meet him it was like connecting with an "old friend." There was no other voice like Ciardi's, and I mean by that not simply the timbre and tenor of a man who delivered of himself in near Shakespearean tones. He could be dramatically lyrical as Dylan Thomas, pontifical as the first Italian pope, capable always of making teardrops into musical notes, musical notes into human syllables. Ciardi existed in our time as a link in the great chain leading back to the original cantors, those ancient singers of original poetry. For this reason I have woven from the works of the Spanish poets Garcia Lorca, and the 16th century Don Luis de Góngora, a meditation, a slight medley of senti-



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ments which summon for me the tradition of spirit which John Ciardi so exemplified.  
"I DO NOT THINK ANY GREAT ARTIST WORKS IN A FEVER. Even the mystics get to work only after the ineffable dove of the Holy Spirit has already left their cells and is losing itself in the clouds. One returns from inspiration as from a foreign country. The poem is the narration of the voyage. Inspiration supplies the image, but not its dress, and to give it that dress one must observe calmly and dispassionately, the quality and sonority of words.

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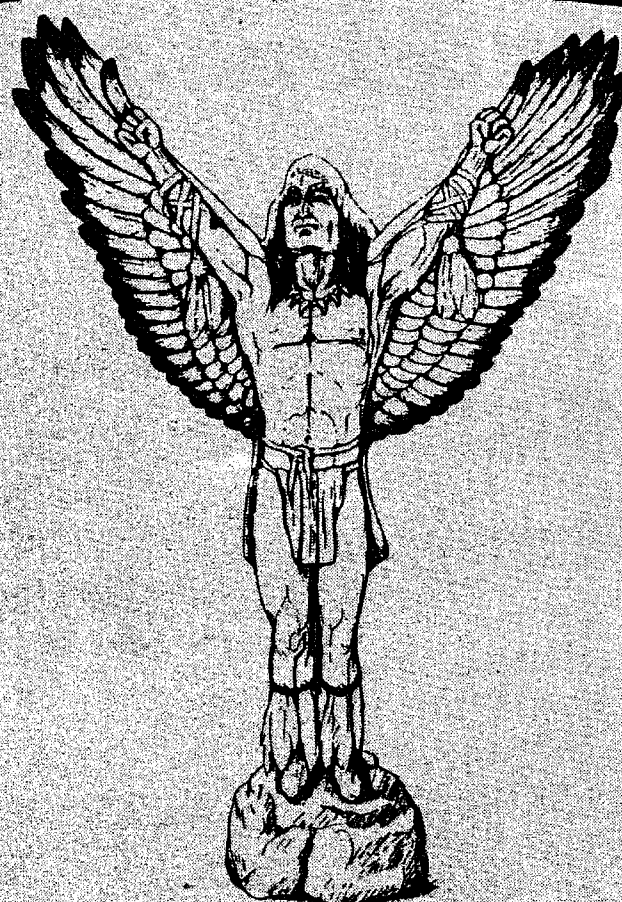
THROUGH THE EMPTY ARCH COMES A WIND, a metal wind blowing relentlessly over heads, in search of new landscapes and unknown accents, a wind that smells of baby spittle, crushed grass, and jellyfish veil, announcing the constant baptism of newly created things. This is the mythological landscape Don Quixote was dreaming of at the hour of his death. An orderly countryside where poetry measures and governs its delirium.

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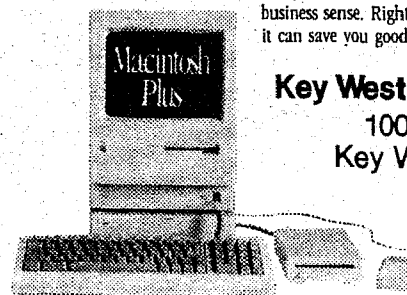
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warm

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	4		
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## GALLERY HOPPING

by Gordon Lacy

At the end of the season, it seems to me that this year has been a big one for the performing arts. As a Gallery column I feel perfectly free to name names. That the Red Barn is capable of transmitting such delights as "Irma La Douce" is pure gain, to say nothing of "Souvenir." Rae Coates' rollicking, vulgar, never-let-up production of "Women Behind Bars" was a dotty, offensive, completely successful evening at the Waterfront. "Evita" at Jan McArt's Cabaret theatre was notable for its smooth professionalism and suffered not at all by comparison with the original except that one was considerably more comfortable in the beautifully re-modeled convention hall than at the Prince Edward Theatre in London. McArt had just bought a house which says much about her feelings for Key West.

"The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" came off a raucous nasal-Gothic Texas hi-jinx with the most wonderfully repulsive language and images in a season of prostitutes (the three a-fore-mentioned works.) Vicki Roush and Chuck Reasoner made their almost love scene eloquent. Roush has learned nuance as an actress and her perfect pitch and impeccable pronunciation give her performance a clarity that should be model. Deadline does not permit me an option on McArt's spoof "Nite-Club Confidential," but let's all go and see! Nicest things to have surfaced this theater season will be Kathleen Elgin's reviews. A gap has been filled.

My last month's column got ripped apart, some of it tacked onto Vaughn Gibson's article.

## ARISTOS GALLERY

Barbara A. Cooper

(305) 296-0218  
219 SIMONTON / OLD TOWN KEY WEST, FLORIDA 33040

Especially upsetting was disappearance of any mention at all of two of Gingerbread's most important shows, those of John Kiraly and Ron



Clemons. I can only try to make amends by stating that John's imposing and romantic show was a sell-out and his new series of serigraphs highly successful. Ron's show was bright and stylish and full of humor, high-lighted by his papier-mache ladies up to all sorts of naughtiness. Our apologies to artists, gallery owners and readers. You can all see Gingerbread's stable of painters 11:00 A.M. - 6:00 daily.

Fred Gros is having a sort of continuing sale of his own paintings and various things he has collected over the years. He is selling his stock at what seems laughable prices. I have been led to believe that Fred will be painting in his gallery all summer, but he is full of surprises

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Gibson, Gregogna,  
Henocque, Lorjou  
Soisson, Telemaque  
Terry

these days.

More surprises; May will be Karen's last month on Duval. She's going up north for the summer and when she gets back will set up Artist's Warehouse in a new Simonton Street quarters where it will be business as unusual.

Ned at Farrington's is offering a 2 for 1 deal on his Frame House Artists' signed prints or a framing break on same. This series is "very designy," plus marine-scapes, so if you are redecorating or installing a business or office have a look in here. The key word is Tasteful and the parking is free.

Judi Bradford at the Guild says that they will continue to show Gary Zimmerman's painted mirrors, a handsome "Catch of the Day" in stained glass by Viann and Fritz Stang, and Judi's soft-sculpture of Hemingway-with-cat can be seen at Hats and Hammocks on Whitehead near Southard. Ann Irvine and Cappy Seiler are continuing their weekly four hour field trips and the resulting works, totally uncharacteristic of these ladies, may now be viewed at the Guild.

The Key West Art Center will be showing the watercolors of Fay Peterson from the 29th of April through the 11th of May and those of Della Vanderclout from the 12th of May through the 26th. Lots of birds and flowers and seascapes I am told. Both are local artists.

The Lucky Street Gallery is closed for the summer, which is to say open by appointment, featuring Rankine's wall hangings and John Martini's sculpture and jewelry, plus the gallery's artists. Thomas Colbert, Grillo Demo and ceramacist, Steve Howell.

The Haitain Co. is practically into reporting journalism with Arbonite paintings by Jn. Immanuel on the recent revolution there that depict Flag Day, Chaos and Revenge and works by Voltaire Hector also on the revolution, Martial Law and Liberation, dated and paraphrased. Timely is the word; the paint is hardly dry.

Jack Baron is very hard at work on next year's show, the follow up to his "Wedding." I presumed logically that it would be "Divorce" but he assures me I am not only wrong but unfeeling if not downright degenerate.

Alice Terry will be showing some of her work at Art Unlimited and is busy packing for her Ogunquit opening.

Sandford's window on Simonton is one of the best in SoMo and she sells most of her hand-

done bags in other parts of the world. She does keep some in stock, and they go into a washing machine perfectly.

East Martello has the annual children's show on Sunday May 4th from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M., a carnival atmosphere with candies and popcorn and, Lee Dodez informs me, more prima donnas than one can imagine. On the usual Tuesday, the 6th, there will be a reception for the members to view the children's works. Lee himself has recently served as auctioneer for the financially very successful Marc House auction held at Gingerbread, and two days later the Navy Wives' Auction. The first is a fine endeavor but more than one artist has complained that 7 auctions a year for deserving charities is rather steep even for the good-natured, especially when their prices are not respected. There should be a reserve on the prices equal to the artist's going rate.

Speaking of the East Martello, Joan Dwyer, Marge Smith, Judd Dolles, Jack Baron, Richard Fowler and Gary Blum were elected board members, and Marsha Gordon resigned, due to her impending voyage, I presume.

The White Street Gallery has been very erratic lately but Hycon has finally got the street work in hand and we are again open 11:00 - 5:00 Monday through Friday, showing our stable and some never before seen Lorjou lithographs. This great artist died in February in Paris and will have a retrospective show at this gallery next season. Also showing Alice Terry, Vaughn Gibson, Henocque and Gregogna.

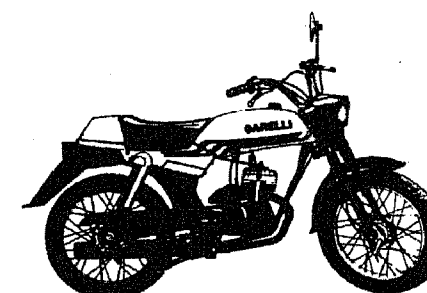
The Burgess-Meister, always worth a visit for John's collages and some of the best paintings in town, will be sporting a Mexican air by the time this hits the streets. Unless I'm wrong.

Aristos Gallery will show Henri La Chapelle's latest oils as this season's last one-man show on April 30th. Barbara says that she will throw a big party for all her artists and their friends mid-May.

Jim Moseley reports that Rose Lane Antiquities is going to remain open all summer with the usual high quality pre-Columbian objects, and that he is gearing up for an Autumn show.

Joe Pais, one of SoMo's cleverest collectors, asked me the other day if The Arts Council could not work out a group health insurance for our many artists who have none. Any ideas out there?

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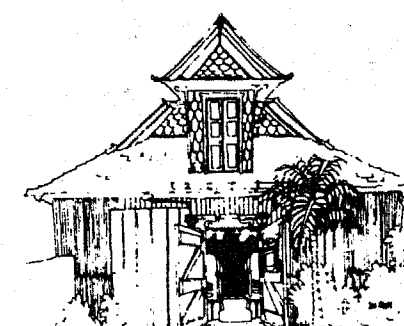
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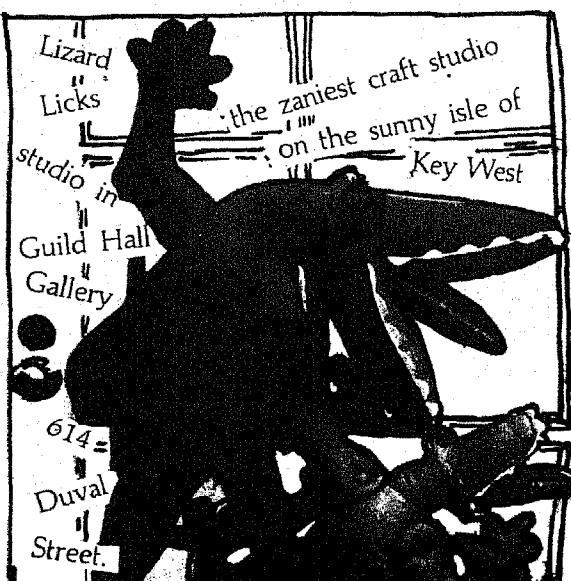
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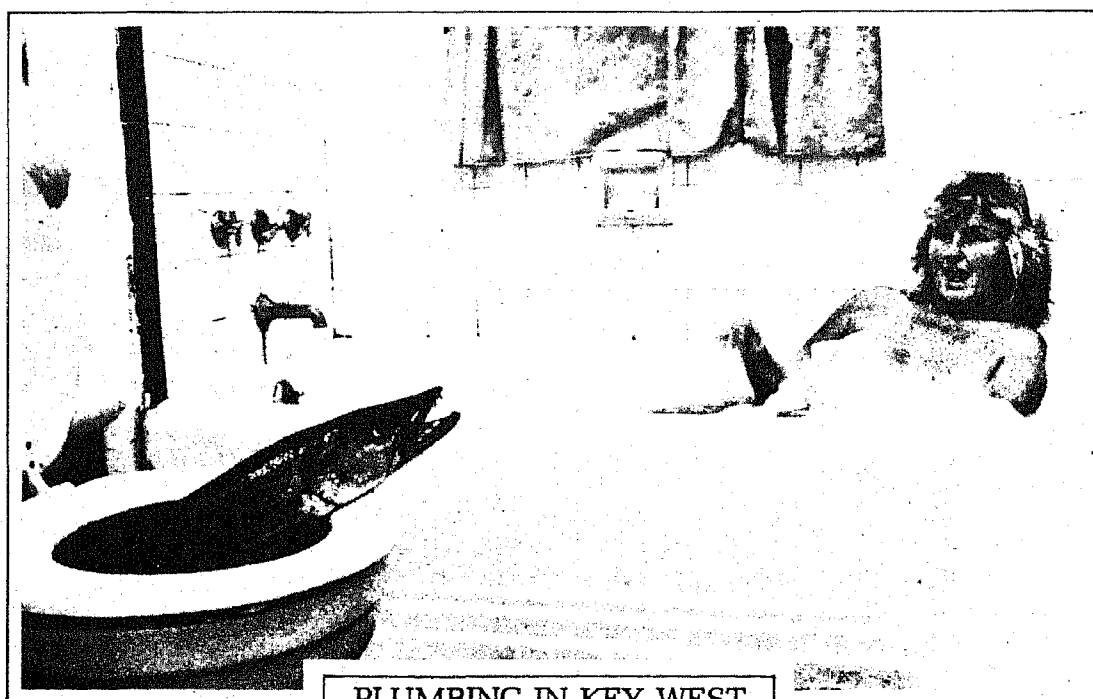


## KEY WEST MAN HOLDS UP BANK WITH LIVE BARRACUDA



A man successfully robbed the Sunny Florida Bank today, using a live Barracuda as a weapon. Bank teller Lola Co-burn told us, "This man walked in, shoved a fish in my face, and demanded all the money. That thing was growling and snapping its teeth at me . . . so naturally I gave the jerk what he wanted. I was really scared!"

Police Chief "Pepe" Trader was confident of an early capture. "The bank security camera gave us a clear photo of the thief caught in the act. Our men are on the lookout for a man of medium height, black shaggy hair, protruding teeth, and four eyes. We'll get him."



PLUMBING IN KEY WEST

## THE ANTIC HUMOR OF RICHARD WATHERWAX

## KEY WEST WOMAN WINS WORST LOBSTER RECIPE CONTEST



The annual Florida Lobster Recipe Contest was held today, but there were no winners in any of the six categories with the exception of Dee West, who took the prize for Worst Lobster Recipe.

"I was elated," said West. "I've never won anything before. My Grandma passed this recipe down to me, and made me swear to keep it a secret. But when I heard that the first prize in this category was *American Bald Eagle Recipes*, I said what the hell . . . go for it."

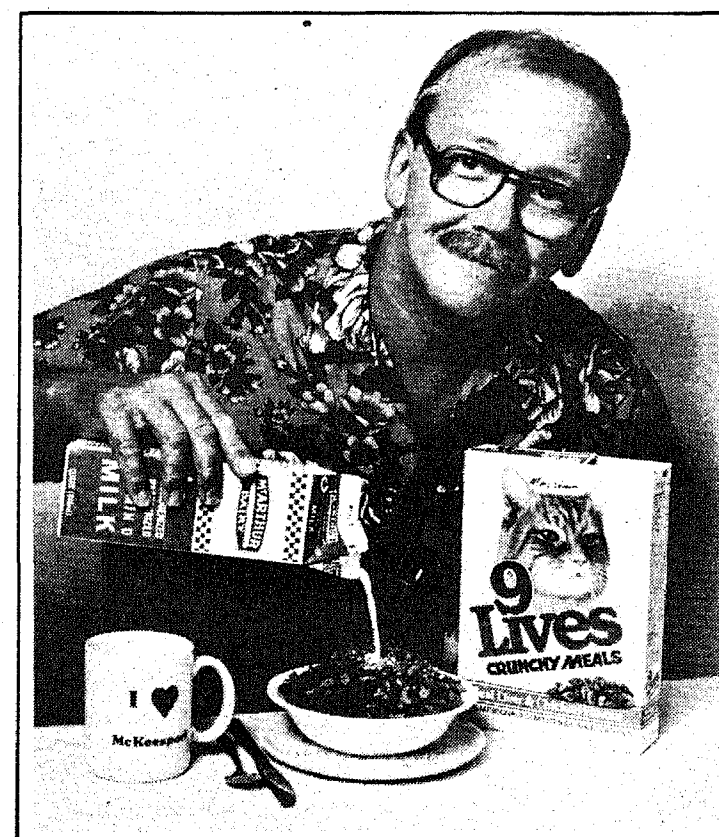
For our readers who appreciate something truly different, here is her recipe —

### Lobster and Scrambled Eggs

Put 4 fresh eggs and a live lobster into a cast iron skillet. Cover *tightly* and place on a hot barbeque grill. Cook 30 minutes. The lobster will scramble the eggs. Add fruit cocktail.



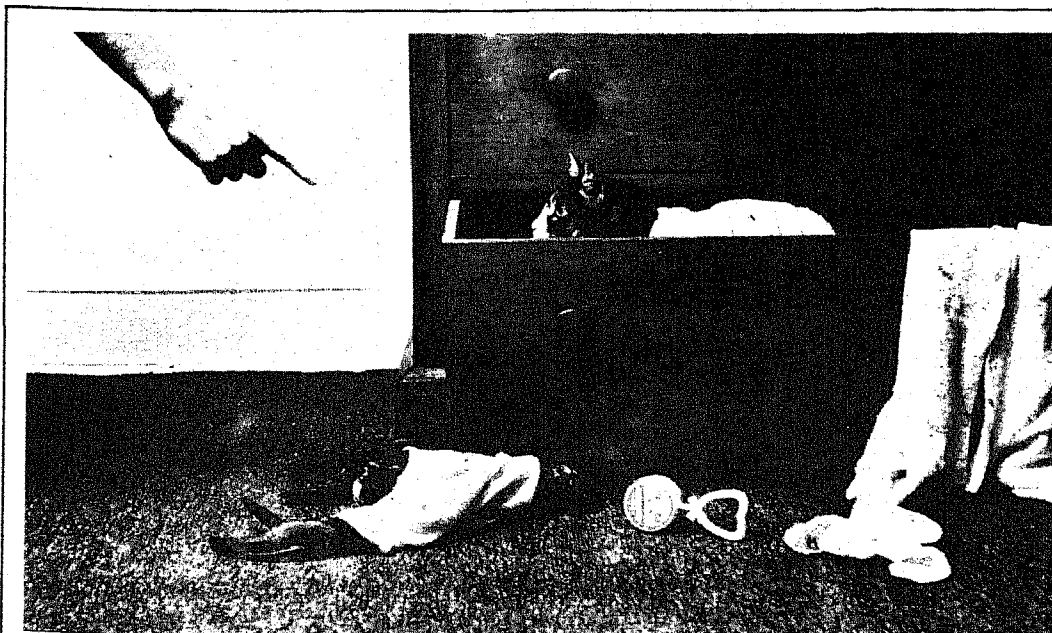
AMERICA'S FUNNIEST LOBSTER



Richard Watherwax



PEEKING LOBSTER



LOBSTER AND CAT CAUGHT TRYING ON THE BABY'S CLOTHES.

## ART and CONTROVERSY

by V.K. Gibson

Art and controversy. It seldom strikes two people in the same way, and is often a matter of semantics. I'm reminded of the famous story of the U.N. diplomat who asked in a



speech: "What's on the road ahead?" The translators, totally bewildered by this question (made

peculiar in the speaker's native tongue,) translated: "What's on the road, a head?" (Humor is socially acceptable controversy—usually.)

Try this quote on for size:

"Art must affect us like a disaster; It must wound and stab us; It must be the ax for the frozen sea inside us."—Kafka.

Pretty strong stuff! What's Kafka talking about, the shower scene in "Psycho"? Those ideas are in direct contrast to what we usually think of when we say "art."

Make a visit to Key West galleries (or those in most cities, large and small, for that matter.) You may see things which you consider to be disastrous—but do they affect you like a personal disaster? Do they wound you?

We can think of certain local artists (Ron Clemons, Craig Biondi, John Kiraly) as we consider this question. Ron's work often conveys strong irony and amusement. Craig has a classical, almost pagan sense of style. Both have a love of the abstract power of paint as expressed in realism. John Kiraly's work seems to be nostalgic of the Key West past, but is actually a romanticized portrayal of the way Key West is

becoming.

I think it fair to say that, regardless of what you think of these mentioned artists, none of them take an ax to "the frozen sea inside us." Offhand, I can think of only one local artist who does that regularly: Jordan Meinster.

Not all great art is bedecked with steaming guts and glowing with travails of the soul. Viewers can be awed by technical genius without being dragged kicking and screaming into a hell of human revelation. One recalls Watteau's happy world (the Indian Summer prior to the Revolution, when it was too late for artistic controversy or anything else to inspire humane change.) Even the classicists Ingres and David, who employed dramatic historical subjects, subordinated their themes to the prowess of the brush.

Controversy also occurs when evolved tastes clash with classical values. Contrary to widely held opinion, the masses tend toward classical values which are situated in a broad band of cultural expression that embraces everything from Beethoven to Fats Domino. In this sense Mr. Domino has much more in common with

Beethoven than does, say, Schoenberg.

For example, in the Eighteenth Century music reached what might be termed its "highest peak of refinement concurrent with comprehensibility," with the supreme composer of the period, Mozart.

It's true that some less talented, established composers balked at Mozart's innovations, but the masses responded to them readily. The objectors filled the same role, then, as many academics do today: small minds in high places.)

Music and the other fine arts continued to evolve, of course, and somewhere along the way they crossed an invisible line and left most of the public behind. Few enjoy Bartok the way they did (and still do) enjoy Mozart. And such "recent" composers such as Ives have suffered the fate of being widely admired by people who seldom willingly listen to their music. This does not mean that later music is less great or valuable, only that it is less accessible.

The new art is therefore off-putting, i.e. controversial.

In recent years there was a large public sculpture, "Tilted Arc," erected in a New York square surrounded by office buildings. Created by Richard Serra, and artist of international stature, the artifact measures twelve feet high and stretches on hundred and twenty feet. It cuts across the space ruthlessly, confronting all bystanders as they gaze from windows or try to cross the space.

The many people who relax in the square during the lunch hour didn't appreciate being challenged by Mr. Serra's unavoidable artistic statement. Protest exploded. Art experts testified as to the worth of the "Arc." The General Services Administration finally decided to take it down. I do not recall what the final disposition was.

One question which public art raises is: How much consideration should be shown to the public who will pay for and enjoy (or suffer) it? After all, none of the art experts who rushed to defend the "Arc" had to live with it every day.

My own feeling is that permanently installed works should not be in total disregard to public taste, no matter how bad that taste may be. Works on temporary display are another matter.

On the other hand I may be wrong. When Rodin created his *Burgers of Callis* the sculpture tableau raised a scandal throughout France. Today the French dote on their *Burgers*. Perhaps controversial public art should be allowed a grace period to get it over the hump of first impressions.

There is sympathy in Key West for the idea of Art In Public Places. The Key West Cultural Commission is investigating the possibility of raising funds for public art, through impact fees and other devices. If this is ever established, there will arise the problem of deciding which artists get the money, and for what.

Unsophisticated taste in Key West would normally be a problem, but in our case the decision makers will probably also be backward culturally and will therefore naturally avoid things which would offend the majority. We can count on this if the usual people are drafted as arbitrators: certain provincial gallery dealers, "artists," captains of local industry, and socialites.

As I think about artists who may be considered "controversial" who live in Monroe County and who produce work suitable for outdoor installation, Ann Labriola particularly comes to mind. Her work fits comfortably within the

existing traditions of modern art, rather than *avant garde* (a term of the past.) But some people might be startled if her work appeared, say, in Old Town, rather than being submerged somewhere in the Keys. As for myself, I would love to see a Labriola piece in town.

There is also controversy in using art to make points which are offensive to anyone.

My own brush with this is rather old news by now, but since the gossip has made the rounds, and it is a cultural matter, I might as well give my side of it.

Earlier this year East Martello hosted an exhibit held in honor of Tennessee Williams. I was among those artists invited to create special works inspired by Mr. Williams' plays.

It bothered me that this man, who had, all his life, taken an ax to the frozen sea in all of us, would be "honored" by the usual sweet, harmless stuff which passes for art just about everywhere. I expected a few exceptions—damned few.

I decided to take as my subject the play "Small Craft Warnings," because this gave me an excuse to do a portrait of Williams himself, who had appeared in the play. It would, I hoped,

reflect the psychological wounds suffered by T.W. during the course of his life.

As I neared the completion of my painting I decided to spatter it with paint, as if it were vandalized, and smear the word "FAG" on it. I was pleased with the results but, of course, knew it would cause an uproar at Martello.

I am particularly appreciative of the backbone shown by Martello Executive Director Lee Dodez at this time. He said the painting should be hung because I had been invited to exhibit, and resisted pressure later that it be taken down.

Some people became very upset and others voiced admiration and approval. One person—the type of person Truman Capote had in mind when he said: "Most rich people would become instantly invisible if they suddenly lost their money."—raised a real stink about the painting. Reactions in general, however, cut across social, income, and educational lines.

There are too many closeted people here. And I am NOT talking about sexual preference! There are closeted minds, turned inward, nice & cozy. That is their business. But it was good, I believe, for some of them to be momentarily awakened from their complacency before they

Hardly better  
than pumping it!



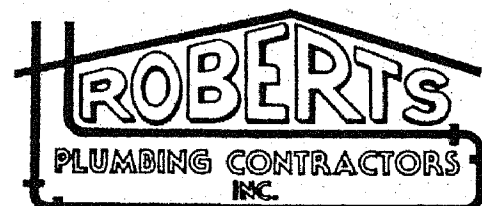
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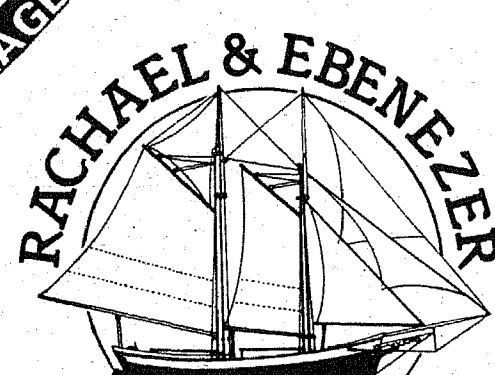
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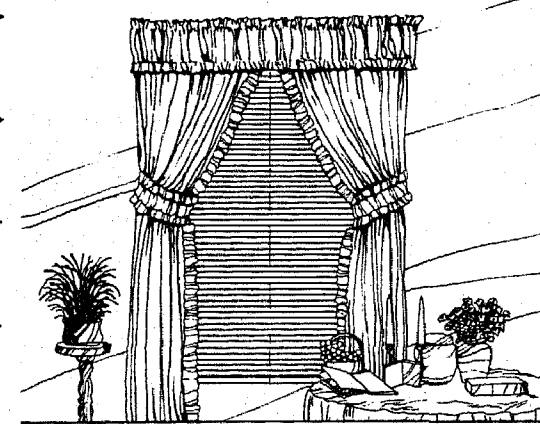


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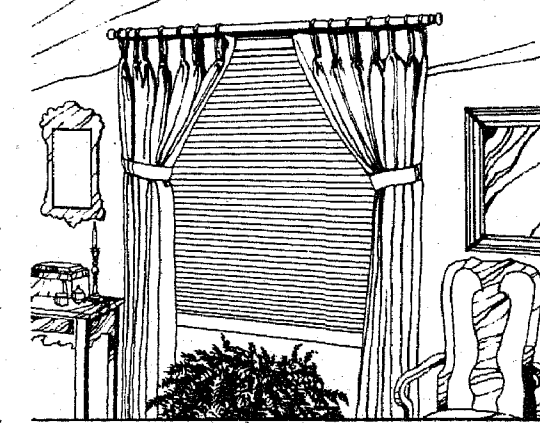
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made their way from the gallery to the bar and buffet.

One person indicated that it was misguided and wrong for me to try to make the point (about Tennessee Williams) "in this way, in this place."

Really? If we find a "safe" place for controversy—is it still controversy? The great frozen sea within us grows each day, annexing the future and profoundly affecting our lives. That is no joke. What's on the road, a head?

continued from pg 29

Meanwhile, we allowed the greatest spurt of growth this city has ever seen, and now we have to expand our services to provide for all the newcomers. That is what the impact fees are for. And the big time developments that are currently suing the city and refusing to pay their share are certainly not helping to solve our problems.

Neither are the successful businessmen who attack the city or me personally and cry about how they've been stopped from building "affordable" housing. If they are truly concerned about our housing problem, let them show some support for city programs to obtain land at low cost, and funding at low interest and combine

the two for truly affordable housing. It can be done and it will be done with the cooperation of our community.

It is very easy to say: "It's all THEIR fault, THEY are driving the costs so high that we can't afford to live here any more." Well, just remember that every person who successfully speculated on land and houses in Key West has helped the price spiral continue. And everyone who "borrowed" a little water or electricity from our utilities helped increase the hook-up fees. And every person who either failed to vote or didn't care what their elected representatives were doing or winked at some illegal act they knew was costing the city money (and all of us probably fit into one category or the other) every one of us has helped raise those prices also. It is time for community solutions: fair laws that treat everyone the same and provide some relief from the current problems. I think impact fees are a good example of such a solution. If you have a better idea, please call me or another commissioner and let's see if we can make it work.

-G. Halloran

How can I find out if my phone is tapped?

It's easy. Dial 1-202-949-9944. If you get a busy signal, you're tapped. If you get a weird siren-like signal, you're not.

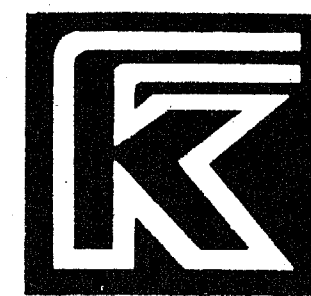
There's so little to do for young children in Key West. All through our drive down the Keys, we saw billboards for the Flipper Dolphin Show which I understand has been closed now for a couple of years. Why are these billboards still up?

As to the billboards, apparently on one else has rented them and until someone does, there's been no reason to expend the moneys to change them.

The good news, however, is that the Flipper's Sea School officially known as the Dolphin Research Center still exists at Mile Marker 89. Established in the 1950's by Milton Santini, it was the training ground for the dolphins who starred in the "Flipper" film and TV show. Now, as a non-profit organization, it trains dolphins for aquariums around the country.

The staff currently conducts tours of the facilities and, for a \$20 fee (which goes toward feeding the dolphins,) you'll spend 1 1/2 hours learning about dolphins and have the opportunity to get in the water, play with them, and take rides on their backs. It's one of the greatest daytrips imaginable for kids and grown-ups alike. Call Jeannie at 289-1121 or 289-0002.

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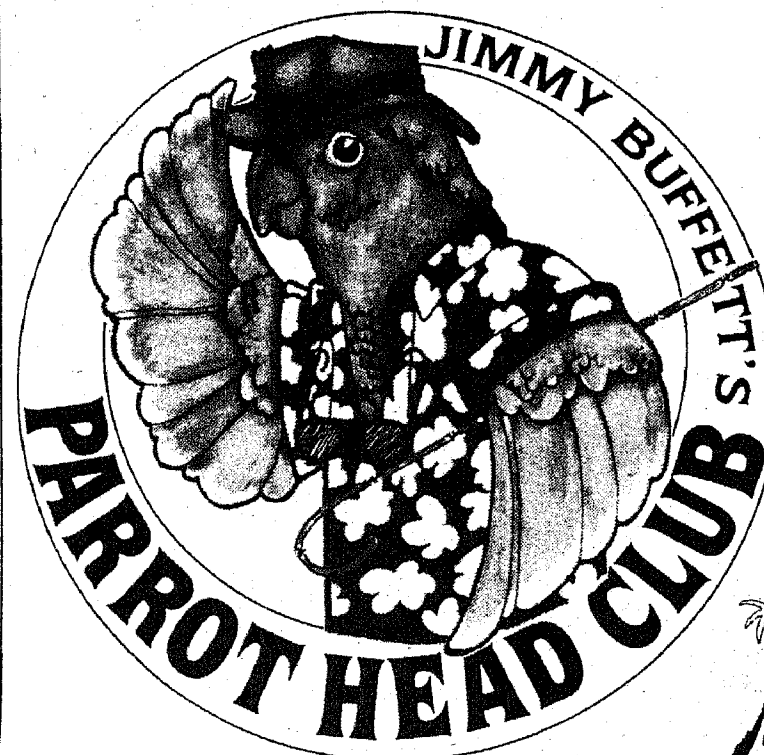
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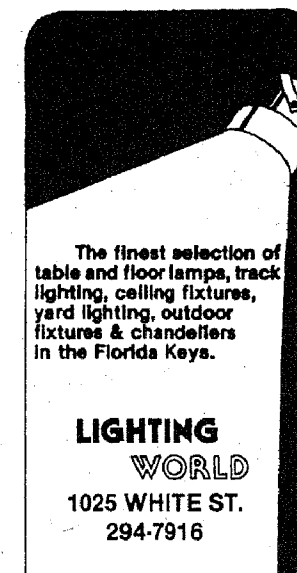


You don't have to be one of Jimmy Buffett's "Parrot Heads" to appreciate the Margaritaville Store. However, once you've experienced "Margaritaville," you'll most likely want to join the club.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

The George Halloran Legal Defense Fund has been closed out. This is a final report of all transactions:

Received from donations	\$6,238.00
Interest income	33.48
<b>Total received</b>	<b>\$6,271.48</b>

Printing and postage	219.02
Bank service charge	37.65
Newspaper ad	65.00
Steel, Hector & Davis, Attys	4,379.39
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$4,701.04</b>

Remaining funds donated in equal amounts to Save Our Neighborhoods (SON), the Monroe Assn. for Retarded Citizens (MARC), & United Way ..... \$1,570.44

**Total Spent** \$6,271.48

I sincerely thank everyone who helped me, financially or otherwise.

(SIGNED) George Halloran



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7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

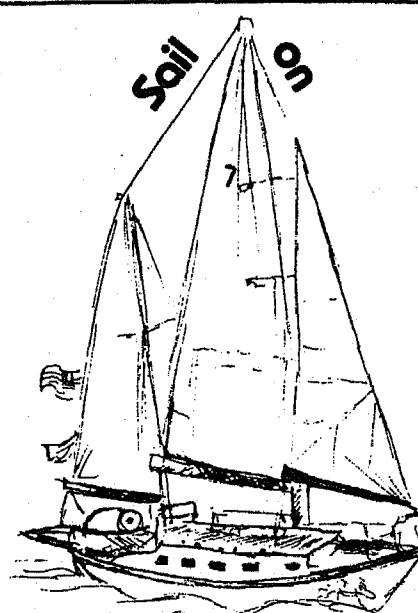
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continued from pg 29

mander of the Boca Chica Naval Air Station announced that if the city didn't exercise its option to purchase the Truman Annex that the Navy might choose to keep the base. Sullivan was not sure why Navy Secretary John Lehman had given an indication of possibly taking the property off the market. However, given the current political turmoil in the Caribbean—as well as increasing possibilities of military action against terrorists worldwide, the option to improve Naval operations in the region may prove more valuable to the U.S. Government.

A few days later, it was suggested that the Navy might only be interested in the Truman "Little White House."

Nonetheless, many Key Westers agree that, if this were to happen, they would welcome the return of a stronger Naval presence in the city. "It would mean jobs, real jobs, good jobs" said Commissioner Jimmy Weekley.

Occidental Land Development Group representatives Lynn Kephart said at last Friday's meeting that he would be back at the RDA's next meeting with additional information about that company's bid to lease and develop the property.

George Perrin, of the Engineering firm Post, Buckley, Schuh and Jernigan and the current Secretary of KWHD implied that he too might be back with proposals since doors had now been "re-opened to any and all proposals."

Cook Inlet Region, the Alaskan Indian Group, is watching the progress of this sale and, given both their admirable track record with other historic property developments and their reputation for outbidding the competition, the city would be wise to seriously consider speaking to them about what they might do should the property go up for public auction.

One of the more unusual possibilities comes from Key West newcomer Robert Card of Margaret Street who, earlier this month, proposed a grass-roots fundraising effort to buy the property for the city. At last week's RDA meeting, he claimed to have been in touch with a large corporation which he suggested might be interested in purchasing the entire Annex property but which was really only interested in possible uses of Tank Island. The entire remainder of the mainland property, he said, might be donated back to the city for tax purposes. Card said that, if his negotiations were successful, a bid announcement would be made this week.

There can be no doubt that numerous other developers have been waiting in the wings but have made no formal bids since the RDA has been legally tied to the KWHD deal until now.

### The Great Hueso Hope

The apparent foot-dragging and lack of communication from KWHD over the past month seems to some to have been a great disservice to the city—as if the message they were sending was that, if they couldn't have it, they'd wait until the very last minute and make sure none else could have it either. After all, the default was based on the fact that KWHD hadn't even bothered to say "no." They just didn't call.

Others see this as a blessing in disguise. It certainly makes for a stronger case to the GSA

that the city and the RDA were acting in good faith and that now, with the deadline here, both are over a barrel, but still working diligently toward some solution.

One option which RDA Boardmember Robert Kruse says he has heard voiced more than any other is the option for the city to purchase the land itself.

As we suggested last month, if KWHD had been planning to sell-off development rights to numerous other companies, the city could certainly do the same.

"The ball is certainly in the city's and the RDA's court right now," says Kruse.

"With the right economic and developmental expertise, the city could purchase the property itself and I can't imagine that, managed properly and with a long-range lease, it wouldn't pay for itself—without it being a terrible burden to taxpayers. In fact, it could be the greatest single boon to the city in years.

"Properties two blocks away on Duval Street are worth about \$1 Million per acre. As times change and, if the city can find the vision to look at this transfer in terms of long term uses and benefits, I have no doubt that the return on \$13.8 Million would be at least in the range of \$50 - 60 Million . . . enough to pay for city improvements which otherwise will be placed on tax-payers.

"The businesses and artists renting space now are important to the city. Had this deal gone through, they'd be facing huge rent increases or evictions. We need to recognize the value of attracting people like this and making it possible for them to stay and survive. The extremely low rents could be somewhat increased. We could offer longer leases and encourage people to make their own improvements for credits. Many of the businesses there have said clearly that they'd like to have a chance to buy the buildings they now lease.

"Mel Fisher doesn't want to leave and I don't think the city wants to lose him.

"The existing parking lots alone generate \$75,000 each year. We could open more space just for parking, alleviate the congestion downtown, and put the moneys towards the lease payments. We could create a Recreational vehicle campground, bringing RV tourists to the city and generating \$300,000 - 400,000 a year.

"The Customs House is in a prime commercial area. I can't imagine that someone wouldn't want to lease it for offices or shops.

"The city could sell small parcels for worthwhile endeavors to make the mortgage payments and, in time, it would be ours.

"There's so much to be done and what we need now are fresh ideas—from everybody. We need expert financial and legal advice, accurate assessments of properties and possible sources of income, and the willingness of the citizens and the city officials to look to the future rather than bicker over differences of opinion.

### GSA: "It's Not Over Yet!"

Last month, we reported that, according to Earl Jones, Commissioner for Federal Property Resource Management for the GSA in Washington, the GSA, even if it did not give any more extension on this sale, would be willing to listen to proposals by the city.

Last week, Barney Maltby of the Atlanta GSA office reiterated that position to RDA boardmembers saying that it would be early Fall

before a public auction would take place and that, if, in the meantime, the city or the RDA could work out an alternative deal, they would be receptive to it.

Otherwise, if the GSA did not get a public auction bid of \$13.8 or more, they would be forced to re-assess the property, go back to Congress for re-approval and start over again themselves—a process that could take them a year or more. Since they have a mandate from the Reagan administration to unload the property as a means of decreasing the national deficit, they'd rather take a sure offer from Key West than take the risk of opening the bids and possibly finding less than they wanted.

But there's even better news than that:

Representatives of the firm Cahill, Gordon & Reindel of Washington D.C. came this month to Key West and studied the procedural documentation of the RDA-GSA deal and found that the GSA itself had failed to follow required governmental procedures:

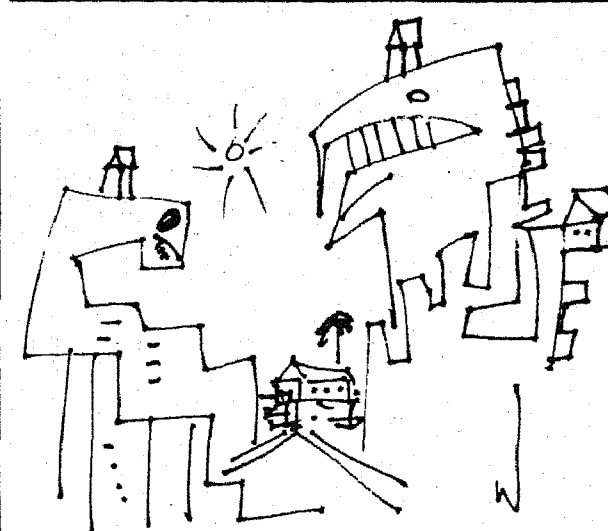
1. In 1983, following Navy decisions to change the size of the property to be disposed of and Navy "freezes" on the sale, a revised offer for sale came forth. The GSA, as required by statute and regulation, did not provide notice to the city government which has jurisdiction over zoning, to allow the city to zone it in accordance with local comprehensive planning prior to it being offered for sale. As such the price determined by the GSA for the property was "wholly inconsistent with the existing comprehensive plan and the zoning intentions of the city."

According to an affidavit from Key West City Planner Art Moseley the RDA's proposal "contemplates development approximately twice as dense . . . as that in existence elsewhere in the city of Key West." In addition, the report clearly documents that the price was based on erroneous comparisons with various properties elsewhere.

and  
2. the GSA also failed, as mandated by Section 2 of the National Environmental Protection Act, to prepare a Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement about the environmental consequences (e.g. sewer and waste effects) to the city.

The memorandum, sent to the GSA this week, asks for a 90-day extension so that these legal matters may be attended to.

Given all of the above, "Square One" may be a great place to be.





From the Key West Garden Club

## The Naturalist in Key West

by Cynthia Edwards

Beware of some moth caterpillars that are hatching out in May—they may sting. Nothing really serious for most people, though; the stings usually cause minor skin irritations and only extremely sensitive individuals experience more severe reactions.

Sphinx caterpillars are green with jagged white bars along their sides and each has a horn on its posterior. Toxins are contained in hair-like projections on the body. Other common names are tomato worm and tobacco worm. The Sphinx moth is 2½ - 3 inches across, gray, speckled with black or white and can be seen flitting around lights at night.

Concealed by its gray or light brown "fur" are the stinging spines of the puss caterpillar. The moth is a black and white night flyer.

Quarter-inch stinging spines cover the io moth caterpillar's body, which is an eye-catching chartreuse green with a longitudinal russet stripe and a parallel white stripe. It is about 1½ inches long while the adult moth is a huge, three inch, fuzzy dark brown thing.

Migrating monarch butterflies usually fly over Central America on their way north, but strong, cool northwesterly winds can blow them off course and down over the keys, where they are frequently seen.

Fragile-looking zebra butterflies will be laying eggs this time of the year. The butterflies are about 2 - 2½ inches across, wider than they are long, resulting in an ovoid silhouette, and narrow yellow stripes arching over a black background.

A giant swallowtail butterfly has been drifting among the orchid-festooned walls of the West Martello Tower-Joe Allen Garden Center. Its yellow and black markings compliment perfectly the early morning sunlight and shadows of the tropical garden. "Swallowtail" refers to the long, streamer-like appearance of its lower wings. Overall length of the giant swallowtail

may be up to five inches. It's caterpillar, the orange dog caterpillar, is unpopular with some Keys gardeners because it favors citrus plants, but many are willing to tolerate a certain amount of damage in order to enjoy the beauty and grace of this butterfly sharing their natural world.

A mounted and labeled butterfly collection is on display inside the fort at the center, which is open, free, to the public during the day from Wednesdays through Sundays.

That heady, very sweet scent wafting on the breezes throughout town is jasmine, classic scent of the tropics. It blooms several times a year here, and May is one of them. It seems to intensify with the soft dampness of settling evening dew.

Even the slightest breeze will set off the whispering of the dry light brown pods filling the still-leafless woman's tongue tree. Their tiny, pinnate leaves will be coming out later in the spring.

Silky new spring-green leaves have been pushing off the old ones on mahoganies all over town. Dead old leaves can be seen on the ground beneath the trees which are never bare—in the spring the old foliage is simply displaced by the new. The grove at Bayview Park shimmers with delicate verdure.

Dynamite trees in Bayview Park also have fresh new leaves. The name of this tree is derived from the exploding sound of its hard, circular seed pods when they fall to the ground and pop open to release the seeds. The tree can be identified easily from its strange bark which is covered with short, nasty, hooked thorns on small, pimply bumps.

Two pairs of blue-winged teal were seen feeding with an American coot at the salt ponds, where, only a week earlier a flock of about 20 was seen. The spring duck migration is drawing to a close. A lone merganser hunkered plumply on a shallow mangrove spit nearby.

Soon the resident herons and egrets will have the place to themselves again. Looking like a punk rocker with wildly spiked hair, a reddish egret in full breeding plumage stalked the shallows, the wind ruffling the long russet feathers standing up on his head and along his neck. A nearby Louisiana, or tricolor, heron winced at low-flying aircraft but held his ground. The dis-

tinctive longitudinal white stripe down the front of its long blue-gray neck sets it apart.

The common nighthawk and the Antillean nighthawk look very similar but the Antillean breeds only in the Florida Keys. They're both about nine inches long, a mottled dark, dark brown with white wing patches, long pointed wings and slightly forked tails. At dusk they can be spotted flying about in open spaces chasing bugs. Birders say the best way to tell them apart is by their call: the Antillean nighthawk says a bright "kiddle-dee-dee;" the common nighthawk emits a vulgar "phffft."

People come for miles to see the mangrove cuckoo in the Florida Keys. The ocean side of Sugarloaf Key is considered to be a prime location for this shy and rare bird.

Least terns have just arrived on Key West and can be seen on Higgs Beach where, beginning in May, they will nest on the flat marl. These small, slender seabirds will choose any flat place for their nests, including alongside Route One and the roofs of a building, such as Sears or sheds at Truman Annex.

Noisy, brilliant green flocks of wild parakeets streak from treetop to treetop in the morning and evening, startling resident and tourist alike. These long-tailed exotics are a real pest in South Florida because they love to eat the fruit in orchards and make a squawky racket during their peregrinations.

By contrast, the beautiful trilling of mockingbirds has been heard less and less as mates are found and nesting begun. Soon the whining of hungry young mockingbirds will replace their parents' songs.

As spring greenery phases into summer colors, Mother's Day in Key West is marked by blooming of the spectacular royal poinciana, the umbrella-shaped trees with feathery leaves. The streets of the town will be canopied with every shade from bright orange to velvety red and the ground carpeted with soft flower petals.

## Family and Health Services

### EMERGENCIES

Ambulance ..... 296-2401 or 911  
Fire ..... 296-2828 or 911  
HELPLINE/Latch Key  
Program ..... 296-HELP, 294-LINE  
Missing Children ..... 1-800-342-0821  
Poison Control (24 hours) ..... 1-800-282-3171  
Police ..... 911 or 294-2511  
Rape Victim Advocacy  
Program ..... 294-5531 x4766  
Sheriff ..... 296-2424

### EDUCATION

Adult Education ..... 294-5212  
Child Find (FDLRS) ..... 296-7541  
Downtown Center, FKCC ..... 294-8481  
Exceptional Student Education ..... 296-7541  
Florida Keys Community College ..... 296-9081  
Monroe County Schools ..... 296-6523  
Parenting Skills Classes ..... 296-5911

### RECREATION

Armed Services YMCA ..... 296-6616  
Boy Scouts ..... 745-3987  
City of Key West Recreation Dept. .... 294-3721  
Girl Scouts ..... 745-3737  
Monroe County Public Library ..... 294-8488

### CHILD ABUSE

Child Abuse Office, FKM ..... 294-5531  
Child Protective Services, HRS ..... 294-9513  
Child Protection Team, FKM ..... 294-5531  
Coalition Against Child Abuse ..... 294-5531  
Guardian Ad-Litem ..... 296-7518  
Parenting Classes, FKM ..... 294-5531  
Parents Anonymous ..... 296-HELP, 294-LINE  
Puppet Show ..... 294-5531  
Reporting, HRS ..... 1-800-342-9152, 294-1050  
Volunteer Child Advocacy Team ..... 294-5531

### NAVY

Counseling & Assistance  
Center ..... 292-2533  
Family Advocacy ..... 296-2461  
Navy Alcohol Safety Action  
Program ..... 292-2555  
Navy Family Service Center ..... 292-3152  
Navy Relief ..... 292-2196

### DAY CARE

See Yellow Pages listing  
for day nurseries and child care.

### SOCIAL SERVICES

Big Brothers & Big Sisters ..... 294-9891  
Commodity Food Bank ..... 294-8468  
Community Control ..... 294-1059  
Developmental Services ..... 294-1059  
Domestic Abuse  
Shelter ..... 296-HELP, 294-LINE  
Juvenile Alternative Services  
Program ..... 296-7465  
Monroe County Food Bank ..... 294-8468  
Monroe County Social Services ..... 294-8468

### HEALTH

Al-Anon ..... 296-6616, 294-5531  
Ala-Teen ..... 296-6616  
Alcoholics Anonymous ..... 296-8654  
Blind Services ..... 1-800-342-1828  
Chemical Dependency Unit,  
Delphos ..... 294-5531  
Childbirth Education ..... 294-3490, 294-4536  
Easter Seal ..... 294-1089  
Family Planning ..... 294-1021  
Hello Baby ..... 294-5531  
Helping Hand Stroke Club ..... 294-5531  
Hospice ..... 294-8812

Improved Pregnancy Outcome ..... 294-1021  
LaLeche Foundation ..... 745-2274  
LaMaze ..... 294-1068, 294-4218  
MARC House - Detox ..... 743-6551  
Mental Health Care Center ..... 294-5237  
Monroe County Health Dept. .... 294-1021  
Narcotics Anonymous ..... 296-7999  
Nutrition Program ..... 294-1021  
Ostomy Support Classes ..... 296-8659  
Overeaters Anonymous ..... 294-5183  
Up Front/Drug Information ..... 1-800-432-8255  
Well Baby/Medicaid Clinic ..... 294-1021  
W.I.C. (Women, Infants &  
Children) ..... 294-1021

### MISCELLANEOUS

Adoptions ..... 294-9513  
Birth Certificates ..... 294-1021  
Family Resource Center, FKM ..... 294-5531  
Foster Homes: Information &  
Licensing ..... 294-9513  
Legal Services ..... 294-4641 x358  
National Switchboard for  
Runaways ..... 1-800-621-4000  
Red Cross ..... 296-3651  
Salvation Army ..... 294-5611  
Single Parent Hotline ..... 1-800-638-9675  
Victim Witness Assistance  
Program ..... 294-5165  
Welcome Home Ministries ..... 296-2366  
Zonta ..... 296-4357

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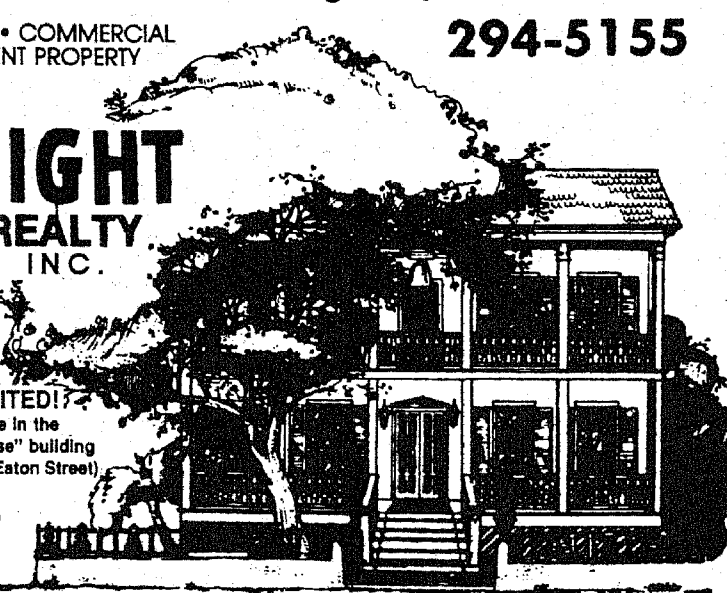
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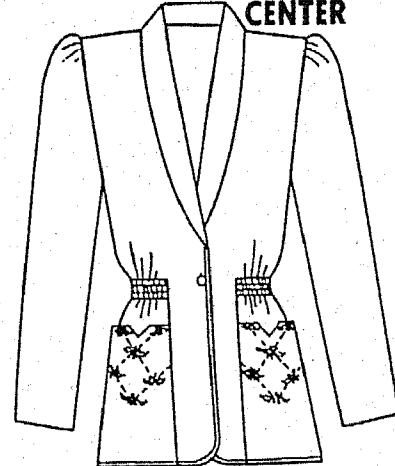
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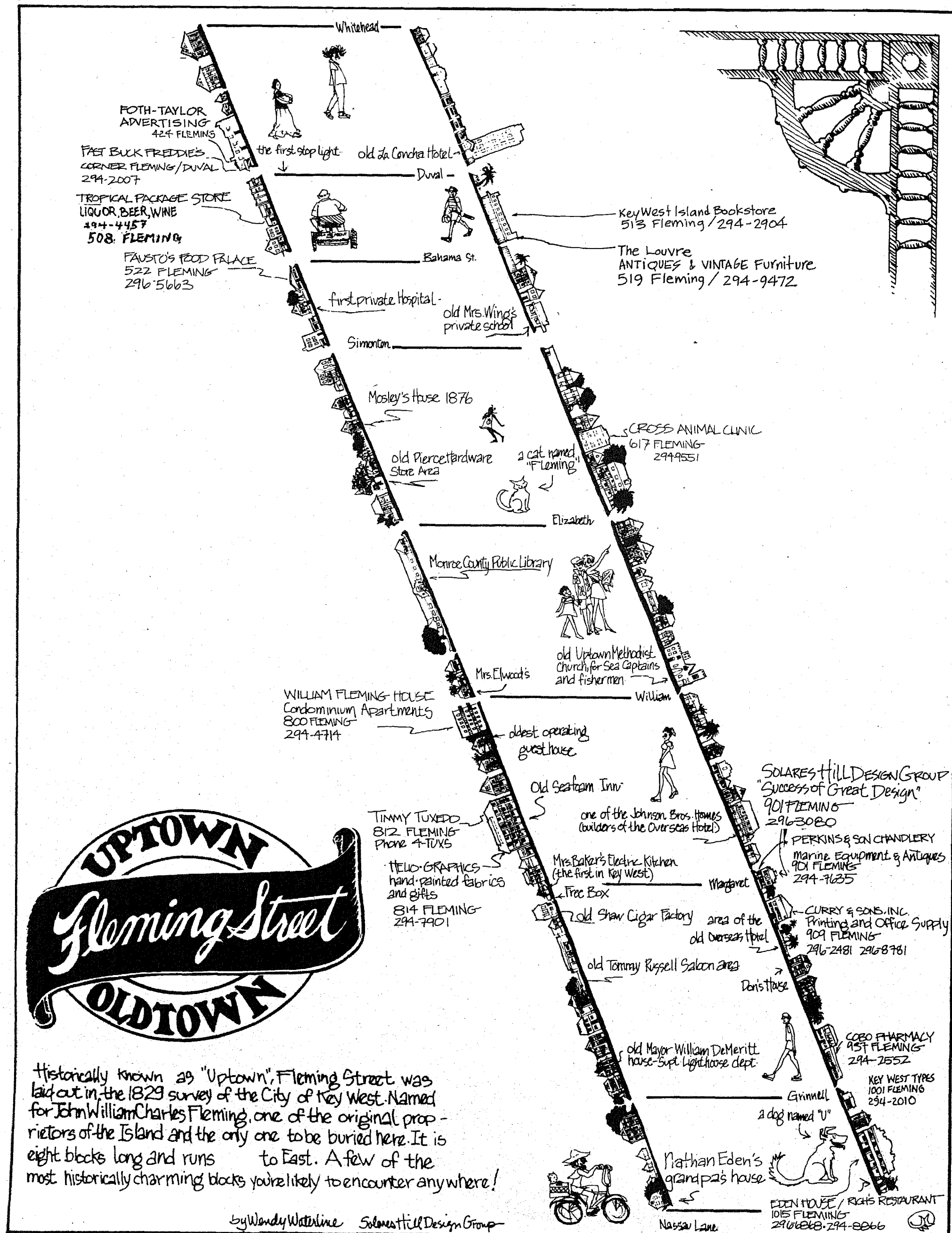
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## May Social Events

<b>MAY 1</b> •Key West Hand Print Fashion Show, Casa Marina, 12:30 pm. •Irma La Douce, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Nite Club Confidential, McArt, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 2</b> •Key West Hand Print Fashion Show, Casa Marina, 12:30 pm. •Irma La Douce, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Nite Club Confidential, McArt, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 3</b> •Children's movies, library. •Last outdoor book sale, bargains! Public library. •Nite Club Confidential, McArt, 8:30 pm. •Irma La Douce, Red Barn, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 4</b> •Children's Art Show, KW Art & Historical Society. •Irma La Douce, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Nite Club Confidential, McArt, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 5</b> •Children's Art Show, E. Martello, 9-5. •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50.	<b>MAY 6</b> •Members party, E. Martello, 7-9. •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Library movie: From Ocean to Sea, 6:30 pm. <b>MAY 8</b> •American Legion Lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50.	<b>MAY 9</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. <b>MAY 10</b> •Children's movies, public library, 10:00 am. •Marathon Dolphin Scramble. •Fish fry, American Legion, 1-5 pm	<b>MAY 13</b> •American Legion lunch, 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.
<b>MAY 14</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Library movie: Treasure - Story of the Atocha, 6 pm. •Artichoke, Red Barn Theatre, 8:30 pm. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 15</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm. •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 16</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm. •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 17</b> •Children's movie, library. •Lower Keys Food Festival Raft Race, Sunshine Key. •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm. •Coffee Mill End of Season Folk Square, and Contra Dance, free, 7:30-8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 18</b> •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 19</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 20</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 21</b> •American Legion lunch, 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.
<b>MAY 22</b> •American Legion lunch, 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 23</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 24</b> •Children's movie, library. •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 25</b> •Artichoke, Red Barn, 8:30 pm. •Bullshot Crummond, Waterfront Playhouse, 8:30 pm.	<b>MAY 26</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. <b>MAY 27</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50.	<b>MAY 28</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. •Library movie, 39 Steps, 6 pm.	<b>MAY 29</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. <b>MAY 30</b> •American Legion lunch 11:30-2:00, \$3.50. <b>MAY 31</b> •Children's movie, library.	<b>For calendar events, please call 294-3802.</b>  <b>To have an event listed in the calendar, please call 294-3802.</b>

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