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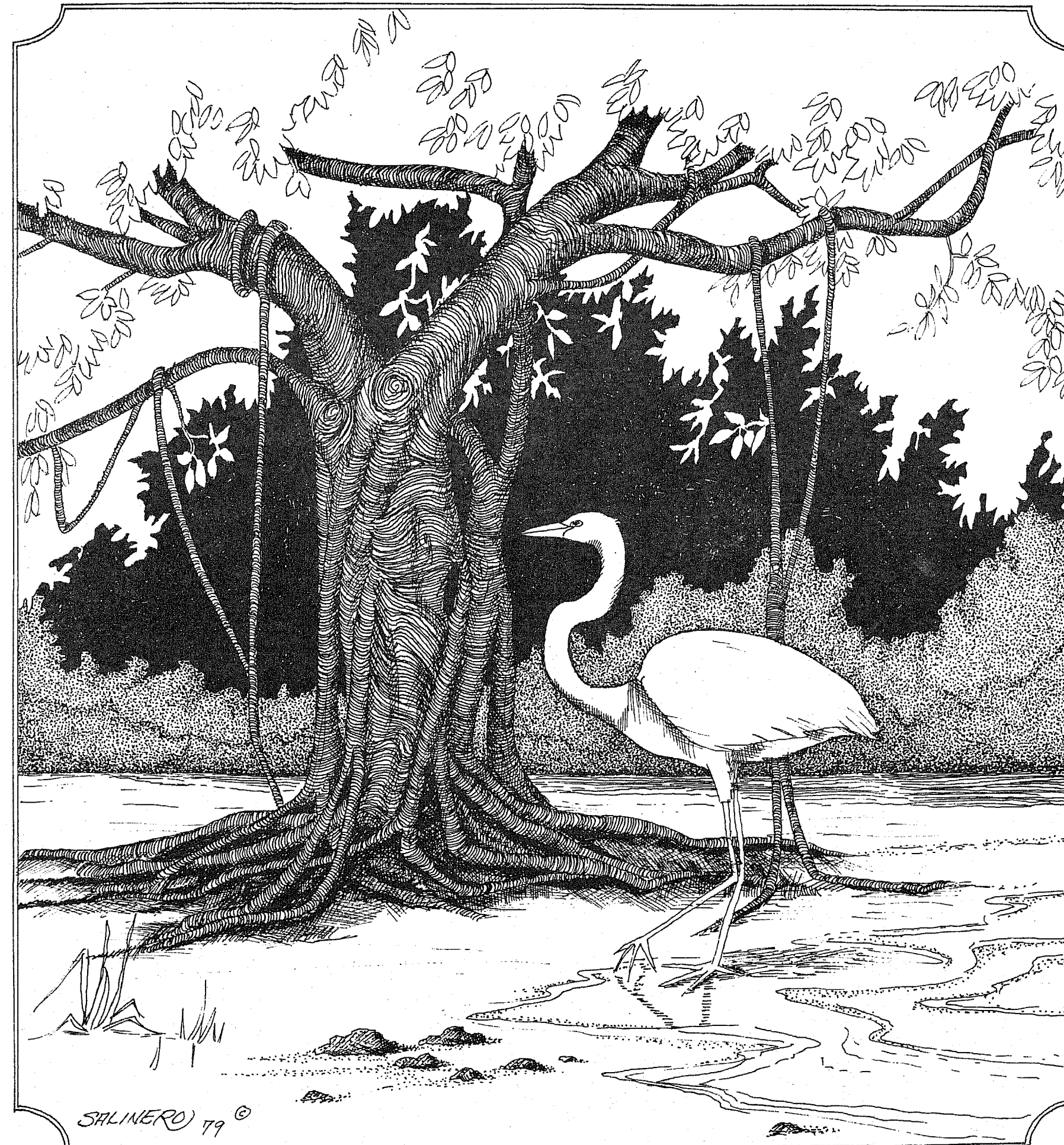
# Solares hill

FREE

Vol. IV, No. VI

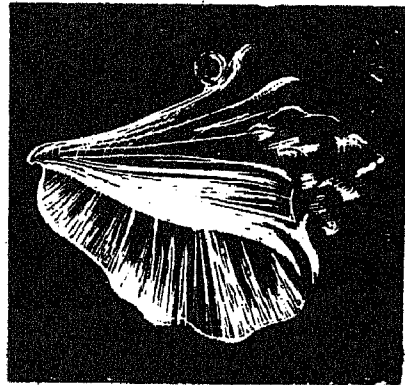
Key West, Florida

June/July 1979



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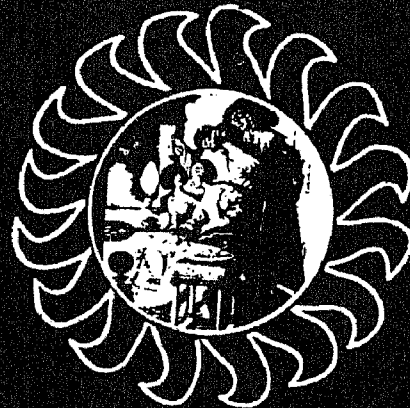


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## From the Editor

Hello --

OUR WRITER Frances Signorelli has written to tell us that she will be sending in her column Palms and Pelicans during the boiling-hot months from her "modest" cottage 4300 feet high in Western North Carolina. She further advises us that her "cheerful, hopeful, mischievous" newsletter, The Sound of the Conch, which is put out during the Season here and available only through subscription, will start up again come December. She writes that her subscribers will find the "little yellow, fun flash in their mailboxes" at that time. May I add that there is nothing like it in Key West, and that I recommend it highly.

I WAS DISAPPOINTED that the lawyer for the Hospital Board persuaded them to put aside for the present the peace offering of Drs. Buckner and Davidson. Both Drs. agreed to withdraw their suits against the hospital and certain doctors if some changes could be made in medical procedures here. Foremost of the changes they seek is to have outside doctors review charges of medical malpractice against Florida Keys Memorial Hospital doctors. I can think of nothing that would help to restore local confidence in our doctors more than to know that in cases of alleged medical malpractice at F.K.M.H. outside doctors would sit in judgment when these cases occurred. Too often members of the same profession find it difficult to criticize their colleagues in the same town. This is understandable. But if they won't do it, who will? Obviously, an outside peer group is the answer, but the Hospital Board is responding to a lame excuse about paying the costs for outside doctors to come to Key West! What nonsense. How often would these doctors have to come here anyway? It is doubtful that this would be an on-going ex-

pense. Here we have a situation in which many, many Key Westers have no confidence in the local medical profession's ability to govern itself properly. We need to have that confidence restored and we need an end to this bitter in-fighting. I hope that the Hospital Board rethinks its position on the compromise package put to them by Drs. Buckner and Davidson.

JOHN MERCER, President of the Old Island Restoration Commission, reports William Rupp, owner of Billie's Bar and Restaurant, has complied with the majority of the O.I.R.C.'s requests for compliance with the guidelines that are required for buildings in the old part of town. I think that in our August issue we ought to take another look at problems that the O.I.R.C. seems to be having with getting people to follow its guidelines. I don't feel that this group gets the support from the city it needs.

WE WILL NOT have a July issue, but we will be with you in August. See you then.

Cover artist this time is Sal Salinero. His work may be seen at the Gingerbread Gallery.



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ART DIRECTION.....WALT HILA

With a little help from our friends ..

Solares Hill Co., Inc.

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## DR. W.A. BISSON: Key West Prodigy

The editors of the Memphis Commercial Appeal were kind enough to permit Solares Hill to quote freely from an article they published last year about Dr. Bisson. We contacted Dr. Bisson at his office in Memphis, and he very graciously sent us a hand-written autobiography, copies of several citations, and a pack of photographs to help us with the story. Mack Dryden spliced all of the information together for the following story.

AT AGE 81, Wheelock Alexander Bisson, M.D., is one of the most often-honored physicians in the United States. After graduating from Florida A & M as valedictorian of his class in 1922, he became head of the physics and math department at State Teachers College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. After a few years, he entered the Meharry Medical College in Nashville and received his degree of medicine in 1929. In 1931 he moved to Memphis, where he began a practice that has become legendary.

IN 1966, DR. BISSON was elected second vice president of the National Medical Association; the following year the organization named him the Practitioner of the Year. He was also named the Tennessee Doctor of the Year by the Volunteer State Medical Association. The walls of his office are so full of citations and plaques that there is room for no more.

Although Dr. Bisson hasn't lived in his native Key West for more than half a century, he has clear memories of the island and its people. Solares Hill contacted him at his Memphis office, and Dr. Bisson reminisced about his life in Key West.

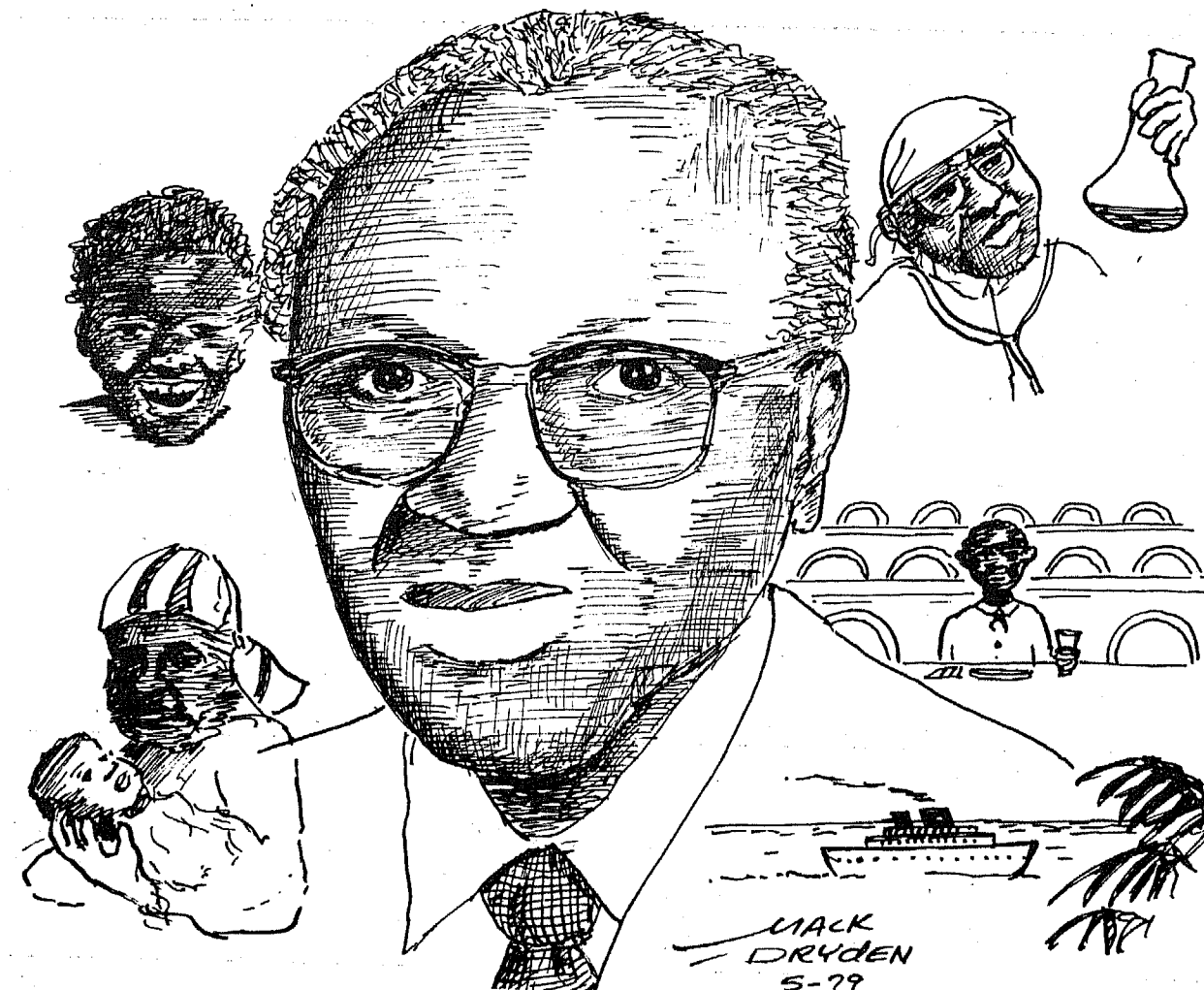
"My mother sewed for the Robert Curry family on Duval Street," he said. "Mr. Curry was a member of the millionaire Curry clan that owned the magnificent Curry and Sons store that was at the foot of Front Street near the Mallory Steamship docks. It was a massive white wooden structure with a turreted watchtower and porches all around the second floor. The ceiling was bedecked with beautiful swinging chandeliers that matched the beautiful architectural character of the building. It was well stocked with all kinds of ship supplies, hardware, spy glasses, pieces of art, salvage supplies, groceries, and general supplies. It was the Taj Majal of Key West, and Curry and Sons dominated the business picture in Key West for many years."

DR. BISSON REMEMBERS dozens of names of people on his family tree, many of whom still live in Key West. "My grandfather, John Bisson, came to Key West before 1890 as a ship carpenter, and he built many ships in Key West."

"My mother had one sister in Key West. Her name was Dora Perry. Her three children were Sarah, Lincoln, and Mary. Lincoln Perry, my first cousin, became the movie star Stepin Fetchit who made many, many moving pictures and came to Key West to perform for President Harry Truman at the Little White House. Stepin Fetchit came to Memphis three years ago to attend the funeral of my older sister, Mrs. Winifred Thompson. He had a stroke a month after the funeral and is living in an actors' nursing home near Los Angeles. I last saw him in August when I was out there attending a medical meeting."

"I was a member of the St. Peter's Episcopal Church, which at that time was the largest Episcopal church for blacks in the state. I was an altar boy there for eight years and a cross bearer for eight years."

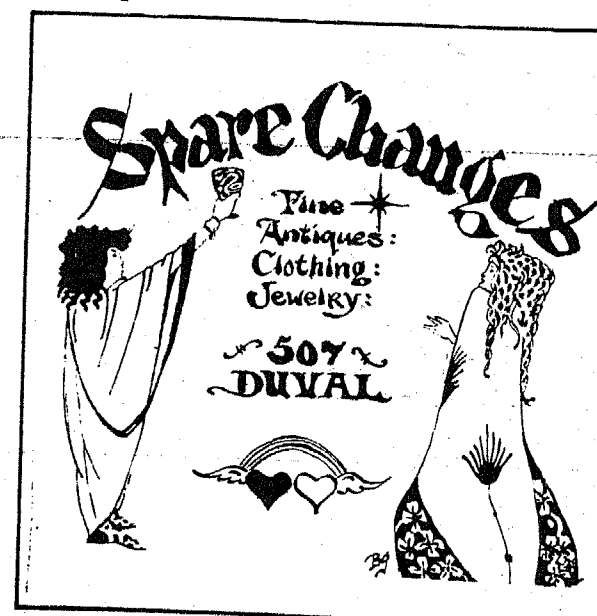
"My father worked on the Panama Canal when he was 18 years old. He helped



ON JANUARY 5, 1989, the cries of a newborn baby boy filled Chapman Lane, a little street deep in the black section of Key West that connects Angela and Petronia Streets.

George Henry Bisson, a carpenter, and his wife Sarah Jane, a dressmaker, were proud parents that day. They wished great things for their only son. Little did they realize that the tiny squirming bundle at Sarah's breast would one day be praised by U.S. presidents, listed in every book of American notables, lauded in the Congressional Record, and cited by every major medical association in the country.

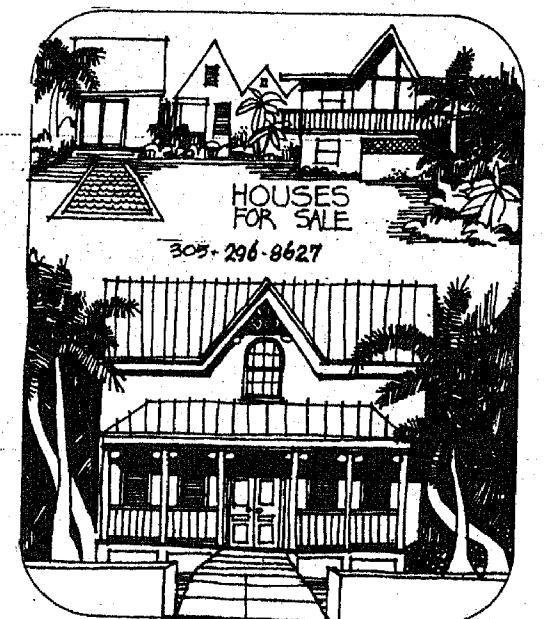
A government report in 1932 showed that Memphis had the highest infant mortality rate of any major U.S. city for that year. Dr. Bisson and five other black doctors went to the superintendent of the Memphis Health Department and sold him on the idea of establishing free Well Baby Clinics in the city. For the next 30 years, Dr. Bisson contributed his time, treating three generations of babies in the clinics he helped establish. Last year, one of the clinics was named the W.A. Bisson Primary Health Clinic.



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dig it. My mother had gone to work at the age of 12 for a judge in Nassau. She lived in his household and was taught to sew and crochet. After my parents moved to Key West, my mother sewed for a very rich white lady there. She was the widow of John J. Philbrick, who had owned the streetcar line, the power plant and an amusement park which at that time was supposed to be the largest of its kind in Florida.

"When I was seven, this fine lady wanted me to travel with her and her grandson, George Stricker, who was about my age. His father had been killed in the San Francisco earthquake. For three summers I traveled with them. We'd go by steamship from Key West to Miami or some other place that had a rail terminal and travel, oh, everywhere, from there by train. The railroad was being extended at that time to Key West but hadn't been completed.

"THE FIRST SUMMER, George and I had a stateroom on the steamer to ourselves, and we all ate together with everyone else on the ship. The second summer, things changed. It was strange and puzzling to me. It was the year that Florida set its Jim Crow foot down hard. The ship's steward came to announce dinner, but told me I would have to wait in the stateroom. I couldn't figure that out. After Mrs. Philbrick and George came back, I was directed to the dining room. The food and service were first-rate -- but I was the only diner in that great big dining room.

"I did a lot of thinking while I ate. I thought like the devil. I thought, 'The white man is a fool to go to all this expense and trouble to feed just one little old black boy.' When we got aboard the train in Miami and headed up the coast, it was the same thing. I wasn't allowed to ride with the whites. I must have been the only Negro on the train because they put me in a rail car

all by myself. A whole car, just for me. I was allowed in the diner only after all the white folks had finished eating. And I thought again, 'The white man is a fool to go to all this expense and trouble just for one person.' However, I decided not to resent it but to enjoy it. I had a good time taking in the scenery flashing by from whatever seat I wanted in the car since I was the only occupant.

"Mrs. Philbrick didn't want things that way, but there was nothing she could do about it. She was just the greatest lady. Whatever she bought for George, she'd buy one just like it for me. She even bought us violins and hired a teacher for us. And when we were traveling, she made me write home every week.

"LATER, MY MOTHER put me in a tailor shop to learn the trade. I would go to the shop, then go to school, and then go back to the tailor shop after school. After we moved to Miami, I was employed for a while by a tailor."

But he had known since he was five years old that he was going to become a doctor. "My mother told me then that she wanted me to be a doctor, and my father backed her up.

"Before going to A & M, I had picked up a book of Latin declensions, for something like 15 cents or a quarter. It laid out all the declensions anybody could ever expect to need. I figured that spending my slack time learning them was better than just idling away time. I learned them all, backwards and forwards and sideways.

"The first day in Latin class at college, the professor asked who could decline something and my hand went up -- the only one. Again, and a third time. By this time, the professor was beginning to feel challenged. The rest of the hour, he concentrated on me alone, testing me, trying to trick me. After class, he told me, 'Young man, you don't need any more Latin for the rest of your life.'

DR. BISSON CREDITS his eagerness to learn to some of the teachers he had in Key West, and he can name them all: Mrs. Theresa Lange, Mrs. Yulee Walters, Mrs. Lucille Graham Cummings, Miss Constance Roberts, Miss Irene Roberts, Miss Belle Leggett, Miss Mildred Shavers, and Professor James N. English.

"I also studied tailoring before and after school under Mr. Ernest Brown, Mr. Alfred Culmer, and Mr. Fred Moss. I took piano lessons from Miss Vernon Eddings on Thomas Street. I also took violin lessons from Mr. Joe Hannibal and Mrs. Valdes. I was a member of the Jolly Boys Orchestra. The other members were Preston Johnson, cornetist; William Stirrup, pianist; Lambert Walters, violinist; Felix Rodriguez, clarinetist; I was a violinist; Josie Wilson, soloist; York Scott, soloist; and Professor Frank Walters was music conductor.

"We played for dances, recitals, concerts, and once a month the sisters at St. Francis Xavier Catholic School on Virginia Street allowed our orchestra to perform and give a two-hour program for the students.

"I was elected president of the student body when I was at Douglass Junior High School, and I took an active part in athletics. I was in track, basketball, dramatics, and debating. I graduated valedictorian in 1917. My classmates were Ed Dupont, Edna Brown, Selina Washington, Miriam Kemp, Asalena Shavers, and Harry Gabriel. Other members of the high school were Ruth Cantwell, Marie Brown, Thelma Cantwell, Alexandrina Hererra, Alice Hererra, Thomas Reed, Wilhemina McCall, Myrtle Dean, and Belle Samber."

DR. BISSON MARRIED Maude Lee Voorhies in 1930; she has been not only wife but medical assistant and helpmate ever since, earning distinctions of her own. A teacher when she married, she began helping the doctor and went to Meharry Medical College to take up physical therapy. In 1976, she was named Woman of the Year by

the 600-member auxiliary to the National Medical Association.

The kind of man he is, the reason that Dr. Bisson is a venerated physician, is evident just in reading his reminiscences about some of the people he has cured. "It has been worth it all," he said. "If I had to do it all over again, I'd do the same thing. It's worth it to work with a patient until 2 a.m. and see that what you have been doing is beginning to show results, to see the worried family



finally manage a smile.

"It's worth it to see the breakthroughs in medicine come along, to feel that you've somehow been a part of it. To see smallpox, tuberculosis, and other awful diseases be brought under control."

HE IS FOND of encapsulating his philosophy of life's purpose by some words which were quite enigmatic to him when he read them as a boy:  
What I gave, I have.

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What I spent, I had.  
 What I kept, I lost.  
 HE SAYS IT was more than half a century later that he felt he had grasped their true meaning: whatever you give comes back in priceless measure. "I have tried to be the kind of old-style doctor where interest in the condition of the patient exceeded interest in condition of the pocketbook. Once a man with the flu came in here. He said he had been to another physician twice and the fee had been, for a man of his financial circumstances, staggering. He said, 'Dr. Bisson, I need some treatment bad, but I'm scared to go back to the other doctor because I ain't got but \$5 to my name.' I told him, 'Sit down. I don't want anybody coming to this office scared of what the bill is going to be.'"  
 Now, after a career that has spanned more than three generations, after treating hundreds of thousands of patients, and after contributing more to the field of relieving human suffering than anyone could imagine, Dr. Bisson is ready to retire.  
 "It'll be sometime this year," he said. "No particular date. Just when it's all done."  
 EST

**poetry**  
 towering pines glisten as a gentle shower falls on the youth of day.  
 droplets of light seep thru and the eyes of the forest unveil a symphony of movement.....  
 a woodpecker busies itself with a typed letter of approval.  
 a couple of cardinals perch in judgment to the sky.  
 sapling of bright green and brown drinks in slowly the elixir of life.  
 i feel the calm of the forest inside me.  
 i feel the cool of the earth, a fragrance in the air.  
 Mother Nature signs the morning with her signature of love.  
 by George Gullette

**Palms & Pelicans**  
 BY FRANCES-ELIZABETH SIGNORELLI  
 SMALL MOVING MAN  
 I AM AT a hillside inn in North Carolina with the notes for my book spread about me -- picking up and putting down, rearranging and reshaping nostalgic island images. One of the island slides has got to be of Red Beccaise, the Small Moving man of Key West.  
 A North Georgia woman on that inn's porch shows interest.  
 "Red Beccaise," I explain, "for years has answered summons to island households following large, admired disasters. Such as fires, blow-ups, dismissals, divorces, separations and spats -- domestic or corporate."  
 "O, he comes like the southern planter. The undertaker," said the North Georgia woman, feeling of her pendant, which is in the shape of a tooth with two long, wiggly roots.  
 Well, generally, you are at the end of your rope when you call Red Beccaise. Let's say the spinet piano and the freezer are to go to the Moose, and the Model T refrigerator to Goodwill. First of all, you go through Frenchie. Frenchie Beccaise mans their phone. She cools you down, sets you right. You are made to see that a man like Red Beccaise, Small Moving man, is worth waiting for, and that's just what you'll do.  
 AFTER DASHING ALL hopes, Frenchie, who has now established who runs this outfit, is apt to locate Red and send him over so that the spinet arrives at the Moose on time.  
 The first time I ever saw Red and Frenchie, they were taking refreshment

at Eddie's Little Luncheonette on Olivia Street. And I said, "I just know that's our Small Moving man and his wife." It seems to me that Red and Frenchie are red-headed, though the haze of distance here in North Carolina, which etches them clear and true for me, might have lightened the hue of their hair.  
 Red always arrives at the job site to find a flapdoodle. Persons who want Small Moving usually are in a shameful mental state. Red comes, trailed by his crew. It seems to me that the crew may change from visit to visit. The cast may change, not the appearance. And Red never changes. There, on the landing, is Red, impassive in overalls, and the crew with all its muscles.  
 Red, who has passed this way before, even recognizes shapes of furniture, like old pals met in the street. Take this oak chest. He's had a couple of goes at it, twice up, twice down.  
 RED SELDOM SPEAKS. Mutely, he indicates the dolly which the crew brings up on wheels. As on the bridge of a ship stands Red -- a nod here, a signal there, and the big green chair sails down like lint. The divan, flipped over on its side, wafts down.  
 This is Red's sphere of influence. It's old material warmed over. No matter how stuck an awkward monolith of furniture, no matter how sharp a stair curve or narrow an aperture, Red conquers. The householder fizzes about, consumed with pride or nerves or pique. Under stress, one was known to throw up a window and wave a chamber pot.  
 Red retains his self-command.  
 Come each Fourth of July, have you spotted that large, chirpy, faded red tent, flapping hospitably from a prominent station across from Smather's Beach? That's Red and Frenchie Beccaise's annual party, tossed by the island's Small Moving man.

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## notes and antic-dotes

by Dorothy Raymer

THIS IS THE third and final article of a series concerning the bizarre story of Karl Tanzler, who adopted the title of Count Von Cosel and who was probably the most notorious proven necrophiliac in history. Ironically, this infamous lover of the dead became a prime tourist attraction and indirectly contributed to international interest in Key West.

For those who missed the April and May issues of *Solares Hill*, Von Cosel, as he was generally known, body-snatched the corpse of a young woman, Elena Hoyos, and kept it as his bed partner from 1931 until 1940, when his possession of the deceased became public knowledge.

Von Cosel, a radiologist at the old Marine Hospital, took X-rays of the tubercular Elena when she was admitted for examination. He immediately regarded the dying girl as a reincarnation from his life in the past and claimed that long ago she had been his love. In subsequent court sessions, after Von Cosel had been arrested for vandalism of a grave, he confessed that Elena was the embodiment of dreams he had sustained from boyhood on through to his current age, which in 1940 was approaching 70 years.

VON COSEL NEGOTIATED with Elena's family to create a mausoleum in the City Cemetery for his beloved. Meanwhile, she was supposedly buried in a regular grave before transfer to the crypt that Von Cosel built with his own hands.

After nearly two years, Von Cosel completed an elaborate above-ground vault. The low rounded top was capped by an urn. Originally, a paneled glass door, which was kept locked except when Von Cosel visited, led to a few steps descending into the interior. On one corner of the outside wall was the inscription "Elena Milagro Hoyos" (her married name of Mesa was omitted). Beneath that her dates of birth and death were followed by the traditional "R.I.P.," although it was a number of years before the body of Elena was permitted to "Rest In Peace."

THE BURIAL CHAMBER resembled a low fallout shelter. In its dim interior there was a casket enclosed in a glass-topped case, flanked by a low table and chairs. Von Cosel often sat there "communicating" with Elena. He even left tender love notes to further the illusion that the corpse was in the cemetery shrine. It was rumored, falsely, that he had a telephone in the tomb and conversed with Elena from his house in stormy weather.

For years, Elena's body had not really been lying in repose but had been concealed in the wrecked fuselage of a plane which Von Cosel had purchased. The plane was grounded on the Naval station near the Marine Hospital until a strict commanding officer ordered it removed.

Von Cosel then had the plane towed out to an area known as Butcher's Pen, once the site of a slaughter house. The body remained in the plane, and he lived in an adjacent beachside shack.

When this property was sold, he moved to a tumble-down garage near 17th Street and Flagler Avenue on a bit of land which is now part of property owned by Jim and Val Lock-lair. Once more settled in an isolated place, Von Cosel transferred Elena to living quarters in the converted garage, where he ensconced the body in a canopied bed.

GRADUALLY, VON COSEL had disassociated himself from the Hoyos household, although at one time, shortly after Elena's demise, he had rented her bedroom from the family and stayed there temporarily. At that time her relatives were apparently

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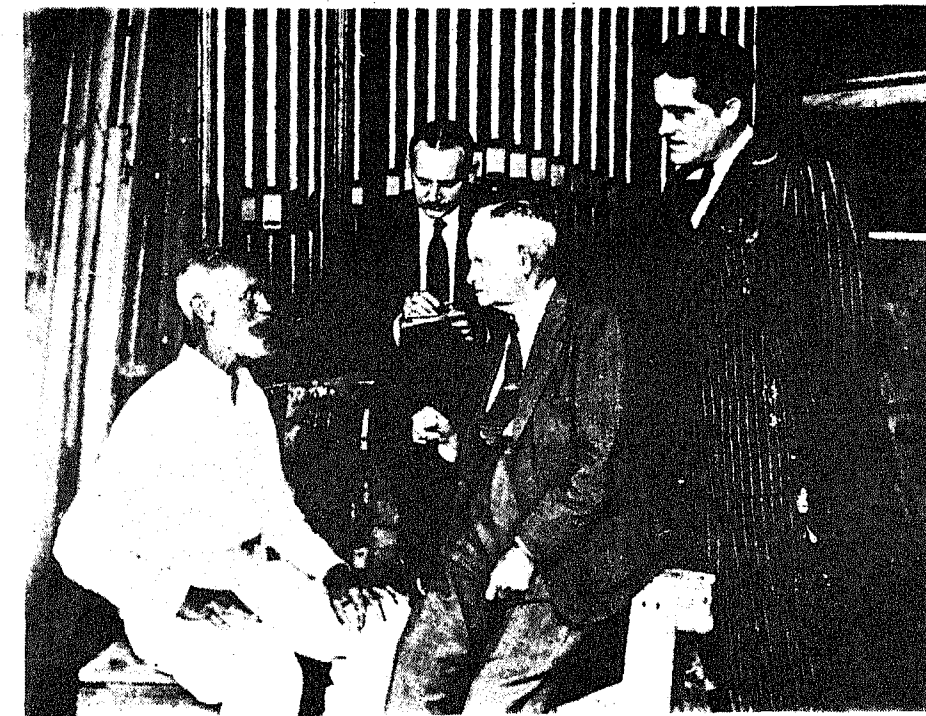
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unaware that Elena was not in the tomb her elderly admirer had constructed for her.

Years passed. Von Cosel did not keep up his intimacy with Elena's people. He no longer had his X-ray technician's job, and his income dwindled. He was unable to make monetary gifts to her family as he had in the past.

ON SEPTEMBER 29, 1940, Elena's sister, Mrs. Mario Medina, went to Justice of the Peace Enrique Esquinaldo. Very much upset, she told Esquinaldo that she placed flowers on the graves of all her family every Sunday, but that suddenly, when she came to Elena's tomb, she had a feeling that her sister was not inside the vault.

Boistered by her "woman's intuition," she went out to the home of Von Cosel and bravely confronted him, asking directly, "What have you done with my sister?"



Von Cosel, left, shown being questioned at his home by (left to right): Havana newspaper man Francisco M. Opero, Louis Harris, (Von Cosel's attorney), and Dr. Julio DePao. Note pipe organ in back. (Photo courtesy of Monroe County Public Library.)

According to Judge Esquinaldo, the "scientist" admitted he was keeping Elena with him but said he was doing so in order to conduct experiments for restoring her to life. He even showed Mrs. Medina the figure of Elena, lying in state under the bed veiling.

THE DISTRESSED SISTER told Esquinaldo that she had first gone to the sheriff's department. When her story was dismissed as fantasy, she appealed to Esquinaldo.

Later he said, "It struck me as one of those unusual cases of necrophilism. I accompanied Mrs. Medina to talk with Von Cosel, and my suspicion was verified."

At first, Mrs. Medina wanted to hush up the horrifying circumstances, and so a week's reprieve was given, with the warning that the abductor must return the body to the cemetery within a week. Esquinaldo was enraged when he had confirmed the stealing of the body, and he kept urging Elena's sister to take legal action.

continued on page 22

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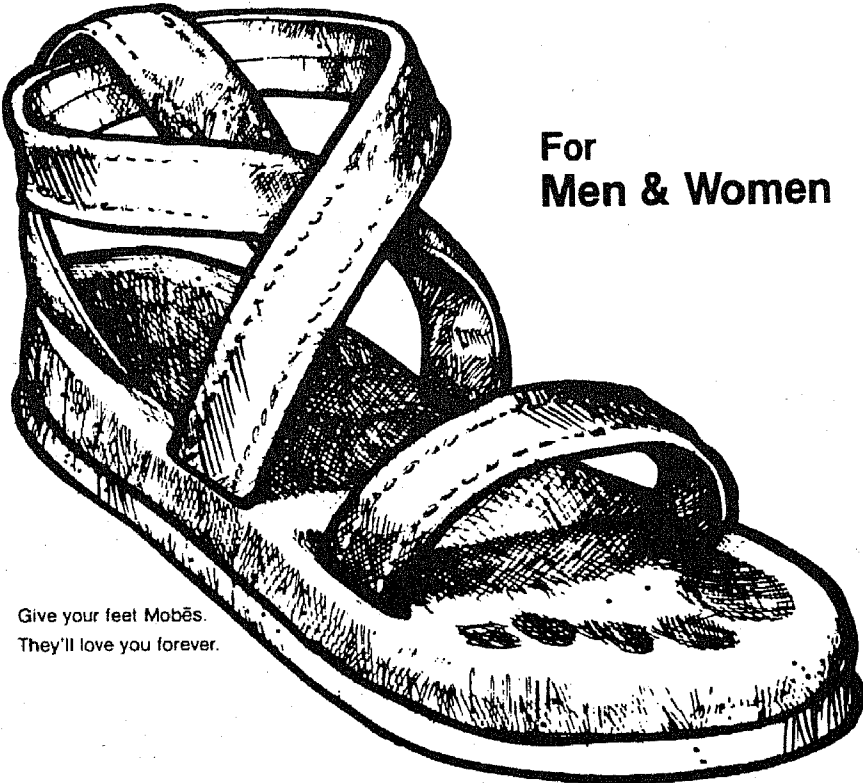


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## poetry

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My colored shards of glass,  
To cause a tune so sweet and clear  
I see into my past.  
I look back on the times I learned  
And felt the pain like you,  
And smile at the lesson taught  
That came from love so true.

I wonder if we'll ever see  
The day when no one cries.  
I hope that everyone is loving  
Someone in their eyes.  
I wish there was a way I could  
Just help the rest to see  
The pain and lonely feelings known  
Can leave us totally.


Cause every day a soft wind blows  
My chimes inside my heart,  
To cause a music soft and true,  
To show me I'm a part  
Of all the times that we've all seen,  
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And all the lessons ever learned  
That came from love so true.

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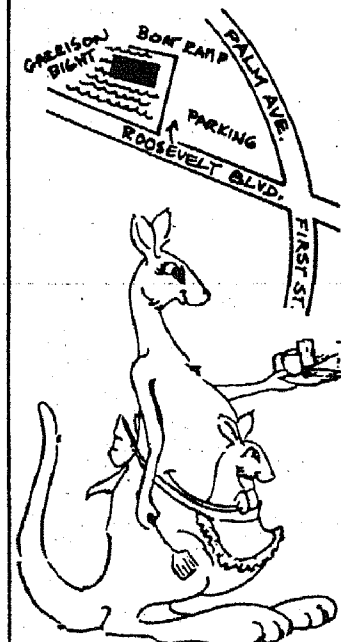
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## Mental Health in Conflict

by Kathleen Hargreaves

DEPENDING ON WHICH side of the political fence you choose, the Mental Health Clinic of the Lower Keys is either the site of a full-fledged local rhubarb or a case of very sour professional grapes.

Not unlike many local issues, camps are divided among vocal opponents, persuasive advocates and a significant number of people hesitant to bite the beaucroatic hand that feeds them.

ASIDE FROM THE many who stand to gain or lose from an organizational change in the Key West clinic, there are approximately 400 limited-income patients whose mental stability depends on receiving the highest quality treatment possible, regardless of professional infighting. Also at stake is the disbursement of some \$60,000 worth of city and county funds.

That hard-won money accounts for approximately one-quarter of the total annual budget administered by Dr. Nancy Spesso, director of the private, non-profit agency.

The youngest of all mental health directors in the state and one of its four female directors, 32-year-old Spesso sits at the hub of the controversy. Described as an "authoritarian manipulator, a genius at public relations, a no-nonsense administrator and an empire builder," Spesso is the object of at least one lawsuit filed by a disgruntled former employee and the "darling" of the Mental Health Clinic's Board of Directors.

CONVERSATION WITH HER discloses few, if any, clearly abrasive attitudes. She willingly rearranges her schedule to accommodate an interview. Her manner is friendly and professional; her answers are direct, considered and uncritical of her detractors.

Strictly public relations, some claim.

Psychiatrist Jerry Weinstock, a former co-director of the clinic and now in private practice, acts as spokesman for the opposition.

"The way mental health clinics are run in the Keys makes Watergate pale by comparison," states the psychiatrist with a history of volatile confrontations with Spesso. Citing numerous examples of her alleged duplicity, Weinstock says it has been virtually impossible to instigate an impartial investigation of the administrator's professional behavior.

"She's got the board eating out of her hand. She wines and dines them. She meets with them frequently on a one-to-one basis and she's got them all snowed into rubber-stamping anything she says."

WHY SHOULD JERRY WEINSTOCK care how Nancy Spesso operates or what transpires at the clinic? He says it's a matter of professional involvement or perhaps -- more accurately, his noninvolvement.

As one of two practicing psychiatrists in Key West, Weinstock claims that Spesso refuses to have any professional contact with him. Rather than make use of local professional resources, the clinic relies solely on a once-a-week visit by a Miami psychiatrist who has little time to do more than review patient medication.

Weinstock explains that in the past he offered his services to the clinic for consultation and worked there a few hours a week for a brief period. When informed that the clinic could not afford his fees, Weinstock offered to continue for free.

"She told me the clinic didn't need my help. Key West is loaded with need. It's bursting at the seams! 'I'm furnishing supervision now,' she said. She also told me that the staff had met and decided they didn't want my help. They later denied any such meeting. She fur-

thermore told her board of directors that I either failed to show up or didn't work when I was there. That was the end of my involvement with the clinic," explained Weinstock, who keeps a detailed file on his activities with the clinic.

DR. ALPHONSO REY, the other psychiatrist in town, has also terminated his relationship with the clinic. His motivation was, in part, economic.

"I was offered a consultant's fee of \$35 an hour. That's not bad if the service was limited to indigent clients. But in emergency situations or applications of the Baker Act often involve time in court. That can add up to a lot of hours that are needed by my private clients." (The Baker Act authorizes brief hospitalization of the patient for emergency evaluation and treatment.)

"THE WAY MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS ARE RUN IN THE KEYS MAKES WATERGATE PALE BY COMPARISON."

Another area of Rey's disagreement with the clinic involves what happens to the client after an evaluation is made.

"Once I've given my evaluation, the clinic takes over treatment. Therapy is done by others. I demanded that I be able to supervise treatment of patients I diagnosed. If that's not possible, then the therapist should be able to spend an hour a week consulting with me on the patients' progress and future treatment. I could not come to an understanding with Dr. Spesso."

DR. LOU O'CONNOR, a clinical psychologist and an associate of Dr. Weinstock since their co-directorship of the clinic, takes a similar, if somewhat more removed, stand on the issue of professional interaction between the clinic and doctors in private practice.

"Since leaving the clinic in 1973, I've had virtually no contact with either the clinic or its directors, including Nancy. That's rather interesting in and of itself. What particularly concerns me

about the clinic is the lack of contact between it and any of its past three directors and practicing psychotherapists in the private sector of Key West. It's as if there's some jealousy, some quiet antagonism between the directors and ourselves.

"When you stop to realize that we're all in this business to help people get better, it seems more than a little strange that there isn't more interplay between mental health professionals in town."

ALTHOUGH DR. SPESSO did not address herself to this issue, she did advise that a full-time psychiatrist had been located and would join the staff in mid-summer.

"That won't last long," says Weinstock. "Psychiatrists have come and gone at the clinic, and I don't have any reason to believe this fellow will last any longer than the others. There seems to exist an authority problem between Nancy and persons she sees as rivals."

AS A FURTHER example of his theory, Weinstock explained that Ernie Szetela, a former employee paid by CETA and agency monies to administer the Baker Act program and funds, was dismissed by Spesso because "she saw him as a threat." Ernie was extremely competent and holds a master's degree in psychology. Spesso told the board that he was incompetent and recommended that he be let go," says Weinstock.

There is at least one variation on this story. Some claim that CETA funds had run out and that Spesso had no alternative but to order Szetela's layoff. Others speculate that a "personality clash existed between the two" and the only resolution to the problem was the exit of one of the parties. Since Spesso was the director, Szetela lost.

Szetela insists that agency appeal guidelines were overlooked, that meetings to discuss his job status were held without the knowledge of the complete board of directors (some of whom were sympathetic to him) and that Spesso attempted to harass him by refusing to sign pay authorizations until legal ramifications were called to her attention. Litigation is pending.

ANOTHER PROBLEM AREA involving the clinic centers on Dr. Spesso's professional qualifications.

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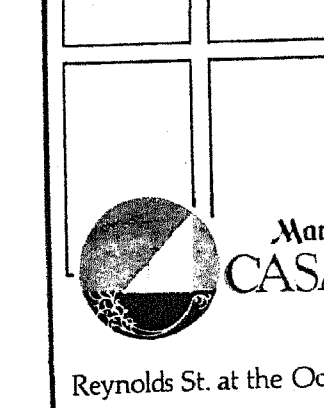
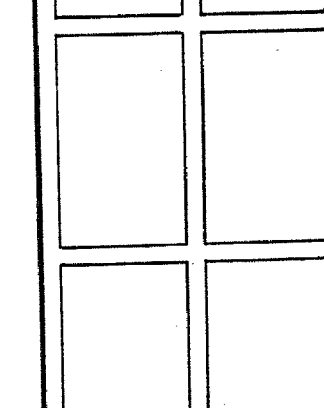
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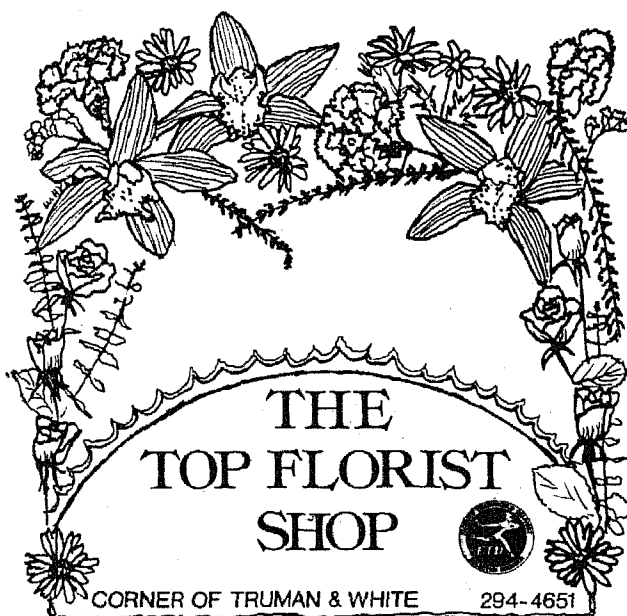


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"Inadequate for the position she holds," states Weinstock. "There is a world of difference between a psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, an educational psychologist and a counselor. People refer to her as 'doctor' but few of them know that her title has nothing to do with medicine."

Dr. Spesso's office contains numerous framed certificates and degrees, one of which confers on her the title of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling from the University of Florida. When questioned about her job qualifications, Spesso explained that she pursued a career in counseling after spending a number of years in mental health related positions.

"I learned just about everything I needed to know about mental illness when my husband and I lived 24 hours a day for three years as a parent couple in a residence cottage for disturbed children at a state mental hospital."

"I worked into the career backwards. I said, 'I like what I'm doing, I can do it, but I don't know why I'm doing it.' I went for a master's degree, then we went to St. Croix, where we did diagnostic evaluation on children for the government. When we came back, I got a doctorate from Gainesville. We ran a group treatment facility for disturbed adolescents for two years. I finished my doctorate, served as director of outpatient emergency in Gainesville for three years and after visiting Key West decided that I would apply for this job if it ever opened up. It did. I did. And here I am."

ALTHOUGH LEGALLY ELIGIBLE to hold the director's position, Dr. Spesso is unable to make clinical evaluations, prescribe medication or exercise psychiatric authority during emergency situations because she is not a psychiatrist or a psychologist. She and her staff rely on their ability to calm a disturbed patient when the occasion arises or request medical assistance from physicians or hospital emergency rooms.

"When all else fails, we resort to the jail. We hate to do it but sometimes we have no alternative. There just isn't

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enough money to do everything and hire everyone we want," Spesso admits. Talk about the allocation of two emergency beds for mental health patients at Florida Keys Memorial Hospital continues.

Even when the new staff psychiatrist arrives, even if he stays, there is simply too much work and too much time involved for one person to handle it all, Weinstock concludes. "No one can be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. That would cause a mental problem all by itself."

THE PROBLEMS BELOW the surface at the Mental Health Clinic of the Lower Keys are ones which can and sometimes do jeopardize a patient's welfare. From all indications, an airing of grievances, hostilities and repressed aggression by all involved would make for a healthier and more efficient state of mind in the offices of the Mental Health Clinic and private mental health practitioners.



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## No Relative of Relativity

by Amy Lee De Poo

MONSTER MOVIES AND mad scientists occupy the minds of children everywhere. I was no exception. I was perpetually lured each Saturday to the Strand Theatre on Duval Street by the dark fascination of the unknown.

I was always an industrious child, willing to slave and toil for the thirty cents admission there and considered myself really fortunate if by some philanthropic quirk of fate my beloved mother gave me twenty cents extra. This was for the purchasing of such wholesome goodies as Reese's Cups and the candy-coated licorice cylinders known as Good and Plenty's. The latter made an effective and bizarre adornment to one's face if stuck in the nostrils, a trick I pulled frequently to disgust and embarrass my younger sister Martha.

Key West had only two movie houses when I was young, the Strand and the San Carlos. All the children went to the Strand because there were three movies shown at the Saturday matinee. The Strand also had a kind and good-natured owner, Iggy they called him, who always stood by the door and endured the endless stream of young humanity pulsing and ebbing around him, a nerve strangler which never seemed to bother him. He seemed to know everybody by name. This made the movie house a kind of home away from home, in contrast to the impersonal chains of theaters we have today. I delighted in his choice of cinematic entertainment -- a lush array of Abbott and Costello and Bowers Boys movies that were so old the vocal tracks crackled. We also enjoyed screaming ourselves hoarse at every Boris Karloff and Vincent Price movie ever made. Iggy certainly knew the tastes of his audience.

I BECAME ENTRANCED with the miracles of science and mad doctors who could

spout highly technical jargon while writing indecipherable hieroglyphics on the blackboard, so I decided one day in winter to become a scientist myself. Not knowing where to begin in achieving the proper skills for producing authentic-looking equations, I asked my father if he knew of any great scientists. He was busy at the time and gave me a curt answer with two words: Albert Einstein. He evidently thought that this was enough to ignite the burning thirst for knowledge in my little brain, but I could see it was not enough for me. I pursued my inquiry a little further, knowing that I was indeed treading on thin ice.

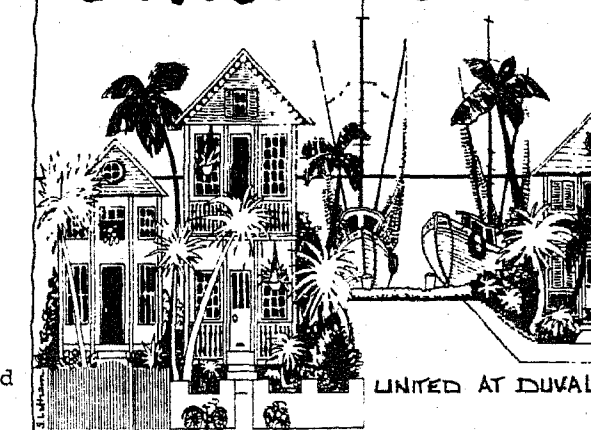
"Well, is that all you know? I mean, isn't there something else I should know about Albert Einstein?" I asked cautiously.

THERE WAS ONE thing John could not and would not ever tolerate: the mortal sin of pestering. He stopped and exhaled audibly through his nostrils, a genuine sign of impatience in a parent. He then launched into his standard lecture on matters of academic importance.

"Why don't you go look it up in the encyclopedia? What are you, helpless? Can't you see that I'm doing something? I paid good money for that monstrous set of books in there, and here you are asking me, wasting time, instead of looking it up." (This brings to mind the eternal question: just exactly what is good money? Parents pay good money for things like cars, food, tools, band-aids, postage stamps and lumpy sweater dresses that make you look like a partially metamorphosed caterpillar -- so what do they use bad money for? I still can't figure it out.)

NO ONE COULD argue with that avalanche of parental dogma, so off I went to the World Book Encyclopedia in the front room

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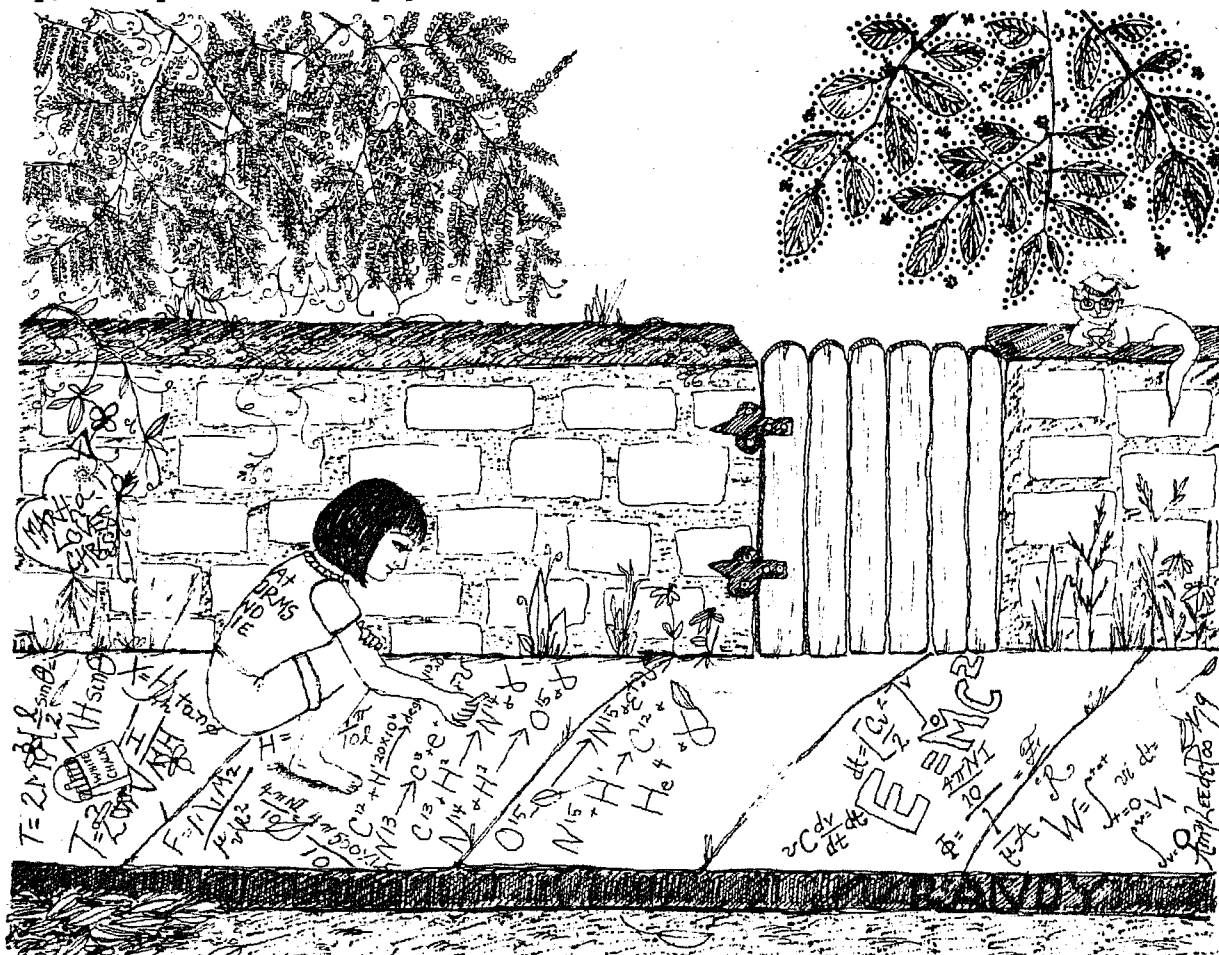
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to consult the oracle of higher learning. I selected the E book and quickly found the section on Albert, which I studied carefully for a while. I was then referred to R for more detailed information on his theories. The text was not difficult for me to comprehend, as I was remarkably astute for my age and all his concepts were reduced to generalizations suitable for any healthy chimpanzee with an aware mind. Armed with the book, I went to my table and began to practice writing equations. A few minutes later my mother announced that dinner was about ready, and my desire for spaghetti marinara

an esoteric, complicated and highly technical array of equations, which the academic world had yet to match. I was quite pleased with how easy it was to appear over-educated. The prize of all my hieroglyphics was drawn out in very large and bold strokes and placed strategically at the end: the magical equation  $E=MC^2$ . This was the only surviving vestige of my all too temporary erudition. Thank goodness it turned out to be so important.

ANYWAY, I STOOD around and lectured to no one in particular (which was not



surpassed my hunger for the theory of relativity. It was rainy for the next few days, so my mad-scientist scheme had to be temporarily postponed.

A few days later, the brilliant tropical sun reappeared to soak the island through and through with warm, humid heat. Luckily for me, the sidewalk in front of our house on Dey Street was cooled by the overhanging branches of a large tamarind tree at that time. I got my trusty box of white chalk, something I never ran out of because of its myriad of uses (hopscootch games, playing school, writing secrets of your sister's romantic inclinations on cement walls and, of course, expressing one's deeper thought for all the world to read, right on the front walk.) I refreshed my memory of what I had learned a few days before and went out to depict what was, to my mind, the quintessence of true scientific scholarship. After an hour or so, I had managed to cover the entire sidewalk with

hard, considering I was all alone), and time drifted by. Soon it was five o'clock, and John pulled up from Boca Chica, where he worked, in his little red Studebaker. Sometimes he had a paper with him and sometimes he did not. Today he did not. He started towards the house, then paused for a moment. He stopped and turned slowly. Evidently something I had written had caught his eye -- could it be my plagiarized magical equation? "Amy, did you write all that?" "Yes, I did. Don't you think it looks good? I think it's quite nice. Wait till Martha sees it. She'll go crazy."

HE LOOKED AT me with a queer expression on his face, similar to that of the old prospector who has just struck the mother lode at age ninety-nine and a half. "Well, look there, what does that mean," he asked, pointing to the most salient of my chalky labors. "Why, that's the equation for the

theory of relativity, by Albert Einstein," I recited like the little parrot that I was.

Poor John. He sort of gasped and looked faint for a moment. He had completely forgotten our conversation of a few days before and my exposure to the enlightening world of World Book. I could just see him thinking to himself, GOOD GOD, the child's brilliant! He probably had visions of What's My Line and The Sixty-Four Thousand Dollar Question swimming in his head because he walked into the house without another word. I suppose it was a little devilish of me not to inform him of the source of my genius, but it was out of sheer devotion to him that I remained quiet -- I wanted him to go to his reward a happy man.

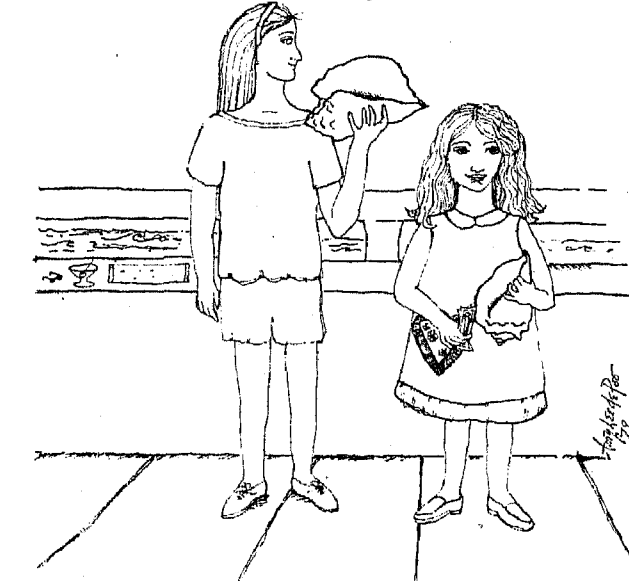
DURING THE MIDDLE of the next week, John told me there was someone he wanted me to go see on Saturday. It was an old friend of my parents who rented a winter home here. He was Dr. E.A. Lowe, one of the most respected paleontologists in the country. My mother would have him over for dinner occasionally for butterflied fried shrimp, a dish she made that is unexcelled anywhere in the world. I couldn't imagine why John would ask me to go see him, especially because on that weekend my sisters and I were going to become rich by selling the empty conch shells John had discarded from his trips out in the boat. The Conch Tour Train stopped at the end of White Street Pier, and my enterprising sisters, Martha and Kathryn, and I had every intention of loading up our bike baskets and making a fortune there in the souvenir trade. I pointed this out to John, but he told me Dr. Lowe was expecting me and he also had a surprise for me. Of course I had to do what my father told me to do. Anything else was unthinkable.

I arrived at Dr. Lowe's cottage and was welcomed in by his housekeeper. Presently Dr. Lowe came out and smiled at me, his little eyes twinkling behind very thick spectacles. I always liked him because he sparkled with the wit only true keenness can produce. He walked a little slowly, to be sure, but his mind was as sharp as ever.

WE SAT DOWN at his table, one that amazed me because it was glass-topped but you could look right through it as if the glass did not exist at all. This could pass for a small miracle in our house, the fact being that you couldn't see through anything glass in our house -- anything glass was usually smeared with butter and jelly fingerprints and nearly opaque. I asked about my surprise; he gently told me to be patient. We began to talk in a most natural fashion, and I forgot about my two sisters sitting out there on White Street Pier, just raking in the money. Interspersed with the usual questions of what my favorite things were, how I liked school and other generalities were some very pointed references to scientific theories and geographical locations. Of course I knew absolutely nothing of any scientific value, and by

the time we were half-finished, the Congo River had ended up in Arabia. I also managed to convince him that Elizabeth Taylor indeed was NOT Cleopatra because her fingers were too fat and that more than likely I was because my fingers were just the right size. He chuckled more than a few times that afternoon.

He then told me a marvelous story about an actual experience he had had with Albert Einstein. This impressed me to no end because I had seen Einstein's name in print in my World Book Encyclopedia. The two men were colleagues at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Einstein, as Dr. Lowe called him, went for a walk in the countryside with Dr. Lowe; they were both so deep in discussion that when lunchtime arrived, the two had walked so far that getting back for nourishment was out of the question. The father of the A-Bomb proved to be quite the angler and snared a trout from the stream they were following. He even cooked it on hot rocks using the principles of solar energy as his source of heat! That was the first time I ever heard of power from the sun. I was charmed by all of this and will never forget that day as long as I live.



The shadows grew a little longer, and Dr. Lowe produced a whole bag of toffee -- my surprise -- then bade me good-bye and that was that.

I DIDN'T MIND so much that I missed out on the sale of the conch shells. After all, I had an entire bag of toffee wrapped in multicolored foil to amuse me. Still, I couldn't help but muse that knowledge did not then, does not now, and never ever will, come cheap.

Dr. Lowe died several years later. I would not have known about it right away, but by some spiritual force, I was scanning *Newsweek* magazine one day, and my eye was caught by the obituary column. There, in black and white, was his name and a list of his many accomplishments. I was truly saddened and thought back to that afternoon I had spent with him. He did not forget me, either. When his

NO RELATIVE OF RELATIVITY continued on page 20

## SALES, APPRAISALS & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



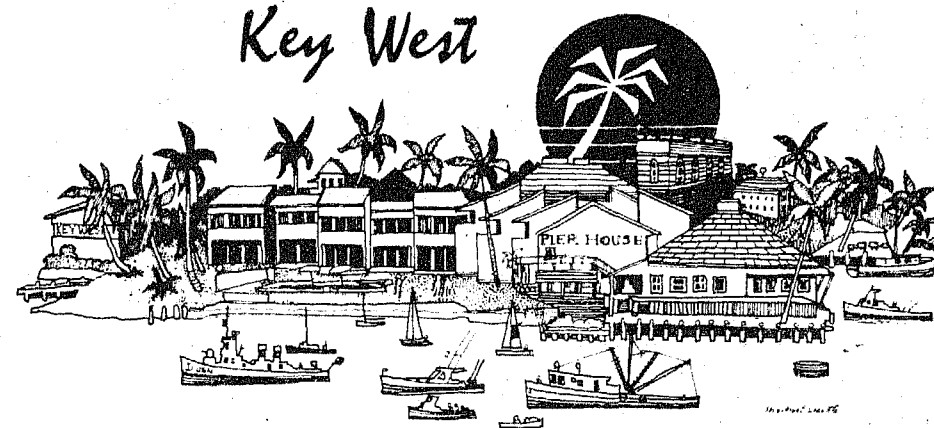
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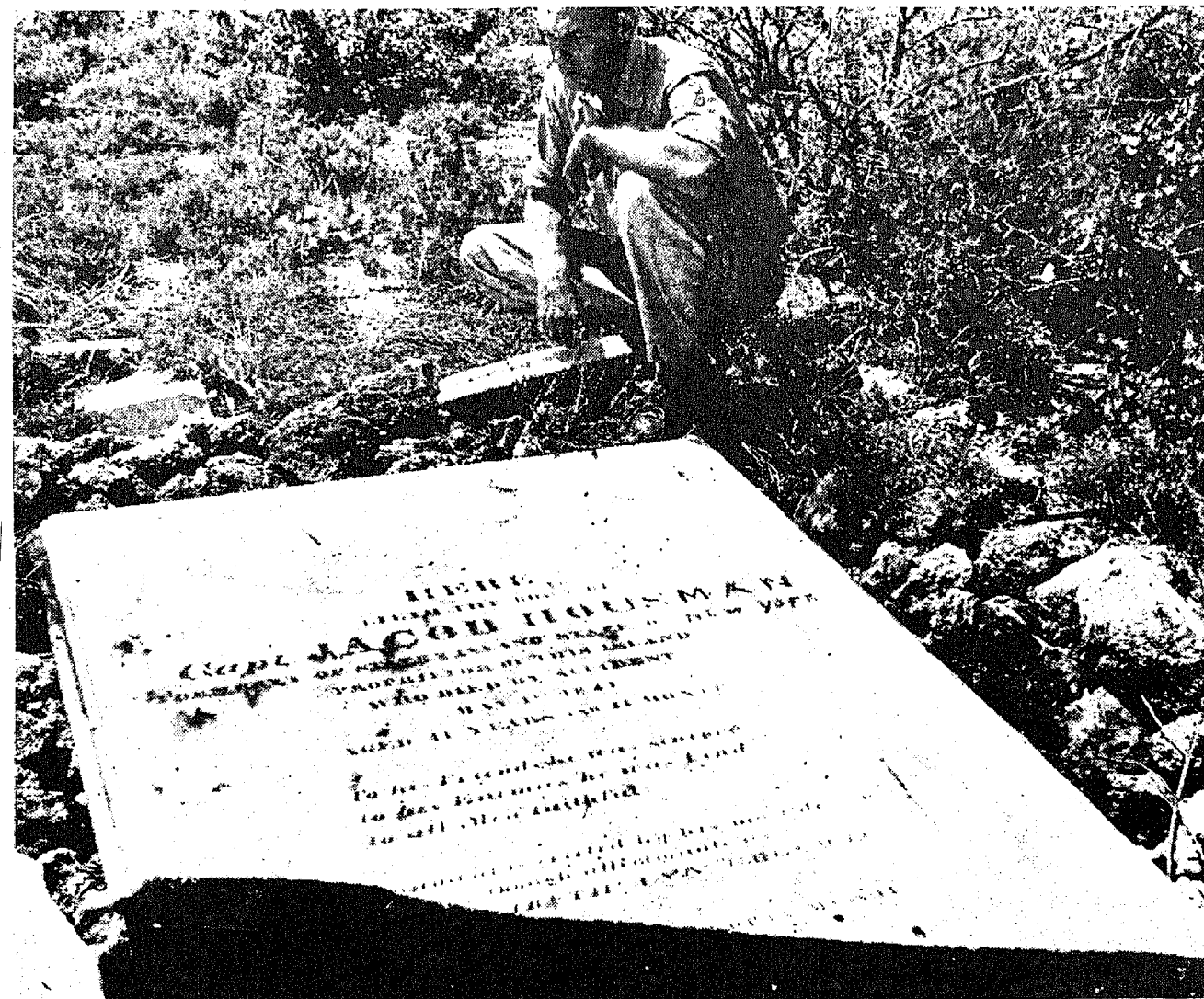
# The Secret of Indian Key

by Lee Rohe

IT'S NOT MUCH more than a brief punctuation mark of land against the surrounding blue immensity of sky and ocean. Squatting there on the horizon, it has a windswept look; the island's hardwood trees on the windward side bend gracefully back from the prevailing winds.

As one draws closer, the 12-acre island seems much different from its neighboring keys. Cactus, Spanish bayonet and giant century plants, their single center stalks rising 30 feet, flourish. Knotted and tortured limbs of West Indian trees suggest a mood of desolation and past destruction. Few forms of life manage to survive on this stark key.

IN THE INTERIOR, landcrabs scuttle noisily through the dead, dry, dusty undergrowth, moving sideways with claws uplifted menacingly. On the shore, terns and gulls arrive like commuters on the breeze. The birds feed hurriedly, retreating and advancing in small legions



The tombstone of Captain Housman. It has been moved from Indian Key for restoration.

along the craggy coral beach. It is as though they, too, sense a haunted mood in the place.

Indian Key today is radically different from the Indian Key of 135 years ago, when it was known as a "gem of the ocean." Despite its present condition, it is the site of the largest historical project the State of Florida has undertaken. In the April 1978 session of the Florida Legislature, a bill was passed which appropriated funds for "research, interpretation, and development of Indian Key as a historic landmark." The state-owned island, bought from a private owner for \$240,000, will be a park, perhaps with replicas of its long-gone wharves and dwellings, as well as, possibly, a museum with interpretive exhibits.

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL about Indian Key is that it represents a remarkable episode

of events and people in Florida's early American history. It once was the site of a wrecker's community and a residence for the naturalist John Audubon and the eccentric botanist, Dr. Henry Perrine, during the early 19th century. The entire village was destroyed in a massacre during the Second Seminole War.

Located about 80 miles south of Miami between Upper and Lower Matecumbe in the Florida Keys, the island is now strictly off-limits to curiosity seekers. Under the jurisdiction of the Department of Natural Resources, the island is patrolled by state park officers, and large signs warn would-be trespassers.

ALTHOUGH ARCHEOLOGISTS and historians already have conducted an excavation and study of the island's past, the state does not know when it will finish the restoration phase. However, \$120,000 was recently appropriated for development of the island's historical features.

made port at St. Augustine and submitted the cargo to salvage proceedings in compliance with the law. It was not the first time that Jacob Housman had managed to give the slip to the Conchs of Key West.

As the Gulf Stream enters the relatively narrow passage known as the Bahama Channel between the Florida Keys and the Bahama Bank, its tremendous mass is compressed, producing a gargantuan river within the ocean with a current of four knots. It is the fastest route to and from the Caribbean.

During the 1820's and 30's, an average of 50 vessels a year would be stranded on the reef. Many ran aground at night, during squalls or simply through mistaken navigation. Most would require only small assistance to be freed.

But if Housman happened by to offer his "wrecking service," a stranded vessel might end up a total loss.

IN THE WRECKING DAYS, outbound cargo from New Orleans, Mobile and Galveston, along with shipping from Central America and the West Indies, came through the Florida Straits on its way to the eastern seaboard of North America and the ports of Europe. To complete the circuit of trade, general merchandise, provisions and luxury goods flowed back.

An estimated \$3 million in commerce a year trafficked past the Florida Keys and Indian Key. So hazardous was navigation of the Florida barrier reef that insurance rates for vessels using the Gulf Stream to enter or clear the Gulf of Mexico were the same for those bound around Cape Horn of South America.

IRONICALLY, IN THOSE days mariners along the Keys often sighted the listing remains of past shipwrecks to steer clear of the reef. It would be several decades before the reef was surveyed, markers placed and lighthouses built.

Upon discovering a ship on the reef, Housman would approach the wrecked captain in private and advise him that if he had to put into Key West for repairs, the expense would be enormous. According to the standard insurance contract of that day, the owners of wrecked ships had to share repair costs with the underwriters. However, if the vessel should be so unfortunate as to be a total loss, the insurance company would have to absorb the whole loss as according to contract.

THE WRECKED CAPTAIN would quickly grasp Housman's point. A collusive bargain would then be struck. Housman would promise a "handsome reward" to the captain for his being such a bright and cooperative fellow. Next, command of the grounded ship would be turned over to Housman and crew. The wreckers would then proceed, for benefit of the stranded ship's unsuspecting crew and passengers, as though they were making all effort to free the ship. No one would notice that the wreckers forgot to put out a kedge anchor from the ship's stern before transshipping her cargo. As the ship lightened, it would drift further up onto the reef. All of this would be done in subtle timing with the high tide so that it would later prove impossible to back her off.

After hours of futile work, Housman would order the ship pulled over the reef. This was accomplished by running out a kedge anchor from the ship's bow. The anchor ropes were then secured to the capstan. With her sails raised and the capstan manned, all effort would be made to haul her over the reef. But the usual result would be for the ship's hull to strain open, flooding the bilge and sinking the ship.

WHEN THE FLORIDA began to close fast on the William Henry off the northern Florida coast, the wily wrecker suddenly

Housman's questionable character is illustrated in the case of a French brig known as the Revenge. In 1825, the Revenge was bound for France with a cargo of Mexican logwood. Sailing northward in the Gulf Stream along the Florida Keys, her helmsman miscalculated, and she ran aground on Carysfort Reef. Unable to be refloated, the Revenge finally bilged, and her crew abandoned ship.

IT WASN'T LONG before Housman, plying the reef in his sleek schooner, the William Henry, came alongside the foundering Revenge. As was wrecking custom, Housman boarded the derelict vessel, nailed his wrecking license to the mainmast and declared himself "master of the wreck." After transshipping the cargo to the William Henry, Housman then committed a "most villainous act."

In defiance of the law of wreck and salvage,\* he set sail for Charleston, S.C., where he planned to sell the cargo on the auction block at a 100 per cent profit. Word soon got back to Key West via a passing fishing smack. Local authorities responded by dispatching the revenue cutter USS Florida in pursuit.

NOW, THE GREEDY Housman was probably silently rejoicing. Not only would he have the cargo, but also the ship's rigging, sails and furnishings as claimed salvage. Back in Key West, the property would be promptly presented for salvage adjudication and within a few days, a sizable award decreed. Housman would pay the wrecked captain off, and the two of them would be on their respective ways again as "hail fellows well met."

Despite Jacob's cunningness in staying one step ahead of the law, storm clouds were gathering over his home port. The Conchs were fed up with his abuses. A damning account of his escapade with the Revenge was published in the Key West newspaper, accusing him of robbery on the high seas. Housman replied with characteristic belligerence in a letter to the paper threatening to "tell all" he knew about the corruption in Key West. Enough was enough, and shortly thereafter a mob gathered at the docks where Housman's schooner was moored. Carrying torches, the "committee's" obvious intent was to put Housman out of business by burning his boat to the waterline. Somehow, Jacob managed a temporary truce that gave him enough time to pack up and sail on the next tide. After getting the "bum's rush," as Key Westers called their method of dealing with undesirables, Jacob Housman continued to patrol the reef as an outcast wrecker.

INDEED, THERE WAS too much money to be made to leave the wrecking grounds. The wrecking industry had made most wreckers rich, including Housman. In the period from 1831 to 1841, salvage amounting to nearly \$800,000 poured into Key West, making it one of the wealthiest towns per capita in the U.S.

Salvage awards were determined by either a salvage court judge or jury. The amount could range anywhere from 25 per cent to 95 per cent of the ship's worth or cargo's value, depending on which was in peril. The degree of danger involved for the salvor in saving the wrecked property also figured into the award. Since most wrecked captains didn't carry enough money with them, the salvaged cargo (or ship) was usually auctioned off to satisfy the salvage award.

AT THE TIME of Housman's exile, St. Augustine was the only other port of entry for taking salvaged property. Key West enjoyed a tremendous monopoly. But it was soon to get a rival in its own back yard.

When Housman purchased the squatter's rights to Indian Key from a hermit fisherman in 1825, he had chosen a strategic location for his wrecking station. Lying three miles to the lee of Alligator Reef, Indian Key is also midway along the entire 145-mile length of the Florida Reef. An added feature was its distance (a 15-hour sail) from Key West. At Indian Key,

he would be the first to arrive at most wrecks.

INSPIRED PARTLY by revenge and financed by his ill-gotten wrecking profits, Housman and crew transformed 12 acres of nearly barren coral rock into a "Miniature Eden."

Rich top soil was carried in and tropical fruit trees, palms and a variety of vegetables planted. Houses were built for the families of his crew. Docks were extended out to the natural deep harbor that lay off the island's northern side. Two large warehouses were built at the foot of each pier. Streets and squares were neatly laid out.

For himself, Housman and his ship's carpenters raised an elegant three-story mansion overlooking the reef and Gulf Stream. On the mansion's roof, a cupola and captain's walk were erected so that the new proprietor of Indian Key could scan the horizon through his spyglass for wrecks ashore.

LATER ON, when a motley lot of sailors, weathered fishermen, turtlers, spongers and wreckers began to stop at Indian Key, the Tropical Hotel and grog shop were



A bust of John James Audubon.

established. For entertainment, the hotel offered gambling, drinking, fiddle music to clog by and prostitutes imported from Havana. In only eight years, Jacob Housman had lavished \$40,000 on development of the key. By then he had also acquired a wrecking fleet of four schooners.

THE SECOND PHASE of the captain's ambitious scheme was to make Indian Key politically independent of Key West, which was the county seat and port of entry. Through a series of petitions addressed to the Florida Territorial Legislature and U.S. Congress, a customs inspector and post office were stationed on the island. Then in 1836 a new county was formed which included the Middle and Upper Keys as well as most of the southern Florida peninsula. The new county was named Dade in honor of Major Dade, who was killed in the Second Seminole War.

Due to Housman's efforts, Indian Key was made the seat of the new county. At last, the outlaw captain was free of Key West. To ensure the territorial government's use of Indian Key as county seat, Housman built a courthouse on the key with his own money. Not surprisingly, many of the county's officers and employees turned out to be Housman's former employees.

As a result of its new status, the small key became very busy. The customs agent recorded 703 arrivals in that year. By chance, one of those arrivals happened to be the brilliant artist and ornithologist, John Audubon.

AUDUBON HAD DREAMED for years of visiting the new territory of Florida and observing its tropical birdlife. By selling advance subscriptions to his famous work, *Birds of America*, he obtained enough money to buy passage and embarked from Savannah to Key West. When his schooner made a short landing at Indian Key, Audubon stayed on and hired a guide to explore the wild Florida Bay and Ten Thousand Islands region of the lower Everglades.

Audubon's watercolors are extremely detailed because he worked from still lifes. The naturalist was a sure wing shot, bringing down almost any size bird in flight with his musket. Each specimen was painstakingly stuffed, mounted and drawn. From his Indian Key back-country trips, he recorded the following vivid scene of birds feeding on the tidal flats.

"The birds in myriads were probing their exposed pasture-ground. The great flock of ibises fed apart from equally

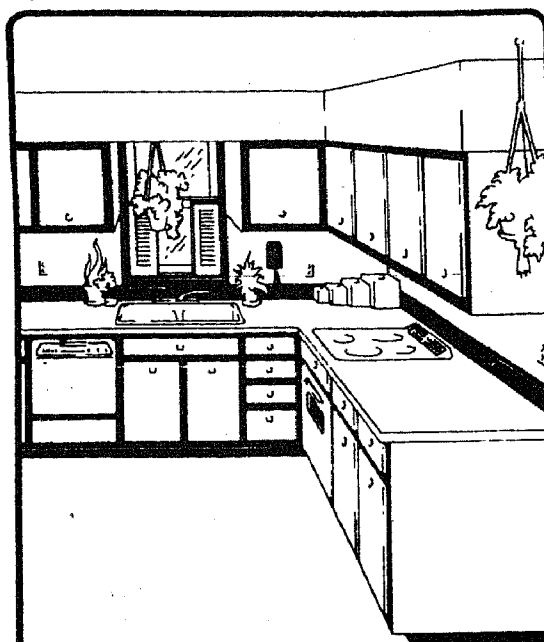
large collections of godwits, and thousands of herons gracefully paced along, ever and anon thrusting their javelin bills into the body of some unfortunate fish confined in a small pool of water."

(We would like to thank the Ft. Myers News Press for permission to use this article and to the Historical Association of South Florida for permission to use these illustrations from the book, *They All Called It Tropical*.)



(TO BE CONTINUED IN THE AUGUST ISSUE)





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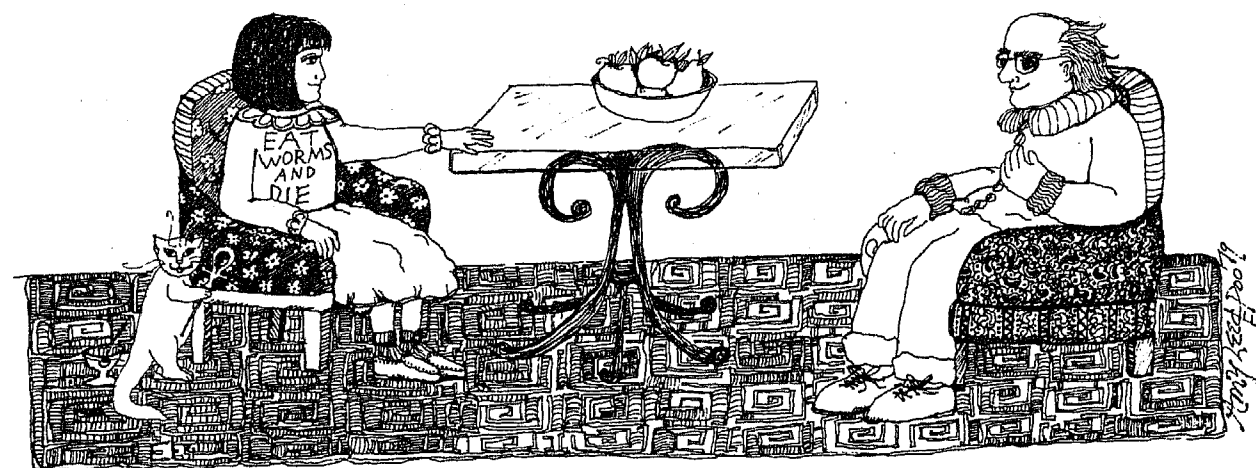
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daughter Pru came back to Key West for the final visit to close his house, she called me on the phone and asked that I come over. Dr. Lowe had left something for me.

daughter from every capital of the world. I only have a few sheets of the stationery left, having frittered most of them away on useless correspondence. They are among my most prized possessions today.



I COULD NOT imagine what it was -- either a box of money of some very old toffee. It turned out to be something worth much more than either of those things. I was given a box with some of his actual letterhead stationary from the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton (and those are the exact words on the paper and envelopes), a box of beautiful cards that looked African and a stack of postcards sent to him by his

As a young girl, I did not understand then what he might have intended by these gifts, but I think I do now. The quest for higher knowledge can be exhilarating.



## The Fine Art of Spanish Lime Eating

SPEAKING OF THE coolest and best of the shade trees, now is a good time for an introduction to: "The Fine Art of Spanish Lime Eating."

I always get excited seeing the Spanish lime trees filling out with new green leaves, watching for the blossoms, then waiting for April's and May's rains. If the signs are right, Spanish limes will be abundant.

Early winds, extreme rain, or no rain are the killers of the Spanish lime lover's dreams. But if all is just right, then come May, June and July, the Spanish lime trees flourish. Those three months are the major production months for Spanish limes.

IT'S SAD WHEN bad weather reduces the Spanish lime crop to barely enough for the owners of the trees. The once kind, friendly Spanish lime tree owner becomes paranoid and chases away anyone who should come near his tree. He will often sit up nights just to guard his precious limes.

Why anyone will go to such lengths to protect a meager, bug-infested crop of Spanish limes is beyond reason. Still, if he went away, perhaps we would try one or two, just for principle's sake.

IN ORDER TO enjoy Spanish limes, they truly must be pilfered, stolen, or just snuck away. The limes are great in the early morning, before the sun's rays have burned off the dew. There is also something to be said about sitting high in a tree on a late, lazy summer afternoon eating Spanish limes. Perhaps you would prefer the cool tangy taste of Spanish limes direct from the refrigerator.

What is a Spanish lime, you ask? After I have expounded at length on their

value, taste and general pleasing texture, one might even say they are a necessity to a Conch or a true lover of Spanish limes. O.K., well, I'll tell you.

A SPANISH LIME is a green shelled fruit about the size of a small plum. It grows in tropic and sub-tropic areas. The inside of the lime contains a large nut (no good to eat) about 2/3 the size of the lime. The other 1/3 of the lime contains a form of semi-sweet tangy pulp. It is this pulp that is so delectable and desirable.

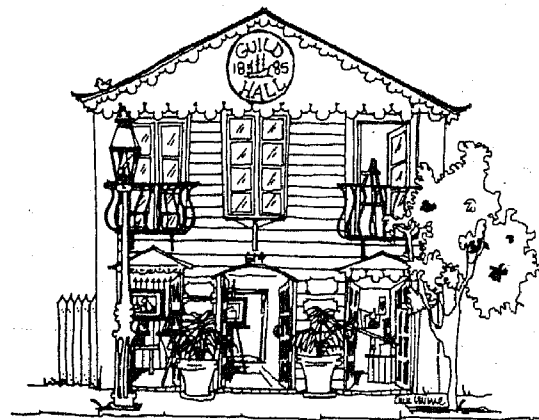
When eating the Spanish lime, one cracks the outer green shell with the teeth, gently, (not unlike an eggshell against a skillet). Then, using the stem as a handle on the bottom half, one removes the top half of the shell. Holding the stem, suck the pulp and nut into your mouth. Next, using the tongue and teeth to carefully strip the pulp from the nut, keep your mouth closed, and spit out the cleaned nut. After doing this, repeat until full or your mouth gets tired.

WHEN YOU FIRST bite down on the Spanish lime you can get a big surprise. The surprise can come even though you are an old hand at eating Spanish limes. The Spanish limes that are too young to be picked can look ripe and inviting. Their colors range from pale yellow to orange gold, but a young one can be bitter, indescribably so. We often dropped the first picked limes to the little kids down below and asked them to see if they were as sweet as the ones we pretended

SPANISH LIME continued on page 24

## PAINTINGS

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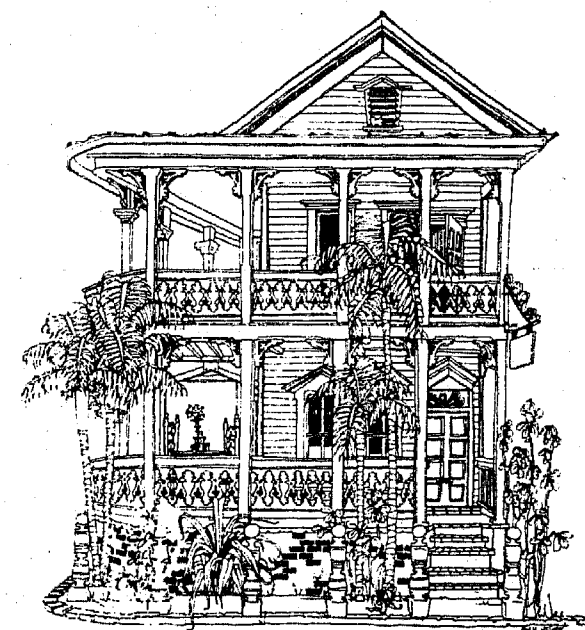
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### - Summer Dinner Menu -

Serving 700 - 1100 pm

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Mushroom Canapes 2.50

### - Soups -

Chilled Cucumber 1.75  
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### - Salads -

Spinach Salad 2.75  
with hard boiled egg and bacon  
Mixed Garden Salad 1.95  
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### - Entrees -

Island Shrimp price varies  
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Summer Poultry price varies  
Fresh Special of the Night price varies

### - Desserts -

Key Lime Pie 1.75 Mousse of the Day  
Fresh Fruit Shortcake 2.25  
Rose Tattoo Cake 2.00

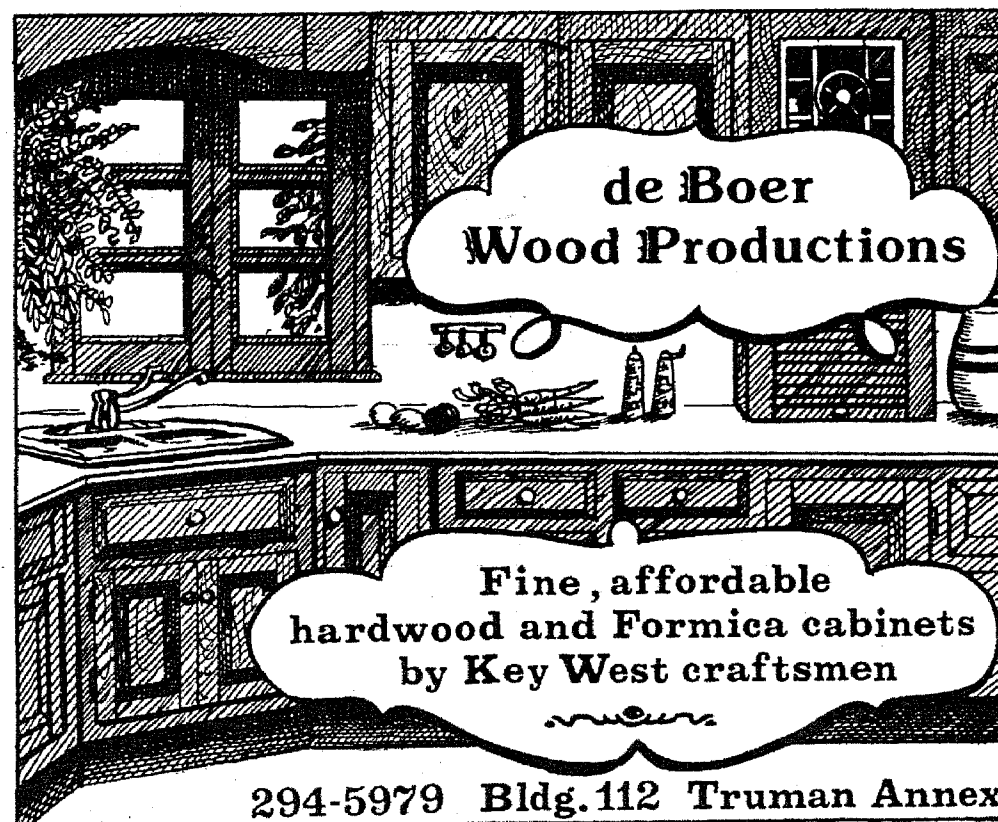


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NOTES AND ANTIC-DOTES continued from page 8

When she finally consented, scandal or no, Esquinaldo obtained a search warrant and an ambulance. On October 6, 1940, he returned to the grisly scene, accompanied by members of the aroused sheriff's office.

Von Cosel was taken into custody and placed in the Monroe County jail under a \$1000 bond. He was confined to a single cell. He declaimed that the spirit of Elena visited him there, talked with him and begged him to bring her back home with him when he could.

BEFORE THE CORPSE, attired in semi-bridal array, was taken to the Lopez Funeral Home, it was examined by most local physicians and a number of other eyewitnesses. Among the stunned viewers was artist Belle Anti, then the wife of Dr. Julio dePoo. She later confirmed evidence seen at the site: Von Cosel had not just been treating or worshipping the partially restored cadaver. He had been cohabiting with it. Physicians who examined the "image" also verified the physical proof of abnormal behavior by the acknowledged lover of the dead.

The first news coverage, however, played down the true facts of Von Cosel's monstrous aberration. As a result, many people believed that he was simply a tragic figure, a romantic man who continued a mystic attachment and adoration even after death had come to his sweetheart.

WHEN THE "PRESERVED" body was carried from the Von Cosel dwelling to the funeral home, it was put on exhibit. Townspeople, by the hundreds, men, women and children, viewed the body. In addition, a throng of morbidly curious out-islanders came from all over the United States and several foreign countries. The total number of viewers was estimated at 6,850!

Among the members of the press who came was the late Jeanne Bellamy of Miami, who wrote a graphic description of Elena's appearance.

"She wore a blue rayon robe and there was a square of gauze over the chalky face with its glass eyes. There was a matted wig on the skull. The hip bones protruded sharply and the legs, encased in stockings, were like sticks."

Dr. William Warren, prominent Key West physician, said, "A repaired skeleton was the foundation, with some bones wired together. The substitutional material had been modeled on the bones, some decayed, and others decaying. The frame was wrapped in gauze and other absorbent material."

IN SUBSEQUENT REVELATIONS, Von Cosel testified to his preservation techniques.

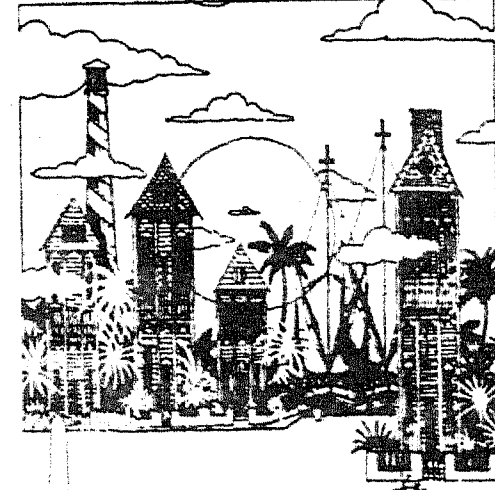
"I rebuilt lost parts and bandaged broken parts. Some of the destroyed parts had to come out, but I replaced these with beeswax and plaster of paris, and I put on sufficient absorbent material so that I could soak her in the solutions to feed her and develop tissues. I was very careful. I used a preservative and powerful germicide called Clinisol to bathe Elena. It cost \$15 an ounce and had to be ordered from Hamburg, Germany."

All of this information was divulged in "lectures" which Von Cosel later gave to thousands of curiosity seekers who toured his laboratory off of Flagler Avenue. He charged twenty-five cents a head. There was even a film made of the conducted tour.

In his lecture series, Von Cosel expounded on his theory that "life is dormant and simply inactive in a dead person. Life can be awakened by a series of treatments by chemical solutions which penetrate perforations in the body and feed the cells. There are many perforations. I had to submerge the whole body in the solution I prepared."

continued on page 26

**PORT OF CALL  
RESTAURANT**



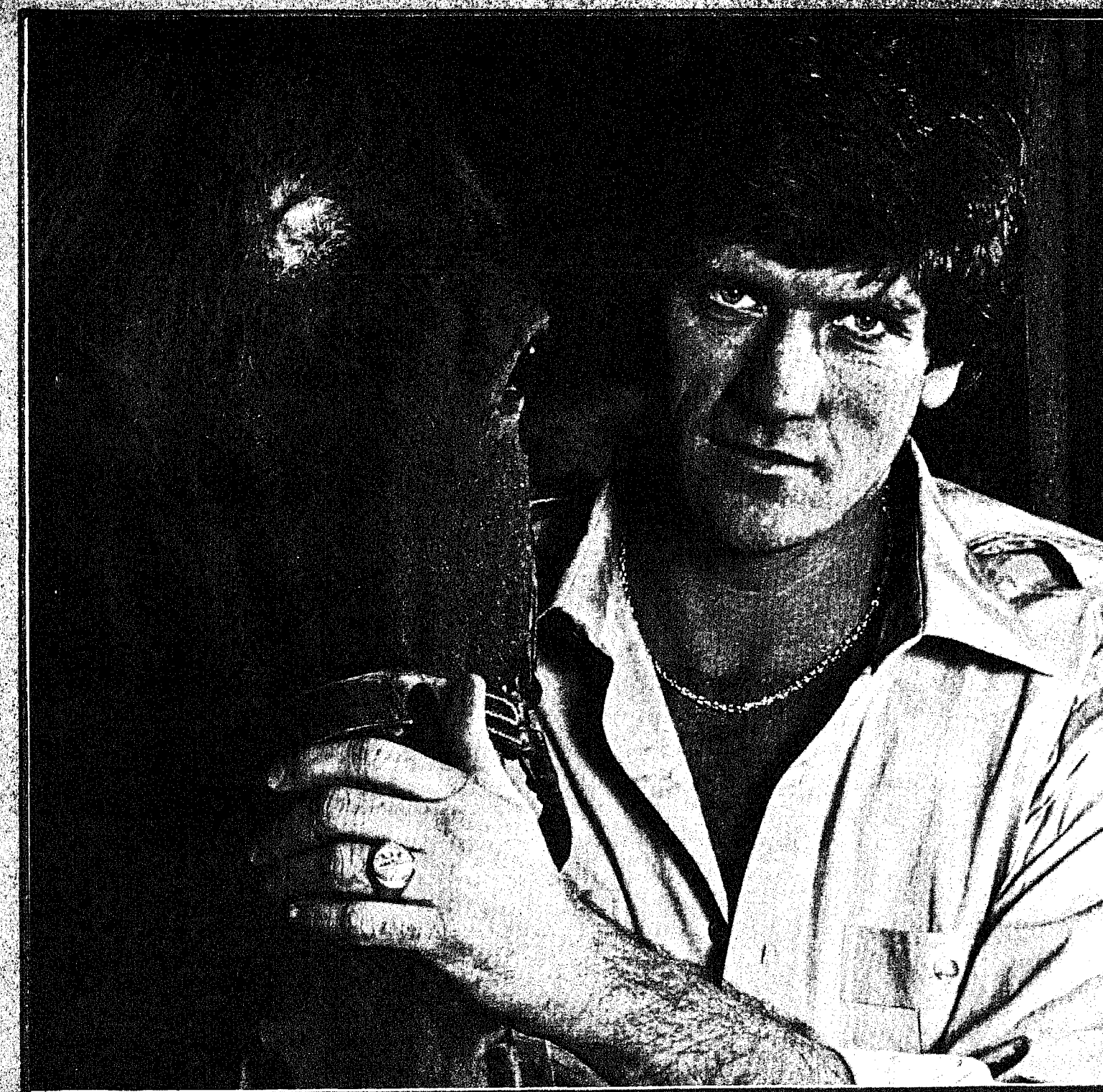
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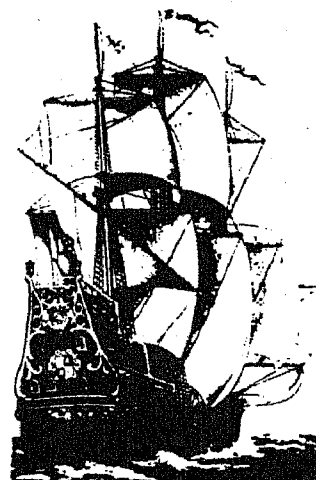
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SPANISH LIME continued from page 21

to eat. When one of the kids pucker'd up, we knew we were too early. Boy, they made weird faces.

When the Spanish limes are super-ripe, they produce magic fruit called doubles. Wars have been fought, friendships made and lost because of doubles. Doubles are twin seeds and somehow the fruit is the ripest of ripe and sweetest of the sweet. Doubles make the sourest person smile, possibly work miracles.

EVERY CONCH HAS a Spanish lime story. A story concerning tree climbing, daring, trickery, monetary profit or similar tales. My story is true, and I can prove it, almost.

I was about 12 years old when Christmas came twice, once in April and later in December. Well, it seemed like Christmas to me when our neighbor gave me full title, control over, and full rights to the current upcoming crop of Spanish limes in her tree.

She was to be away that summer and she didn't want any of the little neighborhood kids climbing the tree. Old Spanish lime trees are very tricky because their limbs are very brittle and even large limbs have been known to suddenly crack, sending climbers plunging 20 to 30 feet to the ground. But a Spanish lime tree all for myself! I was in Conch heaven. That night after hearing those magic words I could hardly sleep. Early the next morning I went over to view this magnificent Spanish lime tree.

THE TREE WAS almost 50 feet high and its branches spread out 20 feet or more from its trunk. Then came the first snag in my plans to occupy the tree. The lowest branch was twelve feet or more from the ground and being 5 feet tall and 3 feet round I had a serious problem.

For the next two weeks I thought of ladders, nailing boards to the tree, etc., but all my plans failed to get my fat bulk to that first limb. When the tree

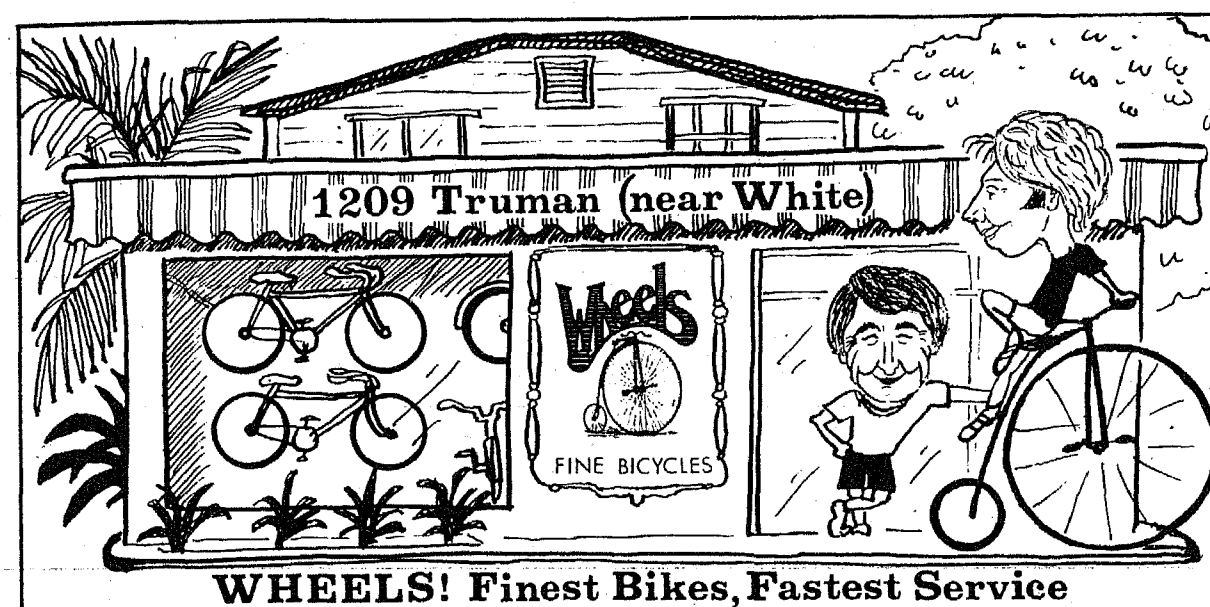
filled with limes I needed a way up that twelve feet of trunk that would leave no easy access for all the rest of the neighborhood kids. In fact I hoped they would not find out the tree was guarded only by me. I admit to being greedy, but a sudden wealth of Spanish limes went to my head.



LATER, WHEN THE tree began bearing fruit, I made deals with the neighborhood kids to only climb the tree when I was there. Letting the other kids climb and give me limes fixed my having to climb that tree. All went well for awhile.

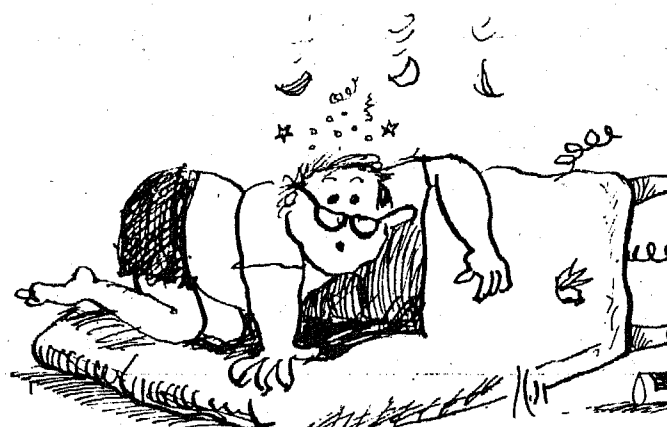
Using a ladder I borrowed, I climbed that tree one summer's day. I sat high in the Spanish lime tree surveying the quiet neighborhood when I became aware of a wasp flying near my head. Suddenly I saw another and another, and oh boy, was I in trouble. I began to cautiously move back along the limb when I hit the nest with my head. Here I was without a

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shirt, 30 feet above the ground; I looked like a fat fly trapped in a spiders web. Well, this fly was going to move as quickly as his bulk would let him.

WASPS, WASPS EVERYWHERE and I couldn't run away. I am a trifle scared of heights, and balancing on that limb, ducking wasps soon proved too much.



I found myself flailing at air, falling rapidly toward ground, then a sudden stop (I had fallen to a lower limb), then a trip upward and outward; once again a downward plunge and right into the middle of an old sofa. I lay there stunned, amazed and sure I ought to be dead; but no, I sprang up and ran around to all my friends, laughing and telling them I was lucky to be alive. Surely they thought I was crazy or suffering from eating too many Spanish limes.

WELL, SOON THE limes fell from the tree or shriveled up in the late summer's sun. One day before the tree was empty of limes I was asked by a 4-year-old boy if he too could get Spanish limes from the tree. Jokingly I said, "Sure, climb the tree and help yourself."

Watch what you tell kids, especially Conchs! Once they get permission, then

they will put all their resources together to achieve their goal.

An hour or so after I gave permission, his older brother came to get him for lunch. The boy was not around anywhere. I suggested he may have climbed the tree and we laughed. We went to the tree anyway and called his name. To our surprise, we heard his small voice high in the tree, looking up we almost died in panic.

THERE ON TOP of the roof of the house near the tree was the youngster sitting on the rainspout eating Spanish limes. I stayed below and talked to him while his brother got some rope, then climbed out on the roof and got his brother safely back inside.

Later, I found that the little boy had found only spoiled limes on the ground, saw those high up over the house's roof and simply climbed the inside stairs to the attic. He then crawled out the open scuttle onto the roof and began happily eating Spanish limes.

We dared not tell his parents, so we had him promise not to go out alone on a roof again. And so another Spanish lime season fades into memories.

AS A GROWN UP, responsible citizen, I no longer steal fruit. I ask permission or buy Spanish limes from the kids, but as I look wistfully out my window, I notice that the neighbor's Spanish lime tree is full of leaves. Could those white things be early blooms? No, only dust on my glasses. But you who own Spanish lime trees be warned, share good-naturedly or the Spanish lime thieves will get you.

by Ray Daniels

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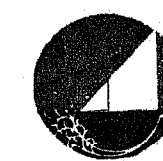
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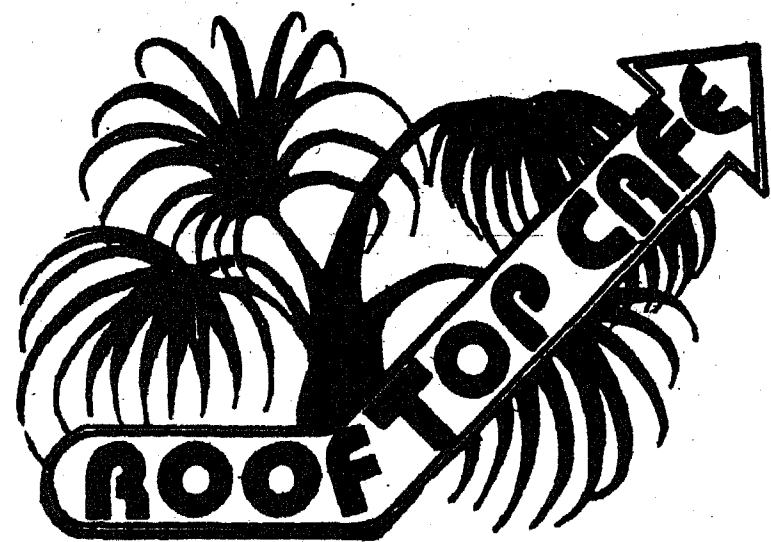
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NOTES AND ANTIC-DOTES continued from page 22

THE TUMBLEDOWN DWELLING where he conducted the tours consisted of two sections or cubicles. The front one held X-ray machine parts and some of the "treatment" apparatus, odds and ends of laboratory equipment, plus a container, which he said was a vat for immersing the body, used in the experiments for restoration of ruined tissues.

In the second area of the home there was a very narrow walking space around the bed in which Von Cosel had trysted with his deceased "bride." A semi-concealing canopy of gauze (some said it was flimsy cheesecloth instead of mosquito netting) was suspended over the bedstead. Next to that was the keyboard of a pipe organ which he had constructed from a damaged one obtained from a church.

Up on a corner shelf, he had placed a large portrait photo of Elena in a wedding veil. On the wall was a death mask, cowed in white with a blue headband.

The reporter who observed these details also noted that the front door of the shabby place had a sign reading "Laboratory." The yard was overgrown with tall grass and weeds, half hiding a sundial. The plane fuselage in which Von Cosel had concealed the body was also in the yard. The nose of the plane was painted with the title "CTS (for Countess) Elena Von Cosel."

A HEARING WAS scheduled for October 8, two days after Von Cosel's arrest. The defense attorney for the hearing (presided over by Justice of the Peace Esquinaldo) was Lewis A. Harris. The charge was violating a cemetery vault.

For the hearing, Von Cosel wore a black suit with satin lapels, no socks, and white tennis shoes.

He seemed astonished over the furor caused by his possession of a cadaver and solemnly announced, "I took her home with me because she was my wife. She had accepted my proposal of marriage. I have so informed the German government."

During the hearing, Von Cosel protested the removal of Elena's remains from his keeping. Harris asked, "Did you have the idea that her spirit would unite with her body and commune with you?"

Von Cosel exclaimed, "And so it did, many times! She gave me advice, even technical advice about the pipe organ. I kept it by her bed so that she could hear the music. It was beneficial and soothing for her, and her ears could hear."

Harris asked, "How would it affect you if the body were taken away from you?"

The reply was emotional. "I would feel lost! I promised her I would keep and protect her the rest of my life, even with my own life, against destruction."

VON COSEL CONTINUED to plead that he be permitted to retain the purloined body, even when told this was not possible. "They can't do this to me! It isn't fair! It will mean the termination of my career. Besides it will mean breaking faith with Elena," he ranted bitterly.

A sanity examination was conducted on October 10. Curiously, despite the testimony heard previously, two doctors and a Mrs. Gilmore Park judged Von Cosel to be sane.

Some of the testimony the culprit gave was conflicting. He told how he had removed the body from the mausoleum in a taxi driven by a relative of Elena's. Other evidence indicated that he obtained the body right after the funeral wake and that only a plaster image had been put into the original coffin.

ON OCTOBER 11, 1940, Enrique Esquinaldo ordered that Von Cosel be tried before a jury of six men for "removal of a corpse from the cemetery and keeping the reconstructed body for more than seven years" (it was actually nearly nine) and "wantonly and maliciously disturbing a certain tomb and grave."

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Said future Municipal Judge, Esquinaldo, "Possession of a body was continued in violation of the law." Karl Tanzler, alias Count Von Cosel, was bound over to criminal court.

On October 12, having spent four days in custody, he was released when the \$1,000 bond was posted by Joseph Zorsky, a former daredevil circus performer who owned tourist cottages at Cactus Terrace, and Benjamin Fernandez. (Zorsky was shot and killed in a robbery at his office a few years back).

The "grave robber" hid out at the Cactus Terrace retreat until October 19, when he went back to his home, where he resumed repair on a damaged pipe organ. He then opened the premises to paying sightseers. This continued for six months. Despite the mystic romanticism associated with this tale of "divine love," commercialism had reared its lucrative head.

AS FOR WHAT was left of the unfortunate Elena, the bones were sawed into small pieces and, along with the plaster, bees-wax, wrapped gauze and foam rubber portion, were deposited in a small casket. This was reburied at 3 a.m. under cover of darkness. Rumors have it that the unmarked grave is beneath one of the roads in the City Cemetery, but only Harold Cruz, the sole living member of the reburial squad, knows for certain -- and he is keeping his vow not to tell.

These cautious measures were taken because Elena's relatives feared that Von Cosel might somehow again get hold of the remains and commit further "sacrilege."

ALTHOUGH THE VANDALISM case against Von Cosel was to resume on November 11, it was finally dismissed from criminal court. In the meantime, a number of psychiatrists attending a convention in Jacksonville visited Key West to examine Von Cosel. He was declared a true necrophiliac, compelled by a rare form of insanity.

Some friends continued to be loyal to "the mad genius," but many islanders expressed an actual fear of his presence in the community. He was "exiled" from Key West in the spring of 1941, evicted from the property on Flagler Avenue, which was owned by banker "Willie" Porter.

FOUR HOURS AFTER Von Cosel's departure for Zephyrhills, Florida, the tomb dedicated to the memory of Elena was rocked by an explosion. A "time bomb" had been placed there, presumably by Von Cosel. The vault was damaged but was not completely destroyed then. It was not until a few years ago that the crypt was demolished, reportedly to prevent curiosity seekers from further effacing the structure. Visitors to the site, through the years, had been in the habit of chipping off hunks of the mausoleum and trampling nearby graves.

A DRAMATIC FINALE to the bizarre epic came on August 1, 1952, when I was on the staff of the *Key West Citizen*. I had just completed intricate research and in-depth interviews on the Tanzler-Von Cosel legend, with the intention of writing a magazine article, when I received a long-distance call from Tampa, Florida.

The caller, who refused to identify himself by name, wanted to know facts and dates in connection with the Von Cosel affair. He stated only that he had to have the information at once. I gave him a brief outline of the internationally famous (or infamous) episode, but since I had done so much preliminary work for myself, I suggested that he come to Key West and dig out his own version.

It occurred to me that since Von Cosel was at least 83 years old by that time, he might have died. I asked the caller point blank if this were true. He answered that he couldn't give me any reason for his sudden demand for source facts. When pressed, he said, "Very well! The break for this story will come over the Associated Press wire."

I IMMEDIATELY CHECKED with the AP Bureau in Miami to see if any story on Von Cosel was pending. The AP evidently relayed  
continued on page 36

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## editorial

by Bill Westray

### MORE ABOUT BEACHES

ON MONDAY MAY 21, 1979, at the regular City Commission Meeting, Mayor McCoy disclosed the results of a study by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers concerning the Atlantic ocean beaches in Key West. The Army study indicated that the Key West beach is the only beach in Monroe County worthy of comprehensive efforts to improve, extend, or preserve.

Consistent with this, McCoy outlined plans to extend the beach eastward from Smathers Beach about 3000 feet toward the airport, and westward from Smathers Beach along Rest Beach all the way to County Beach. This would involve first securing riparian rights from the present private owners of much of the Rest Beach tract, and then pumping sand from an off-shore source into the beach. The new beach would extend the public beaches in Key West considerably and would enhance the values of the property abutting or behind this beach line.

"To give the entire south shore of Key West a wide beach appearance has been one of my lifelong ambitions," said McCoy.

IN DISCUSSION WITH the City Commissioners in a workshop session, Mayor McCoy received an expression of strong support from the rest of the Commissioners. The cost of this plan, about \$4 million, would be borne about 75% by federal agencies, about 12% by state agencies and about 12% by the city. The city's share would be something on the order of four hundred to five hundred thousand dollars. Source of funds for this project was not discussed.

Mayor McCoy then discussed an application by one of the Rest Beach private owners, David Wolkowsky, to riprap the beach front from White Street Pier up to the Rongo townhouses, a distance of about

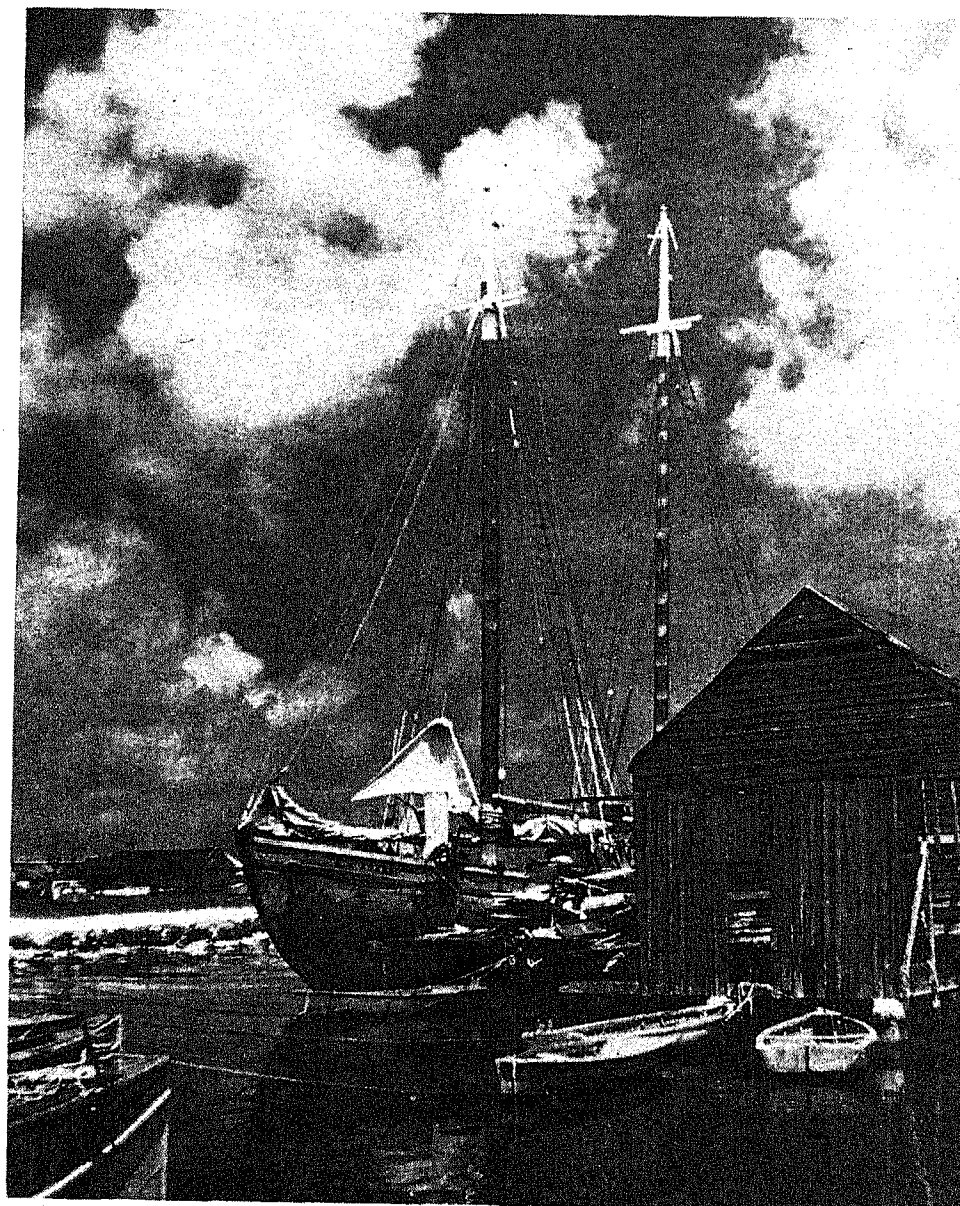
670 feet. The plan would be to place rocks on boulders at the mean high water line and fill the area behind that with about 220 cubic yards of crushed marl or Miami oolite fill. McCoy went on to state that he felt that this riprap proposal was in direct conflict with the plans for beach restoration and that the city should take a position opposing the application.

McCOY'S PROPOSAL WAS strongly endorsed by the City Commissioners who commented that the tract was entirely too narrow to have any buildings placed upon it. This is the tract that the city is trying to acquire as the natural extension of the Indigenous Park across the street on Atlantic Boulevard. David Wolkowsky recently purchased this tract from Norman Artman for a reported price of \$125,000.

Wolkowsky, after consulting with architects, and with the city building officials, has concluded that he could squeeze some seventeen apartment units onto about half of the tract. These would be unique one-of-a-kind units, with high sales potential.

IN AN INTERVIEW with Wolkowsky on Wednesday following the Commission meeting, he was urged to hold off on his project until the city could proceed further with its efforts to acquire the property from him. Wolkowsky said that while everyone else had thought the property was worthless, he had seen some potential in it and that he had spent quite a bit of money for surveys and for architectural drawings to develop the tract. Now he feels that he has created some real value in the property.

He had been told when he bought the property that anything he might consider



An idyllic waterfront scene some years back.  
The photo was taken by Harry Mitchell.

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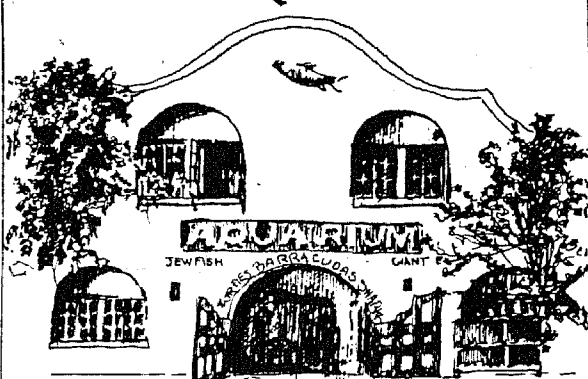
**The Orchid Tree**  
'Tis a fearful thing to  
have one's illusions  
brought crumbling down in  
an avalanche of truth. In  
fact, there's not an old saying which says "time is  
the hammer which shatters all illusion." Now, there's  
a new saying that says it. Give it time and it will be an  
old saying.  
But I digress. Or do I? Remember what a letdown it  
was when you found out that the thrill was gone with  
the girl, that nuclear power won't save the world,  
that Gomer Pyle was a . . . oh, the pain. Betrayal!  
Naivete! Such harsh realities we live.  
But there still is one thing to be counted on in this  
world, so don't despair. There really is a reasonably  
priced, relaxed restaurant in Key West serving a truly  
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doing would be purely speculative. He said that now that he has firm plans to go ahead with the chance to make a substantial amount of money, perhaps \$400- to \$500,000 in profit, that he was really distressed by being asked to stop and back off.

After some considerable pressures and arguments, however, Wolkowsky agreed to temporarily stop all of his activity to pursue this development, to give the city a chance to secure an appraisal and make him an offer on the property. That is where the matter stands at this time.

ALSO AT THE Monday night City Commission meeting, the city heard plans from attorney James Hendricks on behalf of the Coral Isle Development Corporation to proceed with a 136-unit, four-phase condominium project at the northeast corner of Bertha Street and South Roosevelt Boulevard across from Smathers beach. A feature of the proposal is the cluster development on the existing uplands or altered lands thereby preserving the marshland and wetland area in the interior of the tract as a scenic-vista, open-space and possible recreation area.

THE PROJECT IS quite attractive and would appear to be in consonance with normal environmental concerns. The writer, speaking as a local citizen, urged some caution upon the City Commission with respect to the availability of potable water supplies and the availability of an adequate sanitary sewer system to support such a project.

After hearing both pro and con arguments as well as concerns that the Community Impact Statement prepared by the developer had not provided all of the necessary information, the commission tentatively approved the project on a divided vote of four to one, Mayor McCoy dissenting, provided that the developer present to the Commission all of the omitted data that is required in a Community Impact Statement.

McCoy's negative vote was intended to withhold any approval until all the omitted data had been submitted.

IN SUMMARY, our first impression of the Army Corp of Engineers beach restoration and extension project is very favorable. We are certainly in agreement that anything which would improve the beaches, one of the primary attractions of our tourist industry, would be highly desirable.

With respect to discouraging developer David Wolkowsky from building on the west end of Rest Beach, we will continue our efforts in that direction. In spite of the fact that Wolkowsky is well intentioned, we feel that the overall welfare is best served by acquiring that beach tract in public ownership as a natural extension of the Indigenous Park across the street.

With respect to the Coral Isle Condominium Project, we urge all agencies to exercise caution in approving this four-phase project too quickly. We do have a water shortage. We do have a sewer problem. Until we can come up with firm dates when new additional water and sewer services would be available, large projects such as these should have to wait.



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## KEY WEST'S HOROSCOPE

BY EMMA CATES

KEY WEST'S HOROSCOPE by Emma Cates

Sun in Gemini, after 21st in Cancer  
Venus in Taurus, after 11th in Gemini  
Mercury in Gemini, after 8th in Cancer;  
after 26th in Leo  
Saturn in Virgo  
Jupiter in Leo  
Mars in Taurus, after 25th in Gemini  
Uranus in Scorpio, retrograde  
Neptune in Sagittarius, retrograde  
Pluto in Libra, retrograde, turning direct on the 26th  
North Node 13 degrees of Virgo

THE FULL MOON on June 10th will be in conjunction with Neptune in the 7th house sector of the chart of Key West. Partnership matters are highlighted. This conjunction in Sagittarius is in trine aspect to the natal Pluto in Aries in the chart of the city. This aspect favors positive and constructive action in the area of friends and relationships. I construe this to effect a much more amiable interchange between the differing factions of life-styles that make up our community. A realistic and open-minded attitude will be evident in this area.

THE NEW MOON on June 24th will occur in the 1st house sector of our chart. This position favorably aspects our progressed ascendant and the natal Jupiter in the Key West Horoscope. The "image" of Key West will be improved and its reputation as a resort city will continue to

accelerate. The employment picture for the summer is good. The summer tourist season should be better than it has been in the past. The end of June shows a marked upswing in this area.

SATURN, THE RULER of the chart of Key West, continues to transit the fourth house sector of the chart. Building, homes, construction, supplies and employment all continue to be highlighted in the chart of Key West. Improvement in all of these areas will slowly be manifested through this summer of 1979.

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## some remarks

### JUNE GREENE STREET THEATRE UPDATE

by J.P. Bo

IN THE LAST 6 weeks, the Greene Street Theatre has made significant financial strides due to the most recent theatre benefits.

At the end of April, the two-day celebration and feast featuring the benefit performances of Richie Havens, accompanied by "Dino" Williams, netted the financially troubled theatre over \$5000. Community support and cooperation were immense and even exceeded my fondest expectations.

OVER 600 PEOPLE passed through the theatre during the two days -- many for the first time. The energy and vibrations were glorious -- not to mention the food and the music. As the force behind Richie Havens' Key West-Greene Street Theatre concerts, I was in ecstasy watching it all unfold exactly as I had first fantasized it.

RICHIE HAVENS PROVED to be the perfect choice for a name entertainer to come to the aid of my favorite theatre. Known throughout the world as a warm and giving human being, Richie Havens demonstrated those qualities and more in his short stay and involvement here. He's as great an entertainer as ever, too, and Paul "Dino" Williams was masterful as Richie's accompanist.

Let it be known that Richie Havens is now an honorary member of the Board of Directors of the Greene Street Theatre. In November, a plaque commemorating his benefit concerts will be unveiled in the theatre.

THE FOUNDATION has been laid for more concerts like those of Richie Havens. I dedicate myself to that end. In my heart, I know Richie Havens will return, because he was greatly touched by his welcome and treatment in Key West.

In May, Philip Mascia, owner of the Port of Call, closed his restaurant to the public one Saturday night and prepared a lavish six-course meal for over

30 patrons and supporters of the Summer '79 Season. Believe me, it was some spread!!

Philip Mascia's is a perfect example of the type of support the Greene Street Theatre has been receiving from the community lately. This spirit and this spirit alone is the backbone of the theatre, the prime reason for its survival, and the inspiration for a full Summer '79 schedule under the direction of Margo Cone, Richard Magesis, and myself. I believe strongly that great things are going to happen in and for the theatre during the Summer '79 Season.

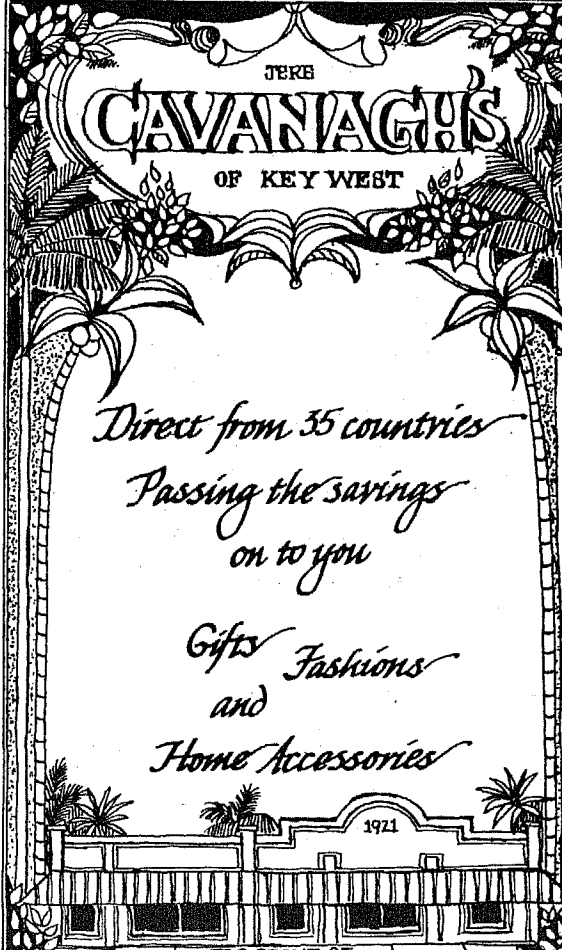
THE COMMUNITY IS finally starting to realize the predicament of the Greene Street Theatre. It is impossible for a 126-seat theatre to pay \$1000 per month rent to the City of Key West without approval of a beer-wine license. Something must be done very soon to alleviate this unjust situation.

We've closed our old Box Office on Duval Street. The Box Office is now located at the entrance to the theatre -- at Thomas and Southard Streets. The telephone number remains 294-5001, and box office hours begin June 12th -- from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Summer curtain time is 9 p.m. The air conditioner is working fine after \$2500 worth of repairs.

FOR THE SCHEDULE of the Greene Street Theatre Summer '79 season, please see our ad on page 35. Clip it out for future reference.

Please include the Greene Street Theatre in your summer plans. We're counting on you, and we intend to deliver the best entertainment possible.

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C.A.K.E. by Mack Dryden

FUNNY THAT KEY WEST, which probably has more genuine artists per acre than any other town in the country, doesn't have an art center to do it justice. There are several nice galleries, of course, but none of them really represents the scope of artistic achievement that gives Key West much of its unique energy.

Janice Wagoner doesn't think it's funny at all, actually, and she has put the wheels in motion to do something about it. Janice has been photographing Key West for seven years; in all that time she hasn't found a good place to display her work in the context she'd like to see it. Recently, she was wandering around (trespassing) in the old Customs Building and Post Office on Clinton Square where Whitehead, Front and Greene Streets converge. The Customs Building is the magnificent old red brick edifice that dominates the square.

THE BUILDING IS a part of the old Truman Annex naval base which the city is in the process of taking over from the federal government. Janice thinks it would be a perfect location for a huge arts center. So she is forming the Cultural Arts of the Keys Enterprises, Inc. (CAKE), which hopes to turn the building into a non-profit learning, viewing and meeting place for artists and art lovers.

She envisions a place where, under one roof, there could be classes in weaving, jewelry making and pottery, monthly changes in photographic art and painting shows. "There are so many artists here, you want to see their work," she said. "Key West is exceptional, eccentric. Everyone likes to hang out here because it's so beautiful. Everyone's like a movie star. CAKE could bring everyone together for a common purpose."

She thinks the old Customs Building is the perfect setting. "It is so huge. You could allot space for everybody's

thing. I want the city to glorify all the talented people, and that momentous building is the perfect place to do it."

RIGHT NOW THE Key West Redevelopment Agency is formulating plans for the reuse of the Navy property, and they would like to hear all the recommendations the citizens of Key West have for possible uses. No decision has yet been made on the Customs Building. A concerted drive by interested people might be the deciding factor.

Janice would like support in her plan and asks that interested people, artists or art lovers, call her at 294-6043 to see how they can help.

### AQUEDUCT UPDATE by Bill Westray

NEWS THAT THE Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority (FKAA) must pay or guarantee the pipeline "enhancement" costs to the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) before provision for the larger pipeline is designed into the bridges seemed to take FKAA Board members and staff by surprise. Enhancement in this case means the extra cost resulting from pipeline sizes greater than the existing 18-inch line; FKAA is required to pay the difference for the larger pipe.

The only surprise in the latest disclosure is the amount of excess cost -- about \$4.5 to \$4.8 million total. During his presentations supporting the large new pipeline, former director Claude Gehman had mentioned that FKAA was supposed to pay for enhancement of the pipeline on the bridges; however, Gehman would never give an estimate of the enhancement costs and we were led by him to believe that they would be insignificant or that DOT would "forget them." Now we know the truth.

ONE BOARD MEMBER has suggested that the entire \$4.8 million be taken from the \$53.2 million Farmers Home Administration

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(FmHA) Loan Fund. This is probably not legal without changing the rules; in any case that would have to be added to the \$53.2 million dollar loan.

In our March 1979 editorial we estimated the cost of the new 36"-30"-24" pipeline along with bond refinancing at \$72,793,500 versus FKAA's estimate of \$53,225,000, predicting thereby a \$19,568,500 deficit. To this must now be added the \$4.8 million for bridge pipe enhancement so our new estimated total cost is \$77,593,500 and the deficit is \$24,368,500.

JUST BEFORE PRESS TIME we learned that Director Dennis Wardlow had secured a tentative agreement with DOT Director Rose to spread the \$4.5 million over about five years. If the \$900,000 per year is to be made up from water revenues, it would be necessary to raise water rates immediately by about 50 to 55 cents per thousand gallons. That would result in an immediate water rate of about \$5 per thousand gallons with fuel adjustment.

On April 12, 1979, the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation (DER), South Florida District, sent a letter to FKAA noting that DER had received numerous complaints about FKAA water service. The letter, signed by Pollution Control Specialist Roxane Dow stated that FKAA was not complying with the Florida Administrative Code with respect to the number of water samples tested for coliform bacteria contamination levels. The code requires 65 samples monthly and DER alleged that FKAA had only been taking six.

IN THE SAME letter DER also expressed deep concern over water pressures in the FKAA distribution system of less than 20 pounds per square inch (psi). DER stated, "The situation is particularly critical in Key West where breakdowns in the sewer system are common, increasing the possibility of infiltration of contaminants into the water system." DER asked that FKAA submit plans to correct the pressure deficiencies, with anti-

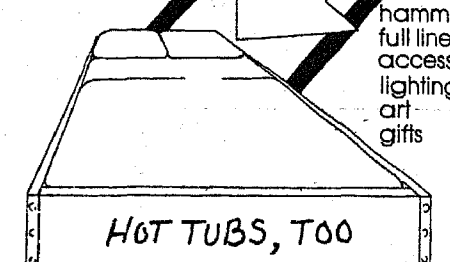
pated dates for completion.

In a reply dated May 18, 1979, FKAA staff engineer Dale Rohe advised DER that 43 coliform bacteria samples were being taken monthly rather than 65. FKAA assured DER that sampling would be increased to 65 immediately.

WITH RESPECT TO pressure deficiencies, FKAA was very vague on corrective measures. The problem was attributed to high tourist demand during shutdown of the Stock Island Desal Plant. FKAA then described improved pumping capacity at various locations in the Lower Keys, increased water production at Rock Harbor, and increased pumping capacity out of Florida City. Other planned corrective measures included retubing the remaining three tube bundles of the desal plant and building a new pipeline. No dates were given as requested, and specific benefits from the several measures described in correcting the pressure deficiency problem were omitted from the reply.



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NOTES AND ANTIC-DOTES continued from page 27

my suspicions that the old eccentric might have died, for the city editor of the *Tampa Tribune* then called me. Nothing was known at that end, but he offered to make a follow-up investigation.

The Tampa editor added that my mysterious telephone call had probably come from a writer in Sanford, Florida, who had been looking through the newspaper files at the Tampa office.

DAYS PASSED WITHOUT further development. Then on August 14, 1952, my suspicions concerning the demise of Von Cosel were confirmed. The AP wire carried the denouement. The decomposing body of Karl Tanzler Von Cosel had been found on August 13 in a small house about two miles from Zephyrhills.

The AP bureau head in Miami contacted me, requesting the background which I had told them I had prepared for a magazine. I complied, also noting that a search of the home in Zephyrhills would probably result in the discovery of death masks and perhaps a large image of the lost Elena. This proved to be the case. Von Cosel had persisted in making images, including a life-sized effigy found in the cottage. This was 11 years after he had left Key West.

WHEN VON COSEL'S body was discovered, it was lying near the front door of his tiny dwelling. The entrance was locked, and all the lights were on. A neighbor had finally noticed that mail was piling up at the residence. Von Cosel had last been seen alive on July 22.

There was speculation as to whether or not Von Cosel had already been approached by the unidentified free-lance writer before his demise. Or perhaps the writer had found him dead -- thus the mysterious telephone request for instant information.

Coroner L.L. Johns of Zephyrhills (about 29 miles from Tampa) averred that

the death was apparently from natural causes of advanced age.

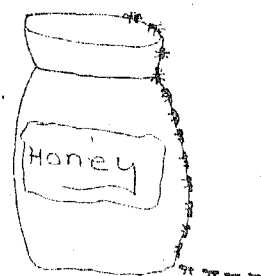
I HAVE OFTEN wondered if the writer who called from Tampa actually disturbed the old recluse and perhaps brought on a fatal heart attack caused by dread that once again the created image of his dead love would be taken from him.

Karl Tanzler, minus his title of doctor or of nobility, is buried in the Zephyrhills area at the side of one of his daughters. The fact that he had children was only disclosed after he had left Key West.


THE STRANGE SAGA of Tanzler-Von Cosel's distorted life still stirs up the recollections of many Key Westers. Certainly interest in the complicated record has continued through the years. It is one of the choice subjects often brought up in conversations when yarns about the island are told.

To bring the account around to full cycle, just recently, May 21, a message was left for me to expect a follow-up telephone call from a woman visitor who was writing a thesis on necrophilia and had been impressed with what she had read in *Solares Hill*. She wanted to talk further with me about the Von Cosel case.

Unfortunately, the second try for contact was not achieved. Perhaps the unknown thesis writer will read this third and last installment in the series and try for future contact.



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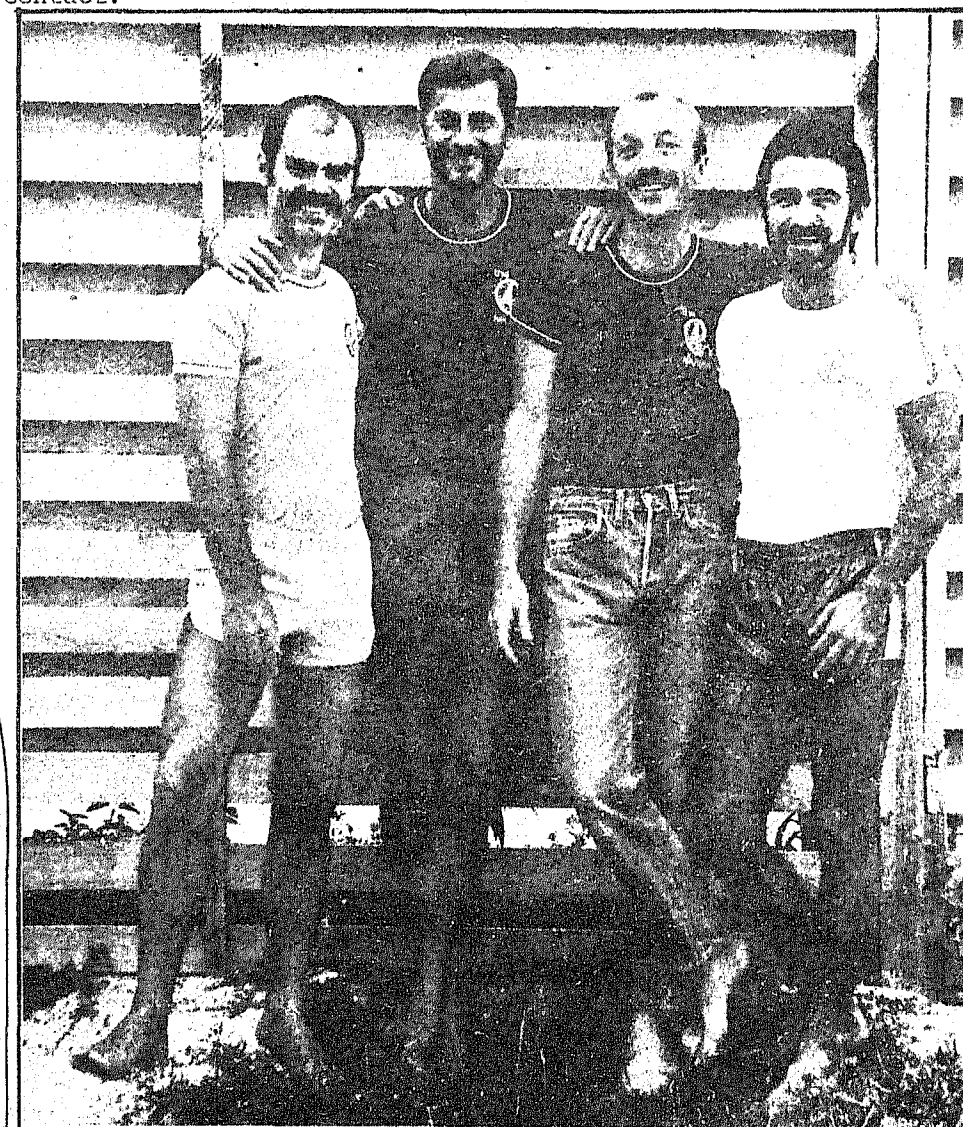
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