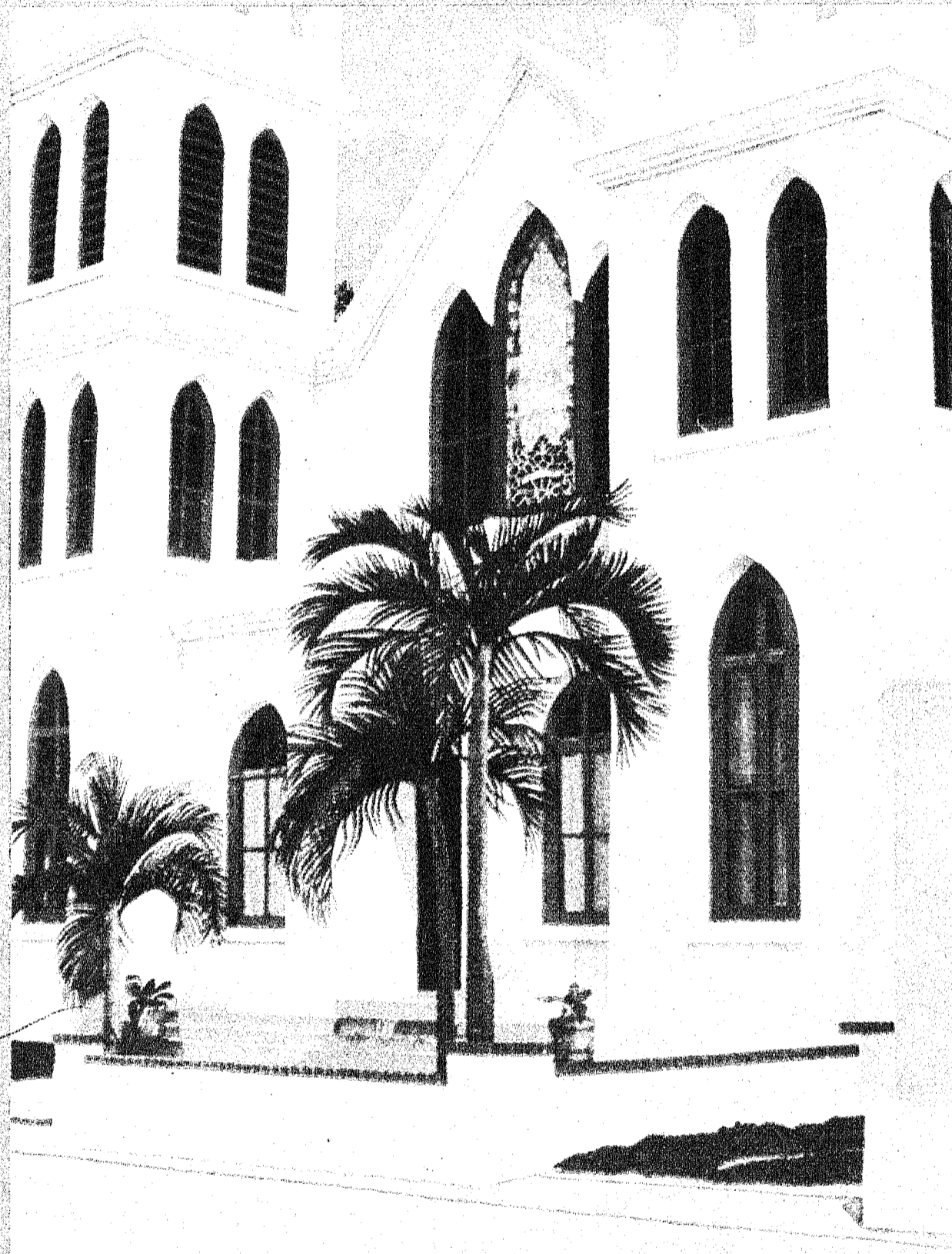


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Vol. 17, No. 12 • KEY WEST, FLORIDA • DECEMBER, 1989



PEACE ON EARTH

BACKROOM POLITICS:



HOW TONY FOUGHT  
FOR HIS FUTURE  
*Page 6*

•  
TOYS KIDS  
REALLY WANT  
*Page 14*

•  
SMUGGLERS  
RAT ON PALS  
*Page 18*

•  
HEAVY METAL MOMMA:  
REEN STANHOUSE  
*Page 36*

•  
TALKING  
TURKEY WITH  
JEANNE McCLOW  
*Page 44*



answer questions about their departments in the city. It's standard."

But Webster was actually a guest host on at least two occasions, according to Joe Deitrich of TCI, when the regular host was out of town this fall. On at least one program that Webster hosted, *Eye on the Keys* endorsed candidates in the then-up-coming city election. Among Chief Webster's guests was Police Benevolent Association President Adam Bittinger, who made the PBA's political endorsements on the show.

There is a provision in the Civil Service rules and regulations governing all city employees that states:

*Any person holding a classified or other position with the City of Key West shall*

*have the same right to take part in political campaigns and to exercise the rights of franchise as any other citizen, except that no officer or employee of the City, except an elected official, shall engage in any political activities during his or her hours of duty, service, or work with the City.*

*No leave of absence for any time whatsoever shall be granted to any officer or employee of the City for the purpose of engaging in political activities for any candidate other than himself or herself for public office.*

Witker does not watch *Eye on the Keys*, he says, so unless someone specifically points out this sort of irregularity to the city manager -- and no one has until now -- he cannot judge whether or not such an

appearance is inappropriate.

If Chief Webster's appearance on *Eye on the Keys* and subsequent claim for comp time was found by the city manager to be inappropriate, it probably wouldn't hurt much. Earlier this year, Witker found reason to request that Webster resign as chief. He followed up his request by letting the issue drop without explanation.

City Hall has been sharply criticized for condoning Webster's juggling act with compensatory hours, weekdays off and frequent public appearances after dark. But hey -- read his contract. There is also controversy over the chief's salary. It's a doozy.

Webster's contract was negotiated by former City Manager Joel Koford in early 1987. Webster, whose moving costs were paid in full by the City of Key West, arrived from Lake Oswego, Oregon, in April, 1987.

His contract pays him a monthly housing allowance of \$840 "to assist in reimbursing and offsetting housing costs associated with local residence which is desired by the city." Webster chose a home for himself and his family in the Lower Keys, roughly 20 miles from City Hall. Webster is the only city employee with a housing allowance.

He commutes to work in a city-owned vehicle. The city pays for an "automobile for his continual and personal use," and provides "for full maintenance, gas, tires, insurance and any other amenities." The chief does not wear a uniform. He receives a monthly clothing allowance of \$110.

When he came on board, Webster's base salary was \$45,600. The contract scheduled an increase to \$50,160 after 12 months of employment. Today, owing to several across-the-board raises in the police department, Webster's base salary is \$75,060.

Webster's base pay is on par with police chiefs in Chicago (\$78,750), Detroit (\$78,660) and Dallas (\$75,333).

Other perks in Webster's benefit package include payment of life and health insurance for him and his dependents, while other city employees must pay to have their dependents on their health insurance policies. The city also provides a disability income insurance policy that "assures not less than 70 percent of his salary plus full maintenance of benefits."

Only the city manager has the right to terminate the services of the police chief,

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and then "only with cause." In that case the city would pay severance pay of 180-days' salary, lump-sum payment, "with full maintenance of benefits for that period, and subsequent rights of continuation."

If he resigns, the chief must give the city a 60-day advance notice. The city would then have the option of requiring the chief to work for the duration of the 60 days, or to make the resignation effective immediately, or within 30 days, "and to pay employee a lump-sum cash payment equal to 60-days' salary with full maintenance of benefits for that period, and subsequent rights of continuation."

The contract may be terminated, at the employee's option, upon the occurrence of any of the following: city attempts to reduce employee's salary or other benefits; city fails to comply with any provision of this agreement which benefits the employee; or employee resigns at the suggestion of the city manager.

In these cases, the employee is entitled to severance pay in a lump-sum payment equal to 180-days' salary, with full maintenance of benefits for that period, and rights of subsequent continuation.

"I negotiated my contract in good faith, from 3500 miles away," Chief Webster recently remarked on George Murphy's radio talk show.

"We made it so appealing he couldn't resist, I think," Joel Koford said right after hiring Webster.

Koford and Webster became acquainted when both men worked in Temple Terrace, Florida, in the 1970s and early 1980s. The


city commission did not play any role in the hiring of Chief Webster in 1987, nor did they have a hand in shaping his contract.

According to Section 3.(04) of the Key West City Charter -- "Duties of commission regarding administrative officers and employees":

(a) Neither the commission nor any of its members shall in any manner dictate the appointment or removal of any city administrative officers or employees whom the manager or any of his subordinates are empowered to appoint, except as provided in this Charter, but the commission may express its views and fully and freely discuss with the manager anything pertaining to appointment and removal of such officers and employees.

(b) Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations, the commission or its members shall deal with city officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the manager solely through the manager, and neither the commission nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.

"The City of Key West is a corporation, within the State of Florida, and we are bound by contracts and legal obligations, within the confines of the law," Richard Witker says. "We operate according to those obligations."

However, any lawyer will tell you this: contracts are made to be broken. 



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# Who Elected Me Mayor?

The inside story of Captain Tony Tarracino's 1989 election campaign

by Michael Ritchie

There was never a more beautiful day. Old City Hall was new again, her windows open wide to a fresh tropical breeze. People were applauding. There were cameras everywhere. And it was all because our man was being sworn in as the new mayor of Key West. My friend and co-worker of the past four months, Lynda Schuh, leaned toward me and, screaming to be heard over the din, asked, "What do we do now?" "Write a book," I replied.

...

Here it is, people, the totally unvarnished, totally true (though frequently warped and sometimes unbelievable) story of what went on behind the scenes in the Captain Tony camp; how we elected him Mayor of Key West -- with the help of the 32 friends who provided him his winning margin.

Let me guide you through the inner workings of our well-oiled, sophisticated and complex political machine. Our first meeting was held in a bar (Captain Tony's

Saloon, of course), where our cheering section was especially well-oiled.

The Committee of Five, Two or Eight had not been formed yet. Tony had appointed Chuck Krummel, a local innkeeper and developer of sorts, as his campaign manager.

Tony gave a little speech emphasizing the lead time -- it was August -- we had on Sawyer and Gordon and how he was sure we were going to win this time. Then he turned everything over to Chuck. But Chuck was at the bar grabbing himself a free beer. So Tony turned things over to Lynda Schuh, at that time an instructor at Florida Keys Community College. Lynda is bright and witty and has quite a few influential friends in the intellectual, artistic community -- a group I knew we'd have to try to reach with Tony's message, whatever it was going to be.

I'd been recruited as advertising director. Lynda and I began discussing things like market surveys and strategies. Then Chuck returned and wanted to talk about T-shirts and flyers. Everyone was given a handful of flyers to pass out and told to meet again the following Wednesday. That was it. I could tell already this was going to be a high-pressure campaign.

...

The wrinkles on his face are like the branches of a wise old tree. His hair is greyed and usually flyaway, but in the pompadour style of the late 1940s, early '50s. The smile is engaging, the eyes omniscient.

Captain Tony has been a small-time gangster, fishing captain, gun-runner, CIA operative, saloonkeeper and peripatetic politician. He is one of a kind.

Of the hundreds of stories about him, most were made up and told by him. No one else could tell a story about catching a giant jewfish with a frog and have you walk

away believing it.

I like the real stories -- how he's made it in Key West as a businessman.

"I planned it all, Michael," he once told me. "When I first opened this bar, I bought a book. It had listed in it all the towns in the country of more than 100,000 people. And it gave the names of the mayors of those towns. I memorized it. So when some lady from Topeka comes into the bar I say, 'Topeka -- that's where my old pal so-and-so lives! Say, I heard he was mayor now, huh?' The hook was set."

He is a charmer and he knows it. With couples he always approaches the wife first; then he moves in on the husband. "Hey, you don't mind if I take your sister here to Las Vegas, do ya's?" In fact, he built his business on charm ("the little boy in me"), and tall tales. And he's the first to admit it.

When he sold his business this April rumors ran rampant that he had huge gambling debts to pay off. Not true. He simply wanted to make sure his large family was taken care of. Family is the most important thing in the Captain's life, even more important, I think, than being Mayor of Key West. The two would come into conflict during this campaign.

...

Our second meeting was pretty much the same as the first. I kept wanting to talk about strategy while Chuck wanted to have people put up posters. I wondered what was happening to our precious lead time. Our first big fundraiser at Martello Towers was 10 days away. Elizabeth Kinnell, local Lady about Town who knows all, sees all and keeps it quietly locked away for future use, gave a report on restaurants donating food -- that was her assignment. Elizabeth was food.

You probably have gathered by now that I didn't think too highly of the job Chuck had been doing. Others seemed to share my feelings. It seemed clear to just about all present (and probably a few absent) that Captain Tony had made a gross error of judgment. Meetings outside of the meetings began to take place. And the Committee of Five, Two or Eight began to emerge.

## Of the hundreds of stories about Captain Tony, most were made up and told by him.

Photo courtesy Michael Ritchie.



The original Committee included myself, Elizabeth Kinnell, Lynda Schuh, Pat Timmons, Bob Hadders, Jerry Cray and Louis Tarracino, Tony's oldest son. Occasionally, Little Tony, the Captain's daughter, was involved, which made eight. Of course, some dropped out or were eliminated, and we'd meet with only two. (Hence, the Committee of Five, Two or Eight.)

Little or nothing happened in the organized meetings. Everything took place in unstructured powwows between Committee members and Tony.

When word trickled back to him that there was great dissatisfaction with his choice of campaign managers, Tony let word leak back to us to be patient and he'd take care of it. When Tony says he'll take

care of something, he does. Which reminds me: he promised me I could be Chief of Police.

...

The fundraiser at East Martello Towers was a successful disaster. The turnout was good, but we made no money to speak of because we paid bands we could have gotten for free.

The evening started out on a good foot when Chuck and Elizabeth came to combat over the placement of serving tables. I saw Elizabeth as a demure lady of diminutive stature, but of large opine. I saw Chuck as a cross between an Argentine gigolo and a Jersey used-car salesman.

I heard Tony wasn't going to give the speech I had written for him, the one he'd

positively loved the day before. I spotted it in Chuck's notebook. This is when Chuck came closest to losing part of his anatomy. Lynda Schuh, gentle giant, played peace-maker. She soothed me and comforted Elizabeth. Then she told Chuck to shut up.

It was an important moment in the campaign. For us, Lynda effectively became campaign manager and remained so for the duration of the campaign.

Tony gave a short, nonsequiturous speech about charterboat fishing, gun-running and how it all related to Key West's future. Luckily the crowd was friendly -- most had been there in 1985 -- and the reception was good. But I made sure Tony never dwelled on the gun-running stuff after that. I wanted to stay in the future, not the past.

Tony shortly thereafter participated in a television debate with Marsha Gordon, Tom Sawyer and David Gentile. We had written Gentile off. Gordon, on the other hand, was a real threat. She had a lot of friends. But she also had a lot of enemies, from what we could gather. That made her vulnerable.

It seems Gordon had a tacit agreement with the other candidates not to discuss the abortion issue, because of her own pro-choice stand. She was afraid she'd turn off "church people." Tony quite innocently asked her a question during the debate regarding the taboo issue. She glossed it over nicely. But when the cameras were turned off she came at Tony like a banshee screaming, "I'll see to it personally that you're never in the mayor's office in this town!"

We figured then we couldn't really count on an endorsement from Marsha Gordon if we got into the runoff with Sawyer.

...

The only thing that surpasses Tony's ego in size is his heart. He helped me adjust to Key West some years ago, which wasn't easy. And I can parade hundreds of others before you to give the same testimony. But let me give you only one example here.

Much was made during the campaign of Tony's saloon-keeper image, implying a constituency of drunks and barflies. Pat Timmons, a good friend and a member of our Committee, used to be a hopeless alcoholic and, yes, a regular at Captain Tony's Saloon. He reached a point where he said, No more. Pat began attending 12-step meetings. But he was not impressed with the program, and found "counting the

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Page 8 -- December 1989 -- Solares Hill days" of sobriety too much to bear. He confided in Tony.

Tony laid his glasses on the bar and said, "Pat, don't count no days. That's bullshit. Think about women. Have a Coke. Before ya know it, a month's gone. Turn around, a year. Believe me, I know."

Believe me, when Tony Tarracino takes the time to remove his glasses, light a Lucky and look you directly in the eye, you listen. And you believe.

Pat listened. He hasn't had a drink in two years. He was probably the single most valuable member of our campaign committee.

It was a simple message, what Tony said to Pat. That's the way Tony works. You'll come to him with a giant, complicated problem and he'll say, "Hey, what about this?"

Tony himself says, "I ain't perfect."

He believes in two and only two media buys: radio and small space ads, mainly in the *Citizen*. (God knows why!) Otherwise he'll stick with posters and T-shirts. This does not create much of a role for an advertising manager. My job was really to provide support and advice in whatever way I could.

Tony doesn't read scripts well. The only truly good commercial done during the campaign was Tony's at-home talk with teenagers about drugs. It turned out to be one of the most effective tools we had in the election. School principals called asking for copies to play for their student bodies.

Between Chuck and Tony's near refusal to cooperate in any organized advertising

**Tony laid his glasses on the bar and said, "Pat, don't count no days. That's bullshit."**

effort, Lynda Schuh was becoming increasingly distraught. She had, after all, a name to uphold in this town. And Tony just wasn't taking this thing seriously, days before the primary. She was ready to "walk." Though I persuaded her to stay on, she did pull a temporary disappearing act -- her ploy, I believe, to convince Tony we meant business about this campaign. She came back in about a week.

On primary night, most of the Committee gathered at Captain Tony's Saloon to hear the results. Tony was at the Board of Elections. There would be a victory party at Logun's, one way or the other.

Absentee ballots were announced first, and Tony was some 60 votes out of the running. I'd never worked on a losing political campaign. So that was what it felt like. Precincts One and Two were announced. It was all happening too quickly. Tony was running third.

Then we heard Precinct Six results. Tarracino -- 35 percent, Sawyer -- 30.7 percent, Gordon -- 34.3 percent. We had won one! More followed quickly. The vote totals were tallied and they looked like this: Sawyer got 2243; Tony, 1890; Gordon, 1418; and Gentile, 106. Within 15 minutes what had promised to be a wake turned into a celebration royale. Tony would be in the runoff with Tom Sawyer.

Don't let them tell you that finishing second is anything but wonderful! At least in an election with a runoff.

The party quickly adjourned to Logun's to await the victorious candidate. The crowd was fairly large, but nothing to write home about. Cameras were poised, lights ready, at the front entrance for Tony's arrival. The cars pulled up, Chuck jumped out and bounded over to the cameras, elated in the light surrounding him.

It's my view that Chuck Krummel nearly lost the primary for us. He was never around when anyone needed him. He failed to return phone calls. He had no political

acumen, and no organizational skills whatsoever. He joked that he just wanted to get some political appointment if Tony were elected; I don't think it was a joke.

The Committee members gathered up Louis Tarracino and threatened to resign *en masse* if something weren't done. Louis said he was going to talk to his dad. Then we celebrated.

Phase Two: The Election. Chuck is gone. I spoke with Tony, who acknowledged the problem, adding, "He's family -- what could I do?" He went on to say that he was now going to listen to five principal advisors, myself among them, and that Chuck would be given some assignment "in the field, away from ya's guys."

He was true to his word. That very night he and Lynda put together an organizational chart reflecting that decision.

Tony somehow was changed. The primary victory had done wonders for his personal attitude and approach to the election. It seemed as though we'd finally switched into high gear.

For years, Tony had followed a set routine. He traveled from his home to the bar and back again. That was it. I knew we had to get him away from that bar and into the streets where he could be seen. If Tony spends 10 seconds with you, he's got your vote. So I wanted to get him out. His confidence bolstered, Tony began to move around.

We opened our new headquarters at the corner of Truman and Duval Streets, a busy intersection with excellent exposure. And we hired a full-time secretary, Randi Delby. Tony had a place to go besides the bar, and he ate it up. He immediately began spending all his spare time there. And Randi was wonderful for reminding and re-reminding the Captain of his commitments and appointments.

Tony is forgetful. His hearing is also extremely poor. And he has trouble

concentrating on more than one subject at a time. Like many individuals with hearing loss, Tony has learned the knack of nodding his head positively or negatively at appropriate times. So it usually seems as though he understands everything you're saying. He may not.

It's important to speak directly to him. And make certain he understands exactly what you're talking about. A nod of the head from Mayor Tarracino may not be assurance you're going to get your ordinance passed.

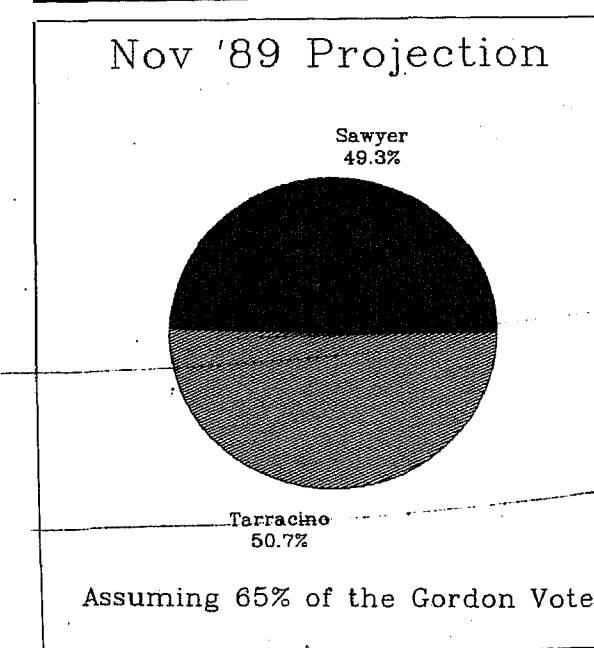
After the primary, money did indeed begin pouring in, though we never seemed to have any. Contributions and calls to headquarters were up. There was some organization. We had a calendar of events, though we still had no media plan or written strategy.

Some of us were worried Gordon might throw her support to Sawyer.

"She won't endorse Tom," Tony said confidently, "not if she wants to run again. She's smart enough to know that. Naw, we got nothin' to worry about from Marsha. Now, she may try some dirty tricks, mind ya, I don't say she won't do that. She's a witch. But she'll never endorse Tom, I promise ya's."

I knew we had to swing her supporters, or a good majority of them, to our side. A friend and computer specialist, Bill Gregory, ran an analysis of the primary results for me, breaking it down precinct by precinct.

**It usually seems as though he understands everything you're saying. He may not.**



were terrifying. Given those parameters -- everyone holds their votes and we get 65 percent of Marsha's -- Tony would win by less than one percent. We were worried. To us, 65 percent seemed a crazy, unattainable figure!

The only other way for Tony to win was to increase voter turnout. So that's what we determined we would do. That's where we set our sights. Interestingly, though Bill and I had not factored in increased voter turnout, our pie graph predicted, almost to the voter, the final election result.

Work began on the "Sunset Cruise for Captain Tony," which promised to be the largest event of the campaign. It was slated to raise a lot of money -- something we always needed.

We planned a flotilla -- 20 or more boats with Captain Tony signs and banners to fill the harbor in front of Mallory Square. The response from the boat owners elated me. The whole boating community seemed to be in support of Captain Tony. He was one of their own.

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Good news, I thought, came from Captain Finbar of the *Wolf*. He wanted to make Tony an official captain in the Conch Republic Navy -- an honor not at all pooh-poohed by locals. I knew it was something Tony had really wanted for a long time. But Lynda brought up the question of Wilhelmina Harvey, the honorary admiral of the fleet. Would she approve it?

Wilhelmina let Finbar know she didn't approve. Not that she didn't support Tony, necessarily, she said. She just didn't want politics involved. Bull. Harvey has her paws in every corner of Key West politics, and don't you forget it. Play with her, and you're playing with fire, honey. My bet was, though, if he won in November, she'd be jumping out of her pants to induct him into her Navy.

...

The 14th of October, the day before the Sunset Cruise, I went to pick up my morning paper. I'd been reading the *Citizen* since the start of the campaign. But it was Saturday and there was no *Citizen*. So I chose the *Miami Herald* for the first time in my life.

The headline barked at me: "Deed Shows Mayoral Candidate Doesn't Live in City." Why did I do that on that morning of all mornings in the year?

My day, my big event, I'm the producer. I don't suppose it could have been some scheme cooked up by the *Herald's* Key West based reporter and the Sawyer camp to overshadow our big event. The timing was certainly too perfect for that. Probably just the boys at the *Herald* trying to ruin my morning.

It worked, guys.

Tony lives in Key Haven, as the story pointed out, but has claimed residency at the apartment over the saloon. He signed a warranty deed when he sold the place, however, stating his home address as Key Haven. Stupid, and he admitted it.

The most disheartening paragraph in the story read, "Parker [city clerk] said there are two possibilities if Tarracino is disqualified: first, Sawyer could be declared mayor without a runoff; second, Marsha Gordon could be moved up to second and pitted against Sawyer."

The staff was demoralized. Tony was demoralized. And the Sunset Cruise for Captain Tony was quickly dubbed by someone the Burial at Sea.

Tony and the Committee met at Schooner Wharf to go over the coming days' events. I knew Tony was shaken. His habit at such times is to pace, hands in his pockets, eyes firmly on the ground. He paced as he said, "It's nothin', I promise ya's. I owned that bar 28 years. And I paid the utilities on that apartment. Marty's [Tony's wife] got the receipts ... no, my attorney's got the

receipts. We showed 'em to the State Attorney. Those guys just won't quit. But I'm takin' care of it. I got a call in to the State Attorney's office now. I know him, ya's know."

The article did real damage. Though Tony really did pull some backroom politics and get it cleared up and temporarily solved, as reported in the paper the next day, the issue had raised questions that promised not to go away.

In the three years or so I've been hanging around the saloon and observing, the only residents in the upstairs apartment I can recall are some huge palmetto bugs that retreated there to sleep off long nights of sipping on the bar's empty booze bottles. But if the qualifier is to *maintain a residence*, Tony has certainly done that.

Beyond that, the *Herald's* article produced some strong positive support for Tony. People don't like mudslinging, and some are quick to come to your defense when you're being attacked. There is this faction that believes, "What the hell -- Captain Tony is Key West. Who cares if he lives here?"

He did bring all three networks to town.

...

The Sunset Sail was indeed the largest flotilla in Key West's harbor, as well as a major campaign event. Tony, family and friends were aboard the *Constellation*, a 96-foot staysail schooner -- the largest, most striking one in Key West. Captain Fremstad let Tony take the helm. There he was, surrounded by supporters, cannon roaring, and he was the captain. Every line in his face was asmile. The little boy was sailing a real, huge two-masted schooner into Key West Harbor. Twenty boats followed, all sounding air horns, passengers waving and shouting. Tony beamed. He strode the deck waving to the other boats and the people on shore. It surely couldn't get any better than this.

Wilhelmina Harvey never recanted on her objection to a Conch Republic Navy ceremony. But she *did* buy a ticket to the cruise (though I didn't see her there personally). We made some good money and we got some good word-of-mouth publicity, which made me happy.

...

It was the day the *Citizen* published an editorial cartoon profiling Captain Tony. He was portrayed as a pirate, spouting campaign rhetoric. The character mentioned being a resident of Key West. His pistol discharged, and he symbolically shot himself in the foot. The cartoon made its point.

Members of the Committee busied themselves preparing a one-legged dummy dressed as a sea captain, to be positioned in the headquarters window as a response to

the cartoon. (These were the same people who wanted to dress Tony in a silver spacesuit with twinkling lights in his beard for the Fantasy Fest parade.)

They preened and primped and readied the dummy for Tony's arrival. They spray-painted the hair and beard white like his. And they proudly surveyed it from all angles. I sat and watched, wondering if I'd missed the beginning of the movie.

When the Captain arrived and met his effigy, he was delighted! I had expected him to vomit and run into the streets discoursing obscenities about his campaign staff. Once again, I didn't know my candidate.

Tony had the staff move the dummy to a seat beside his, at the head of the conference table. And he stared at it, transfixed. "It's wonderful," he exclaimed. "It's me!" And then he started to talk to it. He actually talked to it, offered it a Lucky Strike. I recalled stories of Nixon in the final days at the White House, talking to portraits of past presidents.

...

Sixteen days until the election. We were now holding meetings almost daily. Money was indeed coming in as the days wound down. Pritam Singh gave Tony a thousand dollars. But then he gave Tom Sawyer the same amount, hedging his bet (if Sikhs bet).

Tony came to headquarters each morning around 10 and began fundraising calls. The Old Islander in him didn't like that at all. At this point he also began to have great mood swings. One day money was pouring in and the world was going to vote for Captain Tony. The next, "I just don't know, Michael, I just don't know about this one."

Other developments occurred around this time. We began to see more of Brooks White, a professional advisor and fundraiser who had heretofore been silent, or certainly quiet. I applauded this change because Brooks is sharp, a pro.

Tony seemed to be going off places with a guy named Louis LaTorre a lot. Curious, I thought. I found out LaTorre was Director of Social Services for Monroe County. Even more curious, I thought.

We were all surprised that Sawyer had not launched any major attacks. In fact, he personally called Tony's home to tell him he had not been responsible for the *Herald* article. I admired him for that, but I was still on my guard. I still felt I heard footsteps.

...

"It's not Tom Sawyer, I'm convinced of that," Tony said as he paced in a large circle at headquarters. "I'd just like to know who the hell it is! Marty's gettin' upset -- she's been cryin'. It's these fucking phone calls we're getting at the house." He continued to pace nervously, an expectant candidate.

When the phone rang he swiveled on his feet and moved toward it, adjusting his hearing aid. "The State Attorney's office?": we all heard Randi as she answered the phone. A collective *shit* was uttered.

Tony took the call. "Yeah. Yeah. Shit, we settled that a week ago. Look, I owned that bar for 28 years and everyone knows..." Tony was nervous, real nervous. And it showed in his voice.

"Yeah, yeah. Well, how's about you

meet me at one o'clock, okay? Yeah, I'll be there. Yeah, bye."

We all sat, waiting to hear what the other side of the phone conversation might have been.

"Nothin' to worry about," Tony said as he began to pace again. "Nothin' at all. I know him, that State Attorney. Now don't ya's tell anyone, but he told me he's gonna take care of it. They got a complaint about the bar not having a residency permit for the apartment. More shit from the other side. This guy just wants to look at the apartment himself and he'll straighten it all out. I'm meeting him there at one o'clock."

"What about the apartment?" I asked. Tony fidgeted with the telephone dial. "It's all ready," he said. "I got clothes there, posters, all kinds of campaign stuff. No problem."

I had been trying to convince him for weeks to spend some time downtown.

He suddenly thought of something. "Shit," Tony said. "I gotta call and make sure the ladder's up to the apartment."

No problem.

At that moment Marty walked through the door. She was wearing her very serious demeanor. Tony stopped her at the door before anyone could speak. "It's nothin'. They just want to see the apartment. Nobody outside this room knows about it. I'm gonna take care of it. See ya's later." He kissed Marty and left. Moments later he returned and added to the group, "Hey, we don't want the media to get hold of this, so nobody says nothin', right?"

"I hope he's going to talk to our attorney before he shows the apartment," Marty said.

"He's going to stop there on the way," Randi responded.

...

Headquarters was abuzz during the final days. Brooks White had obtained a list of absentee voters; we'd do a mailing to them. Contributions were legally to end November 4, so Tony spent a good deal of time on the phone, soliciting. People also called us saying they'd contribute if Tony would stop

by. He would, and they did.


One time we wouldn't pick up a donation. The owner of a T-shirt shop downtown called and offered a thousand-dollar donation if Tony would take the "right stand" on window displays. I told Tony about it. He said, "No, I won't make no promises. I need the grand, but I won't make no promises." He threw the piece of paper with the gentleman's name on it into the wastebasket.

And then he had to go meet Louis LaTorre.

...

I've described Tony's emotional highs and lows during this period. I recall one day at headquarters, when things were winding down, that I saw into his soul. It was just us, alone.

"Twenty-five percent and I'm gonna lose," he said out of nowhere. "I gotta have 32-percent turnout or it's gonna be just like last time, I lose by 52 votes. That hurts like hell, ya know? 'Cause I knew 53 people


  
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**"Look, I owned that bar for 28 years and everyone knows ..." Tony was nervous, real nervous.**

who would vote for me -- they just didn't. Damn, it hurts to lose that way."

The day of election eve was surprisingly quiet at headquarters. We'd done just about all we could do. Louis LaTorr however, was buzzing around. And Chuck had slithered back in. Something was afoot.

LaTorr had by this time made a thousand-dollar donation to the campaign fund, a fact later revealed in the papers. He was always accompanied by a tall, Middle-Eastern associate to whom I was never introduced. Nothing major. Louis is charming, patronizing and the kind of guy you'd probably like to know.

So, why did I have this curiosity gnawing at my insides about this guy? Because neither Tony nor any members of the family would talk about him. That was unusual. Tony was always straight with me. He'd tell me the deepest, darkest secrets of the campaign. But Louis LaTorr was off-limits. I suspected the answer would come in Tony's administration, if he were elected.

...

"We tried hard, Michael, we tried hard. I don't know about this one, this thing could go either way. But we sure as hell tried hard." The Captain sniffed from a slight headcold, got into his van and left. Those were the last words he said to me before election day.

...

Election eve is a depressing and lonely time for political workers. It's all over, there's nothing more you can do, save stand on a street corner with your candidate. The handshaking and arm-twisting are over. The bickering and the bolstering are done. Perhaps before you even crawl out of bed the first of the electorate will have made a selection. Based on what?

Personality. What your candidate had to say or not say. Or they could be swayed by a friend who's driving them to work. All this goes through your mind.

It was a particularly quiet night on the waterfront where I lived on a small sailboat. The "whap, whap" of halyards against an aluminum mast echoed across glassy water.

I thought about Tony's words -- "Damn, it hurts to lose that way."

I didn't want to lose.

...

At 6:30 a.m., I was standing, as is traditional, at the corner on U.S. 1 by Garrison Bight with my Captain Tony sign. I ran into Tom Sawyer and wished him good luck. He returned the gesture. Sally Lewis joined me. She's a pure doll. You may not like her politics, but you can't help liking her. I knew she wanted Tony to win,



The cast of characters (from left): Pat Timmons, Lynda Shuh, Captain Finbar, Mayor Tony Tarracino, Louis Tarracino (obscured), Bob Haders and writer Michael Ritchie.

and vice versa, though neither could say so publicly before the election.

Jimmy Weekley was also on board. The way I saw it, there would be a triumvirate on the city commission.

...

The radio reported what could be a record turnout -- 38 to 40 percent. If that were true, I told Randi, we had it for sure. We closed the office and headed for Logun's. Committee members gathered around the TV at the bar, feeling confident from the talk on the streets. Election Central was on TCI. I knew my precincts and my numbers. I knew what I wanted to hear.

Absentee ballots were announced first. No surprise. We lost there, but, by a much narrower margin than in the primary. Encouraging. Our worst precincts came next -- One and Two.

Again, losses, but by significantly less. I felt it. I passed a "thumbs up" to my com-patriot, Pat Timmons. He winked.

"Precinct Nine," the announcer said, "goes to Anthony Tarracino ..." At that point I knew we had it. We'd won a precinct we had lost in the primary. We had the Gordon vote, and we had increased voter turnout.

Then, although the margin narrowed, precincts brought the Tarracino victory in quickly.

Unofficially, Captain Tony was now Mayor Tony Tarracino by 28 votes. The crowd, which had grown greatly, roared. Tony appeared on the TV screen, together with his family. He was there to accept victory.

The mandatory recount was finished and the TV commentator reported Tony was officially mayor by 32 votes. All hell broke loose. I headed for the front door. One, I didn't want to get stepped on; two, I knew Tony would be arriving momentarily and it would probably be the last chance I'd get to

see him all night.

I could hear horns honking blocks away, signalling his arrival. He stepped out of his black Cadillac with his son T.J. on his shoulder. I was glad for him. And proud for him. And I didn't see him the rest of the night, close-up anyway.

The notables began arriving, led by Pritam Singh and his entourage. Just there to congratulate the Captain, I thought. Louis LaTorr arrived and took the time to stop and congratulate me. And in passing he said, "If there's ever anything I can do for you, just ask. I mean it now, anything." Great, Louis, how about a condo at 1800 Atlantic? I honestly didn't understand what he meant.

They came out of the proverbial wood-work, all the people who had been afraid publicly to say they wanted Tony. And, I guess, some who didn't want him but would now claim they'd been supporters all along. I've seen it before in other campaigns. Win and the world wins with you. The real winner was Logun's. They made a killing that night -- they didn't give away a single free drink.

Slowly all the Committee members filtered out onto the street where we congratulated each other and left Tony to enjoy his night, surrounded by his new hangers-on. Around nine we all headed for Captain Tony's Saloon. It was packed. When Tony showed up, he immediately got behind the bar and began serving drinks. He was back in his element, with his people. The little boy was having a ball.

Out front a police car pulled up. A very straight-looking officer entered, strode officially toward the bar and exchanged a few words with Tony. He was on his way out when a female patron took the officer's arm and asked, "Are we causing any trouble, officer?"

"No trouble, ma'am," he replied. "Tony's my boss."

...

Michael Ritchie worked for 10 years in Chicago as writer/creative director with some of the world's largest advertising agencies. Early in his career he helped create the "Little Green Sprout" for Green Giant Foods.

Ritchie semi-retired to Key West "to sail and pursue serious writing." He has served as mate on the Schooner Constellation and on several other Key West sailing vessels.



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**"If there's anything I can do for you, just ask. I mean it now, anything."**

# A Few of Their Favorite Things

Nix whiskers on kittens -- today's kids want Nintendo

by June Keith

Soon 'twill be the night before Christmas, and visions of Barbie Dolls, G.I. Joes and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles will be dancing in the wee heads of children everywhere. By then, Key West's Christmas shopping parents will rest easily, having made the annual Yuletide trek to South Miami toy supermarkets. Sleep in heavenly peace.

But wait. Do you really want to stick to the brand-name route again this year? And, more importantly, should you do business, on behalf of your developing youngsters, with merchants so blatantly disrespectful of the rudiments of English grammar that they proudly proclaim: *Toys R Us* with the "R" backward?

Christmas morning at your house doesn't have to be a re-enactment of a Saturday morning television commercial. Dare to be different. Throw your kids a couple of curves like -- a good book! An old-fashioned game! A toy that requires an expenditure of energy!

"The marketing of toys has become every bit as big a business as the inventing of toys," says toy inventor Kyle Wickware.

Consumers beware. The big toy manufacturers flashing their products before television eyes, day after day, year after year, do *not* have your children's best interests in mind. Their goal -- the one and only -- is to sell toys. Period.

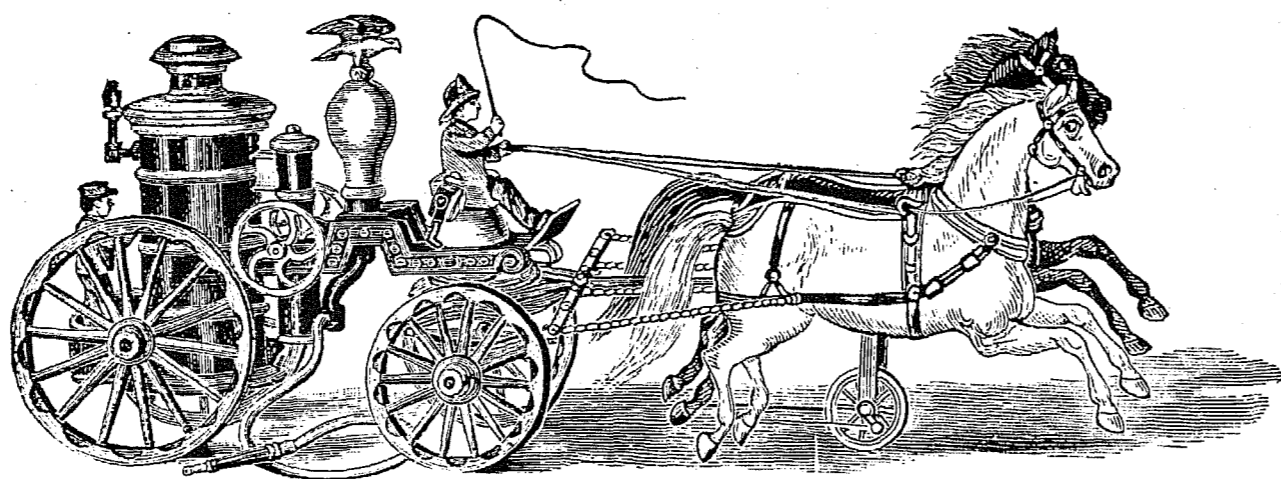
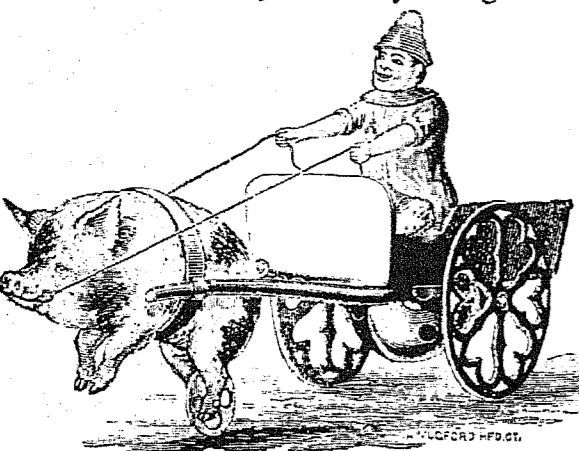
That means that not all toys are going to be as much fun for your kids on Christmas morning as they appeared to be when glamorously displayed on the tube.

"Television advertising makes kids think they can't live without some toy, and parents are powerless!" former toy shop owner, Peter Ginsburg, says. "It's so tempting, the articles can be garbage but still -- it's so alluring to children!"

Though Ginsburg conscientiously scouts out stimulating and educational toys for his six-year-old daughter Melissa at Christmastime, he also admits to giving in to pressure from advertisers and buying some not-so-educational stuff at the local department stores.

"You want to see your kid's face light up on Christmas morning," he sighs.

According to an informal survey taken at Sugarloaf Elementary School by fifth-grader

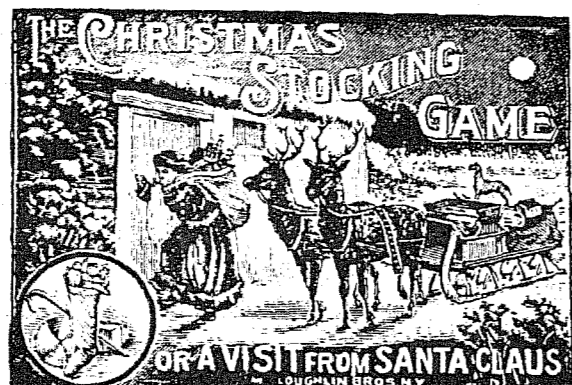


Mikey Perez, nine out of every 10 kids asked say they want Nintendo video games for Christmas -- again -- this year.

There's no getting around it. Kids want and think they need the Nintendo system. Nintendo, says Kyle Wickware, represents the wave of the future -- electronic games -- indoor fun in small spaces, that utilizes today's heavy visual orientation.

There's the social factor, too; Nintendo is a status indicator. Parents, remember back in the '50s when the kid with the ping-pong table in the basement was the most popular in the neighborhood? Now, he's the one with the Nintendo.

"Kids want the toy that everybody knows about, that everyone agrees is cool," Wickware says. "You don't want your kid to be the one to run out into the neighborhood on Christmas morning with a toy that no other kid ever heard of and say, 'Hey look! I got this neat toy! It's a hoola hoop.' Then your kid is lost out in left field somewhere."



Last Christmas, the local supply of Nintendo systems and games for sale ran dry. Miserable parents and children -- and even more miserable merchants who turned Nintendo-hungry consumers away empty-handed -- prompted over-flowing stocks for this buying season.

"We're ready this year," says Elaine Leavitt of Sears' sporting goods department. "We've got over two showcases full of games."

Leavitt says, the basic Nintendo unit -- which you hook up to a TV set -- costs \$119.99 and comes with two games. Additional games cost from \$39 up to \$55. There are about 125 Nintendo games available. Additionally, there are accessories, like joy-sticks, power gloves,

cartridge cabinets and sweatshirts.

An alternative to buying pricey Nintendo games is to rent them. A clerk at Key West's Video To Go shop estimates that the shop rents out an average of 25 games a day, at \$2.50 each per day. The most popular game in the last week of November: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Nintendo games are also sold and/or traded by enterprising children at yard sales and flea markets.

There is a fear, on the part of experts, that playing Nintendo for long periods of time psychologically sets up some kids for stress-related syndromes. Further, Nintendo hardly contributes to the development of bone mass or muscle tone in young bodies.

Wickware predicts that in response to



parents' and educators' concerns, the makers of Nintendo and other electronic games will soon begin to design programs that require kids to actually move -- to run outside, to perform some task that requires interaction with their surroundings and other human beings.

"Nintendo will grow from its electronic stage as manufacturers realize that kids don't want to be cooped up," Wickware says. "Kids will be directed to do things -- like an electronic scavenger hunt."

Psychologist John Rosemond recommends placing a limit on kids' Nintendo hours. If you've got Nintendo addicts in your house, perhaps this is the Christmas for new bikes. Encourage your kids to ride them from time to time.

A bike is a classic, all-American Christmas gift. Every child deserves one. Ask any bike shop owner.

"We go crazy at Christmas," says Gordon Smith, owner of the Bike Shop. "We sell a couple hundred bikes every year."

Smith cautions that the best performing bikes are those that are assembled in the shop, by experts who understand the delicate interaction of gears, spokes and



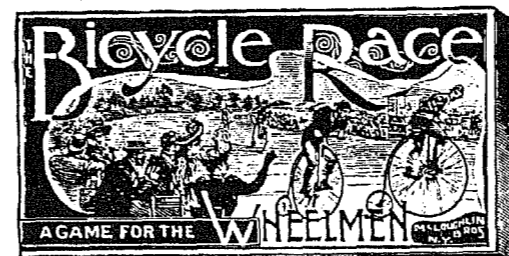
pre-greased components. He does not recommend buying an unassembled bicycle in a box and putting it together on Christmas Eve.

"It's like the difference between a French chef and me preparing the same dish from a recipe," Smith suggests. "We could both start with the same ingredients and the same instructions, but the French chef would get much better results."

Bike accessories make good gifts, too, and in bike-conscious Key West the selection is excellent. Try the bike shops for the really spiffy items and the local department stores for their cheaper cousins.

Little girls love dolls for Christmas, and so do little boys. But, please, don't call G.I. Joes -- little jointed soldiers who come packaged with tiny canteens or M-16 rifles -- dolls. Call them *action figures*.

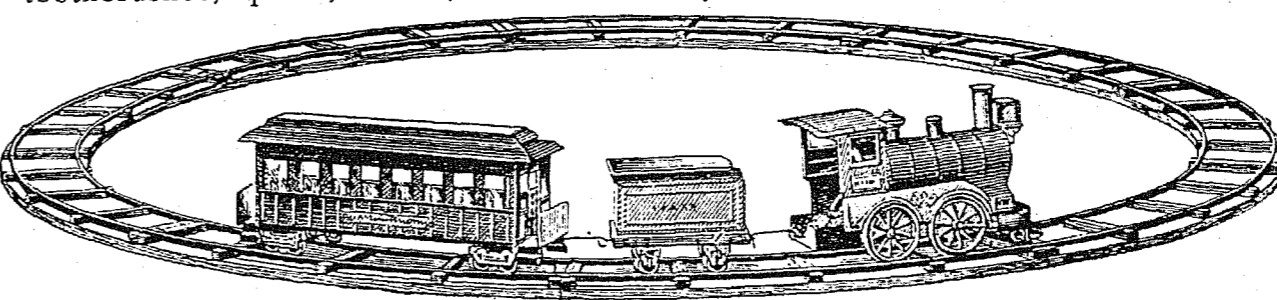
The word is out among pint-sized collectors: the war is over. G.I. Joe has cooled off considerably in popularity since last season, according to Mikey Perez, who sold his entire collection of "Joes" at a yard sale last summer. Kyle Wickware says the accessories designed to accompany the G.I. Joe action figure armies are poorly constructed, and kids eventually catch on to that reputation.



Today's sizzling hot action figures are Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Legend has it that an exhausted toy inventor got a little nutty one day at the toy factory and strung together the most absurd combination of icons the late 1980s had to offer.

"How about a toy called *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*? Ha, ha, ha," he said to his partner. Today, those guys are still laughing -- all the way to the proverbial bank.

"It started with figures, then vehicles, then lunch boxes and thermoses, then toothbrushes, pants, shirts, sheets,



everything you can think of," says consumer Mikey Perez. "You name it, they've got it."

There's a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle game, too. And the coupon on the box of Ninja Turtle breakfast cereal claims that "crunchy, sweetened Ninja Nets with Ninja Turtle Marshmallows is the outta sight way to start the day! Cowabunga!"

There's Barbie cereal, too. I swear, we're not making this up.

If your kids are mad for dolls and action figures, by all means buy them. And buy the other junk that goes along with them -- the lunch boxes, the cereal, the bubble bath, the key chains. This stuff can make you a *lot* of money one day.

The very first Barbie doll, manufactured in 1959 by Mattel, in mint condition and with original clothes and gold hoop earrings, is worth today \$1,500. With the original box and accessories, it's possibly worth up to \$2,500.

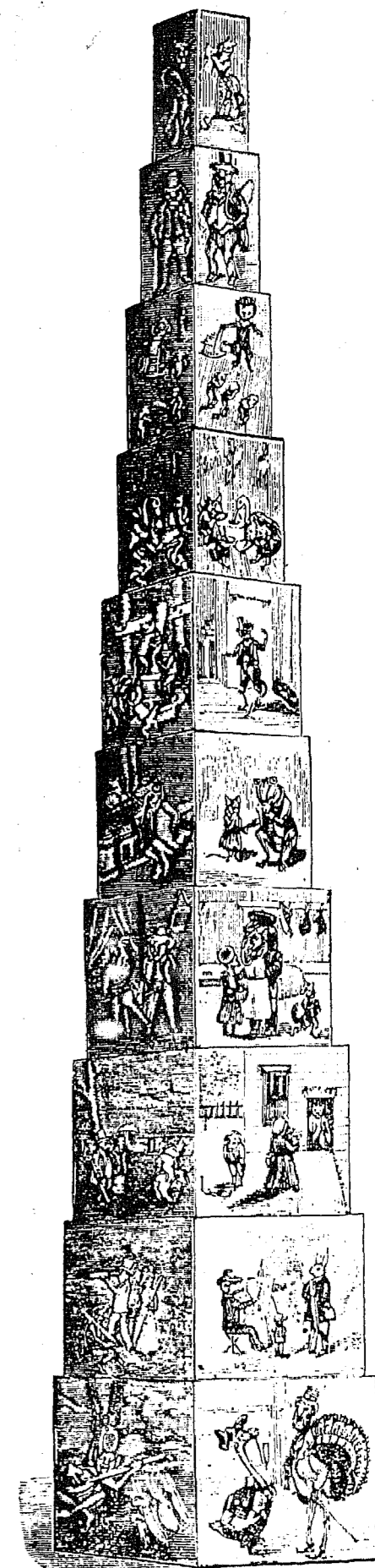
Wickware, an avid toy collector, is giving his 11-year-old daughter the collector's manual *Thirty Years of Barbie* for Christmas, with the hope that she will catch the collecting bug and possibly become independently wealthy by the time she graduates from high school. A number of books on toy collecting are available at Waldenbooks in Searstown.

"Collecting is good," Wickware says. "Collecting is a system of putting something away and waiting for appreciation. Collecting toys is just like collecting paintings, antiques or money. It offers a great return on the dollar."

Wickware bought several books on toy collecting in 1984 and began to buy mint condition Star Wars and Star Trek action figures and accessories at yard sales.

He estimates his collection of Star Wars lunch pails, Halloween costumes, Darth Vader action figures and Star Trek posters to be worth about \$8,000 today. He has them stored in an attic up North, in banana boxes, appreciating at the rate of 12 to 25 percent a year.

"This rivals the stock market," Wickware says.



Wickware suggests that parents encourage boys to start Match Box Car collections. Play with them. Save the boxes. Put them away when the kids get tired of them. Date them and pull them out five years later. They'll be worth 100 to 200 percent more than what you paid for them. Merry Christmas!

Key West mom Lisa Grahl looks out for her 18-month-old son's investments by buying lots of Disney Studio toys.

"When he was born, his grandmother gave Glen stock in the company, so we're having a Mickey Mouse theme Christmas," Grahl says. "How does it help us if I buy other brand toys?"

Buying Christmas gifts at the local

Greenpeace Store helps support the work of environmentalists. Now there's an investment! At Greenpeace there is a series of beautiful nature books by artist Jerry Pallotta. They are the *Icky Bug Alphabet Book*, the *Yucky Reptile Alphabet Book* and the *Flower Alphabet Book*. They're nice and inexpensive.

There are solar system mobiles for young astronomers. There are "hugg-a-world" pillows and cuddly stuffed animals for toddlers. There are puzzles and kaleidoscopes, all with nature themes, and made of old-fashioned ingredients like wood, cotton and cardboard.

Stuffed animals and fish from Greenpeace make nice gifts for little kids, but, suggests Eilene Molineaux, parenting instructor at Key West's Family Resource Center, it is not necessary to spend lots of money on gifts for very young children.

"The best thing for babies is for you to talk with them and play with them,"



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Molineaux says. "The most fascinating thing to them is the human face."

Sadly, Key West super-writer Shel Silverstein does not have a new book out this year in time for Christmas. But if your kids don't have the entire collection, or if your kid's Silverstein books have been lost or worn out from use, buy new ones. It's un-American, and definitely un-Conch Republican, to deprive children of Silverstein.

Waldenbooks in Searstown is stocked with all the seasonal favorites for kids, as

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well as several glossy new, over-sized, magnificently illustrated storybooks that look sort of like kiddie-version coffee table books. They cost a lot; so remember, you can't judge a book by its cover. Make sure the story is good, too.

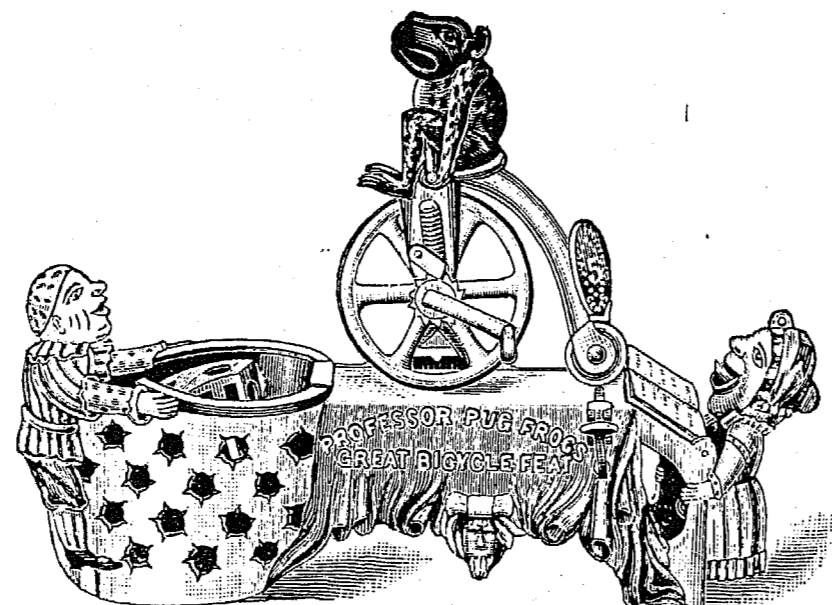
Wickware suggests that parents ask themselves several questions about a toy before purchasing it. Will the toy challenge your child's imagination? Can he or she play with it alone or will he need help? How long-lasting is the entertainment value? Is it dated? Or will it always be current? Can you add on to it?

Wickware points out perennial favorites like Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs, Legos, Mr. Potato Head, friction cars and trucks and art supplies. Other tried and true kid-pleasers are checkers and chess, board games, gyroscopes, wind-up toys, doctor kits, magic kits, U.S. map puzzles, flashlights, tape recorders and cameras.

Guns are out. Even water guns are out. So are balloons because they threaten the ecology.

Watch out for fad items that have little or no lasting benefit for children. Fads will come and go, but good toys have been around, in one form or another, for many years. Look at those toys, Wickware recommends, and analyze what makes them so appealing generation after generation.

And whatever you do -- don't throw away the boxes!



**Key West Days & Nights**  
by Bill Manville

I think it's evident even to people with no more than room temperature IQs (72 to 78) that first marriages nowadays have become merely a rite of passage, the moral equivalent to the old-fashioned notion of graduating from high school -- a signal, tentative and vague, that you have arrived at some approximation of adult life. Your first divorce is the diploma and you pass on.

Ritually enough, my own first marriage took place before I was 20. To show I am not making this up (thank you, Dave Barry), I will name the person and place: Suzie Shillington and I were married in judges' chambers on the top floor of the Ladue County Court House in Clayton, Missouri. The marriage itself had a viable life of at least 10 minutes: the ceremony (sometimes called the *deed of darkness*), congratulations and best wishes followed by an elevator honeymoon. By the time we hit ground floor we were running -- Suzie west to San Francisco, and me pointed east. We remain friends to this day, 3000 miles having a notably soothing effect.

But not all women are equally as good humored about the epiphenomena of life as is Suzie Shillington. By consequent court order, I will not speak about the unspeakable -- my second marriage -- except to say it left me convinced marriage is for emotional junkies only. It is an industrial-strength fix, presenting us here on earth with all the intimations we will ever need to know of both heaven and hell. Or, as Ambrose Bierce put it: Marriage is an institution of two prisoners and two wardens; the entire jail population also number-

ing two. In fact, all arguments for and against marriage can indeed be summed up by the Number 2:

1. Pro: You will never be alone again.
  2. Con: You will never be alone again.
- Ruminations such as these led me some years ago to suggest adapting one of the great 12-step programs of our time to the needs of people like me. Called, perhaps, Ex-spouses Anonymous, it will assist people for whom one marriage is too much, and a hundred not enough. If any member feels the uncontrollable desire to get married again, he/she phones headquarters and they send over music and a bunch of carefree, good-looking single people to hold constant parties with you until the urge passes.

Now that you know these things about me, you may be in better position to understand the surprise of many who attended the wedding of the Beautiful Ms. Glenna Moore to Mr. David Foley at the Old Stone Methodist Church here in Key West on November 11. Stumbling about there in the background, dressed in a dinner jacket so long in the closet it had begun to turn green, was a somewhat tall, nervous-looking and very out-of-place figure. What was so surprising was not that he was crying -- after all, wasn't he giving the bride away? -- but that, stone heart temporarily out to lunch, that figure was me.

Here's how it happened. "Bill, I've been having a fantasy lately," Glenna said one day about a year ago. We were having a fish sandwich and French fries -- "Fry 'em hard and brown, Tony, and please put in a lot of anabolic steroids, GH and cholesterol, too, if you've got it" -- as we'd done a hundred times before at the Garrison Bite Floating Fish Palace and Restaurant. "Isn't Tony getting better every day?" I said. "She makes the best cole slaw in Key West. Put me in your fantasy, Glenna, and make it come out that I win \$10 million in the Florida lottery."

"My fantasy is that maybe I'm ready to get married at last," Glenna said. "Bill, I see myself getting married in your backyard." "When that happens, I'll give the bride

away," I said, and asked Casey for another iced tea.

"That's in my fantasy too," Glenna said. Let the record show that, while I am firm in my disbelief, Glenna is a New Ager, used to seeing life, love and UFOs in the stars. Let it further read that when this conversation took place, she had not met David Foley, nor was he yet even thinking of coming for a vacation to Key West. I believe we live our emotional lives on tectonic plates, too deeply buried for me, at least, to see. Sometimes, without warning, they shift. My shifting emotions had brought me to disaster in two different marriages; Glenna's brought her David Foley. The reception was in my backyard. All my love, Glenna.

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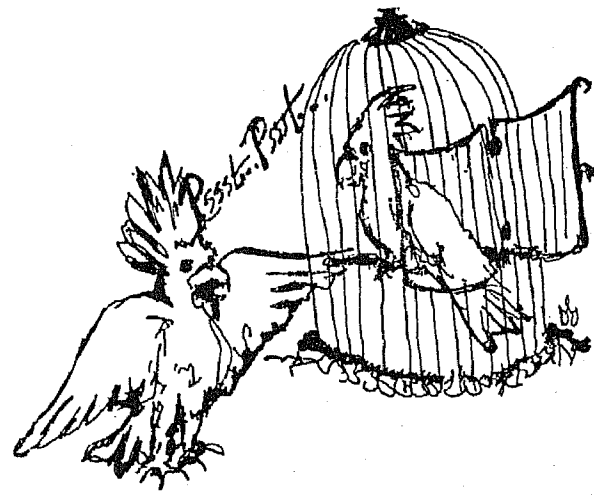
# Trial Shows Dope Smugglers Double-cross Pals

by Bud Jacobson

Friday the 13th, October 1989.  
A bad-luck day for five men from the Upper Keys who faced a jury in circuit court in Key West and heard their fate: Guilty as charged on all counts.

There wasn't much waiting around after that. Retired Circuit Judge Helio Gomez, who presided at this six-week dope smuggling and conspiracy trial from September through October, ordered the five men sent to the lockup without bail until their sentencing. The trial was the sendup of one of Monroe County's most unusual cases in many years.

It was curious for several reasons: the length of time -- two years -- it took the state to get to trial and the fact that not once did the state reveal who the real money men behind the operation were. Their identities were never disclosed. It seemed obvious from the appearance and character of the state's witnesses -- all of whom had been in the racket together with the men on trial -- that they weren't the *real* biggies. Also, unlike ordinary dope cases in which the little



guys usually turn state's evidence against the leaders, here the major players in the smuggling ring turned evidence on the small guys.

The first break in the case, which had been investigated by officers of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Florida Marine Patrol, came in September, 1987, when the FDLE moved in fast one night and busted 12 men involved in cocaine and marijuana smuggling. The ring had been in business since 1984 in the Plantation Key-Islamorada district; the volume of their business was estimated in the tens of millions of dollars.

After the arrests were made and a brief note appeared in the press, things seemed to fade out. There were indications then, according to sources close to the case, of a certain amount of political heat because glaring publicity was not welcome and many of the names were well known in that part of Monroe County.

All the accused were hauled up in front of County Judge William Ptomey for the first arraignment and pleading. Ptomey, over several months, acted as a circuit judge temporarily and became the case judge while hearings went on, statements were taken,

and so forth.

Numerous lawyers got involved for the defense at first. It was explained to the accused that they were faced with years in the slammer because the state had tapes, photos, sophisticated evidence gathered by the FDLE and the Florida Marine Patrol. Months went by, sources said, with a profusion of pleas and conflicting alibis. It was made clear that to cooperate with the state and snitch on the hardnose guys who insisted upon going to trial may lead to leniency.

The first to break ranks and plead guilty to two felony counts was Timothy (Timmie) Hampson, 27, a Coral Shores High School graduate and a classmate of Matthew Laird, who was one of the five men who refused to cooperate.

Laird and Hampson had been known at school in athletic circles and Hampson's father (the son said on the stand) is the owner of one of the county's largest insurance firms, Ray Hampson Insurance. The father ran for a seat on the board of the Mosquito Control District in 1988 and was defeated.

The other holdouts who would go to trial included Cliff Johnson, Herb Schremmer and Bill Ballard -- all in their 60s -- and Francisco Hernandez, about 50. Hernandez did not speak English and court interpreter John Borges was brought in.

Their ex-pals and fellow conspirators who took the stand against them, besides Hampson, included Frank Espildora, Manny Perez, Carlos Rivera, Jose Cruz, A. Valdez and W. Tucker. They are to be sentenced on November 20 by Judge Ptomey.

The case dragged on through 1988 with, first, a judge from Tallahassee assigned to try them; then Judge Gomez was decided upon because he was in Key West and, by

that time, the state had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on the case and apparently wanted it moved along, sources said.

When the trial opened in the big federal courtroom -- they had permission to use it because the other courts were jammed up -- it was a show. Defending attorneys were among the best -- Jeff Gautier, a former state attorney in 1970 in Key West; Ed Carhart, formerly a prosecutor in the 1970s during the trial when then-city attorney Manny James was busted on dope charges and convicted; Polly Valentine, a tall and bookish lawyer with years in the courtroom; and Ray Fernandez, short, stout and fiery.

The state prosecutor was Melanie Hines, from Tallahassee. The office of State Attorney Kirk Zuelch was not used. Hines is a tall, strawberry blonde; she was assisted by Miriam Garcia, a petite brunette.

When they got to the point of the trial, they had gone through eight days of jury selection. The jury they chose, four women and two men, was credited by all the lawyers as one of the best ever.

Hines brought the story forward, telling the jury of the long investigation and then, after hearing from law personnel, she brought in the ex-members of the ring to testify against their friends.

Manny Perez, thin, small and nervous, said that early in the game he had met Hampson when he bought insurance from him. Hampson, he said, offered the use of his speedboat and had houses "where we put the merchandise," both cocaine and marijuana. On two occasions, he said, he

peeled off \$5,000 in cash to Hampson. In spite of the fact that Perez was the paymaster and frequently made trips from Miami with \$40,000 and more in cash for the gang, there was no way he looked like one of the top dogs.

Hines brought Hampson, who was dressed in a business suit, stocky and short with long, flowing brown hair, to the stand and led him through his story. He told the court he was a state-licensed insurance agent and worked for his father. "In December 1986 I became a drug smuggler," he said, "for the thrill of it; money was not the issue." He was paid, however, a number of times for his work, his boats, his storage houses.

While he talked, Laird, his ex-classmate, stared at him, his eyes ice cold, burning Hampson's face on his memory. Laird got two 15-year sentences for conspiracy and smuggling.

It was Laird's attorney, Fernandez, who sneered at Hampson, branding him a "spoiled rich brat," whose "family money" had protected him. He paid \$46,000 to the FDLE to compensate for their investigation of him, Fernandez said. Further fines are expected, according to a Florida revenue agent who was in the courtroom, along with an agent from the IRS.

Carhart referred to all the turncoat witnesses as a "pack of liars who should be prosecuted for perjury." Johnson was given five years; Schremmer took it on the chin for 25 years; Ballard got over 30 years. All sentences are to run concurrently. Hernandez, the driver of the marijuana truck, took five years for transporting.

The sentencing of the other members of the smuggling gang, the ones who have pleaded guilty to felony counts and then testified against their ex-pals, was rescheduled by Judge Ptomey from November 20 to Friday, December 22, at 1:30 pm.

There will be a follow-up on this in Solares Hill in January.

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# Skipper Kripitz: The Man Behind the Boy

by Christine Naughton

God is a comedian playing to an audience that's afraid to laugh.

-- Voltaire  
Skipper Kripitz' favorite quote

Listen. Out of the silent night comes the sound of a tiny cymbal struck once. It sits on its pleasant pitch like a bird on a wire for only a few seconds, then fades slowly. Just as the ear reaches for the last of its sound, come arhythmic, liquid notes from a kalimba, or African thumb piano. Bass drum and high-hat cymbals enter next to set the beat, followed quickly by Tibetan bells and the varied sounds from -- a toddler's activity board! This is the music of Key West percussionist Skipper Kripitz.

The artistic and singular Skipper moved to this island 15 years ago and has been on the run ever since. By virtue of his excellent playing abilities and an energetic approach to selling them, he probably works more than anybody else here.

He dashes hither and thither -- to rehearsals for his Conch Republic Marching Band, to his impromptu roller-skating parties, to a visiting mothers' luncheon, to this gig or that. During any given evening one might spy him playing drums at two or three separate establishments along Duval Street and maybe at a theater, as well. (He has a total of nine drum sets.) Yet he always has a moment to chat, to ask, "How are you doing?" and to genuinely care about the answer.

Operating in a highly competitive industry where concern and respect are rare attributes indeed, and in a small town where people's true natures come into sharp focus, Skipper is a source of support and inspiration to fellow musicians. His concern and consistently positive attitude could easily define humanitarianism.

But Skipper doesn't take himself quite so seriously. During a casual dinner engagement at his place, Skipper plunks frozen cheese ravioli into a hot pot of roiling water. "Mmmm," he intones to his guest. "I hope you like *boiled diaphragms!*"

Zooming around town, he is a symphony of colors and textures. The indigo of a silk shirt vibrates against the scarlet of silk pants. A yellow Kopavi T-shirt, with the



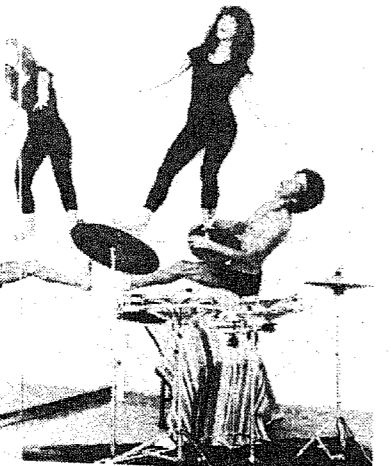
Reluctantly astride Spotty.



The Easter Bunny.



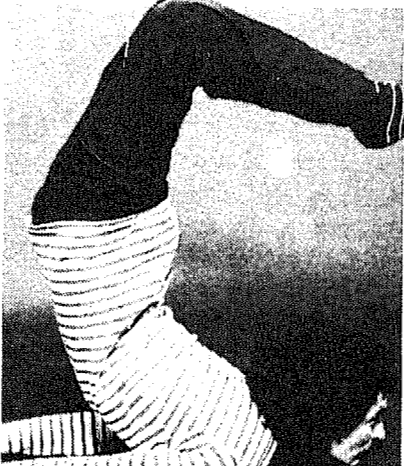
With Jamila Tazewell.



With Penny Mollot-Jampol.



A hug from Eartha Kitt.



Look, ma -- no hands.

Photos courtesy Skipper Kripitz.

Hopi sun sign in red on the front, peeks from beneath the shirt. A red-laced pair of original Murphy shoes are bound to his feet and a silver lotus necklace from Yellow Butterfly circles his neck -- two Key West traditions which, sadly, have passed. Small and silver, a hoop from his sister adorns his earlobe. Atop a mass of dark corkscrew curls rests a Moroccan fez, embroidered in burgundy and brown. His 5-foot, 5-inch, 106-pound frame flies and spins together with the colors like a child's top on the loose.

"Remember the Roadrunner cartoon with the feet going in circles and smoke behind him?" he asks, searching for a way to describe himself. "That's me. I definitely see myself as a caricature. Most people kind of look like *people* -- but I think God made

me a little more of a cartoon character. So I work with that. Just call me a cosmic elf drummer.

"I think I'm ultimately a comedian. I'm here to help people laugh. I guess I really like that.

"The people who entertain me the most are usually children because their scope is so much bigger. I like that primo age of kids when they're way up there: they're not bound up in adulthood yet, but they're somewhat socialized -- they're not pooping in their pants. I try to keep my mind way up there, too. And I don't poop in my pants.

"I don't believe you ever need to grow old; you just need to take responsibility."

Skipper says his personal discipline is a strange one. "My room, for instance, is orderly and organized -- I'm an efficiency expert -- but everything is totally dusty. I am a fanatical garbage recycler and I never waste food. I think the only sin in the world is wasting food." Chuckling, he adds, "Of course, paying retail is a sin, too.

"And I'm a general tooth maniac. I have a whole tooth ritual I go through every night. Baking soda on the gums, periodontal toothpick, floss, the whole nine yards. Do you think people want to *know* this?"

"Skipper is eccentric. There are things about him that are hard to deal with on a daily basis," observes musician Richard Tazewell, who has known Skipper for 10 years and has worked with him for almost as long. He says the man is impossible to categorize. "He spreads himself too thin sometimes. But his good energy and that

capacity for caring he has are things that make him special. With all his idiosyncracies, you have to love him.

"He uses so many textures and sounds that you couldn't really say he's just a drummer. His phrasing when he's playing is musical beyond what a drummer would normally play. He plays drums like a pianist plays piano."

Skipper offers his own musical philosophy. "Music to me is just an exquisitely clear form of communication that we human beings are allowed to have. It matters so little what kind of music it is; if it's just done purely it comes through real loud in everybody's psyche. It's universal stuff. It hits everybody. It's just a drug that's available. Musicians wield a lot of power with that communication."

"His imagination and thirst for new sounds have led to his creation of strange instruments, sometimes pulled out of any ordinary kitchen," says Penny Mollot-Jampol, owner of the Coffee Mill Cultural Center and co-founder of the Key West Dance Theatre. "Try the thermos and hair pick, the child's rattle, or the popcorn in a jar. Skipper finds music in every corner of his world, and opens every ear around him to what music can be. He's an amazing musical creature.

"His approach and freedom stem from a solid background -- those incredible chops are hard-earned. I never realized the difficulty of his job until I sat at the traps once and he gave me an exercise: with one drumstick, hit the same place on the skin

"I don't believe you ever need to grow old; you just need to take responsibility."

89-thousand times with exactly the same movement of your hand up and down, up and down. I'll take a pirouette any day."

The Key West theater community has discovered a goldmine in Skipper's musical abilities. He played drums in many local productions throughout the 1980s, including Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center's production of *Hair*. *Anything Goes*, *Lovers and Other Strangers*, *Penny Lane and Company* at the Waterfront and *Loose Ends* at the Red Barn Theatre were other projects. He played for singer Eartha Kitt's 1981 appearance at the original San Carlos and, two years later, again when she appeared at TWFAC. And he backed up Phyllis Diller at the San Carlos in 1981.

He acts, too. He filled the title role in 1984's production of *Snoopy*. Last season, he played Eddie in the Red Barn's production of *Pumpboys and Dinettes*.

"I love to work with Skipper," says the Red Barn Theatre's Susan Hawkens, who directed *Pumpboys and Dinettes*. "It's remarkable -- his ability to cross over from clubs and gigs to theater, but he has such a curiosity, and once he grasps a concept, he's able to bring all that experience in other

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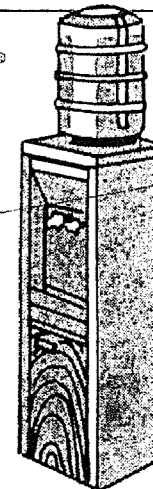
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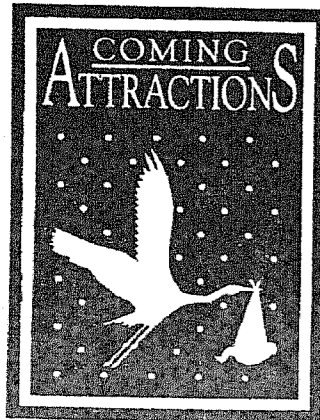
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areas and focus it right into a brand new discipline."

Beyond theater work, Skipper maintains a successful living as a club musician. He formed the band Kopavi -- a Hopi Indian word meaning *open door* -- with saxophonist Rich Greengold and keyboard player Richard Tazewell in 1983. Today, Skipper and Richard continue Kopavi as a duo. He was also a founding member of the Jivetones, back-up band for the Fabulous Spectreles.

A sensitive and exciting accompanist, Skipper has played for special appearances by Jerry Herman and Leslie Uggams at TWFAC and has backed up virtually every local singer at one time or another. "I'll play *anything* and, sooner or later, I usually get a chance to," he says.

In January, 1990, at the special request of classical pianist Yehudah Guttman, Skipper will perform a solo percussion presentation at TWFAC in a memorial concert dedicated to Yehudah's wife.

"I took Skipper home with me to St. Louis to meet my family," says Bruce Seigal, a long-time friend. "He was so attentive and open to everyone, they immediately accepted him as one of the family. After a big family dinner, Skipper sat down with all the kids in the living room. My sister played the piano and Skipper got all the kids playing music on improvised instruments."

Jamila Tazewell, Skipper's godchild, sums up her feelings in one sentence. "I think Skipper is nice, fun, exciting, weird

and just plain *great*."

But for all his friends, Skipper does have his own biological arrangement of relatives. On a winter night in pre-casino Atlantic City, Marty and Betty Kripitz welcomed their third child, their first boy. Samuel David Kripitz was born on December 27, 1950 at 9:57 p.m.

It was evident after only a few weeks that little Sam's favorite thing in the world was movement, especially his own. Amused by his son's precocious antics, Marty dubbed the boy "Skipper," and he has seldom since been called anything else.

"Growing up on the shore was great," says Skipper. "We lived close to the Steel Pier, where the famous high-diving horse made his 75-foot jumps. I used to go every day with a dollar for lunch and hear the music on the pier. I saw Ray Charles, the Supremes, the Animals, Stevie Wonder, Count Basie, Duke Ellington and all the big bands, vaudeville shows. It was incredible -- they were practically in our backyard."

There was music at home, too. Particularly vivid is the memory of his oldest sister, Bunny, playing Billie Holiday albums over and over. "When I hear Billie Holiday, I go primal," he says. But his first percussive ideas were pounded out on bongo drums on the stage of a neighborhood restaurant.

During the 1950s, Skipper's sister Ellen worked as a dancer in New York City. In the primitive dance classes she taught, conga player Emile Latimer introduced Skipper to the basics of rhythm and hand-drumming.

But the most important event of that



decade had nothing to do with music. One night when Skipper was nine years old, Betty and Marty went to a dinner dance. Marty had a heart attack while they were dancing, and he died in Betty's arms.

"Of course it was hard to lose my father," Skipper recalls. "It happened so fast. We had a great relationship -- it was obvious to everyone around us how close we were. But I got more from my father in the nine years I had him than a lot of people get from their fathers all their lives."

By his own admission, Skipper didn't stand still and focus on anything until he was 14 years old. That year, he received a pair of drumsticks, and began playing drums in rock and roll bands, some of which went by such names as the Psychotics and Truth Fruit. After high school, he studied music and communications at Livingston College.

"It was the oddball part of Rutgers University. I fit in fine," says Skipper with a grin. He remembers his drum teacher, Charlie Tappan, fondly. "He was a crazy old guy. He could take the drumstick and pop houseflies off the wall. He called it *focusing the stick*."

During his last year of college, Skipper became a vegetarian and began the daily practice of yoga -- both are habits he continues still. "It was easy to fall into the whole Eastern thing," Skipper says. "It must be past life stuff. It was no effort to become a vegetarian."

At 21 he married and he and his wife, Michelle, spent a year traveling through Europe and North Africa. The trip broadened Skipper's ear, and he found he had a special affinity for the music of Africa.

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The marriage dissolved after three years, and Skipper moved to New York City where he played in clubs with various acts for two years.

In 1976, he visited friends in Key West. "I loved [Key West] immediately. It was such a tight local scene. I wanted to live here then, but I couldn't find enough work playing to make it. So I went to Santa Cruz for four years."

### "There were hippie feasts on the eve of the full moon."

There, Skipper further developed his growing spiritualism. He became involved with the Native American Church and attended their medicine meetings, Indian prayer meetings deeply grounded in nature. "There are fundamental natural truths that Indians are in touch with," Skipper says. "It's a heart-opening experience to be among them." He returned to Key West at the end of 1979.

"It was a great time -- the perfect time. Everybody knew everybody. We all ate at the Orchid Tree. There were hippie feasts on the eve of the full moon. The town was full of painters and musicians, dancers, artists, writers, cats, dogs, mommies and babies. It was a real community."

"I hooked up with Linda Kuchera, a choreographer, and Ron Miller, a keyboard and trumpet player, and we played for original dance pieces. I played *Cabaret* at the Greene Street Theater. I found I could work more, but still I bounced back and forth from Santa Cruz to Key West every six months for three years."

Then, in 1981, after studying music with the band Oregon and with drummer Jerry Granelli and playing with singer Jay Clayton at Naropa -- Boulder, Colorado's school of Tibetan Buddhism -- Skipper returned to Key West. Eventually he bought a house and Key West became home.

He discusses the changes that have taken place since he first arrived. "Key West has changed rapidly," he says. "It's hard to live here now. It would be very hard for me to live here if I didn't own a house. [The cost of living here] is just snowballing. That's the way a lot of places are being developed at this time if we look at how America is capitalizing its quiet little resorts."

"But we have that much more culture here because of the development. The advantages to being a musician in Key West are that it is a big town culturally. I'm as busy here as I would be anywhere. And, for its size, there's good variety here, musically. With all the changes, there's still a great deal of music, theater, literature and art here. We have an amazing number of very talented people."

"On the other hand, it has its disadvantages. Because of its size it's limited in scope. And it's too small to attract many *master* musicians, so people who

have already achieved a certain level of proficiency on their instruments have no one to study with. There's a danger of stagnation."

"I think most segments of society are represented politically here, too. We have opposing forces in this town, but they come together sometimes for very nice, unified things like AIDS benefits or protesting offshore drilling in the Keys."

"Still, it would be great to win a few little battles, like keeping Peary Court from being developed. [The island] doesn't have to get swept away by development into a complete other identity. It has to be kept palatable for the artistic community or it's just another big condo."

In June, Skipper met Paula Jo Chitty, a peaches-and-cream, red-haired lass from Arkansas who appeared in the local production of *The Fantasticks*. The two have been inseparable since.

"Our first meeting definitely typifies Skipper's intensity," says Paula Jo. "I was brand new in town, and I was attending my first Red Barn party, talking with a group of people when this Star Trek-clad ball of energy whirled up to me, completely grabbing everyone's attention. He said, 'You must be Paula Jo Chitty.' Five days later we were living together."

"Since then, I've been amazed by Skipper's musical talents, schedule-juggling capacity, warm-heartedness and his incredible ability to bring out the child in almost everyone. Ours has developed into a wonderful relationship of mutual babysitting."

About the future, Skipper relates a dream

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or two. "I always want to be making music and playing drums. I envision multi-media projects with dance, art, video and still photography, and eclectic folk music from all over the world. What's wrong with a pedal steel guitar and a bagpipe doing Charlie Parker songs? I love strange blends of material and instruments."

"People who want a hard, fat backbeat all the time might not particularly like the way I play. I like to paint with drums."

"And I'd like to have children of my own someday. I've done a lot of video and photography work with children. I have five godchildren," he says proudly.

Reflecting for a moment, Skipper shakes his head and smiles. "So far, I've had a good and fortunate life," he says. "It's been easy compared to most people's. I'm truly blessed."

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## Business Briefs

Manager Steve Winemiller announces that **Tar Heel Trading Co.** is enjoying its third year at 802 Duval Street. The shop features the work of more than 100 artists from 40 states, and specializes in waterfowl art. Many of the artists have won national awards. Winemiller says that Tar Heel is one store where customers are encouraged to touch the merchandise.

**Animal Crackers**, an all-breed pet-grooming salon owned and operated by Bleth McHaley, is sharing facilities with **The Bird's Nest**. Located at 517 Fleming Street, the salon's pet-grooming services include bathing and dipping, nail clipping and full grooming of both dogs and cats. By appointment only; call 296-9890.

Edward McManus, esthetician and image consultant for **Color Me Beautiful/Color for Men and Women**, recently attended the second International Congress of Esthetics in Miami at the Fontaine Bleau. He is a graduate of the Christine Valley School of Esthetics, and can be reached at **The Salon**, 915 Simonton. Call 292-1222 or 294-8108 for appointment.

Dorry Santiago, owner of **John Santiago and the Hair People**, 1201 Duval Street, announces that "Color on the

Beach," a workshop for hairdressers about natural haircoloring, will be at the Pier House this month. The workshop will be taught by Jesse and Flo Briggs who formerly owned the Yellow Strawberry salon in Key West. The couple, a co-founder of Hair Color, USA., now owns four salons in Florida.

"Have cooker grill, will travel" is the idea behind **Island Catering**, a new business located on Big Pine Key. The owners have 10 years in the catering business, and specialize in cooking meats and fish on the spot, as well as providing all the extras for island-style dinners. Their catering menu includes a Key West barbecue and a Conch luau. For information call 872-4725.

Maggie Reela, owner of **Maggie's** at 724 Duval Street, is planning a January buying trip to England, where she will search for unique jewelry. Her shop features jewelry made of natural materials -- shells, wood and silver -- and rhinestones. Maggie's is open daily, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.



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# Old House Handbook: Wooden Blinds

Comments on the Components of a Key West Historic House

by Sharon Wells

One of the salient features and indigenous elements of Key West's carpenter architecture is wooden louvered blinds, usually side-hinged, which close to protect existing double-hung windows. What are commonly called shutters are actually blinds. By definition true shutters have solid panels and are usually placed on the exterior to shut up a house, blinds have movable louvers which help to manage light. Such window treatments are practical, energy-conserving elements, not just decorative or aesthetic finishes.

In Key West's subtropical climate, there is a need to break up and scatter the sun's intense rays and allow for a maximum circulation of air. Softening the sunlight, blinds or shutters help to cool house interiors and insure privacy.

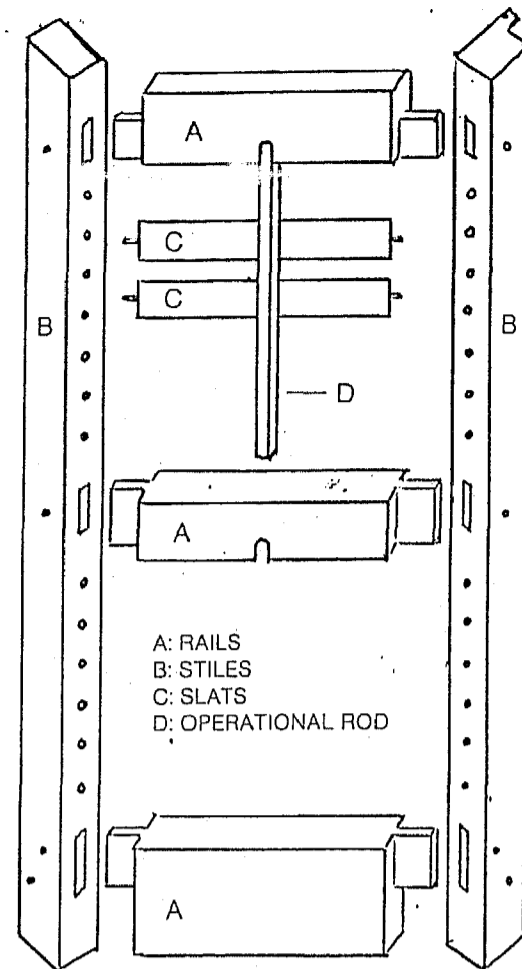
Historically, Key West buildings have exhibited varied styles of shutters or blinds

at doorways and windows. Movable or fixed louvers, top-mounted or side-hinged blinds, solid vertical slat shutters and blinds with screens typify window treatments in Key West. In the early years, almost all buildings were painted white with dark green shutters. Later tints of cream or yellow and light grey appeared. White reflected heat and the dark shutters reduced glare and absorbed light.

An 1838 drawing of the island's north side by Frances Conte de Castelneau shows rectangular houses with roofs parallel to the street and louvered blinds. Historic photographs, however, provide the best documentary evidence of the existence of blinds in Key West's vernacular architecture. Most images show the traditional side-hinged blinds. In an 1855 view taken after the 1846 hurricane, blinds are a discernible feature.

Traditionally, island carpenters hand-crafted side-hinged blinds out of cypress, valued for its resilience and strength. Less frequently, blinds featured top-hinged panels with movable wooden slats. Cypress pegs were used to pin the frame sections together. Often hand-tooled Roman numerals, still seen today, were used to identify the shutters.

After the devastation wrought by the 1846 hurricane, blinds could be seen on



A: RAILS  
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almost every structure -- schools, commercial buildings, residences -- on windows, doors or dormer windows. In some cases, louvered blinds were mounted on a railing to screen the outside porch. Blinds were viewed as purely functional, protective items.

Certainly blinds as an adaptation to the

environment had a clear predecessor in the Bahamas. Shutters are common features on both Bahama Houses, which were built originally on Green Turtle Cay and dismantled to be reconstructed in Key West in 1847. The Richard Roberts House, located at 408 William, and the John Bartlum House, at the corner of Eaton and William, are other examples.

Shutters, however, are not primarily a Bahamian influence. Typically, they were found in Greek Revival houses, which dominated America's domestic architecture from about 1830 to 1860. In *A Field Guide to American Houses*, the authors write:

*One of the most familiar stereotypes in American architecture is the full-columnaded Greek Revival mansion of the southern states. ... This particular Greek Revival subtype does, however, have a little-recognized colonial background, for it sprang, at least in part, from French colonial building practices. Early in their colonial expansions both the French and English appended broad living porches, a rarity in Europe, to houses built in tropical regions. The origins of these large galleries or verandahs are obscure, yet they appear wherever British or French colonists encountered warm climates, including the West Indies, Africa, India and Australia.*

It is likely that, gradually, these evolutions or acclimatizations included the use of shutters or blinds to filter the heat.

An excerpt from the *Preservation Guidebook for the Old Section of Key West*, published in the late 1970s by the Old Island Restoration Foundation, notes: *Louvered shutters, commonly called "blinds," were more popular than solid ones for they could be used as a cooling device as well as a storm covering. With the louvered blinds over the opened window, air could circulate while the hot sun was kept out.*

Local sources for wooden blinds are fairly limited. Strunks and Scotties carry ready-made wooden blinds with fixed louvers; Acme Restoration Construction and Supply, Inc. carries new blinds that are machine-made with movable louvers,

ready for a wood finish. Locally, only one firm restores and manufactures shutters by hand.

Historic Shutters restores old shutters or blinds, and manufactures new custom wooden cypress blinds for original window openings. Elizabeth DeVries and Matthew Stauch, two craftsmen who have researched and perfected shutter-making over the past five years, own the company located on Stock Island. They believe nearly all handcrafted shutters are repairable. They have installed shutters or blinds in over 250 Key West homes.

Shutter restoration services at Historic Shutters include complete disassembly of frames, removal of hardware, slats, cypress pegs and staples where necessary. Shutters are squared, sanded and reassembled using the original materials, except where new slats, rods or pegs are required. Work may include new wood inlays, epoxy injections, installation of new rust-resistant screw eyes, hand sanding of wood slats and insertion of new cypress pegs. Operational rods, which lock into place, are installed after all millwork is completed. Restoration costs about \$150 per window opening; louvered doors run about \$500.

A wide range of new blinds is also available, including: blinds with fully movable slats; blinds with fixed slats on

the top portion and movable slats on the bottom (for use with old windows where the top sash has been painted shut); blinds with inset screens; or blinds with tempered glass allowing for retention of air conditioning. Newly manufactured shutters are handcrafted using cypress wood, mortise-and-tenon joinery and an identical 1 3/4-inch "Key West" slat size.

The value of historic materials is increasingly recognized by homeowners who delight in old houses. Nothing can replace that patina worn by age. Hopefully, the local availability of both shutter restoration expertise and new movable louver blinds will provide an impetus for homeowners to save old, irreplaceable shutters or blinds and, where necessary, replace with new functioning blinds.

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Nature Notebook

Scorpions: The Most Ancient Arachnids on Earth

by Sandra Russell

Scorpions have been feared by man since ancient times. Like other primitive survivors -- rats, roaches, sharks, bats -- their adaptability to extreme conditions and their defiance of extinction make them profound and fearsome threats to man, if only psychologically.

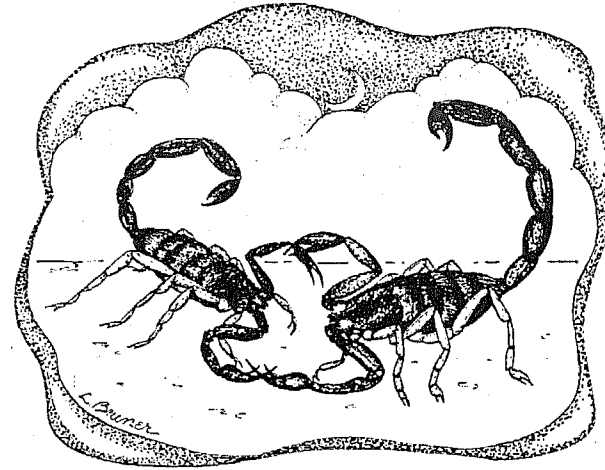
Scorpions were the first creatures to crawl out of the sea and adjust to terrestrial life. They are the most primitive of the land arachnids, a group that also includes spiders, mites, ticks and other unbeloved, predatory meat eaters. Scorpions are the oldest of their class, having left the sea 400 million years ago.

Until that time, the scorpion, a massive beast measuring up to six feet in length, had been the terror of the sea. Its reputation followed it to the beginnings of man. Although it was millions of years later and the scorpion had decreased in size to less awesome dimensions, man from the very beginning cast the creature in the role of evil doer in his legends and fables.

What specific scorpion traits inspire such a malevolent image? All of them. There is nothing in the animal kingdom that compares with the scorpion's methods -- of eating, breathing, courting, mating or rearing of young. Combine this bizarre biological behavior with the scorpion's austerity, cannibalism, solitariness, nocturnal nature, primitive appearance and deadly sting, and you have all the makings of a classic monster.

Nowhere in the scientific journals are the scorpion's regenerative powers discussed, but many people who have spent time in scorpion country have hair-raising tales of the scorpion's indifference to death. I have such a tale.

I was sitting in my dining room one evening, talking on the phone with my little brother who, living up north, had never seen a scorpion. From the corner of my eye, I caught a dark form passing over the windowsill, swiftly down the wall and across the straw rug that covered the floor. My first flash was that it was a cat. Then I looked. Instinctively, my legs folded up



beneath me, a bass drum pounded in my chest.

"John, it's a scorpion." I heard the dry, calm terror in my voice.

"Cool," he said. "Kill it and send it to me."

Just then my daughter's boyfriend entered, a brave and reckless young man. He also froze for the merest moment before catching himself.

"Jerry, a scorpion," I said dumfoundedly, curled in fetal position in the armchair.

He stood there at the room's periphery; the scorpion remained stock-still.

"Jerry, can something be done?" I asked, referring to the possibilities of extermination. Jerry should know them all: he's a Conch, has lived here all his life.

Then Jerry killed the scorpion. He flattened it with a massive all-in-one encyclopedia dropped from six feet in the air. Its body oozed safely into the crevices of the straw rug.

A sense of primal celebration pervaded the room, like wind chimes at dawn. I may have been narrating the tournament to John, who was still on the line; I don't remember. But I said to Jerry, "Save it. We'll mail it to my brother." From the phone I watched him scoop it up with a sheet of stiff cardboard and a dustpan, shake it onto the kitchen counter, and cover it with a heavy glass bowl.

"Okay, John, I'll send it to you." I hung up.

I walked into the kitchen. Now was a good opportunity to examine a scorpion up close. And there it was -- the graceful glass bowl, my favorite, the one that doesn't break, the one with the tiny cable spiralling inside the glasswork. Through it I could see the awful, blond formica countertop, a silver ring of lamplight where the glass lip met the counter's surface. But no scorpion.

I looked harder, closer; perhaps my eyes were going or the light and reflections and shadows were playing tricks. But no, no scorpion.

The scorpion is a nocturnal loner, requiring little air and no water. It lives in loosely knit colonies only during mating season, or when climactic extremes are best met by communal protection. Its head features one pair of central eyes, plus two to five small, lateral eyes on each side, used

Life in the Tropics or How I Got Stung by a Scorpion

by Capt. Gaff McKetchum

It was a typical summertime *Eyewitness News at Eleven* broadcast: a couple of shootings on I-95, a new vice-president's task force on something or another, weather forecast for high of 90, low 80, with 50-percent chance of rain.

I turned off the table lamp, hit the off button on the TV remote, got up and walked over to close the front door. The breeze from the ceiling fan felt cooler in the darkened room, I noticed, as I reached out to turn the lock. Suddenly, a white-hot flash of pain shot through my bare right foot.

Though this was a first for me, I knew at once that I had stepped on a scorpion. I flipped the light back on: there he (or she) was, about four or five

inches long, nasty-looking and glaring at me. Picking up a heavy marble ashtray that seemed suitable to accomplish what the Monroe County Extension Service bulletin on household insect control calls *mechanical destruction*, I smashed that sucker good couple of times.

Less than a minute had passed. My foot hurt; it was a sharp burning sensation like a hornet's sting. There was a small red puncture mark where the stinger had pierced the sole. Cursing the entire class of arachnids, I hobbled into the kitchen and got an ice cube to numb the pain. (I later found out that this is the proper treatment for a sting as it slows the rate of absorption of neurotoxins, giving the body more time to respond.)

After about 20 minutes the pain had eased a bit or maybe I

was just not as concerned with it now because other things were definitely happening to my body. My lips were tingling in a "pins-and-needles" way. So were the muscles of my face and the tips of my fingers and toes. The experience no longer bore any similarity to a hornet sting.

I called the emergency room at the old DePoo Hospital on Southard Street, where a friendly doctor on duty told me that unless I was having trouble breathing, my allergic reaction was not severe and to continue the ice-cube treatment. He also suggested that an antihistamine might help. I popped a Contac, sat down with my foot in a bowl of ice water, and tried to figure out why these tingling numb sensations were somehow a familiar, though distant, memory.

It came to me, not in a flash of

light, but a dawning of remembrance: this, absent the pain, of course, was really quite similar to the initial physical stages of a 1960s psychedelic experience. It was small comfort -- my foot still hurt -- but the fear factor was gone. Thank you, unknown doctor at DePoo; thank you, Timothy Leary.

Unless you're extremely allergic to it, a scorpion sting is not really a horror story, though my friend Lloyd might not agree. He stepped out of the shower one day, picked up his towel, which had slipped from the rack to the floor, and proceeded to dry a most tender part of the male anatomy. Yes, there was a scorpion in that towel.

It was a good many years before Lloyd could bear listening to Jerry Lee Lewis sing "Great Balls of Fire."

only for distinguishing night from day. But the scorpion's most obvious characteristic is the poisonous stinger on the end of its segmented tail.

The venom of most scorpions is capable of causing mild to severe localized reactions, though there are some desert varieties which can cause serious neurological reactions in humans, even death to children. The dark brown or black scorpions of humid climates, such as the ones found in the Florida Keys, however, are relatively harmless despite their fearsome aura.

The scorpion is passively aggressive. Equipped to go long periods without food, it has no need, or capacity, for pursuit. It patiently waits for food to come to it. The scorpion is non-combatant, preferring to retreat rather than to fight, and will not sting humans or other animals unless molested. But when dinner -- usually insects, but sometimes a creature as large as a mouse -- foolishly arrives the scorpion uses its spinelike stinger in conjunction with pincers, designed to grasp and hold the victim.

A scorpion does not chew its prey. It liquifies it, then sucks it dry. Lacking conventional jaws, it pours quantities of digestive fluids over the victim until its soft parts are broken down; then it pumps the nutritious concoction into its stomach. A meal is a slow, leisurely event, as is the mating ceremony.

After being around for 400 million years, scorpions see little need for hasty weddings. The prelude to the marriage festival therefore involves a classical courtship beginning with a sentimental walk, *promenade a deux*, face-to-face and claw-in-claw, instigated by the male who, it is believed, stings the female in the joint near the base of the claw to inhibit resistance. The stroll can last for as long as 48 hours.

Then, motionless, with fingers still gripped, the scorpions contemplate each other blissfully for an interminable amount

of time. The foreheads come together and touch; the mouths, if the monstrous openings between the jaws can be called mouths -- touch in a sort of kiss. The male then sweeps out a sheltered space with his tail and gently draws the female inside. At this point one might think the scorpion not so fearsome after all. But wait.

The promenade is actually a search by the male for a suitable surface on which to deposit his spermatophore, over which he drags the female until the sperm packet has penetrated her genital pore. Joining the claws is a safeguard by the male against the risk of being regarded not as a mate, but as a meal, and with valid reason. After the union is accomplished, the male is transfixed with a mortal sting and his terrible bride gobbles him up with gusto.

The gestation period for scorpions varies from several months to a year. Born alive, the tiny white creatures mount the mother's back where they ride, for about 12 days, relying for sustenance on food stored in their bodies. After their first molt, they are expected to find their own food. The female scorpion provides no direct care to her young.

Cannibalistic, aloof, with a face not even a mother can love, is it any wonder that the ancient Greeks felt compelled to name a constellation after the awesome scorpion, perhaps in appeasement? As their system of astrology developed, it followed that they should create a space for Scorpio, with human characteristics to correspond with the creature's antiquity and hypnotic power. This reasoning gave the astrological Scorpio wisdom, courage, determination, compassion, intense loyalty and the ability to sting as a last resort when their dignity or sacred privacy was threatened.

Astrology has found favor through ancient times to the present, and though the human version of the scorpion still inspires fear and awe, one is tempted to conjecture

that if all the scorpions in the kingdom were upgraded to their human counterparts, perhaps they would be less terrible, less inscrutable. But then again, perhaps not.

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## Readers Write

### A TDC Gone Wrong?

Dear Editor:  
I am writing to you in regard to the Monroe County Tourist Development Council's decision to award all advertising for local TDC-sponsored events to Tinsley Advertising, eliminating Monroe County-based businesses from that budget. I am very opposed to the idea that Monroe County-sponsored events must use a Miami-based advertising firm.

Local people who volunteer their time and effort depend on these funds. By accepting this new policy the TDC will be taking income from our county and eliminating jobs. The policy will cause local design houses, typesetters, printers, ad agencies and graphic-design businesses to fail.

I believe it is important for the TDC to have good public relations, and to that end the Monroe County TDC should support Monroe County business.

We have many talented and creative people in the county who want to be gainfully employed in prospering businesses. But while our large local advertising

community is trying to accommodate TDC advertising, direct mail and response needs, we now find our services are being eliminated entirely.

The TDC should not prevent its funds from coming back into our community; in fact, the council should increase them.

Ron Chespak  
The Advertising Agency  
Key West

### Support Your Local ...?

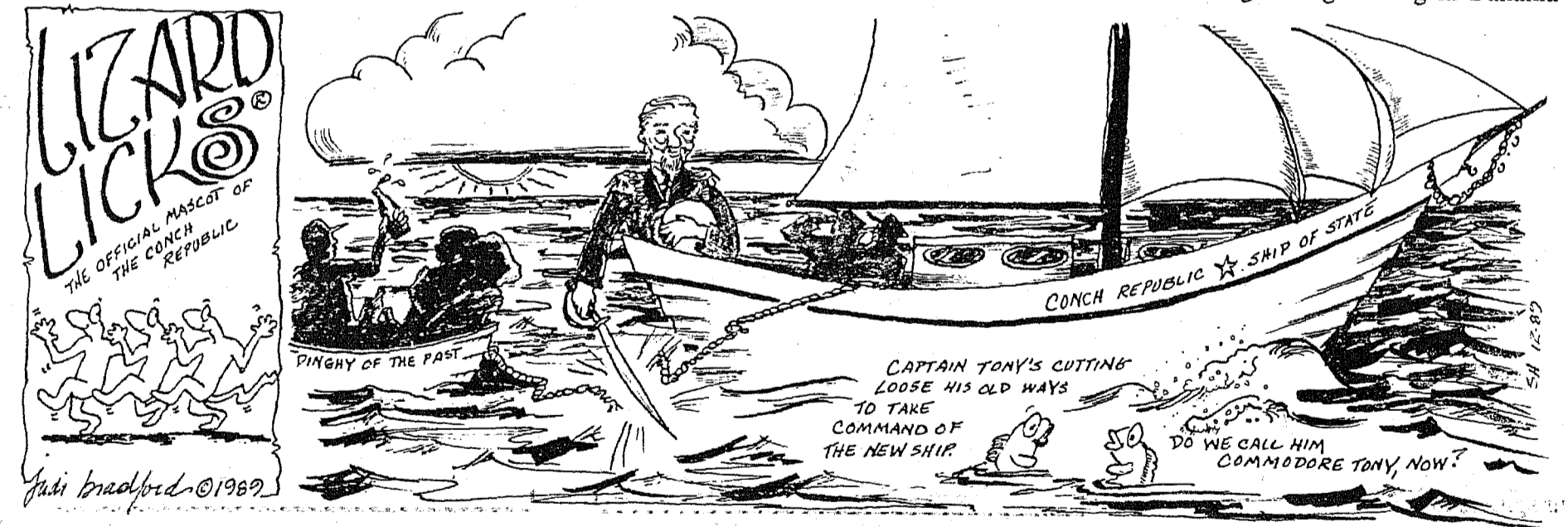
Dear Editor:

Fresh from two attempts to gain control over the Key West Police Department, Monroe County Sheriff J. Allison DeFoor is riding on the coattails of County Commissioner Doug Jones for a third foray into the disruption and attempted takeover of the police department. One has to ask why DeFoor and Jones are attacking a police department which is so highly regarded by state and federal law enforcement agencies. The answer lies in DeFoor's blind ambitions to use political attacks against the police department in order to gain enough public recognition to springboard into higher elected office at the state level.

DeFoor and Jones are manipulating a serious situation involving the recent shooting of two Key West police detectives on duty in Bahama Village. It has been a selfish and egotistical strategy that could have had dire consequences if City Commissioners Sally Lewis, Harry Powell and Jimmy Weekley had not been able to contain DeFoor's and Jones' irresponsibility.

It is ironic that DeFoor is focusing his political ambitions on controlling the police department when he has failed to handle his own duties as sheriff. He has been unsuccessful in solving the crack-related crime problems in Key Largo, Marathon and Stock Island. In fact, DeFoor has been deficient in stopping the flow of drugs through his 120-mile jurisdiction to the city limits of Key West. DeFoor has flummoxed in his efforts to resolve: the shooting of his own deputy in the Upper Keys; murders on Big Pine Key; intradepartmental conflicts of interest; and a jail system crumbling in front of him.

DeFoor's attack on the police department focuses on the difference of opinion between he and Chief Tom Webster on how best to spend \$500,000 in county tax revenue to fight drug dealing in Bahama

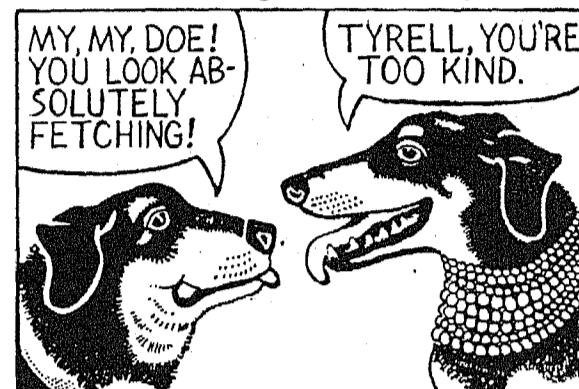


## TYRELL

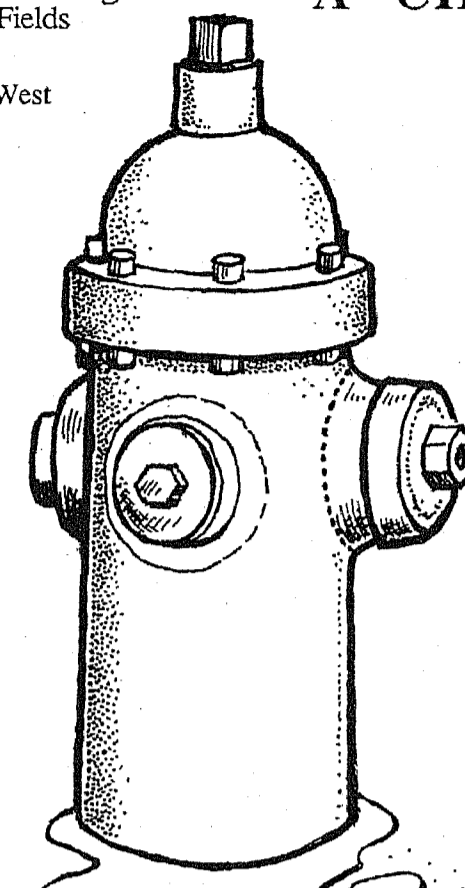
An American Dog  
©Marko Fields

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Twas the week before Christmas and all through Key West The dust had long settled from Fantasy Fest. Tony had finally won his big chair While half the town couldn't believe he was there. Turban Renewal, in transcending "The Dream" Had become in reality the "Big Condo Scheme." Virginia, our "Ginny," was pining away Her vote was no longer to carry the day. Such were my thoughts on a pre-Christmas day That the spirit of Yuletide was pressed not to stray. The December sun was still packing some zap So I'd just settled down for an afternoon nap. When who to my wandering eyes should appear But my friend, a dog diva, whose name is Doe Dear. Her dozen pearl strands were delight to my senses She'd the shimmering neck of a Ubangi princess.



Then all of a sudden I heard a bell's tinkle And noticed the gleam of a Christmas tree's twinkle. As I softly on padded feet came near the sight I was struck by the beautiful yew and her light. But the source of the musically gurgling bell Was a white-bearded man with a midsection swell. He was dressed all in red, from his head to his toe And there were shoppers, in shorts -- they were all on the go.



And while people kept passin' him there on the street He was dingin' and dongin' and keepin' the beat. Some of the folks must of thought he was "hot" 'Cause they kept droppin' coins in his black iron pot. Still hoppin' about he had started to sing So I moved closer still as to not miss a thing. Then my nose and my ears told me something was wrong When the "Twelve Shopping Days" became part of his song. My ears told me none of his lyrics made sense And my nose verified that his odor was dense. Thunderbird vapors enveloped his croons "O Holy Nightstick" was one of his tunes. "On Donder, on Yonder, on Blunder and Nixon!" Christmas in his hands was gettin' a fixin'. It naturally follows that being so loud Soon gathered about him there was quite a crowd. That's when I decided, before I should go I'd try to do something to add to his show. Catching him mid-lurch in some kind of dance A Holiday greeting I wrote on his pants. Slow on the uptake, it took him too long By the time that he noticed I'd escaped in the throng.

Now most of you, no doubt, missed out on that sight But if you go to the hydrant at Eaton and White You'll see that same message of Holiday cheer: Merry Christmas, my friends, and a Happy New Year.

Village. On the one hand, DeFoor believes uniformed sheriff's deputies on bicycles would be most effective apprehending drug criminals. Webster, on the other hand, states that the most efficient use of these limited resources is to beef up ongoing undercover and surveillance programs. All state and federal law enforcement agencies would support Webster's professional opinion, while only certain local politicians back up DeFoor's public relations gambit replete with photo opportunities.

DeFoor has taken a cheap shot at the police department. He has had the poor judgment to use the tragedy of two shot policemen to advance his own personal political aspirations.

A.C. Weinstein  
Key West

Maybe we'll win out. Who knows?

Charles M. Gomez  
Key West

### Sand Dollars

Dear Editor:

Monroe County recently submitted a permit application for the Key West beaches project. As a citizens' group, Last Stand welcomes this step toward resolving existing problems with the beaches and the White Street pier and wishes to make the following comments and recommendations:

Our beaches experience high-energy conditions. They form a dynamic system influenced by storms, prevailing winds and longshore current. Man's piecemeal

interferences with the natural westerly drift have created a series of problems. Erosion is caused downstream of groins and solid barriers like the White Street pier. It is occurring west of the groins on Smathers Beach and is undermining the seawall protecting West Martello Fort. The city's Rest Beach is buried under rotting seaweed and trash caught east of White Street pier. Sand used to renourish beaches erodes, polluting the clear waters vital to offshore coral patches and burying seagrasses -- the basis of the food chain. The future of Key West's southern shoreline is of great importance. Yet the community has been unable to resolve these problems because the solutions have been mired in grandiose, expensive and environmentally damaging expansion plans.

We urge the city and county commis-

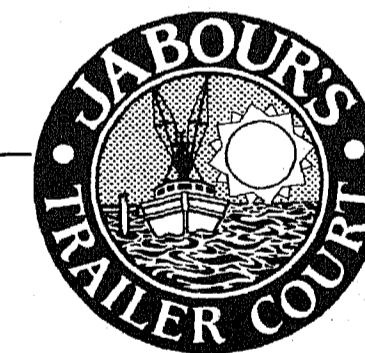
### Longfellow Lives

Dear Editor:

It's getting to be,  
A game as to what it will be,  
The future we cannot see,  
The Assessor says it's not he,  
Well then who could it be?  
What has happened to "depreciation"?  
It would help you and me.

Maybe if we put new  
Faces in place  
We might end this great race  
Of Conchs who are losing faith.

Our fight is long,  
Our spirit is low.



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sions to proceed with a scaled-down project that will solve existing problems first, before attempting to expand our present beach and pier facilities. Over years of discussion, regulatory agencies have recommended a project that would allow timely permitting, improve Smathers Beach and Rest Beach, protect West Martello and finally solve the White Street pier problem. Suggestions for the three elements of the project have included:

1. White Street Pier: At least 200 to 300 feet of the White Street pier should be removed from the shoreline and elevated on pilings to allow a free flow of water. The remainder of the pier would be left in place and maintained. The current permit application calls for removing 775 feet of the pier at an estimated cost of \$1 million. Construction of a bridge to the remaining pier terminal would cost about \$3 million. A 500-foot extension proposed in the current application would add \$1.5 million to the cost and could delay permitting. No funds are allocated, but Tourist Development Council [TDC] and the infrastructure tax are possible sources.

2. Rest Beach / Higgs Beach: Straighten

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out the shoreline by relocating land from the west to east side of the pier. The entire new shoreline of Higgs/Rest Beach should be armored by a solid, sloping riprap wall of large boulders with a concrete wall behind to retain beach sand and wide wooden walkovers for access. The riprap wall should end at least 100 feet west of the city's property line. Riprap should also be placed in front of the eroding seawall around West Martello Fort instead of the loose sand proposed in the permit application. Sloping boulders absorb wave energy and help prevent erosion. Loose sand would soon wash away. The long range, low-maintenance (no seaweed) solution is to riprap the shoreline to best protect a new "perched" sandy beach behind and the historic fort.

3. Smathers Beach: Renourish to the extent necessary to straighten the existing shoreline with mitigation to offset the loss of shallow seagrass beds and degradation of water quality. The permit application proposes to fill with sand a total of 13.2 acres. There is significant annual erosion of sand so maintenance and cleaning will continue to be an expensive, long-term

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Jim McLernan  
Chairman  
Last Stand  
Key West

problem. The smaller the scale of the renourishment project, the smaller the cost in dollars and in damage to the environment, and the sooner it will be feasible to act.

The cost of renourishing Smathers is estimated at \$3 million. Federal funding for recreational beaches has been cut off, but \$1.1 million has been earmarked locally from TDC funds. Because of Smathers Beach's value for storm protection, public recreation and the tourist industry, Last Stand supports straightening out the existing discontinuities through minimal renourishment with appropriate mitigation.

Given the financial and environmental limitations, it makes sense to do the minimum necessary at this time to solve the existing problems. The elements of the project should be separated, and the major White Street pier problem given priority attention. Plans for the optional 500-foot extension should come after current problems are solved. We ask that no further tax monies be spent on expensive plans for roadways in the sky until some down-to-earth, common-sense actions are taken to clean up and create a usable, stable, "perched" Rest Beach and to armor West Martello's eroding seawall. We urge government and community to work together to solve these long-standing problems with our beaches.



There is a big-city lady with an overpowering crocodile purse there beside me in A Little Something, that winky, lavish small grocery tucked into a corner of The Reach complex. She is purchasing a quarter-pound of pricey pate and some good, black caviar. She turns to me with a look of complicity; I can see that she wears black lipstick or maybe it's plum.

She says, "Adolf Hitler is not dead. He is holed up in an outhouse in the backyard of The Oldest House on Duval Street. He was brought here about seven years ago. Five persons in Key West know this -- a former mayor, two real estate salesmen, a bartender and a chiropractor. It's a well-kept secret.

"There is a busker on that block who handles doubtful watercolors with titles like 'Ruined Orchid Earring' and 'Bobbing Apples on Rockland Key,'" she continues. "He will tell you that the aged, used-up dictator washes out his black socks in a skillet, and he notes that from time to time he drapes them over a hibiscus bush back there. Do with this information whatever you care to."

I have had a hard time with myself through the years because I would go charging off about a story like this. But I rather like my life as it is now, as placid as a folded sheet of notebook paper. Just living my own small life.

Besides, I am late for my appointment to get my perm, and I'm profoundly hungry. Before leaving this morning I stopped to eat only a Kosher dill pickle with a glob of peanut butter on the tip of it, the way I like it for breakfast.

I proceed along the sidewalk toward Donald's Beauty Salon having the bagel and Stilton cheese that I bought as a treat for myself. I could have had it in the beauty parlor but I don't eat well with a lot of

people watching me -- like the British royals who never allow a picture to be taken while they're eating. They must not be pictured lifting a fork to their lips, chewing or wiping away sauce. There's a Key West man who, when asked, "Oh, do you belong to the Harvard Club, I note the insignia on your tie," answers, "No," examining his tie, "That's a snick of my breakfast egg glistening there."

I am taking word of Hitler and his sanctuary in a backyard on Duval Street with me. (Is he even now having his first cup of Taster's Choice instant coffee and an English muffin?)

How fortunate women are to have access to beauty parlors. Men don't ordinarily fall back on this reviving retreat. While the manicurist works on her, a woman tells about how tasty her potato soup is because she always simmers a catfish in it. A woman in a jogging suit waiting to have her brows arched says to me in a low voice, "I could make better tasting potato soup than that standing upside-down with my head in a sack."

It's a comforting climate in here: two dryers going, a cup of coffee brought to me, a customer with long, lovely white hair at the shampoo bowl, another in a tennis dress turning magazine pages before she gets color from Stu Barber who is doing an auburn job. It's all cozy, intimate and one notch outside of reality. Very nice to be in.

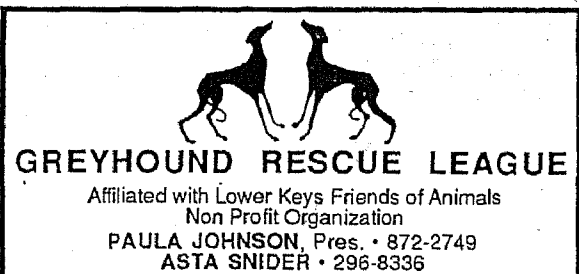
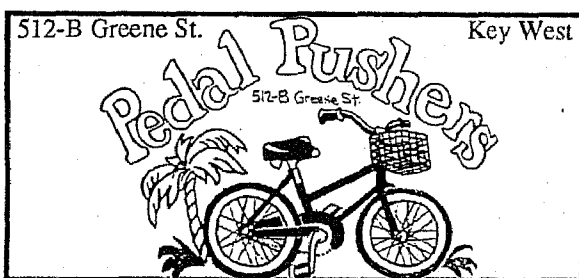
Donald starts on my perm. I mention, "Hitler is said to be in some kind of an aperture out back of The Oldest House."

Donald doesn't miss a beat, doesn't drop a roller. With his usual aplomb and exquisite accepting, he says, "Oh, I think he's in South America. Do you want curls or waves?" This is the way Donald is. Kindly unflappable. Life may bristle with

shocks; Donald goes along with a smile. If a Shetland pony stuck his head in through the window of the shop, Donald would say, "You'll have a 20-minute wait for a trim, sir."

Here is how two of the customers respond or do not respond to this sally about Hitler's predicament. The tennis-dress one has taken fingernail scissors from her bag and is surreptitiously cutting out a picture of Tom Selleck, the movie star, and she is unconcerned. The arched brows at the next station are just beginning to give to that one's face a mystified expression as though she sees on the other side of things and she wouldn't mind if Hitler was put up for Kiwanis Club or the Knights of Columbus. It isn't that she won't consider life's affairs and curiosities, being an educated Smith College alumna, it's just that her ethical and moral stands about large circumstances and horrors in recent years have gotten rather rusty from disuse.

After all, why don't I drop it? The pate-and-good-black-caviar lady said that I could do as I wish with the Hitler-in-his-down-town-hidey-hole bulletin. Stuff a pillow with it? Bury it under that big gumbo limbo tree on Whitehead Street? Write a column about it in the Solares Hill newspaper?



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Book Review

**Human Foibles: Signorelli Novel Is Borderline Quixotic**

by Colin G. Jameson

During an interview for a *Solares Hill* profile years ago, Frances-Elizabeth Signorelli said to me, "Maybe one of these days I'll be a good enough writer to risk a book." I said the book was waiting out there in her "garden of words."

It has always been a lush garden, and it has bloomed: Fannie-Bessie has finally written her book. As might be expected from the author, it is not your ordinary garden variety.

*Human Foibles* is not a novel, not a story at all, really. It starts in the middle and ends in the middle. It is the autobiographical interaction between the author and an array of *grand guignol* playmates, not merely human, but animal, vegetable and a trace of mineral.

As far as the flesh-and-blood actors go, they include 22 antique ladies, 18 dogs (plus a pack of "about 37 in an upstairs apartment"), and 21 cats with standard cutesy names. All share a co-professional balminess.

Most of the old ladies travel in exotic motor cars -- Bentleys and Lancias, the latter being "as big inside as a master bedroom." They flash monstrous jewels, including "a diamond the size and shape of a lump of coal."

In passing it might be noted that one old

dame is allotted 13 pages of whimsy and launders her pig in the bathroom. She and her contemporaries are forever colliding with furniture and bouncing *objets d'art* off the parquet. One of them writes letters to prison pals, offering to help them escape.

Fannie-Bessie's wizard of garden words has conjured some rare birds into her aviary. Perhaps as a defense against them, she endeavors to present some of the incidents and personality sketches as products of a far-out writing class, whose instructor has banished his 44 live-in children to the sunroom, presumably luring them by sorcery. What else could keep them in?

Frances-Elizabeth may not know it but all the other writing students sound exactly like her and serve up the same brand of eccentricity. The same color, the same simile and metaphor, are also there. Sample F-B and/or her alter egos:

"Helen of Troy probably looked like Carmen. Hair the color of *poupon* mustard, swinging down to her hips. Piano scarf slung over her shoulders, scarf figured in peacock feathers. Her nails painted with garnet-colored polish."

Fannie-Bessie and her co-authors always write in the present tense. It suits her perspective, as I discovered when I did her profile. It tells about her best.

"A safe place to park and spend the night



Fannie-Bessie Signorelli.

is in front of a funeral home in a small city. You are a resting mourner."

She sees a "tiny, splintered light." "A mountain breeze fastens its teeth" in her; she passes "the slaty hip of a hillside."

"The hams looked like sunburned human thighs." Brunch, though, is "clot of cheese, size of thumbnail. Four pecan meats, 2 1/2 tangerine sections." Then we have "the high-powered lawyer who each day seems to leap into the saddle of his own personality."

Sometimes Fannie-Bessie's fantasies outreach her. "He has gone to court twice for

walling up cats." "It's my night to wash my hair in mayonnaise." A jealous City Electric System employee borrows a cherrypicker to catch his girlfriend in the act in one of F-B's upstairs rentals. (He fails.)

Fannie-Bessie should have tagged one of her fictitious storytellers to narrate the tale about the fallen angel who dropped into a friend's trailer, shedding part of a wing and rebounding heavenward with the admonition, "Where there is love, put love, and then you will find love."

Light thickens. A raccoon is equipped with a crutch and smokes cigars. A lady confects honey from a patch of poison ivy. Auntie maintains that Sebastian sent a stingray flopping up her stairs at 2 a.m.

Let us not forget the girl who was "so magnetically disturbing that the waiter had to throw cold water on all the men there."

It gets thicker. "We find a boat off Houseboat Row with a cow aboard. That cow birthed a calf aboard last night." presumably this was not the cow that later provided "cow soup."

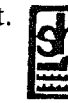
Believe it or not, there is a woman who trains palmetto bugs for military service. She drills six for F-B, but they don't perform too well. She says their performance "needs tightening up." So does this book.

There definitely are redundancies. Two separate citizens buy theater seats for their plants. Two separate people also allege that in Key West's early air transport days there was a convention: "If the pilot has a coronary [stroke], one of us will have to sit in his lap and try to fly the plane."

This is fun stuff, even if it is difficult sometimes to distinguish the sunshine from the moonshine. It is not truly Quixotic, because there is no story: we are reading about the idiosyncrasies of family and friends as if channeled to us by a roguish troubadour. But there is imagination and satire -- though the author also must have been privately satirical about herself, since she is the featured player about whom the others build their fantasies.

Near the end of the book Frances-Elizabeth Signorelli writes, "I always have suspected that Jane would tell a man who had lost two legs to pull up his sox." So she would, Fannie-Bessie. So the others would, too.

And he would do it.



Frances-Elizabeth Signorelli will be signing copies of her new book, *Human Foibles*, on Sunday, December 17 from 5 to 7 p.m., at the Freeman residence, 724 Eaton Street.

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# Art Circle

## Heavy Metal Momma

Ironworker Reen Stanhouse makes steel move



Just-completed entrance gates for Casa Roma Estates on Cow Key Channel.



Reen installing lily pads for "White Sound of the Lotus & Lilies," a copper-and-enamel fountain.

Photos by Chris Adair.

by Judi Bradford

"Island Ink and Iron is not a laundry service," says Reen Stanhouse about her commercial art and ironwork business. "People always think I take in ironing."

Far from it. Reen does decorative functional ironwork in a tropical *nouveau* style. For 16 years she has been crafting window bars, gates, furniture and, recently, balconies and stair rails from steel. It is not a medium easy to master, because the labor is dirty and hard.

If you have lived in Key West long, you've seen Reen making a dash to Strunk's or the marine hardware store and you have wondered what on earth she has been doing -- blackened from cheek to shinbones, wearing an odd assortment of sturdy clothes, and buzzing with the energy of a half-finished project.

It started in the carefree days of the '70s. Reen was making jewelry with Wendy Welden (Lovelace). Wendy assisted Mad Man Lenny, a New York ironworker, on gates for gallery owner Marion Stevens.

When Pat and Judy Sullivan, at that time the owners of the Green Parrot, needed window and door gates, Wendy and Reen went to work. "It was just like big jewelry, we figured."

Reen has been working in iron ever since. She created pieces for the Bull & Whistle, developer David Wolkowsky, Delmonico's and others. "We used the barter system. I didn't carry money back then. I had trades in every bar and restaurant in town."

What makes Reen's ironwork stand out is its sculptural quality. "All traditional ironwork is flat -- very two dimensional. You rarely see variation in that," she points out. "My work is functional sculpture. If you take an ornamental design and bring it into three dimensions, you create movement. Movement is important."

Each of Reen's pieces is matched to its surroundings and its functional demands. She doesn't rely on easy solutions. In fact, those who see her in action might think she thrives on difficult solutions. "Reen has the ability to work with the limitations of

function," observes John Martini, owner of Lucky Street gallery and iron sculptor who shares studio space with Reen. "A gate not only has to be aesthetically pleasing, but it has to open and close."

"The main thing about Reen," he continues, "is she is dauntless. She undertakes incredible projects that are scary to contemplate and she just goes ahead and does them. It's the scale that always amazes me. She also has a great tool collection."

Her designs come from nature. Elements of tropical flora twist and turn in three dimensions, creating the illusion of tender growth and supple movement in cold, hard steel. "Metal is not necessarily flexible," Martini reminds us. "Getting a flowing feeling out of steel is not easy."

At a private residence in the Middle Keys, Reen built a bougainvillea stair rail winding up a hill to a pineapple patch. Cast bronze leaves sprouted from the twining iron. She carves the cast elements and sends them off to a foundry. There's no sketching a design and sending it off to assistants: she

preparation of the steel," she says. "I'm a traditionalist when it comes to finishing. I approach it as a boat in the water." She uses rust-retardant primers, marine epoxies and airplane waxes to seal the vulnerable steel from the erosion of climate.

She stresses the difference of working on commission as opposed to retail work. "When somebody buys a finished piece, they get into you. When they commission a piece, you get into them." When customers call on Reen, they generally know her work.

She feels a lot of pressure in a commission. The work has to be designed and executed to suit the customer. That also means work schedules have to synchronize with the client's lifestyle and deadline. "The pace is not your own," she says. "It's not only the work, but the deadline and the process. The client becomes a participant." The relationship between the customer and the designer becomes a part of the piece.

"The final payoff is not the money," says Reen. "It's whether the client likes it."

After the design process, the work changes very little. "It always ends up looking almost exactly like the original sketch. I build it in my head hundreds of

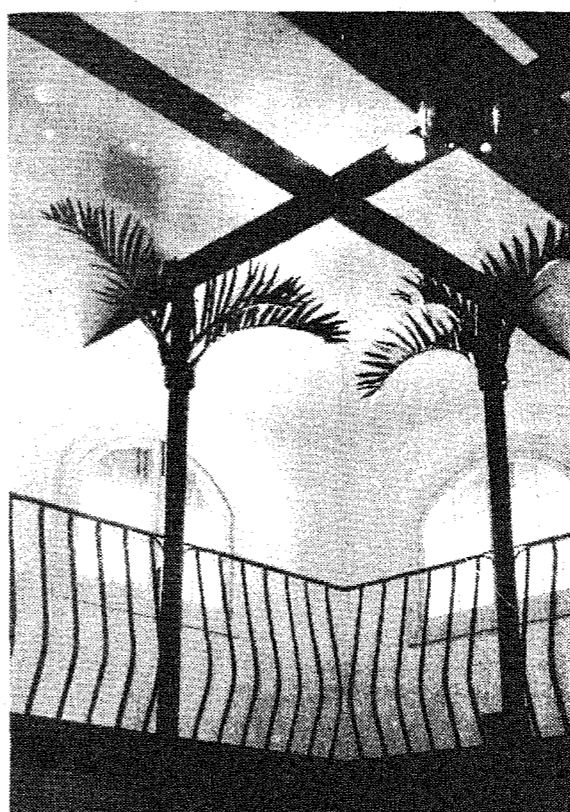


Photo by Chris Adair.

"Hanging Palm Garden Balcony" with spiral monk's ladder and steel palms, at "Play It Again" estate in Key West.

does the rest of the work herself. From concept to installation she is right there, though she gets able help from her boyfriend, Chris Adair, when the work is too heavy or the deadline too demanding for one person.

Her design work is backed up by structural integrity and finishing techniques that provide for longevity in a hostile saltwater environment. "It's all a matter of the

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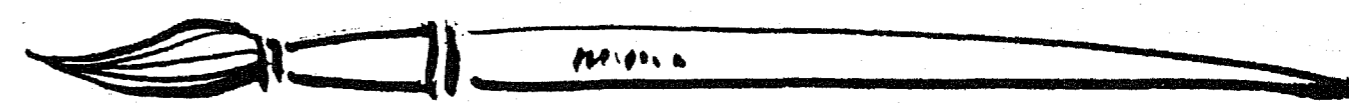
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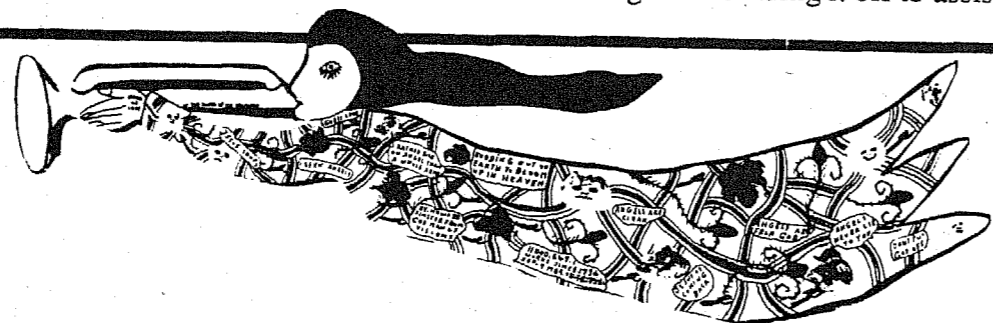


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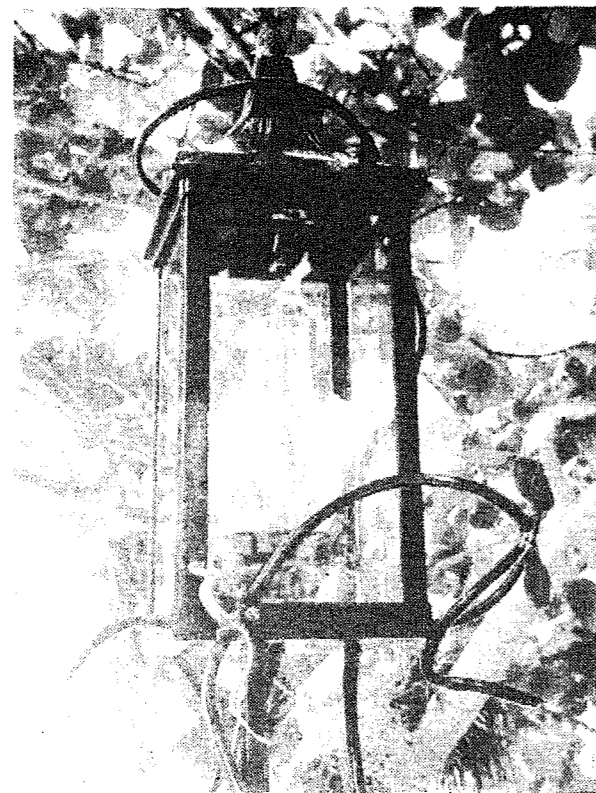
times over before I actually make it."

Often functional commissions require coordination with architects and others. A recent commission for the Key West residence called *Play It Again* is a good example. *Play It Again* is the brainchild of its owner, Michael Ross, whose occupation is "lifestyle management and maintenance for the handicapped." Every inch of the building is custom designed, inside and out, foundation to ridgepole. Each room is a graphic and functional masterpiece of creative, eclectic opulence.

Reen designed a 360-degree hanging palm garden balcony around the library walls. Vertical supports are stylized palm trees that shoot from the ground floor, past the balcony projection to the vaulted ceiling where cut steel fronds cast balmy shadows on the curving surfaces. Its integration into the room and the house involved collaboration not only with the client, but also with other workers as the house was being completely redesigned. The cabinet makers, painters and flooring crew interacted in balcony development.

This cooperative approach is in step with a national crafts movement that has been building since the 60s. In a commentary for *The Guild: A Sourcebook of American Craft Artists*, arts author Akiko Busch says: "Throughout history, crafts have been produced with deliberate regard for their environments... Until recently, however, doctrines of the Modern Movement discouraged this integration of crafts in architecture and design."

The resurrection of artistic involvement



Dora's Lamppost, part of "Bougainvillea to the Pineapples" stair rail, which winds along garden stairs at Puenta La Requena Estate on Sugarloaf Key.

in construction, according to Busch, brings with it "a new vitality, a sense of totality, a holistic approach to crafts, and to the structure and ornament of our built environment."

Reen's work is included in the "Architectural Metalwork" section of *The Guild* 1989 edition. *The Guild* features the crafts of 382 artists and is described as "a source for the extraordinary, the creative, the unique

projects that make a meaningful difference in the places where we live and work."

Versatility is another Stanhouse standard. Recent work includes a lotus blossom copper fountain; a traditional, majestic, gold-finished entrance gate for Casa Roma estate; a palm frond chandelier; palm tree curtain rods; and fish tables.

Island Iron was recently chosen by the Historic Florida Keys Preservation Board to restore the 1891 staircase in old City Hall. The structure is a premier archetype of 19th-century decorative metalwork. Reen's craftsmanship, evident in numerous projects around the island is in the finest spirit of those earlier artisans who created decorative iron pieces.

During a short stint in West Palm Beach, Reen restored some of Gold Coast architect Addison Mizner's work. Self-taught in restoration as well as design, she says she learned "by paying attention to curator techniques" and she has tapped into curator association information. Her working experience has brought her in touch with South Florida foundries, and now she is in a position to replace and restore old pieces.

Historian Sharon Wells describes the project: "Unlike New Orleans, Key West's architectural legacy includes only a few examples of finely crafted ironwork."

Reen has an inherent appreciation for both the delicacy and the strength of the material itself. Her workmanship, detailed knowledge of metal restoration and artistry will provide new life for the decaying entryways of iron.

Photo by Chris Adair.

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11:00	AQUA		AQUA		AQUA		L.I.A.
12:15	L.I.A.	WALK	L.I.A.	WALK	L.I.A.		
5:30	AQUA	AQUA	L.I.A.	AQUA	L.I.A.		
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# DECEMBER ARTS CALENDAR

This symbol designates a reception that is open to the public.

**Art Collections Key West** • Mixed media on rice paper and limited-edition graphics by internationally acclaimed Yamin Young. Keys work by Matson, Shannon and others. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. 600 Front Street in the Bottling Court, 296-5956.

**Art Unlimited** • Oldest private art gallery in Key West. First to carry Haitian art. "I go in after it." Daily, noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment. 217 Duval St., 296-5625.

**Banana Boat Batik** • Handpainted clothing by Jennifer Green, Janice Childs, Amy DePoo and Gay. New ceramic work by Walt Hyla: animals, fish, lidded vessels, functional ware, flying fish (hanging fish sculptures). Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. 419B Duval St., 296-2380.

**Carole Gallery** • Key West primitives by the owner. Daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 1100 Whitehead St., 294-5496.

**East Martello Museum & Gallery** • "A Decade in Key West," 10 years of Fred Gros, December 6 through January 7. December 5, auction of ornaments made by local artists. Daily, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. 3501 S. Roosevelt Blvd. 296-3913.

**Farrington Art Gallery** • Remodeling is finished! Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday sometimes. Gallery and framing by appointment. 711 Duval St. 294-6911.

**Florida Keys Community College Library Gallery** • December 1, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., opening of "Underwater Art": paintings done by dolphins; photographers Chris Adair, Don Kincaid, Lynne Smith, Mario Mitchell; sculptors Chris Scala and Ben Fishstein; video artists Tom Jackson and Billy Deans. A multi-media extravaganza continues through December 22. Also, monthly literary readings by local poets and authors continues through spring. Open Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Junior College Road, Stock Island, 296-9081, ext. 202.

**Gingerbread Square Gallery** • Local artists Sal Salinera, John Kiraly, Gil Furoy, Ron Clemons, Patricia Townsend, Tennessee Williams, Robert Franke. Seven days, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. 901 Duval St., 296-8900.

**Gallerie Moderne** • Abstract expressionism. Daily, 1 to 5 p.m. 516 Amelia St., 296-3156.

**Great Southern Gallery** • December 2, Artists' and Models' Ball (benefit for AIDS Help) -- call for info and tickets. See our rotating exhibit at TIB bank at Eaton and Whitehead. Call about our art classes: watercolor, airbrush and figure drawing. Thursday through Monday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. 910 Duval St., 294-6660.

**Guild Hall Gallery** • Drawings, paintings, prints, soft sculpture, cartoons, printed and hand-painted cards, ceramics, T-shirts, leather bags, photography, painted mirrors, stained glass, ironwork by 16 Key West artists. Daily, 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. 614 Duval St., 296-6076.

**Haitian Art Company** • Special selection of oils on canvas by internationally known J.E. Gourgue, December 1 through 31. Daily, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 600 Frances St., 296-8932.

**Harrison Gallery** • Works by Helen Harrison, Matthew Lineberger, Cricket Barnes, Ann Lorraine, Nancy Bender and Sherry Read. Tuesday

through Saturday, noon to 5:30 p.m. 825 White St., 294-0609.

**Is It Art** • Hand-painted artwear, prints and wall-hangings. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 913 Duval St., 294-0411.

**Kennedy Studios** • Graphics and limited-edition prints. Daily, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., 133 Duval St., 294-5850; daily, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., 716 Duval St., 296-7251; daily, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Key West Art Center** • Members Juried Show through December 16. Daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 301 Front St., 294-1241.

**Lane Gallery** • Group show through December 8, December 11 through 25: Kathleen Elgin watercolors and Fiona Owen miniature watercolor and gilding. Daily, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. 1000 Duval St., 294-0067.

**Lucky Street Gallery** • "New Works/ New Artists" opening December 12 for our 7th anniversary. Daily except Tuesday, 11 am to 6 pm. 919 Duval St., 294-3973.

**Rose Lane Antiquities** • Pre-Columbian art. Daily, noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment. 524 Rose Lane, 294-2270.

**Whitehead Street Pottery** • Stoneware, porcelain, and Raku vessels. Daily except Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 1011 Whitehead St., 294-5067.

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Theater Review

# Little Shop of Horrors: The Terror Is Timely

by V.K. Gibson

When I told friends that I was to review *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center, they somewhat nervously told me that this musical wasn't serious but was a fluffy bit of fun. Have I somehow acquired a reputation as a humorless critic who trashes anything I do not consider art? It wounds my heart to think so.

Howard Ashman's *Little Shop* is the type of production that director Rae Coates does best: skating with neat theatrical flourishes across the thin, brittle surface of pop culture. Many of Coates' theater roots were sprouted during the genesis of Rock and his talents shone here.

*Little Shop* was actually born a movie in 1960, directed by Roger Corman and written by Charles Griffith. It tells the story of a young flower shop employee who develops a plant that mesmerizes customers into buying but subsists on blood. Someone (Mr. Griffith, perhaps?) stuffed this thing with sly cultural references. I may be wrong, but I sense one of those old-time thinking screenwriters at work here, someone who was a bit less than amused by the disintegration of the Eisenhower Years into the Rock Generation.

The viewpoint of this musical can be described as *broken innocence*. The slice of American culture portrayed here is extremely stylized (gross stylization usually being, in the pop culture, the surrogate for style itself).

Michael Boyer's set was effective and, for once, the TWFAC stage didn't seem too large. The grimy clichés of Skid Row provide a nice setting for the gaudy sizzle of Mushnik's Flower Shop. The style of the shop seemed to be a degenerate Art Deco, glowing like a box of cheap candy tossed in a trash can, compatible with the naive, punkish undercurrents of the show.

Each of designer Julio Cruz, Jr.'s costumes was a quaint, even affectionate parody of 1950's and '60's fashion. Cruz gave us a bag lady (played by Kelly Moore) whose clothes would pass for chic style in today's artsy circles. It created a nice sort of poverty. Anyone who has ever seen a real

bag lady knows that what we had here was a Cabbage Patch Doll.

But under the niceness of this interpretation lurked ugly truths. The audience came to life when the carnivorous plant named Audrey II -- which was genetically spliced into existence by Seymour the shop assistant -- had its first taste of blood. The "ohhhs" and "ahhhs" were similar to those inspired by a nursing baby, which says something about maternal, not to mention paternal, instincts.

The monster plant (manipulated by Darryl Marzyck and Rob Palera), offered Seymour (Danny Weathers) the potential to realize the accessories of the American Dream, as perceived by Mr. Average Citizen. Audrey (Carmen Rodriguez), another employee for whom the giant vegetable was named, entertainingly listed the particulars for us in a song about tract houses, kitchen appliances and the sanitary plastic lifestyles portrayed then on television. Rodriguez did an adequate job creating her character -- a controlled stereotype.

The monster also evoked images of national demigods of the bottom line -- big-mouthed, blood-sucking business types whose driving appetites and ambitions more than make up for low brows. The play's message: Feed the monster and it will make all our dreams come true -- until it finally devours us.

Musical director Jim Rice neatly handled Alan Menken's score with adroit performances by Skipper Kriptiz, Din Allen and Woody Allen. No memorable songs, alas, but mood was established.

The synthesizer-dominated sound we hear in many local performances is becoming tiresome, however. Reliance on acoustic instruments would have been more in keeping with the nostalgia of *Little Shop* since electronics didn't become the standard until the late '60s. But that would have been costly, and producers today can't be lavish with resources.

The chorus of Skid Row bimbos was played by Debbie Cooper, Kellye McMullen and Melody Cooper. They were effective as trashy fallen angels enobled by hormones, if not by philosophy.

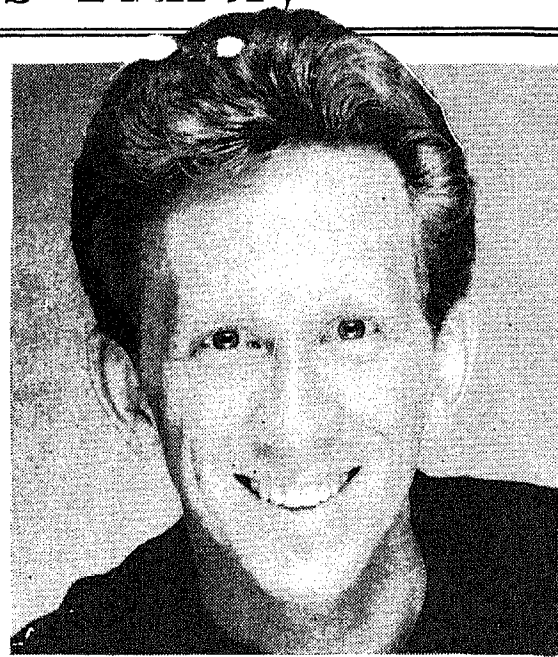


Photo courtesy TWFAC.

Danny Weathers.

Among the singers, Audrey II was most distinctive. Felix Rice's impressive voice was made even greater with amplification. The body-mike solution to TWFAC's acoustics problem, however, detracted from the intimate experience of live theater. At times the voices sounded like they were coming over a radio. Also, voices occasionally faded in and out. But that's better than not being able to hear them at all.

Danny Weathers, as Seymour the love-sick loser, more than held his own with the monster plant. Weathers is a versatile actor who was just right as the nerd flower shop clerk.

So was John Holt in the role of Mr. Mushnik, Seymour's boss, although something about this character disturbed me. I assume that this was a Jewish stereotype; and these days (as we see genuine social enlightenment replaced by synthetic, sensorial rhetoric), stereotypes of any sort smack of bigotry. But Holt bounced about the stage to great effect, creating a loveable, little old Jewish munchkin with an utterly mercenary heart.

Bruce Peterson played many roles well, my favorite being Mrs. Luce, wife of the publishing magnate. Kelly Moore, in addition to the bag lady, was the sadistic punk-rocker dentist. I didn't find him convincing, but was always aware that he was a nice fellow playing a part.

What would the originators of this confection think of the world we have today? Skid Row, rather appealing in retrospect, was their model for the cultural sewer. It seems horribly dated today. The idea people behind *Little Shop* could scarcely have imagined back in 1960 that their tongue-in-cheek depiction of frustrated dreamers, charming losers and amusing immoralists would one day spread across the maps of our great cities, and even the small towns, bleached of any whisp of charm, deprived of all dignity, and engorged with bitterness.

What we see here, despite the updating by current productions, are the encoded messages of the sort of kinder, gentler America which President Bush has set as our national goal--now that it's lost forever.

## Community Notes

**Going, going, gone.** As a result of an October 25 court ruling, a 1971, 45-foot Hattaras convertible fishing boat will be auctioned off in Key West this month. The yacht, used in both marijuana and cocaine smuggling operations, was seized by the Coast Guard last spring. Proceeds from the auction of items confiscated in drug busts are used to purchase equipment for the Monroe County Sheriff's Office to help in future busts. "Every dollar raised this way is a dollar the taxpayers won't have to pay," rhymed Sheriff Allison DeFoor.

**Recycling update.** Until further notice, Recycle Key West, the local all-volunteer recycling effort, has moved behind the old Customs Building on Truman Annex at the end of Front Street. Recyclers are asked to approach the site by way of the Truman Annex parking lot. The facility is open on Wednesdays from 2 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call Lucy at 296-6348 or Gazelle at 294-4536.



The Montclair String Quartet at TWFAC, December 5 at 8 p.m.

**Get a jump on chronic disease.** The Monroe County Public Health Unit conducts a weekly chronic-disease screening clinic for county residents. The clinic examination includes an EKG; blood pressure check; blood tests for cholesterol, triglycerides, glucose and anemia; urinalysis; Pap test for women; and a health history. Lifestyle counseling is also provided. There is a minimal fee. Call

294-1021 for information and an appointment.



Jesse Brown will play Sally and Ashby Lazarus will act as Linus in *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* beginning December 16 at the Red Barn Theatre.

**Tough on drugs.** A citizens' coalition against drugs is being formed in Key West. According to Marsha Gordon, one of the organizers, representatives from virtually every organization in the city -- civic, social, religious, educational, corporate and military -- will make up the coalition. The focus will be the development of action-oriented programs to reduce drug-related crime in our community. An organizational rally is planned for January. Call Marsha Gordon at 296-4140 for information.

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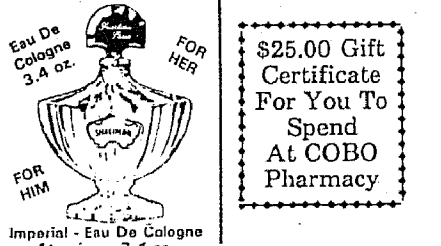
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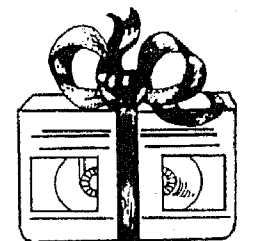
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# DECEMBER CALENDAR

## Curtains & Culture

11/29 to 12/31 • **Nonsense**, a revival of the 1987 production of Dan Goggin's musical comedy directed by Susan Hawkins at the Red Barn Theatre, 319 Duval St., at 8 p.m.; 296-9911.  
 12/2 • **Flamingo Freedom Band** will perform in Old Town. This gay and lesbian band from South Florida will parade the sidewalks performing Christmas carols and will stop for 10 to 15 minute concerts at designated businesses.  
 12/5 • **Montclair String Quartet** performs with Michiko Otaki at the piano. Curtain rises at 8 p.m. for this performance at Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center, 294-6232.  
 12/15 & 16 • **Christmas House Tours**, from 5 to 8 p.m. Five historic residences, specially decorated for the holiday season, will be toured. Tickets are \$10. Call Bill Anderson at the Hospitality House at 294-9501.  
 12/15 & 16 • **The Nutcracker** will be performed by the South Florida Ballet with children's parts danced by local kids. Curtain is at 8 p.m. at the Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center, 294-6232.



Photo by Adolph Gucinski.  
 Penny Molloy-Jampol as Sister Robert Ann in Nonsense at the Red Barn Theatre, through December 31 at 8 p.m.

12/16, 17, 18, 28, 30 and 31 • **You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown** will be presented by an all-children's cast from the Key West School of the Performing Arts, directed by Richard Magesis. Curtain is at 2 p.m. for all performances except Monday, December 18, at 8 p.m. 296-9911.  
 12/17 • **Second Annual Southernmost Christmas Tree Celebration.**

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Call Mark Lindas for information at 296-0621.  
 12/20 • **Matthew Jampol Holiday Classical Guitar Concert**, 8 p.m. at the Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center. Concert will include children's choral numbers and guest appearances by local entertainers. 294-6232.

## Be a Sport

12/16 to 20 • **Basic Research Diving Course** at Florida Keys Community College, 8 to 10 p.m. This five-day course earns four college credits. Call Bob Smith, 296-9081, ext. 308.

## Common Good

12/4 • **City Commission Meeting**, Key West City Hall, City Commission Chambers, 525 Angela Street, 6 p.m. Always open to the public and televised on Channel 5. Call 292-8200.  
 12/18 • **City Commission Meeting**, Key West City Hall, City Commission Chambers, 525 Angela Street, 6 p.m. Always open to the public and televised on Channel 5. Call 292-8200.

## Fun for Funds

11/24 to 12/7 • **Monroe Association for Retarded Citizens** holds its annual Christmas tree sale. Call Mark Lindas at 296-0621.  
 12-2 • Win a 1990 Corvette in the raffle to benefit **Multiple Sclerosis** hosted by Stick & Stein in Key Plaza. Call 296-3352.  
 12/2 • **Sugarloaf School** will hold its 2nd Annual **Sugarloaf Sharks Christmas Craft Show** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To reserve a table or for information call Juanita Rickenbacker at 745-3282.

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**Bubba's Beijing**, at The Reach, Simonton Street on the Ocean. Open for dinner Wednesday through Sunday, 6 to 11 p.m. This menu combines Nouvelle Chinois with Thai and Korean fare built around a firm foundation of Chinese dishes. Try Bubba's Buffet, \$15.95. Phone 296-5000.

**The Buttery**, 1208 Simonton Street, is praised by *Gourmet*, *New York Times* and *Bon Appetit* as one of the great restaurants in South Florida. The Buttery is truly a must-stop for the gourmand in Key West. A complete bar and wine list complement the distinctive Buttery menu, with nightly specials. Open for dinner nightly; reservations are suggested. 294-0717.

**Cafe Exile**, 700 Duval at Angela Street. Open 24 hours. A European streetside cafe known for its eggs, bur-

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The South Florida Ballet dance 'The Nutcracker' at TWFAC, December 15 and 16 at 8 p.m.

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gers and alfresco ambience. Experience fine dining in Sinbad's Garden, enjoy good company in Streetside from 4 to 9 p.m., Disco in Backstreet -- The Dance Alternative. Phone 296-0991.

**Croissants de France**, 816 Duval Street. Open daily except Wednesday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The place in Key West for authentic French baked goods, cafe au lait, sandwiches, croissants, brioche, French bread and pastries. Phone 294-2624.

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dents in decision-making. To volunteer or for more information call Elizabeth Covino at HRS; 292-6728, Betty Cambell at Florida Keys Memorial Hospital, 294-5531; or Liz Kern at Hospice, 294-8812.  
**Just Say No** supper club meets Mondays from 4 to 6 p.m. Call 292-8248.  
**La Leche League** of Big Pine Key meets at Big Pine Methodist Church 9:30 Monday mornings. Call 872-2148.  
**Lower Keys Friends of Animals** helps animals who are victims of misfortune. For membership information call 296-8682 or 296-3926.  
**Monroe County Library**, Fleming Street, offers preschool story hour on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.; Saturday movies 10 a.m., 294-8488.  
**Old Island Harmony Barbershop Chorus**, Old Stone Church, Key West, meets Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.  
**Pool & Dart Tournament**, Big Pine Moose Lodge, Wednesdays, 872-9313.  
**Recycle Key West**, sponsored by the Women's Resource center and located near the Southard Street entrance to the Truman Annex, is open every Wednes-

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**Half Shell Raw Bar**, Land's End Village, foot of Margaret Street, serving lunch and dinner 'til 7. Freshest shrimp, fish and lobster direct from their own fish market at the shrimp docks. Cash only.

**Henry's**, 1500 Reynolds Street. Open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Located in historic Casa Marina Resort serving Continental Cuisine and Key West's most popular Sunday Brunch. Reservations are suggested. 296-3535.

**Holiday Inn, La Concha**, 430 Duval Street. A downtown landmark with three restaurant choices. The **Rainbow Room**, open 7 to 11 a.m. for breakfast, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch, features seafood items. The **Top**, with its spectacular views of Key West and sunset, serves drinks, appetizers and desserts. **Crazy Daizey's** is a streetside cafe and fun spot specializing in paella, Frogmore stew and sandwiches by the inch. Phone 296-2991.

**Jerome's**, 610 South Street. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, from 7:30 a.m. to 4 a.m. Enjoy a large variety of reasonably priced fare while dining inside or on the front patio watching Key West go by. Full liquor bar. Visa and Mastercard accepted. Phone 294-1055.

**La Trattoria Venezia**, 524 Duval Street, open daily. Featuring Italian and French cuisine. Dine in an elegant Eu-

ropean atmosphere complete with Italian music and friendly, warm service. 296-1075.

**Lighthouse Cafe**, 917 Duval Street, open for dinner 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Specializing in wonderful Southern Italian and seafood dishes, served in a beautiful garden setting or cozy indoor dining room. Reservations suggested. Diner's Club, Visa. Phone 296-7837.

**Louie's Backyard**, 700 Waddell on the Atlantic Ocean, open from 11:30 a.m. to 2 a.m. Featuring international cuisine in a restaurant ranked among South Florida's best. Dining inside or outdoors on the water. Enjoy cocktails on the Afterdeck Bar. Phone 294-1061 for dining reservations.

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700 Duval 296-0991

**Pier House Restaurant**, One Duval Street. *Travel & Leisure* said the Scampi in Amaretto was well worth the trip. *The New York Times* called it "Key West's premier restaurant." Reserve a table with a waterfront view. 296-4600.

**Turtle Kraals**, Land's End Village, foot of Margaret Street. Harbor view dining for lunch and dinner. Great hamburgers, seafood and check out the music. Visa, Mastercard okay. Phone 296-4008.

day, 2 to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to accept clean, separated glass, newspaper, aluminum and plastic. Volunteers are needed. Call 294-6241.  
**Small Business Counseling** third Friday of each month at Barnett Bank of the Keys, Tavernier. To make an appointment, call 352-2661. Counselors are members of SCORE (Service Corp of Retired Engineers).  
**Sweet Adelines**, Presbyterian Kirk of the Keys Church, Marathon, Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.  
**Youth Church Training Class** at Fifth Street Baptist Church meets each Sunday, May 7 to 28 at 6 p.m. Taught by Jane Parker.

**ERIC GRAHL**  
GRAPHIC ARTIST • DESIGNER

1122 WHITEHEAD STREET  
KEY WEST, FL 33040  
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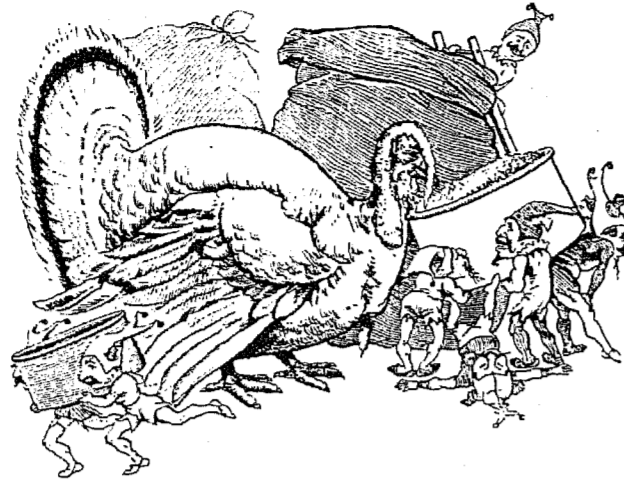
# Some Thoughts on Holiday Feasting

by Jeanne McClow

It's true. The mere mention of Christmas holidays makes me all blurry-eyed. I like everything about them -- the anticipation, the glitter, the good will, the high spirits. But most of all I like the feasting.

An American feast is unique considering that nearly all its culinary offerings are rooted in other cultures, other cuisines, thanks to the millions of immigrants who have settled here. By applying their cooking methods to foods they found here and blending their recipes with those of other newcomers, they began developing our colonial cuisine. Today, our country has a cuisine all its own: it's called *new American*.

Actually, there is one intrinsically American feast -- the one with turkey and all the trimmings. But that one, according to me, should be reserved for Thanksgiving when we pay tribute to our nation's bounty. I hadn't realized my prejudice until a German friend invited me to Thanksgiving dinner, warning that she was planning to serve lamb. She said she couldn't get all



excited about turkey. (Come to think of it, my friend didn't much care for cranberries either, or pumpkin pie.)

It had never dawned on me that to a German a turkey is just a big, ugly bird with a bad temper. (My grandmother always kept three, so I know about these things.) But to an American, this majestically plumed fowl is a symbol of the "land of plenty," and if Ben Franklin had had his way, the association would have been official.

I had to chuckle a few days later when her six-year-old -- a young patriot in our midst -- came home from school and asked glumly why he wasn't going to have turkey and pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving like everyone else. Guess what? We did. I offered to make lamb for Christmas.

Having grown up on the Great Lakes in the land of apple-cheeked blondes -- unfortunately, I wasn't one of them and, hence, never got to be cheerleader, much less homecoming queen -- I remember ham as being appropriate Christmas fare, just as it was to our German, Swedish, Polish and Dutch neighbors. A *Christmas ham* it was called, studded with cloves, sticky with brown-sugar and mustard glaze, and served

with hot raisin sauce, mashed potatoes, yams candied with maple syrup or maybe miniature marshmallows, scalloped oysters for Grandpa Otto, creamed onions and peas, winter squash, Parkerhouse rolls heated in their state-of-the-art foil package, and both pumpkin and mincemeat pies, the latter left for the grownups.

Later, when I moved to the more cosmopolitan East Coast, I learned about celebrating with standing rib roasts and Yorkshire pudding, roast duckling and goose, steamed



plum puddings and fresh seafood, though I never will get used to a fish being holiday fare.

Finally, I began to follow my instincts: I headed south for the holidays, right down into the Caribbean -- Key West, to be specific, where, incidentally, I now live. Talk about new taste sensations.

I concentrated on tasting the foodstuffs of the region -- the array of exotic, tropical fruits and root vegetables, that are the culinary envy of the world over, and the equally acclaimed seafood, with its delectable spiny lobsters and stone crabs. As a *lagniappe*, there was Cuban cuisine.

As I ate, I read into Key West history. And I began to notice something missing from the local tables: where was the cuisine of the town's original settlers, the British Bahamians?

Most historians agree that one must be of

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British Bahamian descent to be considered a true Key West *Conch*. We know that they existed, and we know that they ate more than just conch. In fact, Walter Norman recalls, in his amusing book *Nicknames and Conch Tales*, several instances of eating conch food -- the kidney stew on waffles every Sunday at Judge and Emma Patterson's; Mrs. Patterson's fresh coconut cake that became a favorite of President Truman's; Miss Missie's slow-cooked turtle -- two pounds of "chicken" turtle rung up at 25 cents in the earlier days of this century; and the conch-style souse -- tripe cooked with sow belly, seasonings, and lots of Key lime juice -- that his mother sent him out for on Saturdays.

It took spending a recent Christmas in the British Virgin Islands to get even a glimpse of how a Christmas feast might have been in an earlier Key West. There, under a starry sky dotted with colored lights, we dined on hot, roasted chestnuts and thick whole-wheat bread with spice butter; Jersey turtle soup with milk punch

and chilled plum pot with Barbados rum; a Caribbean seafood ragout and English cheese croquettes; a boneless stuffed Christmas duck with sauce Montmorency and, for dessert, Old Christmas pudding with hot custard sauce, and hot mincemeat pie. Flickering in the darkness was a Yuletide log.

Since I'm not confident I'll find any such fare around here this Christmas, I'll have to start collecting recipes. I'm particularly interested since half my ancestry lies in the British Isles. If you have any recipes or information to share, please do. In the meantime, Yuletide greetings to all.

Jeanne McClow moved from Manhattan to Key West several years ago. She has been involved with the food world for 15 years. Once a high-school English teacher, she was an executive editor of *Better Homes & Gardens* books, food editor at *American Express' Food & Wine*, and the publisher of her own book company.

Since coming to Key West, she has

Solares Hill -- December 1989 -- Page 45  
contributed regularly to local publications, reviewed dozens of the town's restaurants for *Surfside Press' Florida's Famous Restaurants* and, most recently, wrote a Christmas food feature for South Florida's current issue.

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Mars cascades through Sagittarius after December 17 while the Sun illuminates that same sign until the 21st. Sagittarius asks us to aim high at our ideals and goals; philosophically, our faith can be restored. Mercury enters Capricorn December 7; Venus spends December 1 through 10 in Capricorn; and Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are also there. Many of us will be looking deeply at long-term goals and priorities at the end of this rather karmic year.

**ARIES**

Factors favor travel. You can share a ride to get away if you don't have cash for flight. The ninth house is the zodiac's heart of spiritual renewal. A number of influences crossing that sector provide you with a new or expanded life philosophy. Of course, planets in Capricorn teach you the role of discipline and hard work. Nothing gets done without effort; dreams alone won't cut it. Self-mastery and the pursuit of personal goals are very much with you at this time. Of course, distancing yourself from your usual vortex provides great clarity, as well.

**TAURUS**

Money has a way of making you tick and with several influences crossing the

complex eighth house of joint finance, you'll need to exercise diplomacy in managing the funds or "who gets what." You can afford to be generous this year with so many karmic planets favoring your aims and ambitions. Venus, your ruler, enters the chart sector of career standing. You will use charm, no doubt, to win over supporters; but also realize that with your conservative nature you must at least try to be more flexible. Co-workers may show you new angles for looking at professional endeavors. Be open to their views!

**GEMINI**

Marriage, partnership, union, relationship fall strongly on your stellar agenda this month. You can't avoid your interaction with others and suddenly you're more intuitive about others' needs. It's as though you get to see life through another's eyes. A number of planets also move through Capricorn triggering your karmic lesson of letting go of what is no longer needed. The gift of discernment will be strongly felt by you at the end of the year. It's time for a major clearing-out phase. Go with it; the space created is a veritable vacuum, drawing many new and desirable aspects into your life.

**CANCER**

Holiday merrymaking takes behind-the-scenes planning and it may be you -- culinary artist that you are -- who has many responsibilities. A number of planets cross your sector of chores, but keep the holiday spirit so that all the details flow well and your efforts become a meditative experience. Capricorn planets fall in your sector of marriage/union; expect a lot of energy around relationships at the end of the year. Saturn is no easy planet, so there will be lessons in partnership as well as good times. You are coming to understand your own relationship needs rather than what has always been simply a matter of course.

**LEO**

It's time for Leo to have some fun. Poor Leos have had a real workaholic year, and with Saturn in their workhouse it's been hard to relax the guard and simply flow. But the Sagittarius planets this month bring out your fiery nature and enable you to act on impulse and enjoy. Sports, the arts, creative expression and activities with children are some of the ways to channel this Jupiterian force. However, the planets slowly collect once more in workaholic Capricorn and before the year is out, you'll be back at the grindstone. You know your skills, abilities and accomplishments are growing. Be glad for that!

**VIRGO**

Go ahead, tidy up the house, wash those old curtains, paint the bedroom. It's time to make the home sparkle. You enjoy those domestic duties when your constant pursuit of purity and perfectionism can be invoked. Relatives will most likely pop in, and by the end of the month you'll have over five planets crossing your chart sector of joy and recreation. Passion and romantic love take on new importance in your life; from that fire, creativity streams from you. How are you channeling your inventive drives these days? Your own artistry may surprise you!

**LIBRA**

Events around the neighborhood give you a feeling of satisfaction and involvement. There's much to see, do, participate in and you're really in the mood to experience it. Your normal level of charm rises and you can use your Venus-ruled "gifts" to win friends and influence people. This is a good time for those of you employed through the arts or entertainment industry; your product/service is more easily shown. There's much energy building around the home base toward the end of the month. Are your quarters cramped with visitors? Is it time to move? Do you need to refinish the floors or walls? You'll be seeking to make your own nest more nurturing into the new year, too.

**SCORPIO**

It's time for money to start pouring in. Have you already planned where to spend it? You may find yourself very generous this month. You may even splurge and do some entertaining. All year you have found enormous power behind the spoken or written word, and at this time your communications powers are honed even sharper. It's a good time to engage others in dialogue; make decisions; get to know your neighborhood; take short trips; heal relations with brothers/sisters; read, write or study. That ought to be enough!

**SAGITTARIUS**

Well, this is your month of the year. The stellar spotlight is focused on you. You probably have a number of projects waiting for financial backing and factors look promising for some of that money to come in by month's end. Certain issues around honor, ethics or protocol may also be important. Jupiter in Cancer implies closer ties among family members; someone in your family may be traveling to a far-away place. The full Moon of December 12 gets you to examine partnership issues from a new angle. And Mars in your sign after December 17 may get you jogging or acting on impulses that have been creeping up on you for some time.

**CAPRICORN**

Everyone else may be enjoying the holiday spirit, but part of you is introspective now and would prefer solitude. That's understandable, at least to an astrologer. After all, prior to the birthday is a cosmic cocoon time. We all need introspection then. It's just that you seem

more distant and aloof because the month prior to your birthday is the most festive season. Perhaps that's how you get the reputation for being a loner! Several planets move into Capricorn and renew you by the end of the month. However, Mars' placement in the karmic 12th house cautions you not to act on impulse. Patience is your key-note; you'll have the time you need to sort out the priorities in your life. Don't rush!

**AQUARIUS**

Forever the emcee, you'll have plenty of groups to organize, events to manage and friends to keep up with this month. Until the 21st you're a live wire of zeal and holiday enthusiasm. Deep in the background of your life, the Capricorn planets are at work chiseling away at old structures. You're close to the brink of a major life change, and you sense it. But its silhouette is not yet visible on life's horizon. Still, Venus in your sign after December 10 adds to your high quotient of attractiveness. Use it for charismatic leadership roles or to coax a warm body into your tent. Mars gets you involved with group projects of long-term consequence after December 17.

**PISCES**

It's time to man the fort. Leadership may not be something you seek now, but you find yourself in a management capacity even if it means being in charge of the bake sale at the local church bazaar. You can handle it. Your friends teach you many lessons now. Those made of gold show their stuff, while the fair-weather ones are fairly transparent these days. Yet through these individuals you reflectively get to review your own goals and priorities. Thank them for the unconscious service they are providing you in that complex equation of identity. More and more you're focusing on personal desires and will finally give yourself permission to enjoy at least a few of these. In this season, you may shed one level of your martyr role.

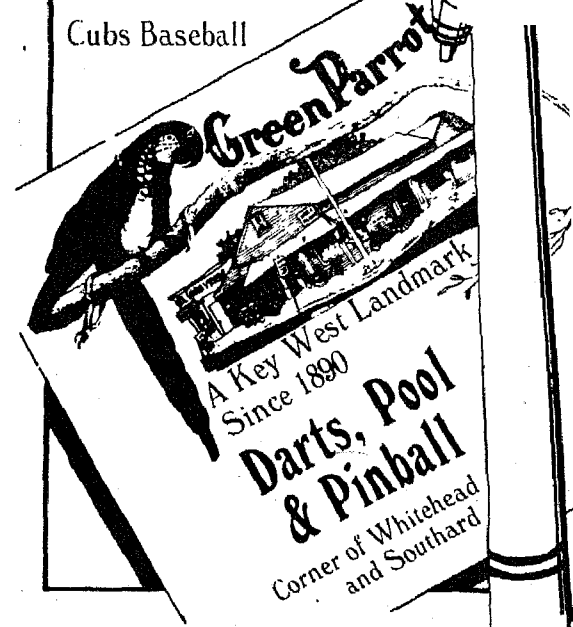
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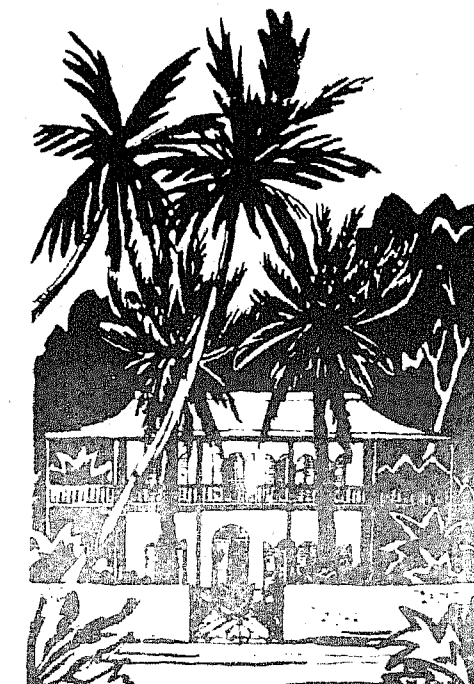
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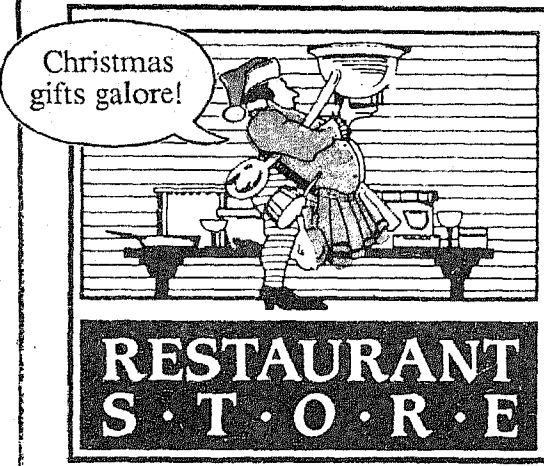
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9900000	Adult Basic/ESL	T/Th	7-10pm	J-27	Suarez/Cobo	0	\$13

ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION							
CODE	TITLE	DAYS	TIME	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR	CREDIT	FEE
9900010	Gen. Ed. Promotion	T/Th	7-10pm	J-31	TBA	1	n/c
9900020	C.E.D. Preparation	M-Th	9am-12	Harris	Valterga	0	n/c
9900020	G.E.D. Preparation	M/W	7-10pm	J-35	Oakwood	0	n/c
0108310	Creative Photography	T/Th	7-10pm	TBA	Brogden	1/2	\$13
21000310	American Hist/Govt	M/W	7-10pm	J-31	TBA	1	n/c
0705310	Conv. Spanish II	Thurs.	7-10pm	J-23	E. Kelly	1/2	\$6.50
1001310	English I, II, III, IV	M/W	7-10pm	J-23	Sembert	1	\$13
1205340	Beginning Math	T/Th	7-10pm	J-25	Rouger	1	\$13
1900300	Driver Training	M/W	7-10pm	J-35	McKell	1/2	\$13

LIFELONG LEARNING							
CODE	TITLE	DAYS	TIME	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR	CREDIT	FEE
9900510	Woodworking	M/W	7-10pm	E-7	Hoxhurst	0	\$13
COB0950	Computer Skills	M-Th	9-10:30am	Harris	Santilli	0	\$13

ADULT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION							
CODE	TITLE	DAYS	TIME	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR	CREDIT	FEE
AC09001	Bookkeeping/Acct.	T/Th	7-10pm	J-15	Papy	1	\$13
ARR0900	Auto Body Repair	M/W	7-10pm	V-103	Aulozzi	1	\$13
AER0990	Auto Mechanics	M/W	7-10pm	V-102	Higgs	1	\$13
HCP0100	Nursing Assistant	T/Th/Sat	TBA	KWCC	Sheddan	1	\$18
OFT0105	Typing	M/W	7-10pm	J-16	Froeman	1	\$13
PMT0801	Welding	T/Th	7-10pm	Welding	Smith	1	\$13

ALL PROGRAMS ARE OPEN TO STUDENTS WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR, GENDER, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, OR HANDICAP.  
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**Community Notes**

Where the buoys are. Greenpeace and Reef Relief divers installed 32 reef mooring buoy eyebolts at six Key West-area reefs, expanding the total number of buoys to 82. Mooring buoys reduce damage to the reef by providing a way of securing a vessel without dropping anchor. Buoys are available at Western Dry Rocks, Sand Key, Rock Key, Eastern Dry Rocks, Western Sambo and Pelican Shoal.

Getting tankers off the reef. Project ReefKeeper has set in motion a nationwide petition to attain swift federal action to prevent reef destruction such as that which took place recently when three freighters grounded off the Florida Keys. "We cannot

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allow ships to continue playing Russian roulette with America's reefs!" declared Alexander Stone, the organization's director. For information call 945-4645.

Did you know ... that one gallon of used motor oil produces 2.5 quarts of virgin oil? That 10 million gallons of used oil are generated by automobiles in Florida? That used oil is often illegally dumped into landfills, storm drains and backyards, contaminating groundwater and damaging the environment? Now you can take used oil to collection sites in Key West for recycling. Call the Used Oil Recycling Program at 292-8200.

Help for the terminally ill. American Life Resources Corporation pays terminally ill people up to 80 percent of the face value of their life-insurance policies, and donates 25 percent of their profits to organizations striving to enhance the quality of life of terminally ill people. Because of the sensitive nature of the service, the company operates under strict guidelines. They are located at 9240 Sunset Drive in Miami, 1-800-633-0407.

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