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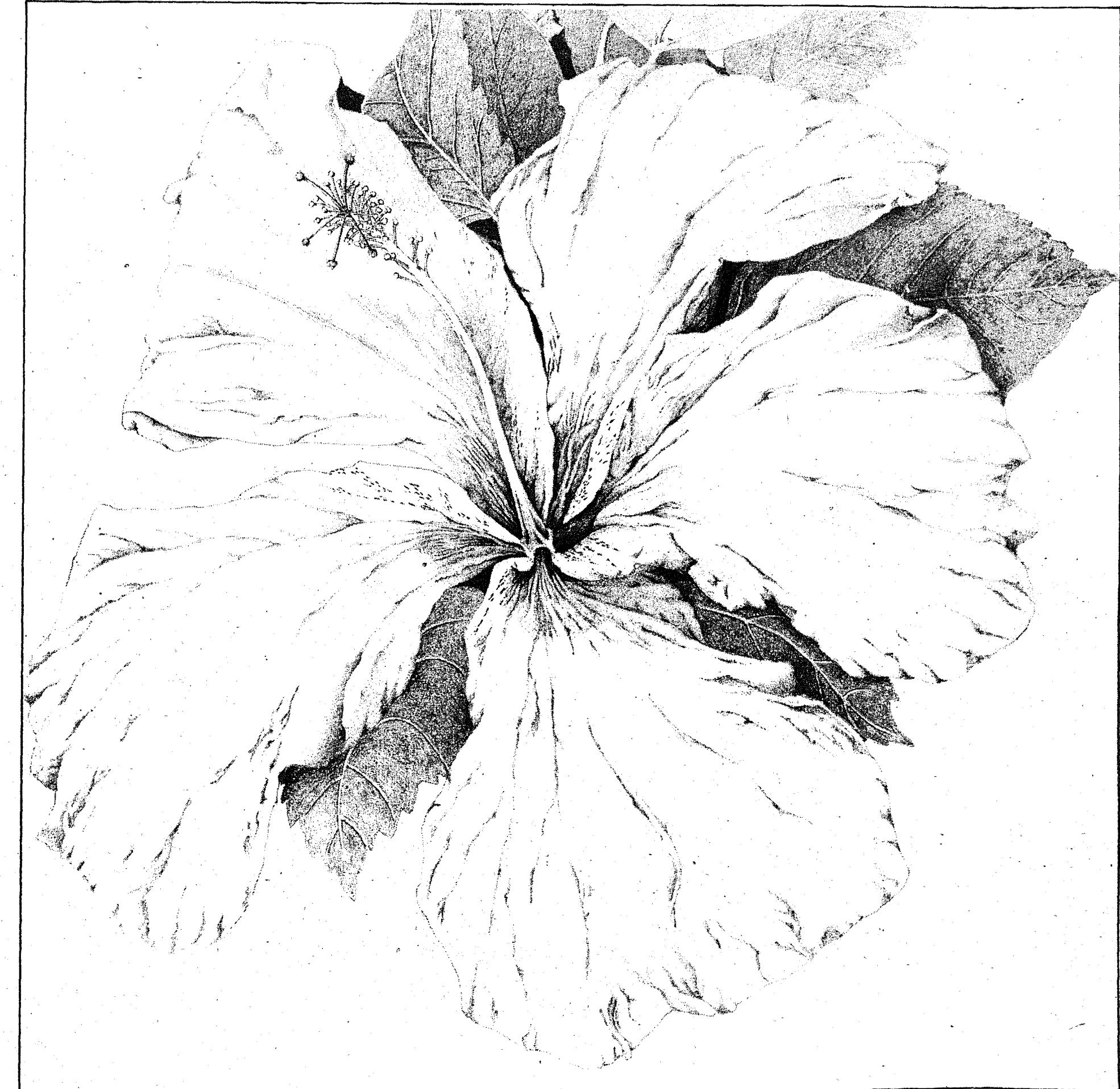
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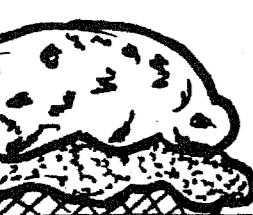
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Vol. III, No. 7

Key West, Florida

August 1978





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## From the Editor

Hello --

WE'RE BACK AGAIN and we're running a few days late. The fault is mine. I was slow in returning from a vacation. As you know, we generally are out on the streets the first couple days of each month.

I WAS VACATIONING in Europe this summer, and I ran across some local people. While on a tour bus in Stratford-On-Avon, I met a man who was born here some years ago named Tom Ashe. He has been living in Schenectady, N.Y., for some time, but recently made a visit to Key West, where, among other friends, he saw "Poly" Artman. In Paris, I ran into David Pla who has been living in Spain. David, whose parents live on Olivia Street, remains very enthusiastic about living abroad and gives no indication of wanting to return to the States. Also, in Paris, I saw Shelly Ippolito, who has been a student there for 6 months. She is planning to return to Florida and continue college in Sarasota.

THE OPINION has been voiced, and we think it is a good one, that the City Commission should declare a moratorium on all building permits until the water and electricity needs of the present population are reliably met.

IN LAST MONTH'S paper, we wrote that we would look into the ambulance situation in our August issue. We have not been able to do so, though I hope for some comment on it for September.

WITH THIS ISSUE, Walt Hyla officially takes over from Tom Pope the art direction and lay-out of the

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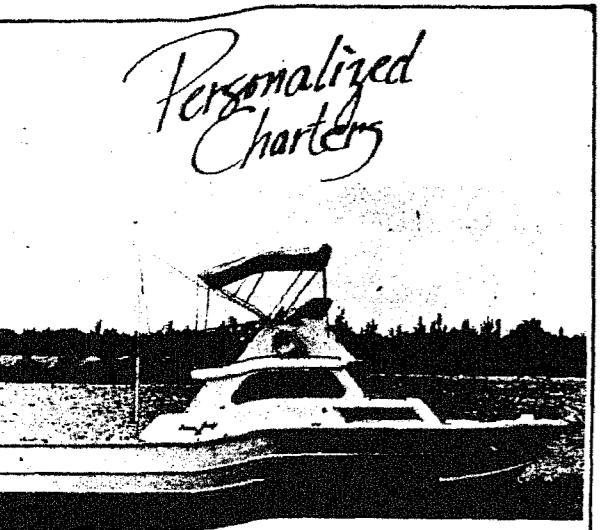
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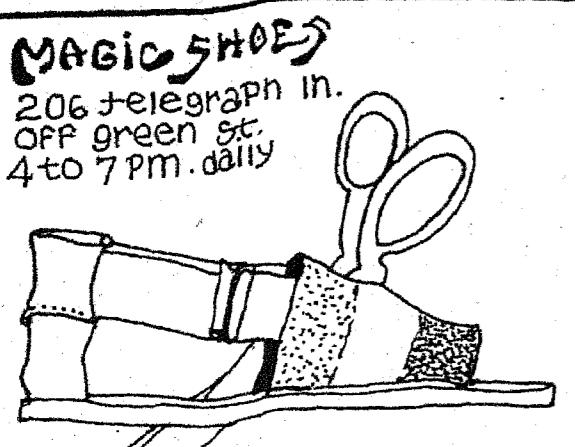
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## Melinda Farrington

(Interviewing Melinda Farrington is a total sense experience. The front porch rocker creaks over timeworn planks, the door opens and shuts with the appearance of friends and neighbors, black and white, coming to say Howdy or to see if Melinda needs anything. From outside, shouts can be heard of kids playing, roosters crowing, and the spatter of hot grease as a neighbor fries up tonight's supper of chicken. Snickers, guffaws, much teasing, and funmaking revolve around one very loved woman, Melinda Farrington, 90 years young, slender as a girl, with long grey plaited hair falling down her back. Melinda consented to this taped interview, although recently out of the hospital.)

K: Melinda, why don't we start by telling me your full name, where you were born, and when.

M: Well, when I first came here, my name was Melinda Sands. April 10th's my birthday, but I don't remember the year. I turned 90 this year. I was born in Nassau.

K: When did you come to Key West?

M: I got married when I was 24, and me and my husband and two kids decided to come to Key West. That was 1920, and we came in a big boat to Miami. Took two days. We came on the train to Key West.

K: What was the train like?

M: Nice. You could look out and see everything. Open up the windows and look out. Took about a day and a night. My husband had to come to look for work. He was working on the railroad. He was a cook. We settled here while he used to be up on the keys. The children had to go to school. We had nice times. I had nothing to do but get ready sometimes and go up and spend the weekend or so with him. Oh, the train was beautiful, but it didn't run when there was a storm. No! How could it run? It had to put up. The train would stop in different places. We'd go up to Marathon lots and stay in the house for us.

K: House?

M: Yeah. Like the train, it's stoppin' places where they got to work. Just like they got to work on this here end this month. They work on this part of the bridge and the train's got to come there, you see. And the people all got to sleep on the train too, you know. But we never sleep on the train. There's a house exactly for us.

K: Where in Marathon?

M: Well, in Marathon sometimes, and sometimes to Cudjoe and different places that the train parked. Henry was a good cook. That was his job from a child. He was a cook, I'm telling you. He did all the

work.

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cooking. I never had to do no cooking at home. (Laughs) You see, when he had to go up on the keys and we go up there on the weekend, the train was right on the railroad, and they'd go out and throw the line out and catch fish and everything. They used to have fun (pointing to son) and ... oh yeah all kind of fish. I never catch one, not me. Him and his sister used to go all along the bridges. We've been all over them bridges. Yeah!

one there, and a white one there, all having fun.

K: What about the hurricane in 1935? What was it like?

M: I had gone back to Miami. My husband, he died in Key West. That was 1924. I left from here in '29 and I stayed there 'til 1940, and I came back in '40, to take care of these kids' children. I



K: What was Key West like back in the 1920's?

M: Oh, it was a beautiful little place. It was somewhere to live. That's right. You could go outside and sleep all night out on the street and everything. People was wonderful. Neighbors, everybody lived together. It was a pretty wonderful place. Not now! Everything was cheap. But now look! Key West was great. There wasn't no cars when we first came, one or two maybe. It was horse and carriage.

The streetcar was all about on Duval Street. It was cute, very cute. A lot of the old people done gone out of Key West. All the old ones came from the Bahamas. Everybody was living together, just a colored house there, a colored

could have stayed in Miami. Had a little job there. I could have worked, so I wasn't worried about money.

K: What were you doing in Miami?

M: Washing and ironing. Oh, I loved that work, but I finished with that work now. I don't go to work like I used to do. Mmm-mm-mm. Like I said, that's the trouble. I like to be going all the time. Working. Keeps me busy.

K: Where did you meet your second husband, Mr. Farrington?

M: My second husband? That's a something! (much laughter) He was a trustee at Bethel Church. We met in church. I had grand-

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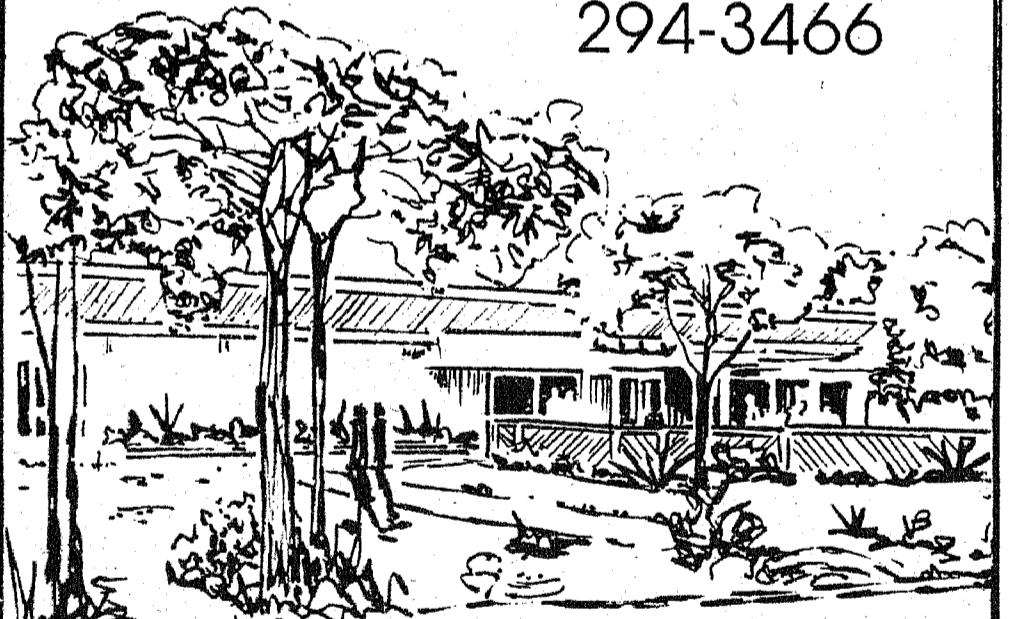
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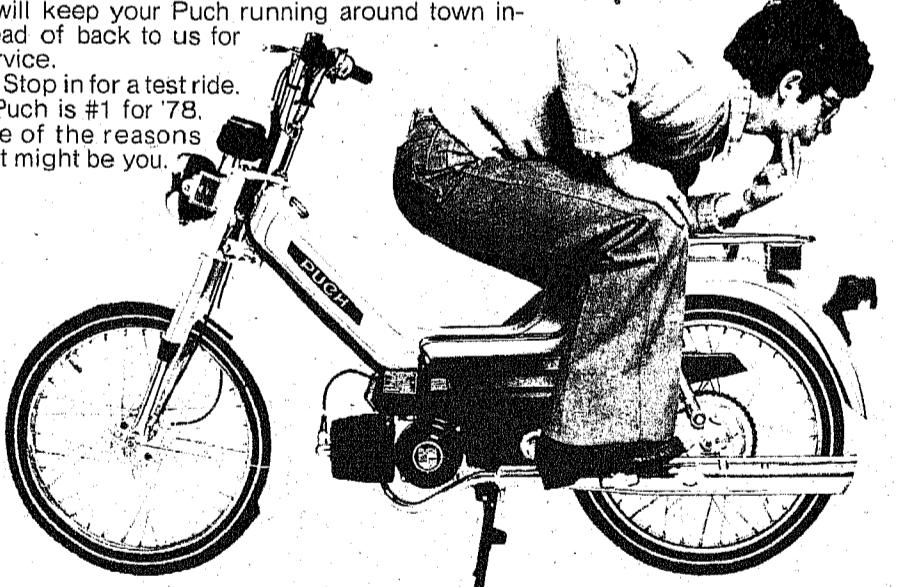
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children already. I got 7 grandchildren now and 2 great and 1 great-great. So you can see, I'm an old lady. (Interview is discontinued as a stream of people enter and leave the house)

K: Phew! You have a lot of friends!

M: Ooooh, yeah! You should have been to the hospital. Yeah, they miss me everywhere I go. I resigned now from the church choir. Do you want me to sing for you?

Friend: She used to sing in the choir. She was president of the usher board. She belonged to the trustee board. You name it, she belonged to it.

K: Which church?

M: Bethel. That's on Truman and Thomas. God, I think plenty about Him. I wouldn't give Him up for nothin' in the world, for no kind of money. Oh coz, I've been too close. If I didn't have a lot of faith, I wouldn't be here. Yeah, I have faith in God.

K: What do you think about the government?

M: What's he doin'? Nothin'! (chuckles) I used to go to dances but the only thing I never do, I never drank. No. A little wine, yeah, I drank that. I was a good dancer. Oh, God, yes. Me and my son used to dance. We danced in New York when I was 88.

K: What do you think of the kids today?

M: Well, I don't know what to say about the world now. It's all different. They're all making a world. Perhaps without all that carrying on, there wouldn't be a world. (laughs)

K: You've got beautiful long pigtails.

M: God didn't give you hair to cut. I always had long hair. I never had to straighten it. Natural... I'd just comb it. In the Bahamas, they don't comb

their hair. They leave it wide open. They leave it wide open.

K: Did you used to swim?

M: Swim? Swim where?

K: In the ocean.

M: I couldn't swallow that water out there! Oh, not me. Not me. Never. You see, when I used to go swimming, we'd go early in the morning. Very early. Sometimes the water would be deep. The way I swim, nobody in the world swims like me, coz' I go in the water and jump up. That's all I do. Jump right up. What kind of swimming? I may drown! (laughter) You went in your dress. We didn't know about bikini. You went in your britches and your dress. No, there wasn't no bikini nor nothing else when I came here. It comes and it grows. It grows like a weed. Everything grows, grow, grow, grow. Different things.

K: You mean change?

M: Changin', yeah, every year. Everything changes. People change too.

(At this point another friend enters the room)

Friend: She used to, everytime she wanted a new hat, she had a birthday. (Much laughter) How do you like that! Everybody says you've never seen a person who has as many birthdays as Melinda. When she'd go on a trip, or church business, she'd have to have a hat and new outfit. And there were plenty of trips she had to go on. You'd better believe it! (Much more laughter) and plenty of birthdays.

We wish you many more, Melinda!!!

# SOME REMARKS

## "SAVING" THE SALT PONDS

"Our land is more valuable than your money. It will last forever." (A Blackfoot chief, in a 19th century treaty council.)

THE COUNTY COMMISSION was faced with a Hobson's choice at its June 23 meeting: change the proposed site for a weather station from a salt pond to dry land near the airport terminal, or lose the weather station; which is to say that the Commission had no choice. Three of the four Commissioners (Commissioner Don Schlosser was absent) had to perform the formality of accepting the Department of Environmental Regulation's (DER) ruling that the salt pond could not be filled, and then change the site to an environmentally acceptable and economically more feasible location.

Still, Commissioners Jerry Hernandez and Richard Kerr spent nearly an hour telling the environmentalists in an imaginative variety of ways, "You're more interested in birds than people."

THE COMMISSIONERS had originally been informed that the salt pond site was the only available site for the weather station, and they had been unanimous in approving that site. Later, when Commissioners Jerry Shipley and Don Schlosser learned that there were local objections to that site and that there was at least one feasible alternate site, they attempted to have the Commission investigate the alternate site. They were voted down by the three Key West Commissioners -- Mayor Purie Howanitz and Commissioners Hernandez and Kerr -- who insisted on the salt pond site. Then, when the DER ruled that the salt pond could not be filled, since there was an alternate site

available, Howanitz bowed to the inevitable and supported the change of site. For a while, it looked like a split vote, with Shipley and Howanitz voting for the change and Hernandez and Kerr voting against it. The motion would have been defeated for lack of a majority vote.

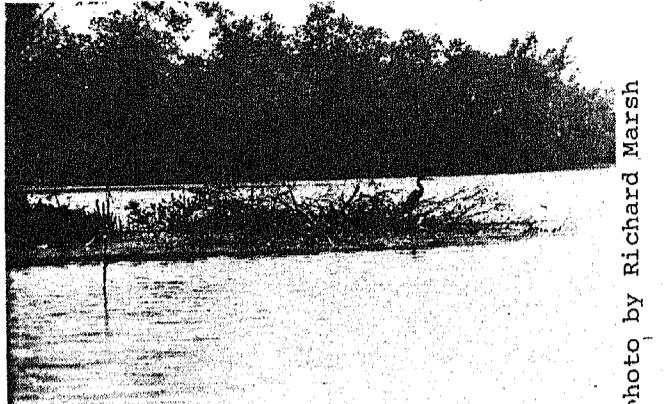


photo by Richard Marsh

A great egret in the pond where the Weather Station would have been built.

FINALLY, Hernandez bowed to the obvious reality of the situation and joined Howanitz and Commissioner Shipley in voting the change. Kerr, determined to cut off the nose to spite the face, obstinately voted against the change.

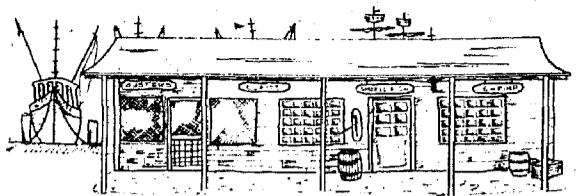
It was a small victory for the birds. After all, they can always pack up and move to the Ten Thousand Islands in Florida Bay, or somewhere up the Keys.

It was a telling defeat for the lusters after the land, who will not be satisfied until Key West is turned into another Miami Beach.

BUT THE MAJOR result of the salt pond

continued on page 10

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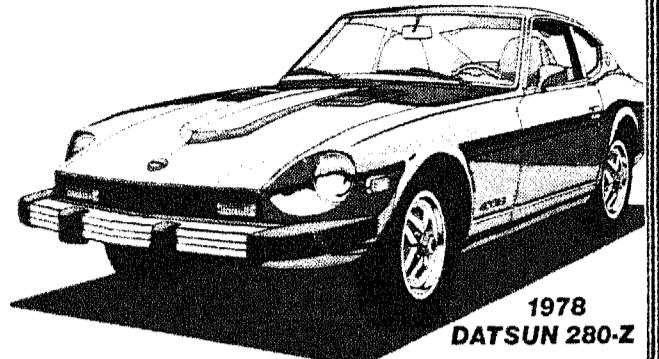
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## notes and antic-dotes

by Dorothy Raymer

"YOU WILL JUST love the quiet and peace of the Virginia countryside," Elisa Morgan kept saying when inviting me to spend a few days with her family in a community near Richmond, Quinton, which is so small that it is not shown on ordinary maps.

The actual location, I eventually found out, is in a wooded area of New Kent County bordering on a two-acre winding body of water called Kent Lake. The Morgan home is perched on a hillside that slopes down to a portion of the lake that has a serpentine form, like a river, deep at one end and shallow at the other.

THE LOCATION was indeed a leafy retreat with winding back-country roads, only scattered dwellings; it was cool even in midafternoon.

The hours passed in relaxation, what with lazing around on a deck embowered with oaks and an enormous beech tree inhabited by three squirrels, which ventured down on the porch deck railing when food was placed there for them. Daily excursions to a country store, walks with the dogs and foster-home children, provided leisurely diversion. And we also went shopping in Richmond proper, one day.

BUT I DID YEARN to see the Dresden Exhibit from Germany which had just opened in the new Mellon Wing of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., so Elisa, who is a student at the Florida Keys Community College here, and I decided to go to Washington for one day, travelling by Amtrack.

We had to postpone the original date set because a relative, John Brownley from Sydney, Australia, was arriving. That final day in the peace of the woodlands became, instead, a somewhat hectic expedition to Washington.

THE TEMPERATURE in the capital pushed 100 and was even more irritating due to the reflection of sunlight from all those marble and stone edifices in the heart of the city. The crowds at the exhibit were stupendous; the waiting for everything, fatiguing, but the Dresden exhibition was literally dazzling, especially the "jewel collection" of gold, silver and precious stone.

Tired, surfeited, we returned that evening on the train, which was half an hour late, and after a light supper, I decided to retreat to bed, since I had to get up at 5 a.m. to make ready for the return plane flight to Key West.

I was in the bathroom washing my face, when the lights went out for the third time during the third severe thunderstorm we'd had in that week.

EVERYONE ASSEMBLED in the big kitchen-dining area, and candles were distributed. We went creeping about the rambling house with flickering lights. Rhoda Morgan, the vivacious, red-haired hostess, observed, "Like an Agatha Christie setting, eh?"

The power company was notified by telephone and all was reasonably calm -- until a sudden gust of wind blew over the flaring torches out on the out-door deck, and there was a wild scramble to retrieve and extinguish the torches before a fire could be started on the ground level beneath the elevated porch.

IT WAS THEN that Mrs. Morgan realized that Lauren, her 19-year old daughter, was missing. Lauren had gone out on the

lake in a rowboat with two young male friends. The news was that a 40-mile an hour wind had arisen, and the sudden storm was sweeping the lake.

The telephone was still in operation, and the frantic mother began calling for help. The police, the fire department, the local rescue squad, all were notified, and an appeal to aid in the search went out to all the neighbors.

The telephone began ringing in subsequent replies every few minutes.

And then car after car and truck after truck pulled up with rescue-minded personnel. At least every 10 minutes there came loud pounding on the front door like "alarums" in Shakespearean drama. Enter men in foul-weather gear to exchange bulletins on progress or lack of it. They were equipped with huge flashlights and raucous voices. To add to the noise and mad confusion, every time this happened the three household dogs set up furious barking. The clamor continued for more than an hour with scarcely an interval of quiet.

THEN THE storm-lost trio straggled in, soaked through by the pelting rain, but otherwise unharmed. They had wisely let the small boat drift into shore when they could not row against the fierce wind, and simply waited out the fury ashore. When the storm's force subsided, they managed to return to the dock below the house, bedraggled, but with spirits undampened.

BY THIS TIME the relay of rescuers began returning, too. There was a barrage of pounding on the door, shouts out of doors and raucous exchanges of reports inside, accompanied by continual barking from the excited dogs.

Australian hospitality and Virginia-style friendliness intermingled. The uncle from Sydney broke out a quart of Australian rum. There was also some Australian beer available. Rescue parties reveled in a real party mood.

I DECIDED to simply go lie down, turn off my hearing aid, and try to rest, if not to fall asleep, after the strenuous hours in Washington. I actually dozed off, but was suddenly startled awake by hot wax dripping on my arm.

I switched on the hearing aid and came groggily awake. A voice in the gloom said, "Don't be upset. You just stay in bed. But the boys who were out on the lake and Lauren are coming through to take hot showers."

The only bathroom with a shower was annexed to the bedroom where I had retreated.

For nearly an hour the room leading to the bath was like Grand Central Station used to be in rush hour, enhanced with a candlelight procession.

BUT AT LAST there was an end to the commotion and I did fall asleep -- for perhaps an hour and a half. Then I woke up again in a blaze of light. The power had been restored!

IT was then around 3 a.m. Vainly I tried to snooze again. There was no more revelry in the other part of the house, but I kept expecting to hear shouts and loud knocking in a repeated pattern.

Finally I got up, dressed and packed, ready for the trip to the airport. Elisa appeared, looking as if she had had a full night of undisturbed repose. She cautioned me to move about quietly. After a quick breakfast, we tiptoed out for the ride to the airport. As we left the remote wooded section, I thought again of the shattered image of "peace and quiet" in Virginia, and of all that concentrated energy and community rescue effort -- and suddenly I became aware of why it took General U.S. Grant so long to bring about the fall of Richmond.



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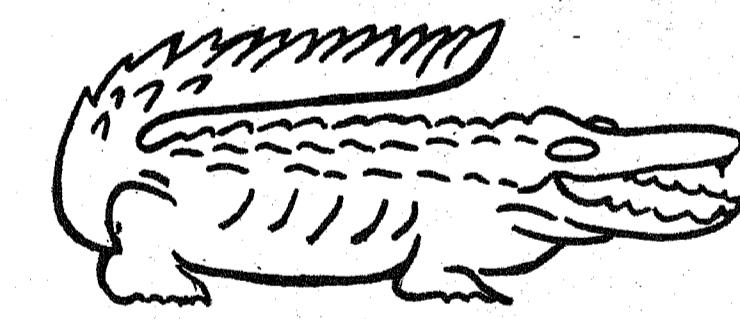
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## COMMENT



### editorial

"Government should as much as possible be run as a business."

THIS IS A QUOTE from Key West's energetic and exceptionally able new City Commissioner, Alton Weekley. Drawing upon his business experience as a vice-president of Fausto's Food Palace, Weekley has been spear-heading money-saving ideas at City Hall.

One of the most practical money-saving schemes pushed by Weekley is joint purchasing. He says that he and Lee Roberts of City Electric were talking about ways to save money, when Roberts introduced him to the idea of combining the purchasing of goods used in common by City Electric and the City of Key West. The idea grew to include joint purchasing with the School Board, Aqueduct Authority, Mosquito Board, County Commission, Junior College, and the Florida Keys Memorial Hospital. Meetings have been held in which the purchasing agents for these groups have discussed the best ways to approach savings. One small example of how this could work would be the purchasing of calendars. City Hall spends about a dollar per calendar for a hundred of them yearly. If they were bought through the Junior College Co-op, they possibly could cost less than 50¢ apiece. This is just a small thing, but it has enormous ramifications. As Weekley points out, supposing that the Xerox paper that these agencies use could be purchased jointly, possibly saving several hundred dollars per year per agency, or that a joint car pool could be worked out for the future. The opportunity for great economies in city spending is there, obviously.

ANOTHER ECONOMY measure being pushed by Weekley is to combine the 12 times a

continued on page 25

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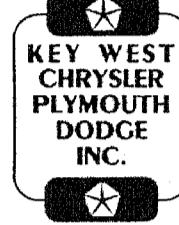
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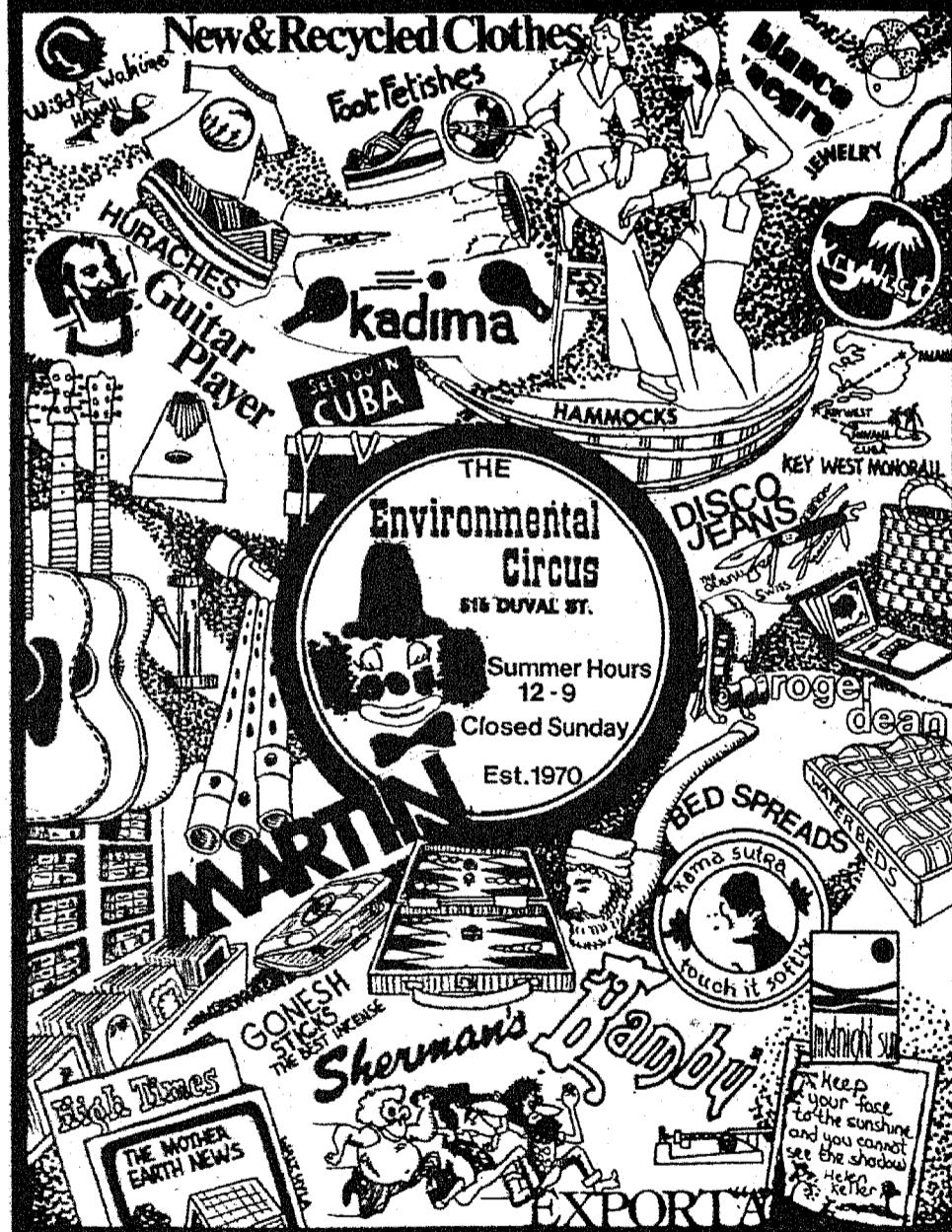
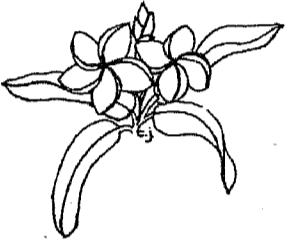
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SOME REMARKS (continued from page 5)

controversy has been that ordinary citizens, who are not involved in development and who are more interested in the quality of human life than in the welfare of birds, have raised quiet but firm voices against the rape of the land.

They stood by helplessly while Carl Rongo blotted Rest Beach with unesthetic and allegedly illegal townhouses, feeling that somehow these offenses to the eye were not right, that something should be done to stop them, but doing nothing themselves.

It was too much for them when the County wanted to take the first step toward making South Roosevelt Boulevard match the tacky sight that visitors are greeted with as they enter Key West on North Roosevelt. Contrary to claims that placing the weather station in the salt pond would not lead to private development nearby, the precedent of allowing the weather station to be built in the salt pond would help ease the way for further building there.

THE COUNTY found itself caught in a number of untruths: that the salt pond was not biologically useful, that there was no alternate site available, that the only opposition to the site consisted of a few bird-watchers. The last untruth was also a serious misjudgement. The opposition turned out to be not only a sizable collection of environmentalists, represented largely by the Florida Keys Citizens Coalition and the Audubon Society, but many individuals who notified the DER, the Army Corps of Engineers and the County Commission of their opposition.

At the June 23 meeting, local Weather Service Chief Meteorologist Richard Urbanik and Key West Art and Historical Society President John Church did not speak against the salt pond location, but their strong approval of the alternate site near the terminal deflated some

of Hernandez' and Kerr's arguments.

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT in anyone's mind that the only reason Commissioners Howanitz, Hernandez, and Kerr wanted the weather station on the salt pond site in the face of its proven unsuitability was to allow the precedent of building there, so that commercial development could take place in the area -- so that a few exploiters could make money at the expense of the quality of everyone else's life.

This attempt to destroy one of the last natural portions of the island was blocked not only by the DER, the Corps of Engineers, the bird watchers, Solares Hill, and Commissioners Shipley and Schloesser, but also by a large number of citizens of Key West, who insisted on being heard and headed.

USUALLY, when money talks, as it obviously did in this case, its voice is louder than reason. This time, however, the voices of the people of Key West rang out above the jingle of the cash register.

The salt ponds are not "saved" by any means. One attack was repelled, but there will be others, and the people who care about Key West will need to fight again and again to keep their island safe from ruinous over-development. R.M.

To the Editor:

IN A CAREFULLY managed news conference at Stock Island on July 15, County Administrator William Roberts depicted himself as a victim of attacks, politically motivated, by Commissioners Jerome Shipley and Don Schloesser. Glossed over were such subjects as a medical history which led to his evasion of a medical question on an official document, and the insubordination involved in his publicly

attacking the motives of two elected officials who have questioned his suitability for the post he holds. They, not he, are accountable to the electorate, and as representatives chosen by the voters they have every right, and indeed the responsibility, of determining any and all qualifications of an appointed official.

OBSCURED BY his personal attack allegations is the fact the Administrator is under-qualified for the job he was given. Anyone in our country who desires to prepare himself for an occupation such as County Administrator, which requires educational and experience qualifications, first arms himself with the necessary qualifications, and then seeks employment in his chosen field by offering credentials which show he is fully qualified. Monroe County has done the reverse; the under-qualified applicant was first given the job, and at a salary of thirty thousand dollars a year plus fringe benefits, he will try to learn as he goes. Evidently, to make sure he will have an ample chance to learn, he was awarded a four-year, no-cut contract through the votes of Commissioners Purington Howanitz, Richard Kerr, and Jerry Hernandez.

THE ADMINISTRATOR freely admits he owes his job to the votes of Howanitz, Kerr and Hernandez. By controlling the Commission through their 3 to 2 majority vote, they would not allow educational or experience qualifications to be written into the job prerequisites for the post of County Administrator. The three Commissioners also adopted an enabling Ordinance which lists all the responsibility and authority which may be awarded a County Administrator as described in

Chapter 125\* of the Florida Statutes, but the Ordinance does not limit his authority or make him sufficiently accountable to the five Commissioners. Once Roberts was appointed, the three Commissioners joined once again in voting to deny a legal question, forwarded from the County Commission to the Attorney General, to determine the legality of awarding a contract as long as four years for the County Administrator.

AN OBJECTIVE VIEW of the whole sequence of events leads to the conclusion that the Administrator's post was molded to suit one particular appointee, previously decided upon, by the three County Commissioners. Their tampering with the appointive process -- a part of the system of checks and balances -- cannot be explained away, and revives an ancient kind of politics Monroe Countians had hoped was past history. The revival, combined with new probabilities, has even more serious implications. Political power and patronage in Monroe County government has always been rooted in two main areas: 1) Who has control of the power to hire and fire? 2) Who has the clout to control the politics of "who gets what" in zoning and land use decisions? The three Commissioners can very well control the "who gets what" in zoning.

\*Florida Statute 125.74, part of the County Administration Law of 1974, describes the powers and duties of the County Administrator, which include: carry out the directives and policies of the Commission, provide an annual report, provide the Commissioners with information and advice, prepare a budget, establish procedures for County departments, supervise the care and custody of County property, act as personnel director, negotiate leases and contracts, perform other duties required by the Commission.

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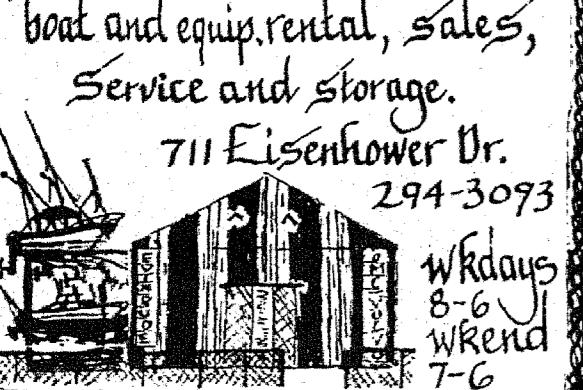
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ing by their majority votes on the Commission. The Administrator has nearly unlimited authority to hire and fire. Then acting in concert, the three Commissioners and the Administrator have within their grasps the ability to control it all, and much of what can happen will be out of the public view and out of the reach of the Sunshine Statutes.

THE DEVICE of creating an appointive post in local government, and giving the appointee such autonomy that he is not accountable to the people or their elected representatives, is not normal governmental procedure. The manipulation of the democratic process which has taken place in Monroe County government, visible to those who dare look, should ring alarm bells in the minds of the public. Our representative democracy is grounded in the principle that all power is vested in, and consequently derived from the people; that public officials are trustees and servants of the people and at all times responsible to the people; that there be safeguards and guarantees against maladministration. What has come to pass in Monroe County is method of bypassing the basic principle of representative democratic government. Any retreat from such basic principle should never be acceptable to the people. It cannot be, if the people are to control their government officials, instead of the government officials controlling them.

by William L. Keefer

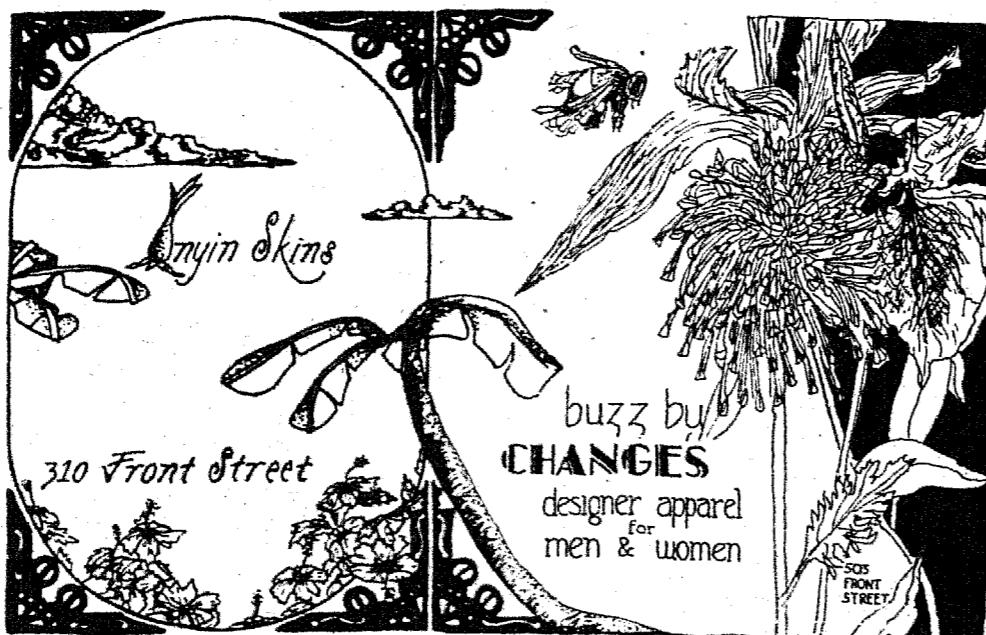
**ED. NOTE!** We are pretty much in agreement with William Keefer's letter. All of this current unpleasantness could have been avoided if Commissioners Jerry Hernandez, Richard Kerr, and Purdie Howenitz had not forced the selection of Bill Roberts on the people of Monroe County. There were qualified men seeking this job; they never had a chance

against this stacked deck.

The awarding of a four year contract to an unproven and inexperienced County Administrator is an arrogant gesture. Refusing to allow the Attorney General to rule on the legality of this four year contract adds to the power grab. Then, to round things out, when the news broke about Roberts' past problems, these same three commissioners tried to accuse Commissioners Jerry Shipley and Don Schlosser of initiating a smear campaign against Roberts. According to Shipley and Schlosser, the first they heard of Roberts' problems was from the Marathon reporter who dug up the information.

THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE is not the fact that Roberts was committed to a mental institution 20 years ago but that he concealed this information on his resume and insurance application. However, the overriding issue has been lost in the smokescreen set up by the three local commissioners. And that issue is that Roberts never had the qualifications for the job and was selected for political reasons over qualified applicants. (W.H.)

BIOLOGISTS from the Marine Research Laboratory of the Florida Department of Natural Resources have trapped and tagged lobsters of all sizes with a yellow spaghetti tag inserted between the carapace (head) and tail. The tags bear the words "FDNR LOBSTER RESEARCH" and a five-digit number. Divers who find tagged lobsters, including shorts (sub-legal size) and egg-bearing females, should leave the tags in place on the lobsters and contact the FDNR station in Marathon at 11400 Overseas Highway or call the toll-free number 1-800-432-2873.



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## PALMS & PELICANS

by Frances Signorelli

watches over an abandoned armadillo hiding behind a tumble weed waiting to cross a West Texas Farm to Market road.

I would pack off three of the children -- one to Reynolds School, one to that White Street junior high school and one to Key West High School -- and head for the crying bench on Monroe County Beach.

A couple of gay fellows who hung out at the beach toilets used to eye me kindly and sadly. Two Cuban girls would move away from me on down the beach figuring from my trembling lips that I was tuning up for a coronary or set for a fit, and they wanted to finish eating their mollette.

I hadn't as yet learned to dress funky in a smart, time-honored island way, and I minced along, my tilty high heels cutting little tunnels in the sand.

The littlest son always attended me about 35 yards back, lurking there, peeping from behind a Monroe County work truck. He was a kid who talked non-stop, consolingly, to himself.

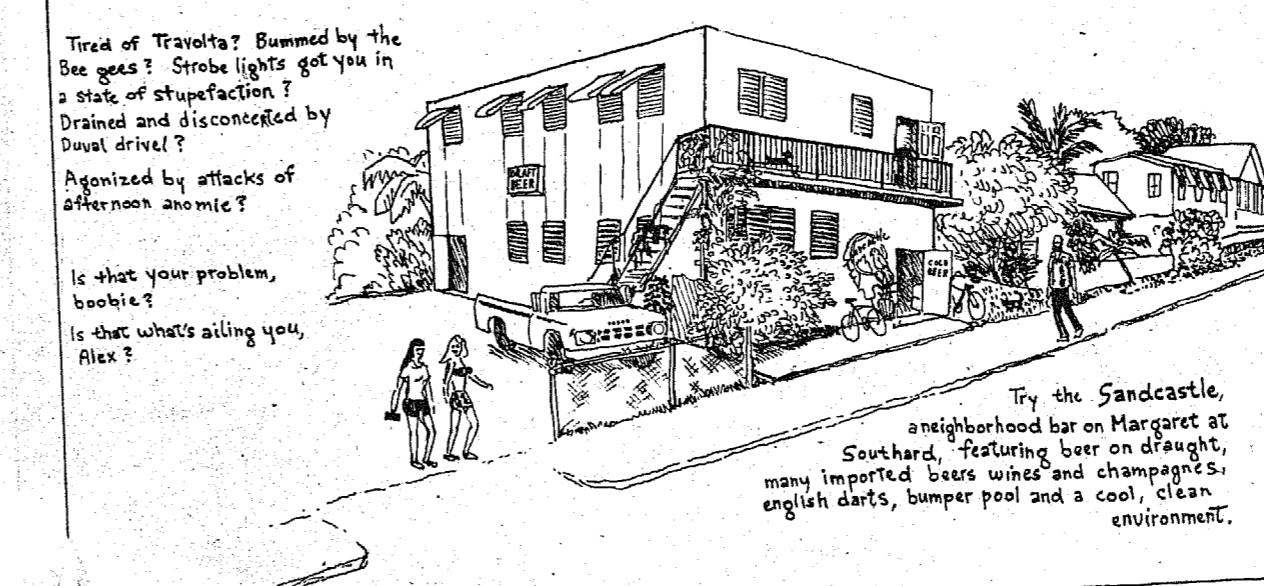
THAT FIRST Key West year, our angst at the beach never improved much when we picked ourselves up and walked home, where Adeline, the maid, was ironing. In those days, 17 years ago, big house owners and big family raisers sometimes had maids, and we called them maids. Now, seldom does anyone refer to a "maid" (much less be able to afford one), except perhaps a really old or passe lady.

The littlest kid is circling me, dragging a stick over the ground.

"I don like it here. I like Grandma's house in Texas. I want my armadillo back. A fellow ought not to have to come here. I want Grandma's little cake and I would feed it to my armadillo."

This was before this kid smoked pot; this really was the way he talked, not addressing anybody directly -- or, maybe, some wonderful, understanding diety who

continued on page 27

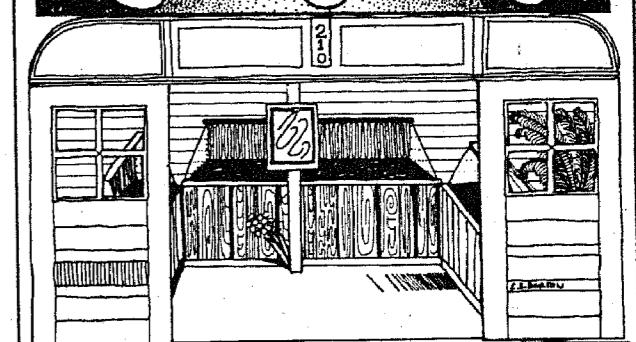


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# WHO IS ROBERT WATSON?

written and illustrated by Malcolm Ross

THE FOLLOWING is the final portion of the journal of Robert Watson of Key West, which details his experiences in the service of the Confederate States of America and spans the period from September 1861 to April 1865.

Watson's initial enlistment was in the Coast Guard, but after a few months of service in this branch of the military he is ordered transferred to an infantry regiment and sent to the Tennessee front. At the front he soon finds himself a pawn in the battle of Chickamauga, one of the most severe confrontations between the North and South. Miraculously, he survives this battle unscathed but goes into retreat into Georgia with the rest of the Confederate forces.

THE LIFE of a footsoldier is fraught with hardship and near starvation, but, as a result of communications with Senator Stephen Mallory of Key West, Watson and his friend from Key West, Alfred Lowe, are granted transfers to the Confederate Navy. The transfer takes the men to Savannah, where they take up duties on a ship, the C.S. Ram Savannah, which is located in the Savannah River near the city. Life in the Navy is a vast improvement over the men's experiences in the infantry, but Union General William Tecumseh Sherman is determined to prove the veracity of his statement that "War is hell," and the men's Navy idyll is short-lived.

Sherman begins his devastating "March to the Sea," leaving Georgia in flames and making his name synonymous with war at its most horrible, and thereby creating a memory which will remain bitter in the hearts of southerners for generations to come. Sherman stated, "If the people (of Georgia) raise a howl against my barbarity and cruelty, I will answer that war is war and not popularity-seeking." As the March to the Sea nears its completion, the Union forces get closer and closer, and the city of Savannah comes under siege in December of 1864. The city falls to Union forces four days before Christmas, and Watson and his shipmates are forced to blow up the ship "Savannah."

THE PATTERN of retreat which seems to pervade all of Watson's military career repeats itself again. The end of the war is now only months away as Watson and the other men from the ship move into South Carolina through Charleston, and eventually end up at Wilmington, North Carolina, where they are assigned to an installation (Battery Buchanan) in the vicinity of Fort Fisher.

WATSON'S DIARY continues from Fort Fisher:

DECEMBER 31, 1864: Cold and clear. This place is called Confederate Point. It is a low, sandy place, water brackish, sand blowing over everything...The water is very shoal about this place and everything that is brought here we have to wade out to the boats and carry it on shore. I went over to Fort Fisher in the afternoon. The men in the fort all busy repairing and strengthening the works. The ground was covered with shell of all sizes, many of them unexploded. On Christmas day the Yankee fleet threw about 30,000 shell at the fort. They burnt all the quarters but did not injure the works much. 2 guns bursted (sic) and several were dismounted. Our loss small.

Fort Fisher is a large and strong work...We have to sleep on the floor and are so crowded that we can scarcely find room to lie. Our food is badly cooked, consequently have not enough to eat. The bread is made without salt or yeast and is as heavy as stone, the beef boiled, and the coffee is slops.

This day one year ago I was at Dal-

ton, Georgia and felt confident that the war would be over and I be at home today, but alas am sadly disappointed and God only knows when this cruel and unnatural war will end. I am afraid that it will not end during Lincoln's administration. This ends the year 1864 and I pray to Almighty God that I may be home at this time next year.

Many of those involved in the war sense that the Southern cause is lost and that it is only a matter of time before it will be all over for the South. Less than six months actually remain to the war as the year 1865 begins with poor food, sagging morale and a rash of desertions.

JANUARY 1, 1865: New Year's Day. Very cold and on guard, 1 iron clad biscuit and a cup of weak coffee for breakfast and 1 iron clad biscuit and a small piece of boiled beef for dinner and 1 biscuit and a cup of slops for supper. Pretty rough fare for New Year's Day. Austin Williams and 5 marines took a boat and went to the Yankees during the night. Some of them were on guard when they deserted. As soon as they were missed the long roll was beat and the roll called to find out who were missing. Williams was one of Savannah's crew (see above). They got off clear.

JANUARY 3: I asked Lieut. Arledge to allow the Savannah's crew to mess together as it was very unpleasant for us to mess with a lot of "tar heels."\* He consented and I went to work and made a mess chest. In the afternoon took a lot of beef and vegetables on shore and carried them up to the bomb proof and hauled up the boat....

JANUARY 4: Went to work on officers grs. The tools consist of 2 old broken saws, a hatchet and 2 hammers....

Watson continues to apply his carpenter's skills to the officers quarters, but the respite from war is soon to end.

JANUARY 13: ...Roll call at 4 a.m. and ammunition given out for small arms. At sunrise the enemy opened fire on Fort Fisher. At 12 M (noon) we were ordered to Fort Fisher to reinforce it. Double quicked up to the fort, the shell bursting around us in large numbers but did us no damage. We manned three guns and commenced firing at 1 p.m. and continued till dark when both parties ceased fire. The Yankees had been firing on the fort all day with 3 monitors and the iron sides but at 4 p.m. they brought the whole fleet to bear and kept up a terrific fire until dark. Fortunately none of our men were hurt except Lieut. Hudgins who was slightly wounded in the mouth with a fragment of shell and several of us were knocked down with sand bags. We were all nearly buried in sand several times. This was caused by shell

\*Natives of North Carolina, the Tarheel State, so named from the pitch-blackened heels of its residents, who reputedly ran barefoot among its pine forests.



I SHOULD NOT SAY LICE FOR IT IS VULGAR, THE PROPER NAME FOR THEM IS "SOLDIER BUGS."

bursting in the sand. Whenever one would strike near us in the sand it would throw the sand over us by the cart load. All quiet through the night and very cold. Got no sleep for we were on the lookout for an infantry attack. Fired our guns every 15 minutes along the beach with cannister. Very dark.

JANUARY 14: At daylight we fell in and marched back to Battery Buchanan. Marched in quick time and got a drink of whiskey on arrival, got breakfast and turned in and just as I fell asleep we were ordered to fall in and go back to Fort Fisher. The Yankees saw us for they shelled us furiously all the way but did us no injury. We got through safe and manned the same guns we had yesterday. I was at a 64/10 in. Brooke rifle and made some excellent shots. We ceased firing at dark but the enemy kept up a severe fire all night. They seemed to direct their whole fire at our 3 guns for we were the only ones that did them any injury. Our shot and shell would strike the monitors and iron sides and break in pieces and of course did them no injury but the wooden vessels did not fare so well for several of them had to haul off. Their shell bursted (sic) among us very often but fortunately none of us were injured. After dark a company of soldiers came in our gun chambers and had not been there 15 minutes before two of them were wounded, one mortally. We all suffered very much with cold and want of sleep. Skirmishing on our left between our pickets and the Yankee pickets. They are reported to be in large force up the beach on our left. Our pickets drove theirs back.

JANUARY 15: At daylight we went back to Battery Buchanan, took a drink, got breakfast and turned in, the Yankee fleet keeping up a heavy bombardment all the time and many of their shells exploding near our grs. One man had a leg cut off and the other broken, he was asleep in the guard tent at the time. At 11 a.m. turned out and got dinner and all hands were ordered to pack up and go to the battery for the fleet had moved to the right and near us. The shelling was terrific. At 3 1/2 p.m. the Yankee infantry advanced on Fort Fisher and were repulsed three times but on the 4th charge they gained a footing on the left of the works. Unfortunately all the guns on the left were disabled, if this had not been the case they never would have gained a footing, but our men fought them bravely until after dark with musketry and contested every inch of ground. The slaughter was great. As soon as we saw that the enemy had gained a footing and planted their hateful flag on the left of the works we knew that the fort was lost and Captain Chapman had all hands mustered, the roll called, and he then informed us that the fort was lost and that it was useless for him to keep us there to be taken prisoners or slaughtered, that we could fight the battery for some time and probably do the enemy some damage, but that we could not hold it for any length of time. He then ordered us in the boats and we had to wade out to them up to our waists in water to get into them and just as we started he ordered us to await for orders. Our battery then opened fire on the left of Fort Fisher with one 11 inch and one 10 inch gun, the other two

JANUARY 16: Turned out at daylight and marched till 3 1/2 p.m. when three of us stopped at a house and got some corn bread and meat for the small sum of \$30.00 from a negro. We were very hungry for we left the battery with nothing to eat. This was the fault of the officers who I am sorry to say were all intoxicated. There was a large quantity of provisions in the fort which fell into the hands of the enemy. After eating the corn dodger and meat we proceeded a little farther and camped for the night. We got some rice and bacon from a negro and gave him a pair of pants in exchange, cooked and eat it and turned in. Very cold all night.

JANUARY 17: Started at daylight and arrived at Wilmington at 11 a.m. very tired and sore, drew a pair of shoes and went to the navy yard and were ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to leave for a battery somewhere on the river. ...Got but little sleep for a lot of the men came in drunk and kept up a noise all night and the place is overrun with lice. They were running over and biting me all night. I should not say lice for it is vulgar, the proper name for them is "soldier bugs."

JANUARY 18: ...The enemy still shelling Fort Anderson, they have been at it for several days.

JANUARY 19: ...In the afternoon about 40 Yankee launches came up the river. Only one of our guns, a 30 pdr. Parrot, would bear on them and soon drove them back. I think they were sounding the channel and dragging for torpedoes.

JANUARY 20: At 10 a.m. 9 Yankee gunboats came up the river and at 3 p.m. they opened fire on us. Our Parrot gun opened on them in return it being the only gun that would bear on them. The third shell the Yankees threw came very near killing me and several more. Fortunately we had put up a lot of sand bags in the morning which saved us but we were buried in sand. Several shell exploded near our gun and one struck the platform and tore it all to pieces. Ceased fire at dark and we worked nearly all night repairing damages with sand bags. Very cold.

JANUARY 21: All hands at work strengthening the fort with sand bags. At 4 p.m. the Yankees came in line and opened on us and continued till dark. They shelled us very heavily but did us but little injury. Our 8 in. shell gun was dismounted and while trying to mount it the gunner was badly hurt by the gun falling on him.

JANUARY 22: At 1 a.m. an officer came around and turned us out and ordered us to pack up and take everything that we wished to carry with us and not to make any noise. We did so and...then marched quietly off to a hollow about 400 yds. from the battery and waited there about 1 hour. It was bitter cold and I thought that my feet would freeze.

JANUARY 23: ...Raining all night. The sentinel on post fired his gun and the guard turned out, fake alarm. The fool heard a coon and thought it was a man crawling up to him. He was very much frightened, he is a N.C. (North Carolina) conscript.

The officers misbehave and Watson contemplates desertion.

JANUARY 24: ...Officers all drunk and drilling us for their amusement. If these things continue much longer I shall certainly desert and go to some other command, for I am heartily sick of it.

The officers continue to misbehave.

JANUARY 25: ...Officers fiddling, dancing, and drinking whiskey all day and nearly all night. Shameful conduct for officers, the whiskey is sent for the men but they drink 9/10 of it themselves. The men are allowed 1 gill per day and they only give half a gill to the guard, the balance of the men get none.

FEBRUARY 8: ...The officers are intoxicated all the time and put on more airs than a commodore would.

The wait for the enemy attack is not without its amusing moments.

FEBRUARY 13: ...At 1 a.m. while I was on post I heard something coming through the woods and when it came in sight it looked like two men. I hailed three times and was about to fire my gun when I discovered that it was a mule. The officer of the guard came running to find out what I was hailing and in cross-

guns would not bear. Continued shelling until 8 p.m. At 10 p.m. we were ordered to go across the river to Battery Lamb. We were very glad to leave for we were nearly frozen as our clothes were wet and it was a very cold night. The shell were bursting very near us all the time.

Stopped at Battery Lamb 1/2 hour and started for Wilmington. I and several of my shipmates marched about four miles, halted, built a fire and turned in after drying our clothing. Slept well. Lieut. Hudgins was captured while trying to get into the boat. The Yankees threw up thousands of rockets when they gained entire possession of Fort Fisher. The sight was magnificent.

FEBRUARY 17: ...At 9 p.m. just as I fell asleep the alarm was given that the Yankees were landing below us. All hands went to grs. and 27 of us went out as pickets, remained there until 11 p.m. when we were relieved by some soldiers and we went to bed. Our officers did not know as much about posting us as a lot of old women, we were scattered all about in the woods and had the Yankees attacked us we would have shot our own men. All quiet the balance of the night.

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ing the ditch the plank broke and he fell in. This amused me for the balance of my watch.

The enemy moves closer and some confrontation is imminent.

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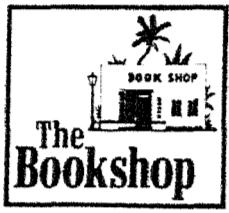
FEBRUARY 18: ...The enemy still shelling Fort Anderson, they have been at it for several days.


**BOOKSHOPing**

Our current best-seller is the new and unique **KEY WEST: THE LAST RESORT**, which sold over 2500 copies in its first month of publication. Dubbed "the authentic local Baedeker" by Dorothy Rayner in *Solares Hill*, the book has received widespread publicity including a Florida-wide *Miami Herald* article which touted it as "a tell-it-like-it-is book that doubles as a guide for tourists and a survival kit for locals." Another book of local interest is **Seasons of the Heart**, a novel about a widow coming to Key West looking for a new life. Also, if you haven't picked up the paperback copies of **Rumor of War** and **Treasure**, you're missing two exciting books. The first is a Viet Nam chronicle by local author Phil Caputo; the second is the saga of Key West's Mel Fisher and his discovery of a sunken galleon. [his battle with the state has been in the papers for months now].

Our **Summer Sale** continues: we still have hundreds of paper- and hardbacks that have been marked down at least 50% or more. Many hardbacks go from \$0.95 to \$1.25. Some paperbacks are as cheap as 5 for \$1.25.

We recently received new shipments of **Greeting** and **Note Cards**, including handmade flower cards from Poland, astrological sign cards, and colorful offbeat stationery. New sci-fi paperbacks, too. We're at 536 Fleming St., one block off Duval.



small crackers for \$2.50, all the money I had. The Yankees won't give us any bread, can't imagine the reason, their men have plenty. 500 more of our prisoners came in at dark.

APRIL 13: ...At 10:30 a.m. all hands fell in and were counted off, for what purpose I can't tell. All the troops from each state fell in separately and their names taken down. I and Alf Lowe put ours with the Fla. troops. All to be paroled are the Va. and some N.C. troops were paroled and started for home. I am in hopes to get off tomorrow...

The men receive their paroles, proceed to City Point where they are stamped by the Provost Marshall, then go on to Point Lookout and finally to Washington, D.C.

APRIL 17: ...Went to the P.M. but it was closed, then went to the Soldier's Rest and got supper. This place is crowded with negro and white soldiers all mixed together. There are also many Southern soldiers, the most of them deserters who have taken the oath and waiting for transportation. There was so much noise that I have slept but little during the night.

Other events are happening in Washington that will affect the course of history.

APRIL 18: ...I forgot to mention that President Lincoln and some of his cabinet were assassinated on Saturday night. (Watson is actually in error -- it was Good Friday, April 14th!) On our arrival we saw all the houses decorated with crepe and flags half-masted, guns fired every half hour, etc. I am informed that we cannot go out of this place but will have to stay here until they bring us our transportation. No one got it today. Lincoln's funeral will come

off tomorrow and then we may get it. Everything at a standstill at present. Nearly every man here has taken the Oath of Allegiance and I am afraid that the paroled men will have some trouble to get away from here. I don't want to take the oath but if they send me to prison I will take it for I am satisfied that the South is gone up the spout and it is of no use for me to linger for a long time in a prison for no purpose.

APRIL 19: The President's funeral took place today and all business suspended for the day. Minute guns fired all day. I am in hopes of going away tomorrow for am sick and tired of this place. Can get no sleep for there are a lot of rowdies and penitentiary birds among us that go prowling around at night stealing whatever they can and making such a noise that it is impossible to sleep. I find a great difference between the officers and soldiers here and those that are in the front. The latter treated us kindly and never insulted us but those that have been in cities all the war treat us like dogs, can't speak civil to us, say we ought to be hanged, etc. The term Rebel son of a b-tch is as gentle a name as they can call us. Pleasant day.

APRIL 20: Pleasant morning. The house that we are in is full of lice, counted five on me this morning, had none yesterday. If I have to remain here long will be eat up by them for I have but the suit of clothing that I have on. There are but 3 or 4 of us paroled prisoners in the house I am in, the balance are deserters who have taken the oath. Many of them went off yesterday. ...God only knows when we will get away from this place for I hear so many reports. Some say that they will not allow paroled men to leave but keep them prisoners of war. But I will find out tomorrow certain.

APRIL 23: Arrived in Jersey City at 6 a.m., got out of the cars and crossed to N.Y. in a ferry boat, walked down to

APRIL 21: ...At 9 a.m. went to P.M. office, were put in the yards in rear of the office under guard. Remained there until near sunset when they took our names and where we wanted to go and then sent under guard to the Soldier's Rest and put in a building with 1200 negro soldiers and a lot of white deserters and bounty jumpers and a few of our paroled men. Was very unwell all day and night, severe cold and light fever. Slept but little during the night.

APRIL 22: At 9 a.m. all the paroled prisoners were sent to the P.M. under guard and after remaining there until 2 p.m. and being humbugged all that time got our paroles stamped and a pass to go to whatever place we named, but no transportation furnished unless we took the Oath of Allegiance. Many did so but and my chum would not take it but got pass to go to New York. We were also informed that if we were found with any rebel clothes on 48 hours after that we would be arrested. Here we were, Alf and I, among strangers and enemies, not a cent to save our lives, no clothes except what we had on, nothing to eat, and a military prison staring us in the face. All this we could avoid by taking the Oath, but we would not. We thought of an old friend we had not seen for 5 years, W.W. Maloney, and after some trouble found his house but he was not at home. His wife directed us to his place of business where we found him. He was very much pleased to see us, loaned us \$25.00, all he had to spare, and walked with us to the depot. We got our tickets to N. York and started immediately. Arrived in Baltimore at sunset, remained but a short time and started again. Arrived in Phila. at 11 p.m., changed cars and started again and run all night.

APRIL 25: Felt first rate today. Every business house closed on account of the funeral of the president which took place at 12 M. All the different lodges and associations, even the Irish, turned out.

**EPILOGUE**

ROBERT WATSON'S diary ends at this point, but apparently his friend Alfred Lowe and he were able to book passage to Havana and from there to make it the ninety miles back to Key West. Robert Watson's name appears on the Key West tax rolls for the following year, 1866, where he is listed only as a male of voting age with no property. By the following year

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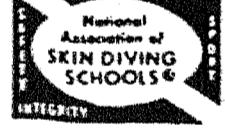
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**Harper's BAZAAR**  
July, 1978  
"...also comes from the Key West Fragrance & Cosmetic Factory in the form of Tan-A-Gay after-sun lotion - 80% cool, calming gel and feels it. And this you can mail order."

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**The New York Times Magazine**  
May 21, 1978  
HOW TO STAY SAFE IN THE SUN May 21, 1978  
"Many sun people swear by products from Hawaii and Florida. The Key West Fragrance and Cosmetic Factory Inc. is one such company, whose business in sun tan products runs to about \$2 million dollars yearly. It features such unusual items as Key West PABA Fisherman's Absolue Sunscreen (with 5% PABA) and Key West PABAtection (which combines aloe and 5% PABA)."

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he has attained a degree of affluence and is credited with owning "three cattle and hogs," land valued at \$150 and \$50 capital. Subsequent years show an increase in the worth of the man to the

applied his carpenter's skills and constructed a home for his family in the 500 block of Simonton Street. This house has passed through various owners and today is no longer owned by any of his

descendants. "I remember Carrie Hattrick is an old but active lady, and I remember one day when she walked by the house and remarked to my father, who was sitting on the porch, 'That's a very old house you're living in, because I was born in it!'"

After she walked on, Mary Anne's father made the mental notation that Miss Carrie was indeed very old herself and close to ninety if she was a day. Apparently the first daughter of Robert Watson who had lived to maturity, she had been born in 1871, lived an active life, and died in 1962 at the venerable age of 91!

WHEN THE FIRST of the articles on Robert Watson, his house and his journal appeared in *Solares Hill*, the only clues to the existence of his diary were a brief mention in *Kinfolk*, the genealogical work pertaining to various Key West families, and a typewritten copy of the diary in the Department of Manuscripts at the Cornell University Library at Ithaca, New York. It was suspected that some of Mr. Watson's descendants were living in Key West, but their names and whereabouts were a mystery.

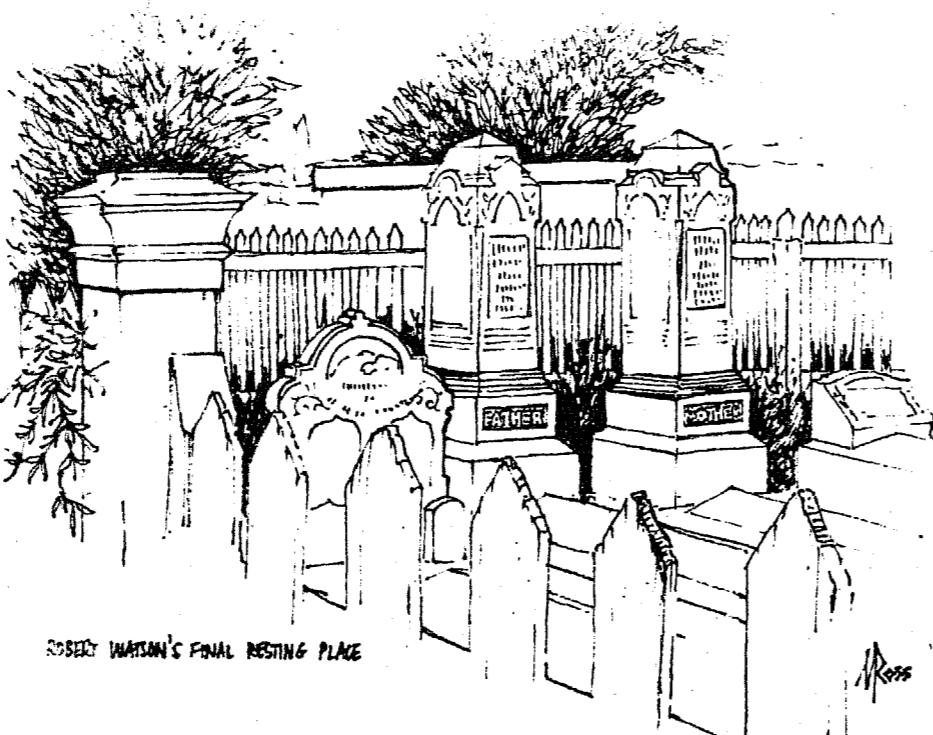
It was coincidental that at the appearance of the March *Solares Hill* one of Watson's granddaughters, Mrs. Carolyn Hawley of Independence, Missouri, was in Key West visiting a cousin. After reading the article on Robert Watson, Mrs. Hawley contacted *Solares Hill*, and an appointment was made to meet her and another of Watson's granddaughters, Mrs. Claudia Gardner.

MARY ANNE MATCHETT was present, and the afternoon was spent discussing the grandfather and his activities in Key West and viewing such Civil War memorabilia as Watson's leather gunpowder pouch and the carpet bag which he carried with him through the war. The fabric of the latter is threadbare and worn, but the blues and reds of the material are still vibrant after one hundred odd years.

These articles had apparently been loaned to the East Martello Museum but were never displayed and subsequently returned.

Mrs. Hawley was able to supply the following information in regard to the descendants of Robert Watson. The names of his six living granddaughters and grandson are as follows:

Claudia Gardner, living in Key West nee Albury; Rosalind O'Flynn, living in Key West nee Albury; Carrie Jones, living in Key West nee Watson; Mary Meyers, living in Key West nee Collins; Louisa Crowley, living in Jacksonville nee Curry; Carolyn E. Hawley, living in Independence, Missouri, nee Hattrick.



ROBERT WATSON'S FINAL RESTING PLACE

point where he eventually owns a carpenter shop on Ann Street and seven lots in a section of town south of Truman Avenue. Both Robert and his more affluent brother George owned most of the property in this area and eventually gave their name to the present Watson Street, which runs through this same area.

ACCORDING TO the records of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Watson married one Caroline Elizabeth Kemp in 1868, and, it is presumed, began to raise a family. Around this time or shortly after, Watson

descendents.

THE FAMILY PLOT in the Key West cemetery shows that Watson lived to the ripe old age of 76 and had a sizable family, many of whom repose next to his wife and him in the plot. On visiting the Watson family plot, Mary Anne Matchett, the present owner of the house which Watson built after his return from the Civil War and who has lived in the house for thirty or more years, noticed a familiar name among the headstones.

"At last everything becomes clear,"



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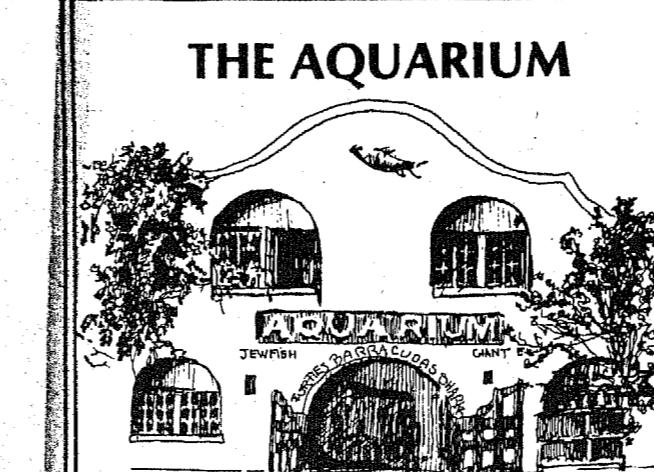
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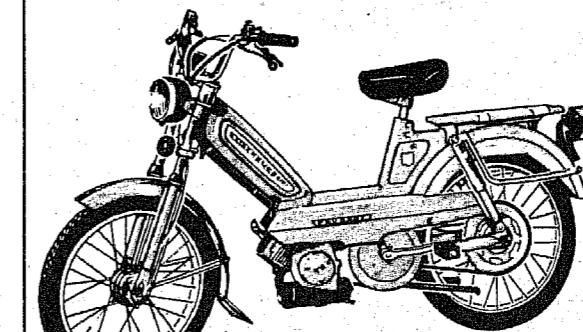
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## TWO FABLES

by Viola Veidt

### THE CRICKET THAT SANG OFF KEY

THE MEDITERRANEAN is a very blue sea, with red rocks falling almost into it. And above these rocks stand very tall pine trees that smell like Christmas every day of the year. When the sun sets, thousands of crickets start to sing, and they sing so loud, that it disturbs the peace. But then, you can't arrest a cricket, so they keep on singing, and hiding in the lovely trees.

Charles Cigale was one of them; he just loved to rub his wings together in the chorus, but he had been a bad Cricket Kid and had been in a bad fight with one of his pals. It didn't give him a black eye, but left one of his wings shorter than the other. So when he rubbed his wings together, they didn't sing "Bribbee, Bribbee," but "Brubb, Bribbee, Brubb, Rub-a-dub-dub." Which sounds even more awful in French.

THE CRICKET Glee Club was very angry and complained to their bandleader, Maitre Maurice Cigalier, who finally called Charles aside and asked him to quit. Charles was heartbroken, what can a cricket do, really, unless he sings! He liked his job so much.

After a few days of sulking, he went to see a family friend, a wise old owl

named Henri Hibou, who ran an employment agency. "Monsieur Hibou," he said, "I am unemployed, what kind of job could I do?"

"Hoo Hoo," Monsieur Hibou replied, "There is a very good job awaiting you. Have you heard about the cricket in the hearth, he who brings good luck to the house he lives in? And since you will be by yourself, no one will notice that you are out of tune, so here is the address. Those two-legged house owners need the luck you can bring."

"Oh, merci, merci beaucoup," said Charles. The address he went to was a humble little shack, where a baby was crying and there were only potatoes in a big pot boiling on the open fireplace. It was a bit hot, but Charles all the same scrambled dutifully up near the fire and started singing, "Brubb, Bribbee, Brubb-Rub-a-dub-dub."

RIGHT AWAY the baby stopped wailing and his mother, who had been rocking him stopped and listened to Charles. "A cricket in the hearth!" she cried out. "Maybe now things will start going right.



CHARLES WAS very proud and rubbed his Rub-a-dub-brubb-brubb wings as loud as he could. Just then the rattling front door opened and the Papa came in, hugged Mama and the baby, laughing and dancing them around. "I've got a job, a really good job at last! Now we can move to a nice place in town, I can finally give you a better life. Say, what's that chirpy-chirp noise?"

"That," said the young mother, "is a cricket, a cricket in the hearth. He brought us good luck today."

"Well," said Papa, "he'd better pack his gear, because he'll move with us as part of our family, whatever happens."

Charles rub-a-dubbed a little more and laughed with them. Then he began to pack his belongings so he could move along with the happy family to their new quarters, because making others happy is the best job there is.

### CLARA CLAM -- THE CLAM THAT WASN'T HAPPY

ONCE IN AWHILE there is a clam that isn't happy. Clara Clam was a very pretty clam, as clams go, and fortunate to live in a lovely blue bay, where she could dig just deep enough in the white sand to avoid the nasty feet of clam-digging human beings. Also, there was a pier very close by, so the clam-digging people could easily hurt their big toes, if they dug too close to Clara Clam. So, Clara should have been happy, as clams are supposed to be. But -- but!

On the pier there lived an oyster named Olivia. She was also a pretty oyster, as oysters go, just as Clara was a pretty clam -- except for one difference. As we all know, oysters make PEARLS. Olivia did, so Olivia was of the opinion that she was much, much superior to Clara.

AND CLARA TRIED, oh! how she tried, to make a pearl. She swallowed sand time after time, but all it did was give her pimples under her shell. And, if a clam itches, well, like all of us, she wants

to scratch. But clams just do not have the ability to scratch very well!!

Olivia Oyster loved to tease Clara by opening up just ever so little to let Clara see the beautiful, shiny pearl that grew inside her. All poor Clara could do was itch -- and her stomach hurt, from eating all that sand. It did not make for a very happy neighborhood.

THEN ONE FINE DAY, a boat came and anchored at the old pier. Some boys and girls jumped out and screamed: "Look, oysters!" Recklessly they started zipping

continued on page 26

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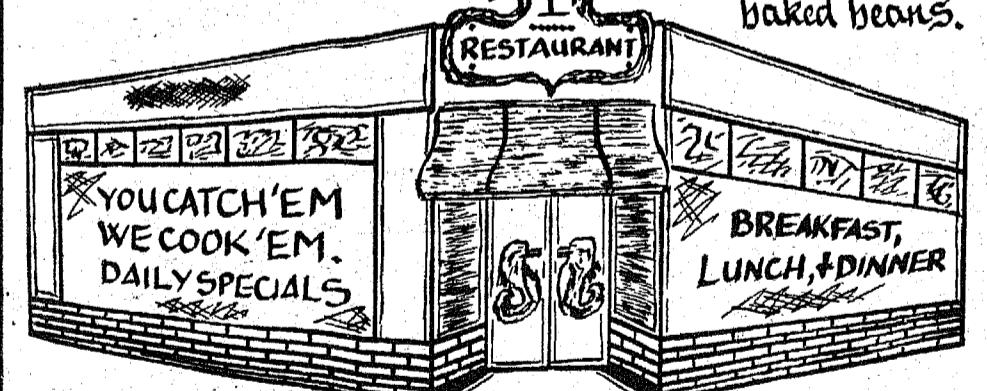
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## The "Resort Tax" Controversy

by Richard Marsh

### FACTS AND OPINIONS

ATTEMPTS ARE underway to establish a tourist development tax in Key West. The tax would be one or two percent of the rental of "any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, rooming house, tourist or trailer camp, or condominium for a term of 6 months or less," and would be collected by the property owner or operator from the tenant.

The state law which enables a county to impose this tax strictly limits the purposes for which the money thus collected can be used:

"To acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate, and promote, one or more, publicly owned and operated convention centers, sports stadiums, sports arenas, coliseums, or auditoriums...

"To promote and advertise tourism..."

"To fund convention bureaus, tourist bureaus, tourist information centers, and news bureaus..."

It is estimated that a two percent tax would bring about \$500,000 annually to Key West.

THESE STEPS must be followed, according to the same law, in order to impose the tax:

1) The County Commission must adopt a resolution establishing a Tourist Development Council and indicate the County's intention to consider the enactment of the tax.

2) The County Commission must at the same time appoint the nine members of the Tourist Development Council -- the County Mayor, two elected municipal of-

ficials, three resort owners, and three persons who are involved in tourism but are not resort owners.

3) The Council must submit to the County Commission a 24-month plan indicating the proposed uses of the tax money, which must be consistent with the uses allowed by the state law.

4) The County Commission must adopt that plan as part of the ordinance levying the tax. After the enactment of the ordinance, the County may change the plan by a vote of four Commissioners, but any changes would still have to conform to the state law.

5) At least 60 days must pass between the adoption of the resolution (Step 1) and the enactment of the ordinance (Step 4).

6) The ordinance imposing the tax shall not take effect until it is passed in a referendum.

The County Commission would have to quickly perform the first two steps so that Steps 3 to 5 can be accomplished in time, if the referendum question is to appear on the ballot for the November 7 election.

FOR MANY REASONS which can become complicated in detailed argument and clouded by emotion and ignorance, the prospect of such a tax -- popularly called a "resort tax" locally -- has become the subject of much heated discussion recently. The heat generated does not always match the light shed. All factions seem to agree on only one thing: Key West does not need a convention center, sports stadium, sports arena, coliseum, or auditorium.

THESE ARE SOME of the arguments

heard in favor of the tax:  
The tax could be used to replace and probably increase the \$14,000 annually that the City pays to the Chamber of Commerce. That would save \$14,000 that the City could use for something else, like hiring an extra policeman to patrol the beaches to reduce thefts from parked cars.

The tax could save the County some of the \$136,719 which it now spends for advertising and could be diverted to other uses.

More money would be available to advertise tourism in Key West, and more tourists would spend more money, which would be good for all residents through a "trickle down" effect.

THESE ARE SOME arguments against the tax:

Some resort owners see themselves as being forced to become unwilling flunkies, collecting the tax from roomers for the benefit of the operators of shops and attractions which will profit from the increased flow of tourists brought here by increased advertising. This objection is understandable when it comes from resorts already doing capacity business; they would have nothing to gain. Also, they resent being on the receiving end of complaints about the tax from the tourists.

The ordinary citizen who is not directly involved in a tourist-related business and the retired citizen whose income is fixed and not locally derived have two major arguments against the tax: 1) they have nothing to gain from increased tourism; and 2) they suffer from crowded streets, water shortages, and the driving up of prices that results from tourism. Proponents answer those objections with: 1) everybody benefits because the city as a whole will benefit; 2) prices are high not because of tourism but because delivery trucks make only a one-way paying trip, since they leave Key West empty. These answers do not seem to satisfy the objectors, however.

BOTH THE PROONENTS and the opponents have been the loudest and the most frequently heard, but there are many who sit quietly and firmly on the fence. They favor some form of tax on tourists; some agree that it should be imposed through the hotels, motels, etc., and some feel it should be more widely distributed through restaurants, bars, and the Conch Train and other attractions.

This faction in the middle -- and it seems to be composed of a large number -- objects to the limitations that the present state law puts on the allowed uses of the tourist tax money. Many would favor a tax if the money could be spent on those things that residents as well as tourists could benefit from: sewer system, water, electricity, streets and sidewalks, beach improvement and maintenance. The tourists cause the yearly water shortage, litter the beaches, and use the streets and sidewalks, they point out, so why shouldn't the tourists help pay? Why should the resident who does not benefit from tourism have to suffer from conditions created by tourists?

THIS MIDDLE GROUP would strongly support a tourist tax that would allow the tax money to be spent in less limited ways. But this group is divided into two factions: 1) those who oppose any tourist tax until the state law is changed to permit the money to be spent more freely; 2) those who say, "Let's get the money first, then see if we can get the law changed. Meanwhile, we are saving that \$14,000 for the City and Key West's part of the County's \$136,719 advertising budget. And we can put the extra money in escrow until the law is changed."

THE THREE COUNTY Commissioners from Key West -- Mayor Purie Howanitz, Richard Kerr, and Jerry Hernandez -- have obstructed efforts by Commissioners Jerry Shipley and Don Schoesser to initiate the steps necessary to bring the tourist tax

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— N.Y. Times Sunday, January 22, 1978

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Reservations suggested

question to a referendum. The Board of Directors of the Key West Chamber of Commerce has voted against supporting the tax, but a ground swell of protest among Chamber members at the end of July appeared to make possible an overruling of the Board. There have been indications, lacking a commitment, that the County Commission may be in favor of the tax if the Chamber was in favor. Results of the Chamber members' efforts to overturn the Board's decision and the effect that would have on the County Commission should be known by early August.

The question of the tourist tax will continue to boil during August. If the County Commission does not take the steps necessary to put the question on the November ballot, efforts will surely continue to put it to a referendum next year.

Throughout the recent discussions on the tourist tax, little has been said of the uses that other cities make of their tourist taxes. For a clearer perspective it may be helpful to look at one example.

**THE ARTS AND SAN FRANCISCO'S "TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX"**

SAN FRANCISCO collects about \$12 million a year from a six percent "transient occupancy tax" placed on all hotel and motel bills.

About \$6 million of that money goes to finance a new convention center and toward bond payments for Candlestick Park. About \$2 million goes directly to the city's general fund; \$4 million is used for publicity and advertising, including promotional activities such as the Convention and Visitors Bureau; and nearly \$3 million helps to support the arts and arts related activities.

Key West, like San Francisco, has been long known as the home of a thriving art colony, yet little official recognition is given to the arts in Key West. It should be of interest to the Key West arts community to study the use of tourist tax money for the benefit of the arts in San Francisco.

MORE THAN 70 arts organizations will receive appropriations from this year's funds, including the politically radical Mime Troupe (\$10,000), the San Francisco Opera (\$405,000), the San Francisco Symphony (\$351,000), the American Conservatory Theatre (\$200,400), the San Francisco Ballet (\$200,000), and the San Francisco Museum of Art (\$178,000). Many smaller groups received grants of less than \$10,000.

Twenty percent of the \$12 million collected in tourist taxes in San Francisco went to support the arts. Translated into Key West terms, 20% of the expected \$500,000 from the proposed tax would provide \$100,000 annually to help support the East Martello Art and Historical Museum, the Frangipani Festival, sidewalk arts and crafts shows, the Waterfront Playhouse (perhaps for a regular revival of *Cayo Hueso '78*), and other non-profit arts related activities and organizations.

NEW LIFE could be breathed into these "tourist attractions" -- for they provide some of the creative atmosphere that visitors find so appealing -- by the addition of purchase funds, prize money, salaries for workers and organizers, etc. \$100,000 a year would enhance the professionalism of the Key West arts colony and attract a higher quality of art.

Roger Boas, administrator of the San Francisco tourist tax fund, says, "There has always been a feeling here that it's not only proper to support culture but that cultural activities make the city a more pleasant place and add to San Francisco's economic luster." In simpler terms, supporting the arts is good for business.

**WHAT'S TO BE DONE?**

ON THE FACE of it, the proposed tourist tax for Key West would do only two things: 1) save the City and the County the money that goes to promotion

and advertising and divert that money to other uses; and 2) make an extra several hundred thousand dollars available to buy advertising.

Some people are of the opinion that Key West does not need more advertising, and in fact could get along nicely with less because of the amount of free publicity Key West gets as one of the current "in" spots. Crowded conditions, limitations of the highway and bridges, and water shortages are among the reasons cited for this opinion. These are of course not the people who would tend to benefit from a high volume of tourist traffic.

Some people favor the idea of a tourist tax, but would like to wait until changes could be made in the law that would allow Key West to do the kinds of things San Francisco does with its tax.

**SOLARES HILL** tended to waver between these two positions until a suggestion was made that we like: pass the tourist tax now and include in the initial 24-month plan the conversion of the country club facilities -- clubhouse, tennis courts, swimming pool, golf course -- into a combination convention center and "sports arena."

If this use seems questionable legally, ask the Attorney General for an opinion. Then ask State Representative Joe Allen to introduce a special Legislative Act that would enable Monroe County to add specific uses to the tourist tax; for example, improving the beaches, buying or amortizing a bond issue to buy Rest Beach and the salt ponds as tourist recreation areas and attractions, helping to pay for the much-needed water pipe line and other essentials, support arts activities, and add to the City general fund to help pay for the extra police protection and other services that increased tourism would require.

MEANWHILE THE CITY, which has been trying for years to get rid of the golf course and country club property it con-

siders to be a white elephant, continues to throw a subtle tantrum by allowing the property to run down with a "see what you made us do" attitude.

We feel that the potential use of tourist tax funds to upgrade the golf course and rescue the country club facilities from neglect, and especially the possibility of a special Legislative Act to allow additional uses of the tax money for Key West's unique needs, will throw a new light on the tourist tax controversy and reduce some of the heat generated in debate.

IF IT IS indeed possible to use tourist tax funds for more than advertising and promotion, *Solares Hill* is very much in favor of the tax.

(Information on the San Francisco transient occupancy tax was taken from an article in *The Cultural Post*, March/April 1978, published by the National Endowment for the Arts.)

**COMMENT (continued from page 8)**

year sewer billing with the annual tax bill. This one payment could result in a saving of \$30,000 yearly, when one figures on the postage saved, the computer time saved, fewer work hours, etc.

THESE ARE JUST a couple of the methods that Weekley would use for saving Key Westers' money. He also talks of consolidating services with the County (where feasible) and of winnowing down the city work force through attrition; for example, not replacing people who leave city employment, if the service can be maintained without them.

Not all the ideas may work -- maybe paying the sewer bill all in one lump would be too much for many people --, but it's very nice to know that Commissioner Weekley is hard at work looking for ways to save us money.

W.H.

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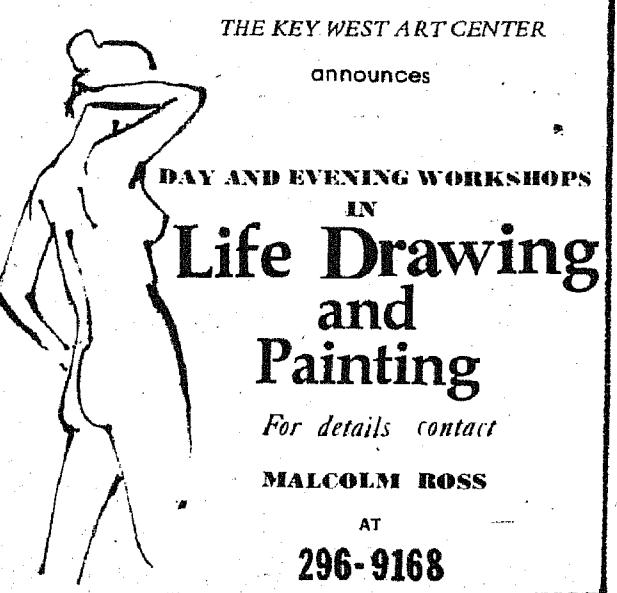
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## KEY WEST'S HOROSCOPE

BY EMMA CATES

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Mercury in Virgo, after 12th  
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Saturn in Virgo  
Jupiter in Cancer  
Mars in Libra  
Uranus in Scorpio  
Neptune in Sagittarius retrograde, turning  
direct on the 28th  
Pluto in Libra  
North Node in Virgo

sults will develop for the city, as this aspect has long range effects.

VENUS AND MARS conjoined in Libra for most of August will make this a sociable month, but squares to these signs may make problems.

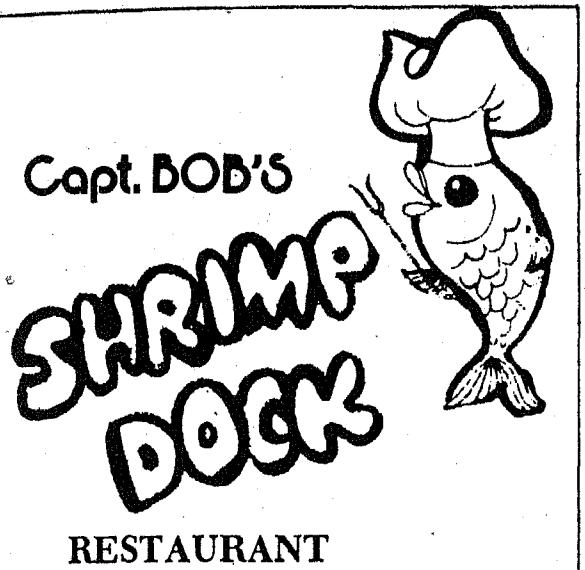
The new moon on August 3rd falls in our third house. This should make for much vacation travel to the city during this month.

THE RULING PLANET of the chart of Key West, Saturn, has moved into the sign of Virgo for a 2½ year transit. This favorably aspects our stellium of Capricorn planets in the eighth house of our chart. This sector of the chart rules money, loans, legal actions, transformation. This shows much activity in this area, with opportunity for marked improvements in the department of jobs in general and the building trades in particular. Gradual improvement in this area will be steadily upward.

Uranus has resumed direct motion after being retrograde since February of this year. This will bring much activity and changes for the city because of our grand trine in water signs affecting the money, work, and public sectors of the chart. Positive and definitely good re-

Clara watched in terror, and dug deeper in the sand -- not deep enough that she might not hear what the boys and girls said, but just enough to get away from their nasty feet. And she heard the awful, frightening truth: "Heh, Wow! Yow! Look! This one's got a PEARL!" And the boys and girls began in earnest to crack and break open all of Olivia's relatives, wide open, to look for more.

CLARA SHUDDERED and dug herself deeper in the white sand, trying not to swallow any, this time. She was very grateful that she was a clam, and looked at the beautiful bay she lived in and she knew, finally, that being itchy wasn't important that fame wasn't important. Little Clara was at last contented and happy, as a clam should be.



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ping of a lady strapped to the sanitary equipment seemed likely enough to us, in our frame of mind.

BEFORE WE MANAGED to get our bearings (of course, soon we gained a little social cachet and our paths diverged in busyness), the most relief we got was on the late, soft, Fall island evenings. I would walk my progeny over to the Key West Cemetery.

We loved the pale blue, tender angel and the little deer, Fatima, sweetly resting in the Otto plot. A woman in the A & P told me that this doctor in Coral Gables brought the little pet deer back in an air-conditioned Cadillac with a garland of orchids about its neck and rested it in the family burying place here.

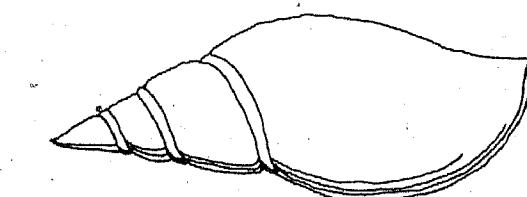
AND THE CHILDREN mourned for the poor Mrs. Peacon who buried all of her 17 children, lost to the island typhoid fever epidemic.

We were inadvertently, for an hour or so, locked up one night in the cemetery among the quiet tree shapes, the airy marble curlicues and the gentle ovals of the plastic flower wreaths.

The children never got over this superior adventure. It even cheered me and the littlest kid at that doleful time.

THE ELDEST and his small sons this summer visited the island. One of his boys pulled at his arm, mumbling. My son translated, like a foreign language interpreter.

"He says that he wants to go be locked up in the cemetery like I was."



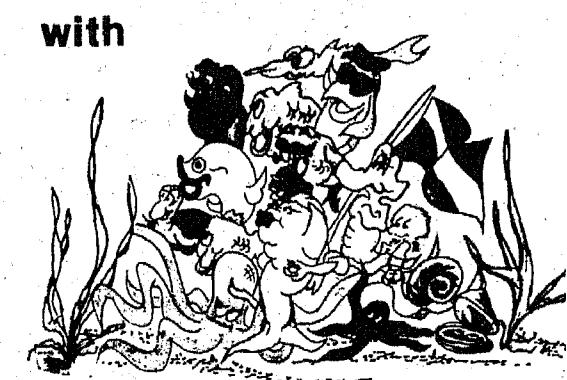
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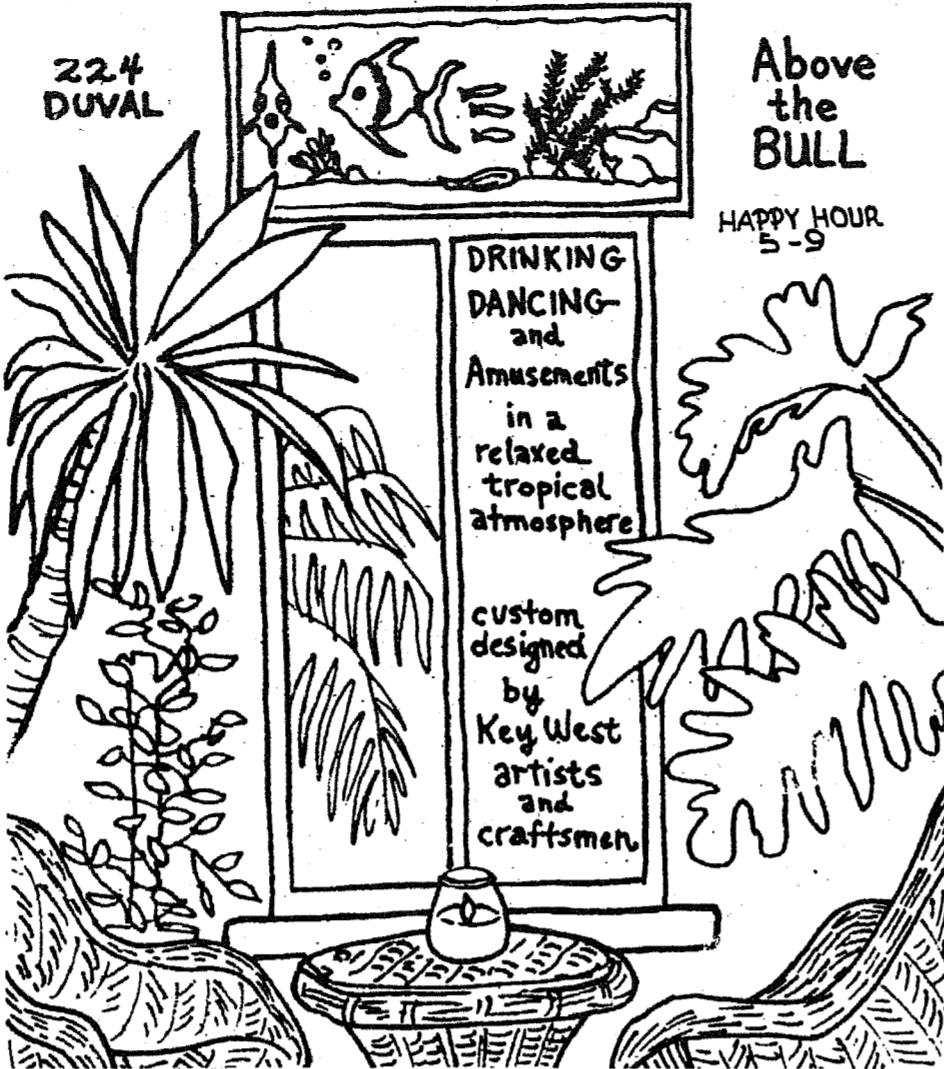
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