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FREE

Vol. 1, No. 16

Key West, Florida

April, 1976



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Solares Hill is a community newspaper published every month on the slopes of Solares Hill, Key West's highest point, by Solares Hill Company, 821 Duval Street, Key West, Florida 33040. Annual subscription rate (11 issues) is \$10.00.

EDITORIAL..... BILL HUCKEL  
 ART DIRECTION..... TOM POPE  
 COPY EDITOR..... WENDY RUSSO

With a little help from our friends...  
 Jerry Pfahning, Lawson Little, John Young, Cecelia, Cheina,  
 Bill and Cathy and "Veep" and Mary of the Florida Press  
 and many, many others. Many thanks.

## From the Editor

My son called out to his mother the other day, "Mommy, mommy, come quick! There's a tick in the shower with me." His mother looked, didn't see anything and asked, "Where is it?"

"There, mommy, there by the lizard."

Somehow that's very Key West.

So, we hope, is Solares Hill.

We've been around before - from 1971 to 1973 - and we think we're here to stay this time.

Those familiar with the paper will notice the same general format, groovy artwork and uptone.

We don't want to be soolds; there is so much here to celebrate. However, if something looks bad we'll poke around it and hope to nudge it back into a good place.

We're monthly - it will be an 11 month year with probably Aug. and Sept. or Sept. and Oct. joined together as one issue.

Happy news from our art department. Solares Hill is fortunate to have one Tom Pope, a registered architect who soon will be architecting here, doing the layout with a calmness and skill that soothes the all-too-easily rattled editor.

We have a wide range of contributors on tap in addition to some familiar names. We hope to be hearing from Art Weiner, Martha Wedel, Gil Ryder, Emma Cates, Thurlow Weed and Malcolm Ross on a fairly regular basis.

Former readers will undoubtedly be pleased to see the Jerry Miller art work review in this issue - including his magnificent trees - as well as an updated Thurlow article. Everything else is new.

We're often going to have articles on the rest of the Keys and the paper will be distributed throughout them.

Our initial press run is 10,000 copies and we will be distributed at all newsstands, grocery stores, super-markets, drug stores, motels, etc. If you can't find us and need a copy, please call 4-1044 and leave a message. We'll get copies to you.

For a free paper our subscription rate of \$10.00 for 11 issues is ridiculously high. This is mainly for those who wish to support Solares Hill as patrons. All old subscribers will receive the first issue free and can resubscribe for \$5.00 if they wish.

We owe thanks to so many people for the great assistance they have given us - we hope that this paper will be worthy of their efforts.

Some notes are: our paper is out the first of the month - We're your community newspaper - Send articles to 821 Duval St., c/o Solares Hill or call 294-1044 or 294-2400.

Many thanks for having us back

Bill Huckel

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# SAM

by Bill Huckel



On the Today show earlier this month there was a film clip on Key West. Toward the end of that clip, a figure was seen on his bike going down Duval Street.

This was no ordinary guy wheeling his Schwinn down the block! This was Sam with his incredible bike.

And what a bike! Dual horns, dual lights, dual mirrors, dual warning flags, antlers and statues, a transistor radio, Navy placards, rear red lights, and a black case with the warning on it: IF YOU CAN READ THIS YOU'RE TOO DAMN CLOSE!

Sam sets off on his bike early in the afternoons, beeping, waving and smiling his way down the city streets. He can be heard coming - beep-beep, honk-honk - and by the time that he arrives to where you are standing, at least a dozen people have had their days brightened by Sam.

But who is Sam? Who is that man on that crazy bike? Is he way-out like his bike?

Way-out? Well, he's been a human pincushion, a light-heavyweight boxer, a blues singer, a hobo, a fire eater, a dancer, a barker, a construction worker, a chewer and swallower of glass, a cook, a Navy man, a snake man, an iron worker, etc.

Sam (Samuel Sumner) was born 62 years ago in Tennessee. His daddy, who was what Sam calls a "jackleg" preacher, left his family when Sam was five years old. A grandmother raised him till he was ten years old.

Sam quit school at nine to help take care of a younger sister after his grandfather died. He also went to work in an iron yard.

Two things happened when Sam was ten. His family situation changed and a carnival came to town.

Sam felt free to leave home and the lure of the carnival was strong. So at the age of ten, he left town with a carnival, the Roger Grater Shows.

This carnival went all over the South. A blackfoot Indian named Sam Coons taught Sam to eat fire, chew up and swallow glass, be a human pincushion, and dance on a bed of nails! Sam was doing this before he was a teenager.

He returned home for a while but got itchy-feet again and took off.

He then joined the Royal American Shows out of Tampa and worked for Leon Claxton and his Hipcat Minstrels. He did this for about three years and then joined the Johnny Ward Shows where he ran rides.

Next came a time with the Heck, Beck, and Wallace Minstrel Shows. There Sam was a blues singer and dancer with Mary Smith, the sister of the immortal Bessie Smith.

Then came a tour with the Whirly Mirth Athletic Show. And this time, Sam was a light heavyweight boxer who would box exhibition rounds with the locals to see if they could stay in the ring with him. This was going beautifully, "until a little cat from Mobile, Alabama named Lightning knocked me on the mat, and then I left boxing."

He returned to Nashville and worked the Cumberland Valley Side Show, this time in a snake show. Sam worked with pythons - three of them - 12', 14', and 16' long.

When he was around 23, he went to Tampa and worked construction, but show business called again and this time he was the head worker with the Sweethearts Rythym, an all girl orchestra in Tampa.

The Second World War caught up with him and he was inducted into the

Navy. He remained with the Navy, travelling all over the world with them, until he retired to Maine in 1967.

He was stationed in Key West from 1954 to 1959, and got to love it. He returned here in 1970 and has worked as a cook at the Buckeroo Steak House, La Brisa, Tony's Fish Market, Louie's Back Yard, Midget Bar, Logan's, and is presently cooking on the base.

One might well ask what possessed Sam to do up the bike the way he has. The answer is unexpected but simple - for safety reasons!

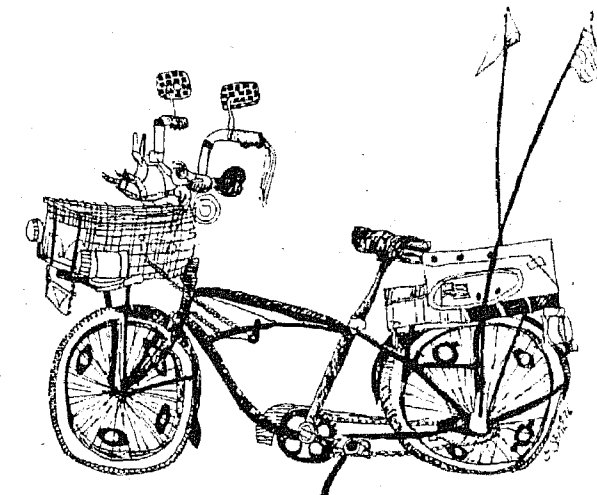
"I was going down Duval Street one night and dropped my flashlight and was almost hit by a car. That's when I made up my mind to put the lights on my bike."

One thing is sure. If you can't see Sam on his bike, you can hear him. Or if you can't hear him, you can see him.

This man with his incredible history of different fantastic jobs and continual wandering has been happily married for 30 years to the same wonderful woman. He and his wife, Alice, have five kids. One of whom is in the Air Force, and one is in the Navy.

Sam has become a much loved figure in Key West and he returns that love.

"I love Mallory Square, the friendliness of the people and the carnival atmosphere. I love all Key Westers, black and white."



\* No damn good

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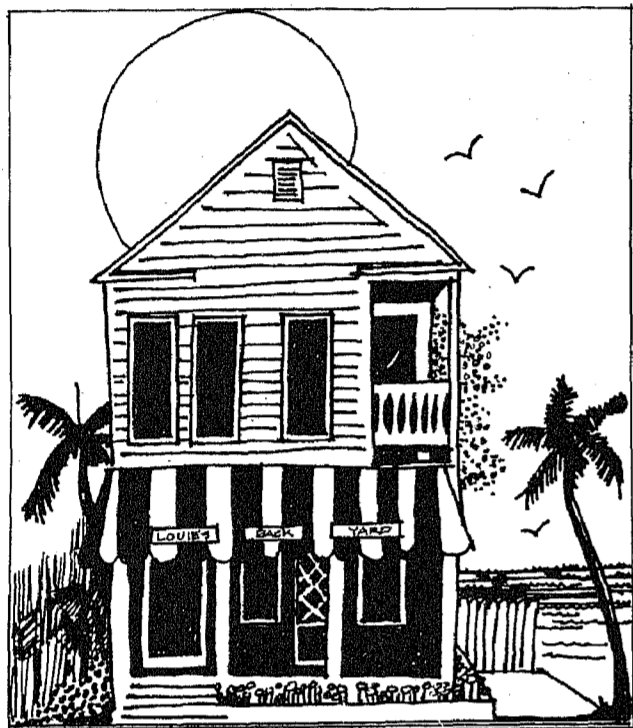
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## editorial

In an article on Rest Beach for the summer '72 Solares Hill, Di Di Quigley observed that "the undeveloped and wild areas of Key West have almost vanished" but that one was "still free to walk there (Rest Beach) and to contemplate its special qualities: the presence of native sea-side plants and animals; the relief and quiet the area provides from the atmosphere of the public beaches."

If state or federal monies were available, Rest Beach could be replanted, turned into a beautiful waterfront park, "picnic tables could be shaded by trellises covered with morning glory vines, paths could wander through Australian pines, sea grape trees, and palms, and the city could have a lovely and necessary park addition for its residents and tourists."

Such does not appear to be the future for Rest Beach, however. What appear to be rows of townhouses are in the planning stages and the sides for two and the foundation for one have already been built. Preliminary plans appear to show two groups of eight townhouses and one group of four stretching from Stevens Ave. to the White St. pier. A real shame - a special corner of Key West gone, a view blocked, an open space closed in, etc.

But there is more - apparently this project is being jammed down our throats without all the proper procedures being followed. It's one thing to have a special area taken away from the city legally but it's another thing if it's being done illegally.

For openers, single-family water hook-ups were obtained from the F.K.A.A. on the basis of single-family construction permits but at the same time multiple-family building permits were taken out to fit the city's R2-H building zone (hotel, motel, multiple-family dwellings, etc.) This is a new zoning system apparently - multiple/single-family construction. Sounds confusing.

Further, if these units are townhouses then special public hearings must be held to see what objections would, if any, be raised against them. This has not taken place and townhouses and single-family dwellings are excluded from the R2-H area without public hearings.

It would appear, also, there is serious doubt about these units following the Florida state coastal setback laws. Fortunately, a team of state engineers is being sent to the Keys to determine the high water mark and to recommend on the enforcing of the coastal setback law.

The city's master plan prepared in '68-'69 by Milo Smith and Associates recommended that the property be acquired by the city with state and federal assistance, and be preserved as a park. Quite obviously there has been little done here.

Some of our commissioners have just returned from Tallahassee where they loudly protested the state's labeling of Key West as an area of critical concern. They stated that we had adequate laws and ordinances to govern ourselves perfectly well without the state's interfering in our local affairs.

Well, we might have the laws on the books but they are worthless if they are not enforced.

What we seem to have here are indifferent public officials, powerful development interests and an uninformed and/or apathetic citizenry.

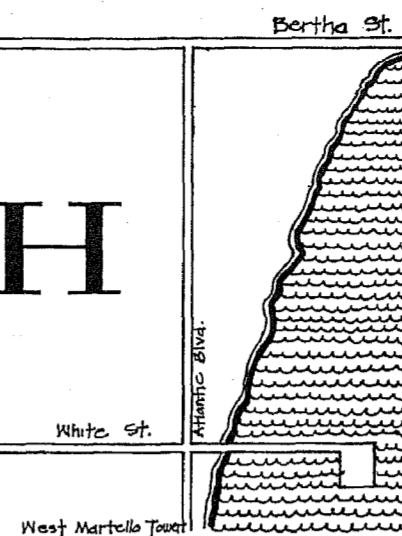
If one of these three groups was to change, something could be done about the construction at Rest Beach or, at least, to make sure that the rules are complied with. I don't believe the builder is going to back off and the public officials have shown little interest in this affair thus far. Therefore it's up to the citizens to do something.

Solares Hill asks that all registered voters or property owners who are concerned go take a look at Rest Beach. See what is happening. Imagine how beautiful it could be and imagine how it will look all developed. Make up your minds. Send us a post card advising us of your stand. If we receive enough support, Solares Hill promises to pursue the matter further. Thank you.

*W. H. H. H.*

## REST BEACH

by Martha Wedel



KEY WEST-- A fight is brewing over a new townhouse project on Rest Beach which promises to mix citizens, contractors, city officials and state agencies in a confrontation reminiscent of pre-Critical Concern days.

The development in question, owned by Carl Rongo, a local contractor, involves 831 feet of beachfront on the southern tip of the island, an undisclosed number of units, four of which are already under construction. The units will sell for upwards of \$110,000 apiece.

Three major objections have been outlined by veteran hi-rise fighter William H. Westray, a retired U.S. Navy Commander, who has kept track of the project since he first spotted a construction trailer on the site two months ago.

Westray alleges violations of city zoning ordinances, coastal construction setback lines, and of the city's master plan which earmarks the area for public beach.

During a Solares Hill interview, Rongo denied any such violations, and said, "It's not fair for people to throw up barricades (to construction) without risking anything themselves. So far it's nothing but talk. Let them put up their money and take me to court."

### ZONING

According to the City of Key West zoning ordinance 69-29, Rongo's property, located between the White Street Pier and Stevens Avenue, lies within an R2-H building zone. This classification allows three types of construction only: "1. Hotel, motel and apartment hotels; 2. Multiple-family dwellings; 3. Bungalow courts."

The first building permits taken out by Rongo on Jan. 22, and the three more on subsequent dates, are for single family residences. Westray says the units should be required to have permits as townhouses, since they "precisely fit" the city's definition of townhouse "A one family dwelling unit of a group of three or more such units separated by adjoining fire walls.... Each townhouse unit shall be constructed upon a separate lot and serviced with separate utilities...."

Both townhouses and single family dwellings are excluded from R2-H zoning without a Special Exception from the City Commission sitting as the Board of Adjustment. Townhouses cannot be permitted without special public hearings with adjacent property owners. Rongo said, however, that "the way I read the ordinances this isn't required."

Although Rongo refers to the dwellings as townhouses, he says they are single family, and cites Sec. 412.8 of the Southern Standard Building Code, "A townhouse unit shall be considered a separate unit."

The semantic waters are further muddled by city Public Service Director Woody Niles who contends that, "It is a single unit but the overall project is multiple family. It's just a matter of interpretation." Niles avoids the use of the word "townhouse". "They are single units with double walls abutting. When they are joined, they're multiple units."

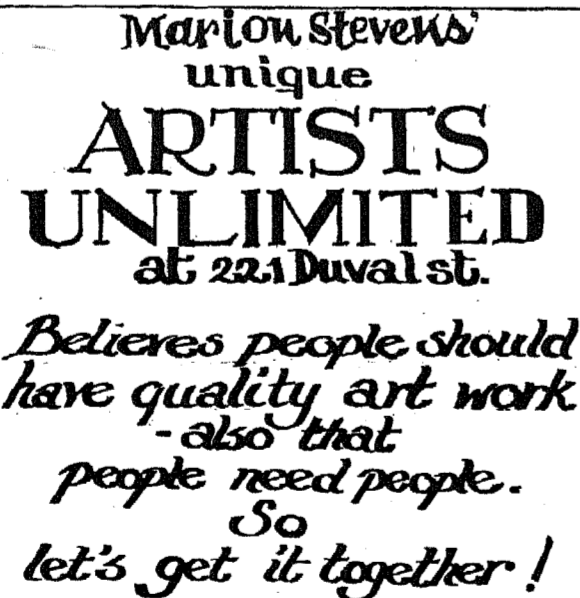
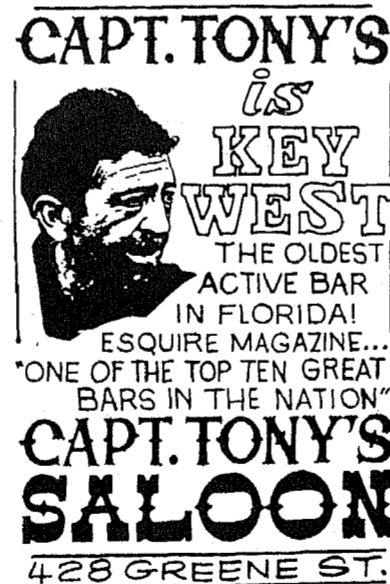
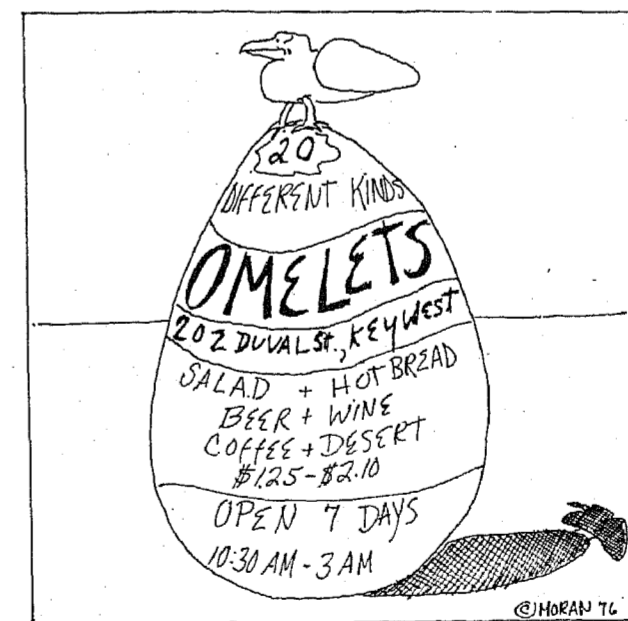
Mayor Charles (Sonny) McCoy also believes that townhouses can be considered single family dwellings. McCoy, an architect, said Rongo asked the mayor if he would design the project. "I said he didn't need an architect's seal because they are single family units. I gave it to my draftsman to draw up, as a favor to Rongo." McCoy said he was not commissioned, and has not received any money for his firm's services.

On the basis of the single family construction permits, Rongo persuaded a majority of the 5-member Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority to issue him two water permits in mid-February. Only water requests from single family dwellings were being considered at that time. FKA Executive Directors Delio Cobo and William Pagden lost a 2-3 vote against granting Carl Rongo Inc.'s request.

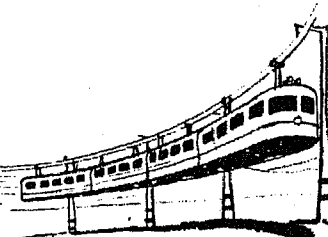
FKA Executive Director Royal Newman declared at that time that Rongo had found a "loophole" in the ban against multi-family hookups. Newman told Solares Hill that with the new moratorium imposed early in March, "There's no way Rongo can get any more."

Rongo, however, is determined to get water when he needs it. The (FKA) enabling act says it shall furnish water," said Rongo, who quipped that if he is turned down he "may request the Executive Director to carry it to me in a bucket."

continued on page 11



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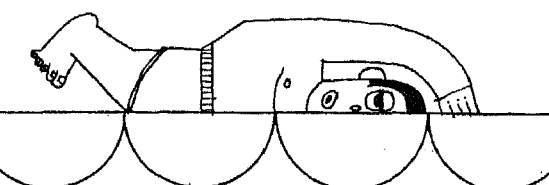
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## CONCH CURE

by Johtje Vos



It was not an insect bite that started the two-year misery with my husband's eye but it did feel like one. Just a sudden sharp sting on the right lower lid which made him rub the eye over and over. The next day not only was the eye swollen but also the right part of his face. We applied eyedrops and some cold compresses and within a few hours the swelling receded. The eyelid, however, looked worse.

We consulted a doctor who prescribed an ointment and said to give it some time. Time did not help; the lid looked inflamed and started protruding into a kind of open triangle which not only impaired my husband's looks and made him look ten years older, but also was a constant irritation.

We visited an eye-specialist who started with a penicillin injection which did not help. On the next visit he removed a tiny piece of the lid for examination, but there was nothing malignant. In spite of new drops, ointments, hot-cold treatments and another session with the scalpel, it did not get any better. Wherever we went, medical centers and specialists in the States as well as in Europe, my husband got the same treatments and always to no avail.

We learned the Latin name of the symptom, that it usually happens to both eyes, and that it is found more often in elderly women than in elderly men. But it did not get better.

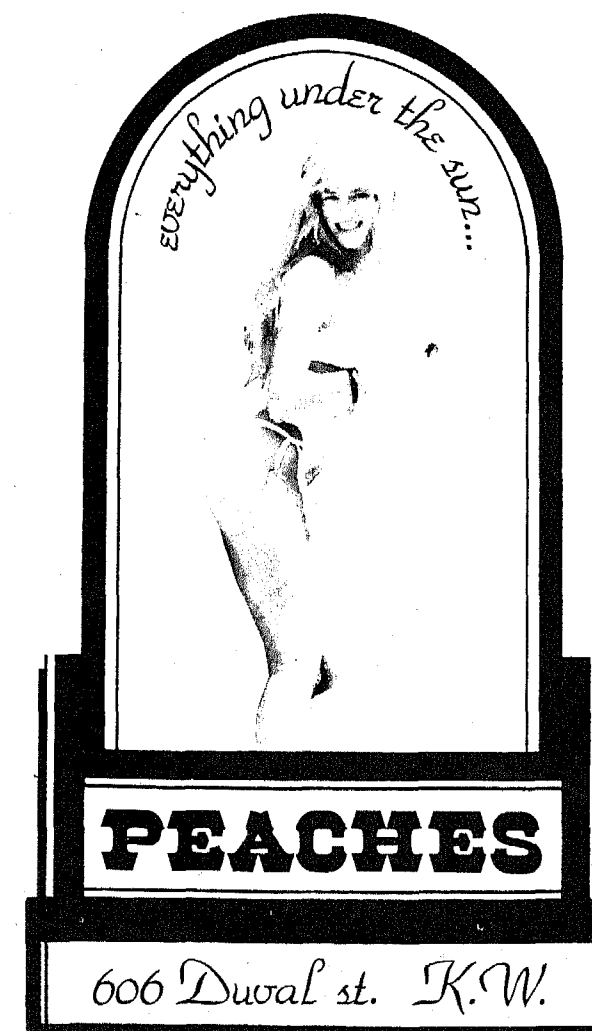
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For the first time in his life my husband, who is a mediocre swimmer, swam under water with his eyes open because he became fascinated by what he saw on the bottom of the sea. The first few times his "drooping eye" hurt very badly from the salt water but his fascination kept him diving.

After a week we noticed that the sick lid looked less fierce, and after little over two weeks the eye was completely and miraculously cured. The symptom has never recurred and we keep coming to Key West to swim under water with wide open eyes.

When we recently met one of the doctors who had treated the eye, my husband told him the story of the cure. The doctor confessed,

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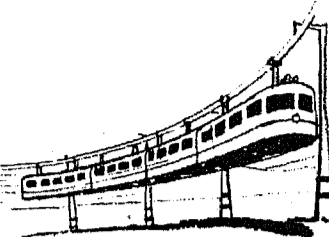
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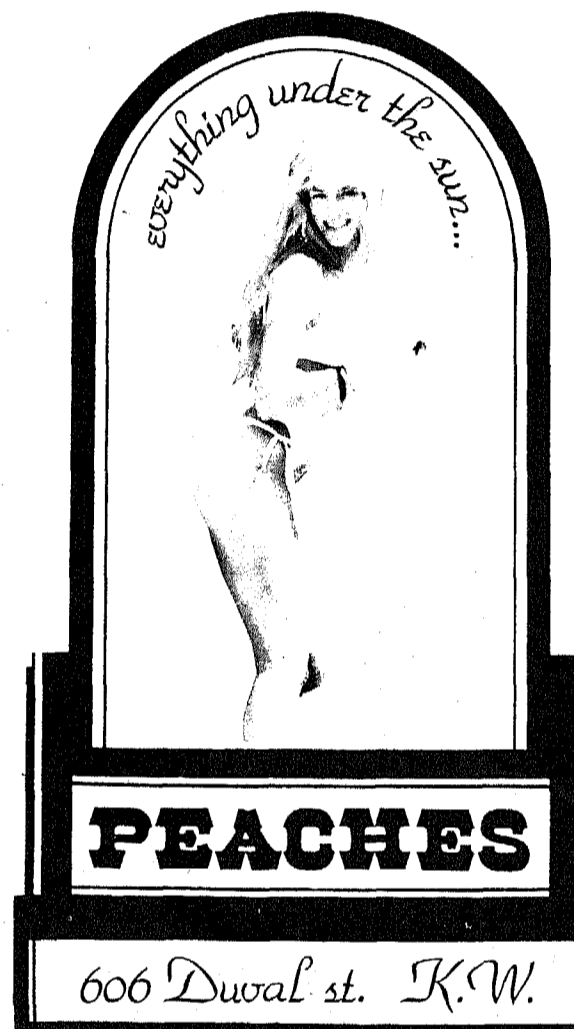
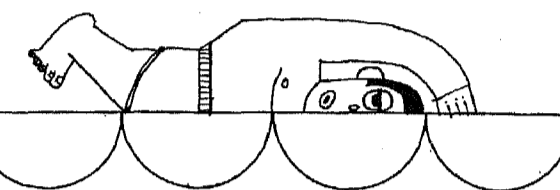
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PEACHES

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# KEY WEST'S HOROSCOPE

BY EMMA CATES

Key West birthday: January 18, 1828

Key West is a Capricorn town with Gemini ascendant. An Astrology buff will know immediately what that portrays - the people here, native Conchs, are reserved and proper but will willingly extend themselves to assist a non-Conch in a helpful and friendly manner.

Always, the reserve is there! The unspoken awareness that this is their island; never awed or excited by any outsider visiting their town no matter how famous or infamous he may be elsewhere.

Never any advances made to intrude on famous visitors for autographs; that would be rude, and an invasion of privacy. Capricorn is too concerned with propriety, and besides no matter how world-renowned the visitor - a Conch knows he is "Lucky" to be enjoying the treasures of Key West.

Portrayal of Capricorn pride? Another facet of Capricorn clearly visible in Key West - Politics. A small town, yes, but super-large in attention to political matters.

Communication: friendly, gossipy, youthful, fun-loving; the Cuban influence is depicted by the aspect of Gemini ascendant.

The sign Gemini rules friends and brothers. Rules forms of communication: verbal, written or visual. Gemini rules writers. Note the number of writers that call our town "home".

Solares Hill is resuming publication with a new moon aspect in the 10th house (career) of the chart for Key West. A good aspect for this newspaper.

During the month of April, we will see more of the changes that have been occurring in our town. Key West will continue in the transition (8th house, sun) from a military-oriented economy to one bolstered by tourists and private enterprise.

Be assured, however, that the military will always play an important part in the life of Key West. As history has recorded, and the future will continue to show, Mars and Jupiter conjoined in Scorpio is a potent configuration. Scorpio rules the military.

During the last two years, while Saturn in Cancer has been transiting the 2nd house (finances) of the Key West chart, money problems have beset our city. Cancer is the natal sign of our country, and Gemini is its ascendant also, so the restrictions imposed by the planet Saturn have been felt locally and nationally in much the same manner.

Values have been tested, and the lessons of Saturn will make us better able to evaluate money and its worth when Saturn moves into the sign of Leo in June, 1976. Saturn also rewards when its tough lessons are learned, so the summer will bring improved financial conditions.

Our moon in Pisces on the M.C. (mid heaven) gave us an uncommon amount of publicity in March; Boca Chica Airfield, drug trials, etc., all on national television, including NBC's Today Show.

Spring Equinox: Aries, the only fire sign in the Key West chart will mark April as a month of new beginnings for the business climate of Key West. Good aspects in the 11th house of friends, hopes and wishes bodes good tidings.

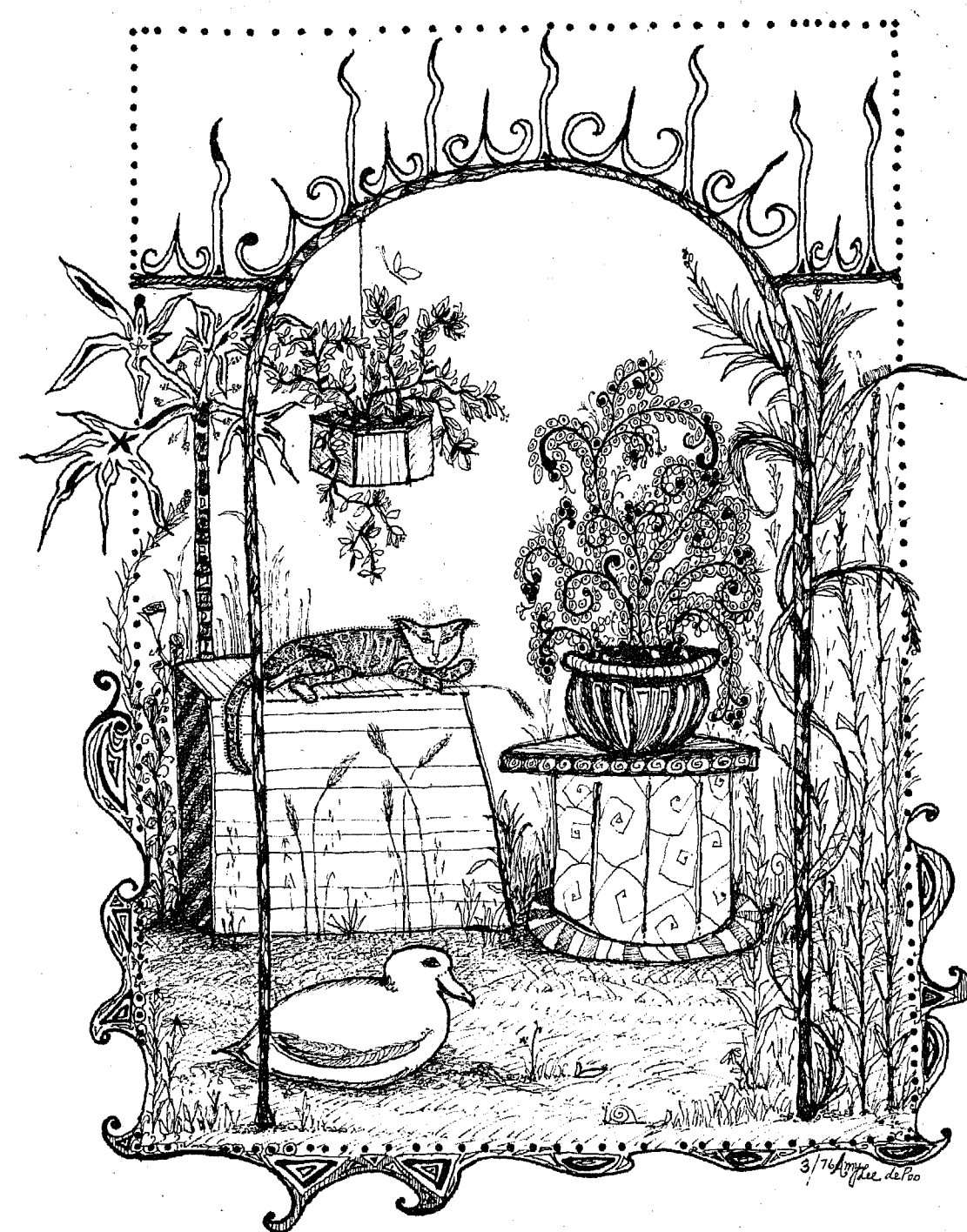
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OPEN: noon to 8 P.M.

## 425 Greene Street

## rest beach continued from page 5

### COASTAL SETBACK

Rest Beach is a relatively narrow strip of sandy beach seaward of Atlantic Boulevard. Although the depth, according to the deed's metes and bounds description, varies between 72.5 feet and 160 feet, Westray suspects the actual property above mean high water may be considerably less.

A state law requiring a 50-foot coastal construction setback, if enforced, would make some of the 831 foot strip unusable for Rongo's units which are 40 feet deep along a 20-foot setback from the boulevard's right-of-way.

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### PUBLIC VS PRIVATE

The beach property in question has long been privately owned. However, public access has been allowed historically. Old men sit in the city park across the street and watch the lazy waves. One ancient conch says the ritual won't be the same without that quiet, empty spot.

The city's master plan prepared in 1968-69 by Milo Smith and Associates recommends that the property be acquired by the city with federal assistance, to be preserved as a park.

Key West's Mayor McCoy said, when interviewed about the city's failure to acquire it, said "We approached the State three or four years ago. Ney Landrum, (Parks and Recreation Director, DNR) said the state had no money." McCoy said he did not approach the federal government.

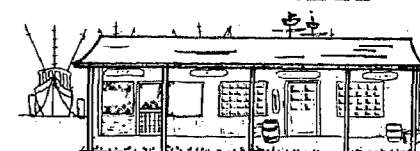
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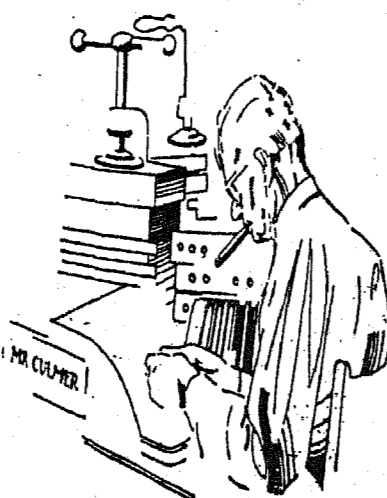


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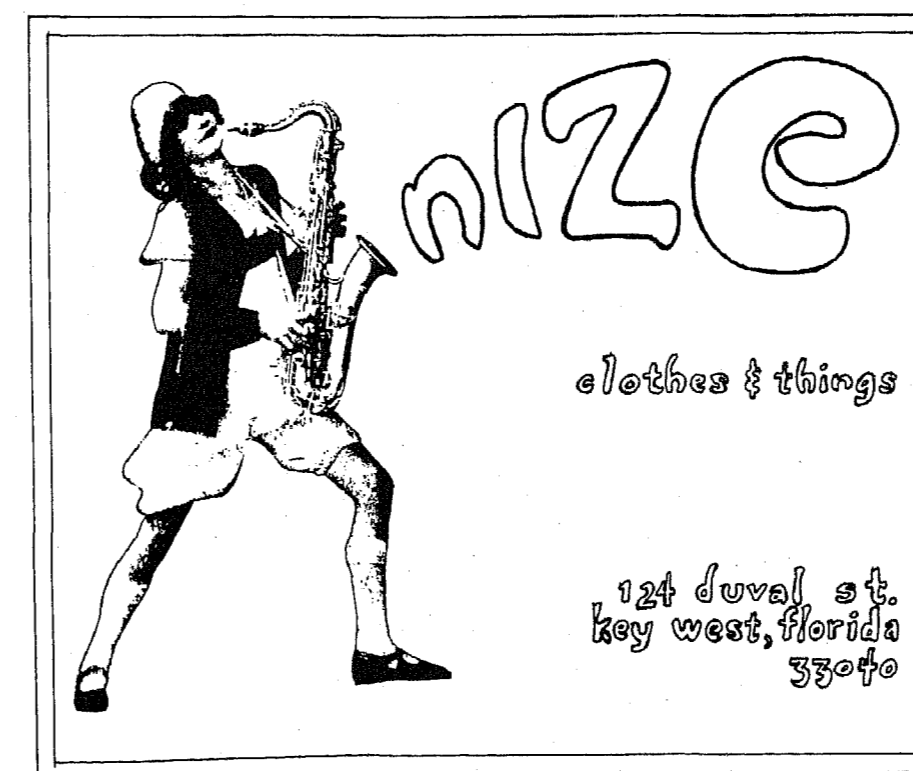
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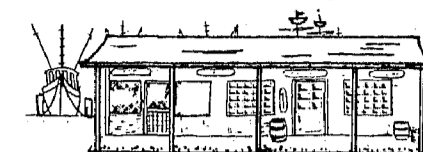
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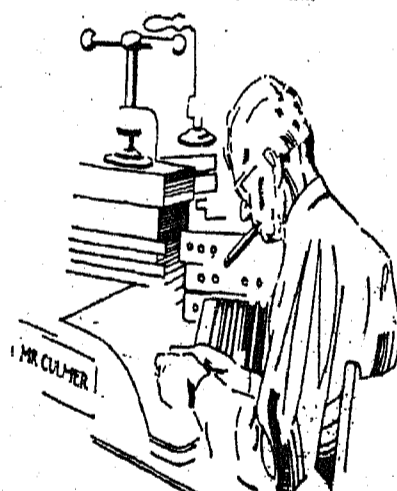


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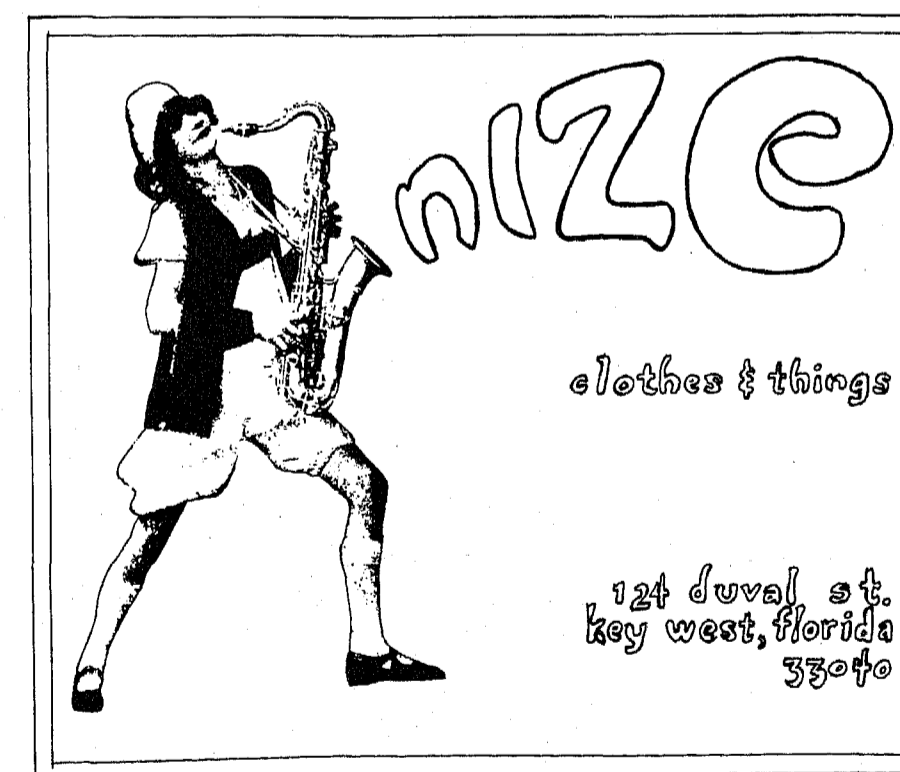
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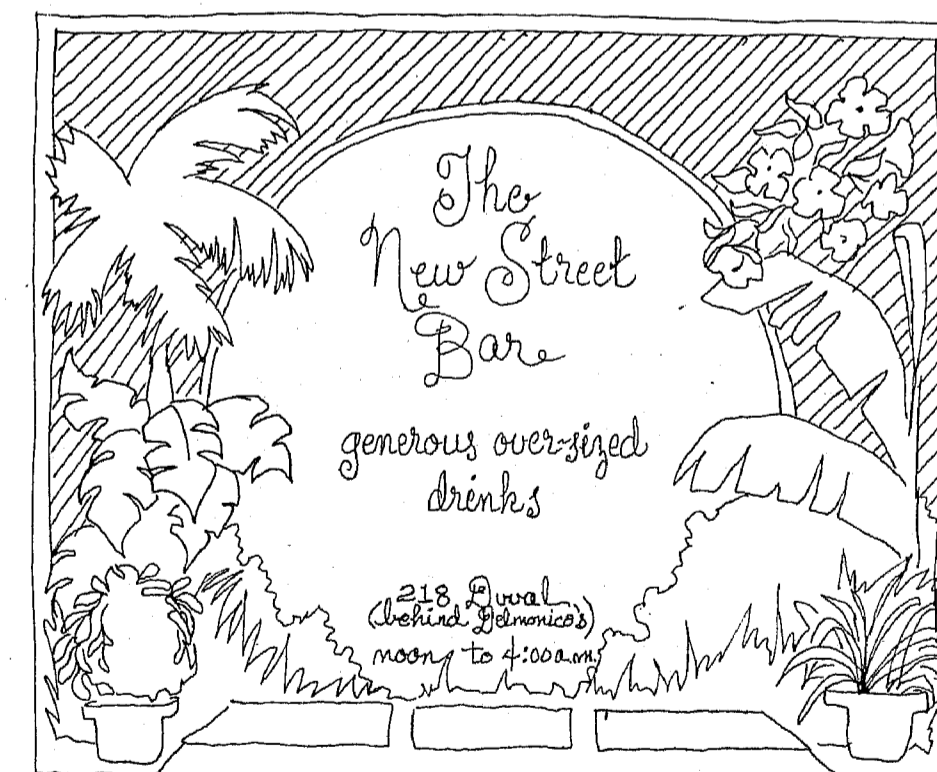
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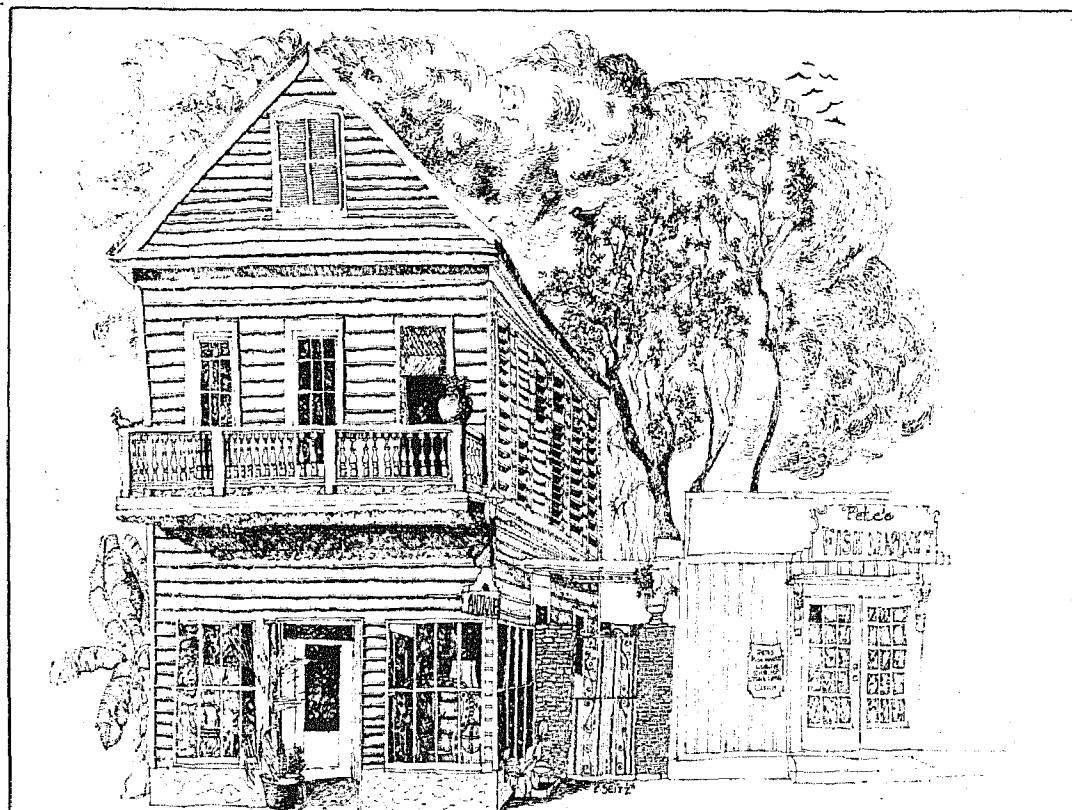
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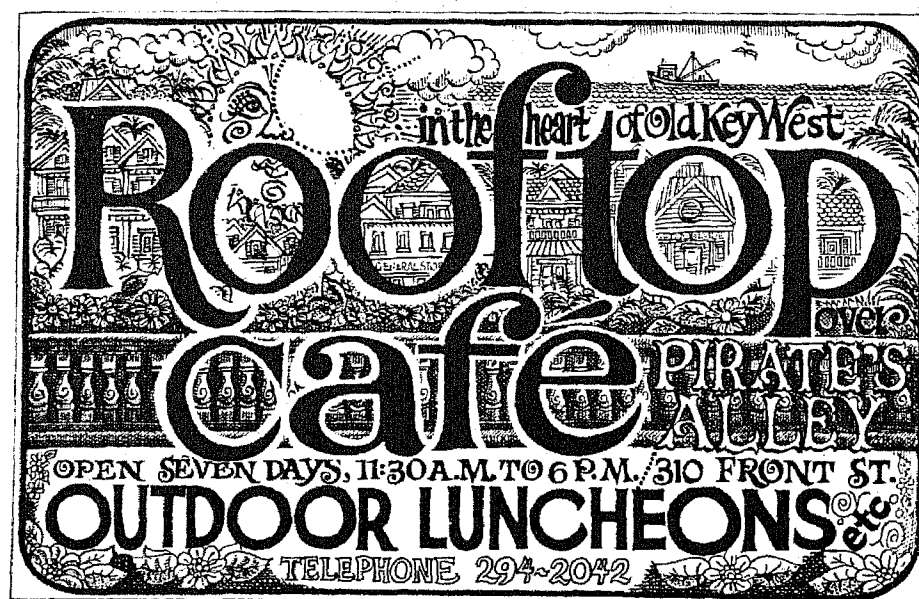
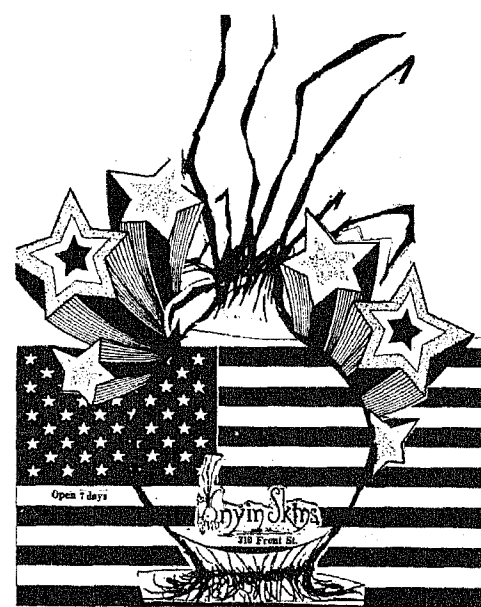


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#### Key West Ghosts

This Island City lures the visitor with elemental charms; the tales of blood and passion, earthy, open living, sea and sun. The Isle of Bones seduces something cloistered deep within the tourist. He will never know it stayed behind until he reaches home. The missing part expands a ghostly partial population that inveigles the return from dreary lives of self-discovered artists and adventurers, who never knew what they were meant to be until a piece of spirit was collected as a souvenir by Old Key West.

from Again In Complete Steel  
by Richard Marsh

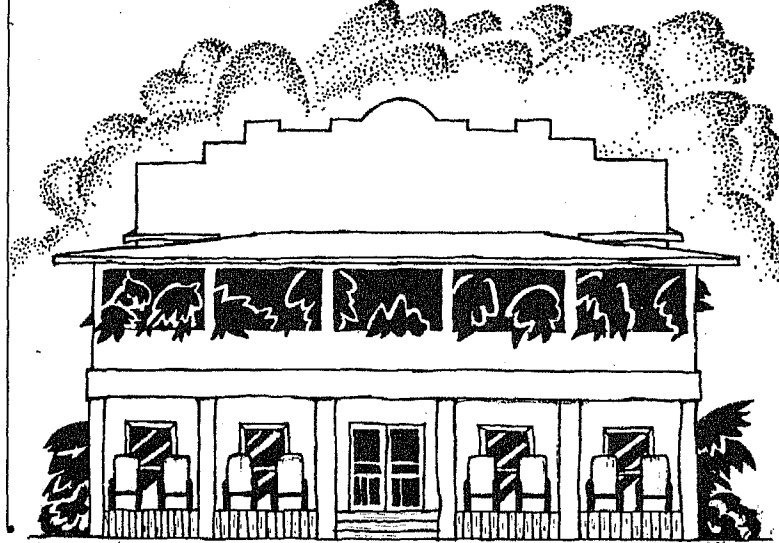


# Eden

HOUSE

1015 Fleming St.  
296-6868

Built in 1924, The Eden House is a traditional Key West hotel. Tranquil, yet lively and very latin. The lobby, Bermuda fans and original art make it the place to mingle. The rooms - clean and simple, individually decorated and coral for. Tropical flora cools the second floor balcony garden.



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One of the most magnificent trees in Key West is the enormous Spanish Laurel that juts out before the Paul and Reta Sawyer house at 1029 Fleming Street. Surface roots, the size of a man's torso, stretch for two blocks around and are firmly anchored in the three cisterns of the house.

In the last century, another Spanish Laurel of just such proportions grew directly across the street but was brought down by a hurricane. At that time Karl Thompson, five years old, planted a limb from the fallen tree and from this grew the tree we now see. He was one of five children of a retired Norwegian sea captain who had a grocery store on Eaton Street. At that time the 1000 block of Fleming Street was far beyond the town limits.

Another immense Spanish Laurel grows at the corner of Simonton and Eaton before the Old Stone Church. Mrs. Myrtle Houston, who has been a member of the congregation for 70 years, remembers playing under the tree as a little girl. She says that she is sure the tree was already mature during the fire of 1888 which destroyed many buildings in the area. She also said that there once stood a row of these huge trees along the whole south side of Southard Street between Simonton Street and Duval. They had all been planted in the mid-1800's by banker John White.

A spectacular banyan or ficus tree dominates the compound between Canfield Lane and Margaret Street. Mr. Stevenson who's lived below this tree for many years said that it must be constantly trimmed back since it drops runners which become new trunks. In this way, the ficus continues to spread and he recalls seeing one in Singapore that covered several acres. The fruit, purplish and edible, is a great favorite of migrating finches and other birds passing through.

A picturesque wild fig tree grows in the center of the First National Bank parking lot at Duval and Front Streets. Mr. Robert Lewis, who has worked years for the city, ten years for the county and the past twenty-one years for the bank, recalls the large rooming house of Mrs. Cripe which once stood there. The house burnt down fifty-seven years ago and the tree grew out of the brick cistern which remained. It has been a lovely and familiar sight to Key Westers ever since.

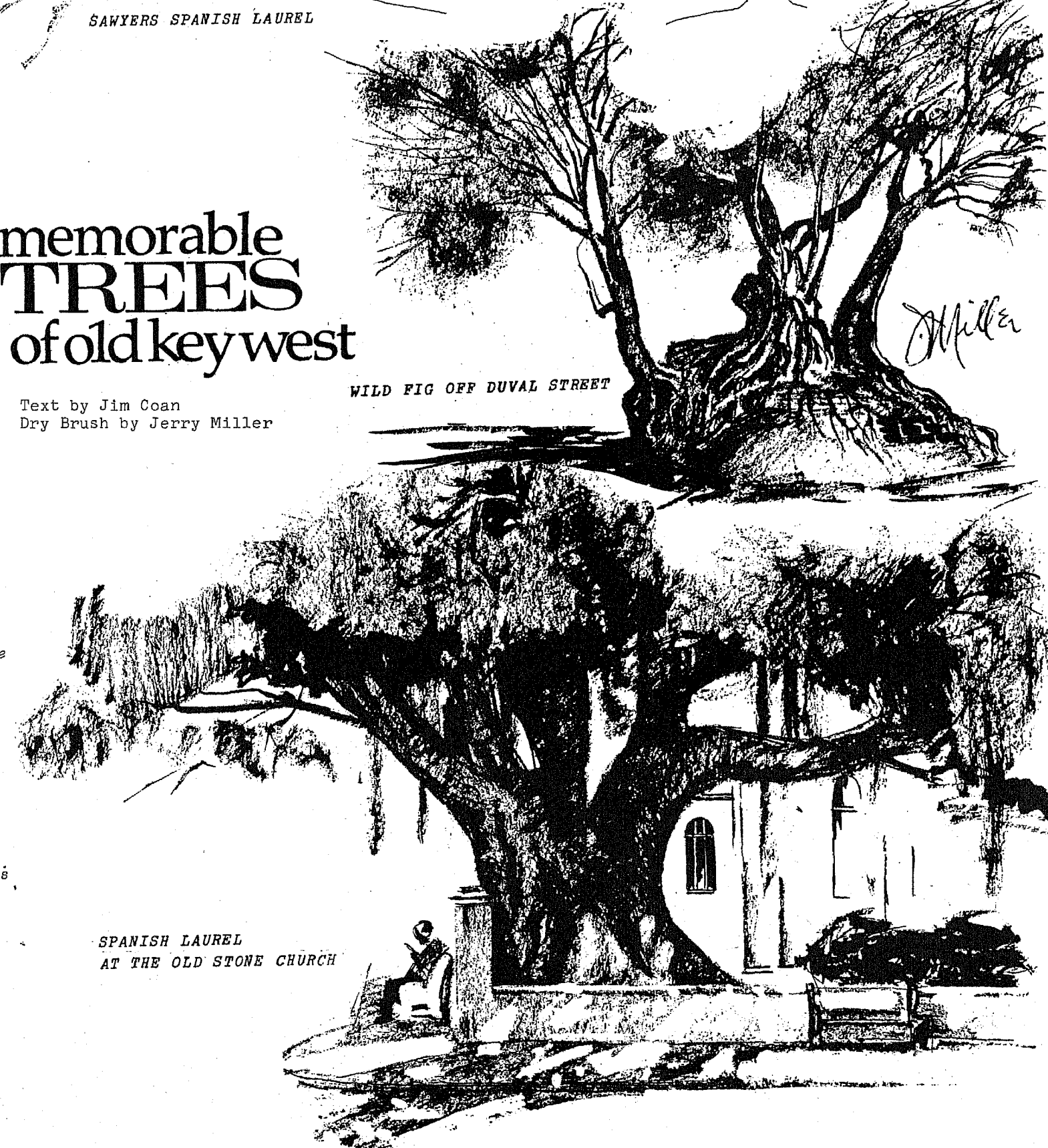


SAWYERS SPANISH LAUREL

## memorable TREES of old key west

Text by Jim Coan  
Dry Brush by Jerry Miller

WILD FIG OFF DUVAL STREET



# Cesar & Zelda

Written and illustrated by Malcolm Ross

"East Meets West" might well apply to Cesar and Zelda Catala, a matched set, two bookends supporting a bundle of well-worn, dog-eared anecdotes of Old Key West and Early Americana, a pair of salt and pepper shakers--similar in many respects, yet highly individual in content.

Cesar was born in Key West, a fourth generation Conch whose paternal grandfather was a Spanish diplomat -- a captain of the Court of Customs, comparable to our present day State Department -- sent to this part of the world by the Court of Madrid as a mediator between Cuba and Spain during the tense times at the beginning of the Spanish-American War. Cesar's great grandmother on his mother's side came to these shores by less glamorous means, the victim of a shipwreck.

His grandmother's brother, one Rollins Pierce, piloted the battleship Maine from Key West to the high seas and turned her over to her captain. History notes that her sailing days were numbered at this point -- no fault of Mr. Pierce, of course.



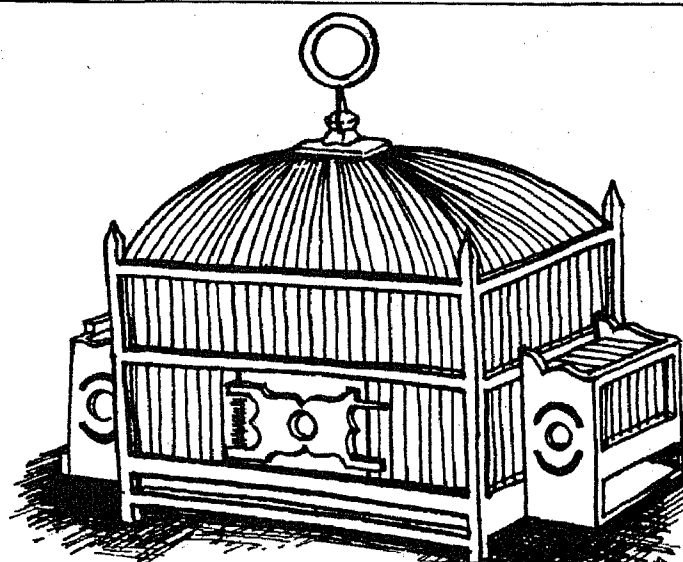
Cesar on wheels

Cesar's memories of growing up in Key West are of an island swept by hurricanes, a community very close to the seas, with a railroad its only link to the United States and a ferry to Havana -- closer to Cuba than Miami both culturally and geographically.

The keys were all very different then -- remote and wild and sparsely populated. Islamorada was still "the purple isle", so named because of its purple hue when approached by sea. This color was due to a species of wildflower which grew in profusion about its shores.

As a prominent character on the Key West scene, Cesar naturally has played parts in many of the dramas of Old Key West. For four years he served an apprenticeship in a Key West cigar factory, holding both the positions of "picker" and "packer". A "picker", who was required to memorize over 150 colors of tobacco leaves, "picked" out the completed cigars according to color. The "packer" then packed the selected cigars and arranged them attractively in the box--particularly the top layer.

An interesting aspect of cigar factory life was that one could become "well read" without opening a book. In the days before radio and muzak the cigar factories employed men called "readers", who read aloud in both English and Span-



Cuban style bird cage a la Cesar

ish everything from classics in world literature to newspapers and poetry to the cigar workers. This diversion was of course a great boost to the factory workers' morale and made the earning of the daily bread a little less painful.

Since his cigar factory days Cesar has turned to other vocations such as that of professional rumba dancer in both Miami and Havana. Awards were there to be won in dance competitions and Cesar once danced before Cuban Dictator Batista in Key West's Cuban Club on Duval St.

A stint as a chauffeur found Cesar behind the wheel of the first automobile in Key West -- that owned by Dr. Maloney of Simonton St.

Pipes and drains became his companions and another calling to master was that of professional plumber. Cesar did plumb well and the original plumbing code for the City of Key West was co-authored by him and another plumber.

The frontier of solar energy has also been pioneered by Mr. Catala and he has constructed solar heaters for several houses in the city.

Cesar is also an avid fan and accurate forecaster when it comes to that local spectator sport called hurricane tracking. No statistics are available but his accuracy is astounding.

A neighbor, Peter Whelan, says

"There was a hurricane coming in late September, '75. It came up through E. Cuba to Oriente and moved west. At that point I wondered if it would go through Havana to Key West. I asked Cesar and he said he'd been tracking hurricanes for 25 years and that there was no likelihood of that and that it would go much further west before north and it did just that."

Cesar's professed interests are "birds and good Spanish cooking." His interest in the former has taken such various forms as bird cage construction, one of which won an award at the Chicago World's Fair of 1929. These cages are generally crafted from local materials, such as "coconut straws" or the hard center spines from palm fronds. His fascination for our feathered friends also extends to the imitation of the calls of various local birds.

An amusing anecdote in this regard is related by Cesar as to how a domino game was broken up by an irate mocking bird which Cesar lured from its tree into the #3 Fire Station.

As Cesar explains it he casually gave the call of a female mocking bird in distress -- as when her brood is threatened by a snake or similar intruder. At any rate a mocking bird suddenly flew into the Fire Station and buzzed the heads of the domino players. A late arrival on the scene was totally unbelieving. As the man stood scoffing at the story and fanning himself with his hat, Cesar repeated the bird call. Apparently the movement of the man fanning himself attracted the angry bird for it immediately flew down from its tree again and pecked the man on the top of his bald head!

It's difficult to say where Cesar's fascination for cooking began, but no doubt it started with his first realization as an infant that food can taste good! Naturally, growing up in Key West, his speciality is Spanish-Cuban Cuisine.

It is a tradition in the Catala household to have an open house for about three days every Christmas. Both Cesar and Zelda prepare for this event for weeks ahead. The accent, of course, is Spanish and dishes ranging from baked ham to black beans are prepared in great quantity and with great finesse.

Cesar's unusual method of "ironing" a Christmas ham with an electric iron to seal in its juices so impressed one visitor that it was written up in a northern newspaper. Other taste delights abound and are equally sensational.

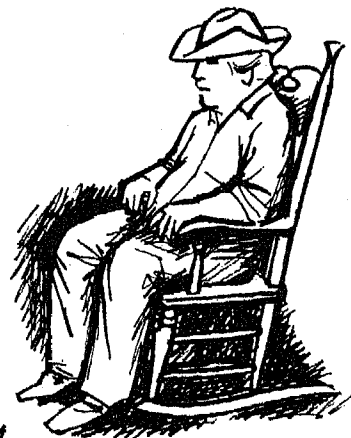
On the third day after Christmas it is possible to stop by the house and view the fatigued pair in a state of near collapse surrounded by mountains of dirty dishes -- totally exhausted from entertaining the scores of friends who have stopped by to extend their season's greetings.

Cooking for the multitudes has never been a problem in this household and in earlier times Cesar and Zelda have combined their talents to cater large dinners -- some in excess of 100 persons -- and particularly for Navy functions.

In preparing for one such affair Cesar was cautioned that among other local dignitaries, the Admiral who was commandant at Fort Taylor would be in attendance and that he and his ulcers were extremely difficult to please. Ignoring this warning Cesar, as head chef, went ahead with preparations for a fine Cuban meal with molletes, black beans and other typical dishes. Nothing could deter Cesar or make him alter his plans.



Angry mockingbird



Cesar rocking

Finally at the dinner, Zelda in an eleventh hour gesture to avert disaster, kicked under the table at Cesar who was lading out the black beans and doling out the molletes. Ignoring her again, he heaped the black beans high and plopped the largest mollette on the Admiral's plate. Zelda gritted her teeth and prepared for the worst. What reaction would the Admiral's ulcer take? It was her shock, however, in a short time to see the Admiral back in line for seconds!

Cesar's strength and physical endurance are almost legendary in Key West. Once Cesar pitched a double header of 18 innings against the Tampa Browns -- when he was 14 years old!

Another incident from earlier days involved an automobile accident in which a young girl was pinned beneath the wheels of the vehicle. Cesar's reaction time was much quicker than most who would have sought the aid of a jack or other mechanical means to hoist the heavy car. With his bare hands he slowly raised the car body and allowed the girl to be pulled to safety.

Another episode in Key West history which called upon the herculean strength of Cesar, centered about the fire which destroyed the old Baptist Church, a beautiful landmark which once stood at the corner of Eaton and Bahama Streets. (A new structure of less classic proportions now stands on the same site.) As had happened numerous times in the past the night sky over Key West took on a distinctive red glow. To those who had seen the glow it could mean but one thing -- fire!

All volunteers including Cesar were quickly on the scene along with the Key West and Navy fire brigades. The Baptist Church was very much afire and the old wooden structure which had survived hurricanes and other natural shocks was going fast. It soon became clear that the building was doomed and further efforts to save it might prove fruitless.

Suddenly, Cesar noticed that the railings and porch timbers of the house next to the church, owned by painter and friend Eugene Otto were starting to smoke and catch fire from the intense heat. Without so much as a "By your leave" Cesar grabbed the fire hose away from the four men who had been training it on the burning church and directed the extremely heavy piece of equipment at the smoldering porches. The incredulous stares and remarks of the onlookers and fire fighters were

countered by Cesar's classic shout: "That's a Conch's house that's on fire! Let God take care of His Church!" Well, Mr. Otto took care of Cesar and presented him with a case of Pedro Domecque brandy the next day.

In contrast to Cesar, Zelda's origins are western and WASP. Her early memories are of northern California and Oregon, a land of Indians and logging flumes.

Although a born Californian, Zelda was taken in by grandparents at four years of age and raised on an Oregon ranch. Both grandparents were from Missouri and had come west by different means -- her grandmother having crossed the plains as a child on the Oregon Trail and her grandfather having come around "the Horn" by ship to the western frontier.

As a child Zelda heard stories of the seven month crossing of the plains in a covered wagon, the hardships, the loss of two sisters and a brother in Indian attacks. The family which had started out with 200 head of cattle and some degree of affluence arrived penniless and with one yearling at their destination in Portland, Oregon!

Her grandfather, on the other hand, had been a school teacher and left Missouri at 27 years of age with "lung fever" (today's tuberculosis) and six months to live. He arrived in San Francisco when mud was knee deep in the streets. His "lung fever" somehow disappeared in the fresh western air and the ex-teacher, rancher and school superintendent lived well into his 80's.

Zelda and her forebears have felt a closeness to the 16th president of the United States and rightly so. Her grandfather's brother had served as a "scribe", or secretary, to Lincoln, but during the days when her grandfather was a child on the Missouri-Illinois border it was his fascination to sit atop a rail fence and yell "Hooray for Abraham Lincoln!" at the Union troops who rode by on maneuvers. One day when he yelled "Hooray for Abraham Lincoln!", one of the riders on a large black horse pulled away from the others and reined up by the startled boy.

The rider leaned over in the saddle and handed the boy two pennies and it was then that he realized that the rider was none other than Lincoln himself! The pennies are still the family's treasure and the recounting of this incident in an essay won Zelda an award in a statewide Oregon competition in 1924. The award turned out to be a copper replica of a Lincoln penny about five inches in diameter and weighing about two pounds!

Zelda's reason for ending up in Key West is simple enough. 28 years ago she came here with a suitcase planning on staying for a two-week vacation. The wind blew the "will resume classes in two weeks" sign from her ceramics studio door in California before she made it back west years later. Just what part Cesar played in this drama is uncertain.

The environment which Cesar and Zelda have created for themselves out of a once condemned cottage is not only liveable but visually very attractive. Decorators and antique dealers have "oohed and ahed" over their collection of wicker (some of Spanish origin) and the assortment of



Zelda holding court

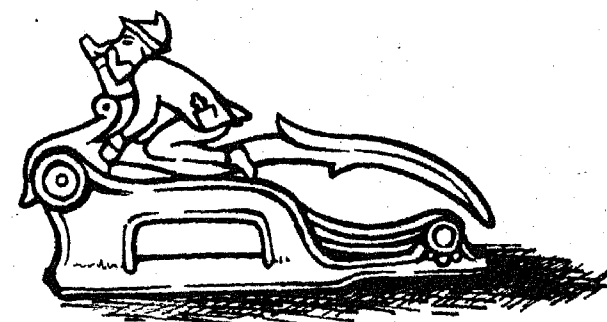
artifacts and antiques of Old Key West. Some have even tried to buy whole rooms but the answer is always the same: "It's not for sale. It's our home."

As Key West is from the sea so is Cesar and Zelda's house from Key West and the sea. An analysis of the decor reads like a history of the island. Here among driftwood that is so beautiful it looks more like sculpture are artifacts from the days of the sailing ships -- water casks and buckets, a set of over 200 "dead-eyes" (ranging in size from about eight inches in diameter to the size of a dime) from the sailing ship "Nonpareil", which was broken up in Key West.

Mementos from Key West's cigar-making era abound -- a leather slung cigar maker's chair, cigar molds, a tobacco crock which was used in the cigar factories to keep the tobacco leaves moist.

Here, too, are desks from the first school in Key West, the Key West Free School. Hidden among Zelda's collection of copper are two copper hanging kerosene lamps from the coaches on Flagler's railroad. Here hangs a hat which Cesar wore at the opening of the Casa Marina about 1919. A gray streaked, white marble table top was once a fixture in the Rest Beach slaughterhouses.

Everywhere is something functional or decorative made from a piece of an old Key West building -- a candelabrum and a crèche made from turned porch ballusters, floors of Bahama pine which were originally part of St. Joseph's Catholic School, a cabinet made from shutters to the old Convent of Mary Immaculate.



Antique cast iron tobacco cutter

Cypress is everywhere, the wood of an antique pie safe gleaming softly in the subdued light, its finish Cesar's secret formula made from the sap of the gumbo limbo and other indigenous trees. The Bahama pine table which is polished to a glass-like finish was once the door to an old Key West drugstore. A cypress aquarium filled with fish and other glass baubles was once a lighted sign from another Key West store.

Here, too, are such odd pieces as a pair of candlesticks used at funerals and called "coffin lights", a brass oil lantern carried by the slaves to light the way for carriages, an unusual rattan-like crawfish trap from the Virgin Islands, a beautiful string of wood floats from a turtle net, Cesar's ornate bed which was once slept in by Cuban patriot, Jose Marti.

Evidence of Cesar's artistry is everywhere evident. A cabinet which he fashioned from an old pigeon coop, chandeliers made from wrought iron pieces and broken demijohns, a collection of porcelain doll heads from diggings at Rest Beach. The list is endless, but everywhere is beauty, the beauty of natural wood, the mellowed beauty of an antique.

One thing which it is not possible to find here, however, is curtains. Zelda doesn't like them and feels she doesn't have anything to hide anyway!

Framed in a cypress panel from a door to the old Convent of Mary Immaculate is a 200 year old glazed Spanish tile bearing the image of a leaping deer. The tile was brought from Spain as a gift to Zelda from Pauline Hemingway, the writer's second wife.

Zelda and Pauline had many interests in common -- antiques and driftwood among them -- and during Pauline's stay in Key West the two became very good friends. Zelda recalls, however, only one encounter with Hemingway himself. The two women and a friend had spent an active morning beachcombing and the sensible thing seemed to be to have lunch at the house on Whitehead Street. The carriage house where Hemingway did most of his work was undergoing repairs and as they entered the kitchen Zelda noticed Hemingway writing at the kitchen table surrounded by three of four sleeping cats.

"Ernest, would you like some lunch?" his wife asked.

The next sound which came to Zelda's startled ears was something like a combination between a groan and a loud grunt. The response, which Mrs. Hemingway interpreted as negative was delivered without a break in his longhand or looking up from his work. Pauline prepared lunch which the three of them ate in a corner of the kitchen without disturbing the creative process or the sleeping cats. The practice of voodoo is, of course, not unknown in Key West. There are many who scoff at its alleged powers and probably equally as many who believe in it and/or respect it the way one would respect a scorpion. The object of this anecdote is not to put down the practice or offend its followers. It is merely an account of the reaction of individuals to a situation.



Zelda "practicing voodoo"

It seems that a number of years ago some strangers moved into the house at the back end of the lane (or "The Alley", as it is known affectionately to its residents) where the Catalas live. It soon became clear after attempts at friendship that these new people did not wish to mix with the Conchs or other residents of the lane. It was remarked that there were strange comings and goings there at all hours of the night, that guns had been seen and suspicion was rife that something

"fishy" was going on. What was "going on" was uncertain but the alley's residents had no intention of letting it interfere with their lives and they developed a blasé but watchful attitude towards the new neighbors.

In a short time certain unfriendly acts became difficult to overlook.

Some people, particularly Cesar and Zelda, whose house was directly adjacent to the neighbors, noticed on numerous occasions strange objects in their yards, on their porches or under their homes -- bundles of strange weeds, parts of chickens, charred oil-soaked rags that looked as if they had once been ignited. A curious heart-shaped lobe of a cactus was impaled on a spike at the end of the lane. Someone said that this was a voodoo charm designed to kill all the people in the alley.

Suspicion led to annoyance. The last straw occurred one afternoon when neighbors had gathered in a backyard for a birthday party. The cake and ice cream had barely been passed out when acrid, foul-smelling smoke filled the alley and sent people running for water to bathe their eyes. It was no surprise that the source of the smoke was the house at the end of the lane. The untimely end of the party and the disappointment of all attending -- not to mention the 15 year old girl whose birthday it was -- caused Zelda's anger to flare and her mind started working on a plan of mischief.

Donning a black raincoat with hood which was so large it dragged on the ground and filling one of the pockets with crumbled Cuban bread, Zelda took a quantity of Blue Cheer laundry detergent and a lighted seven taper candlestick and headed for the alley. Wildly gesticulating and muttering some unintelligible sounds she set down the candlestick in front of the gate of the house in question. Repeating her incantation she carefully sifted the Blue Cheer in straight lines across the alley at about three foot intervals. Then returning to the gate and picking up the candlestick she took from her pocket the crumbs of Cuban bread and scattered them (with appropriate syllables) onto the area in front of the gate.

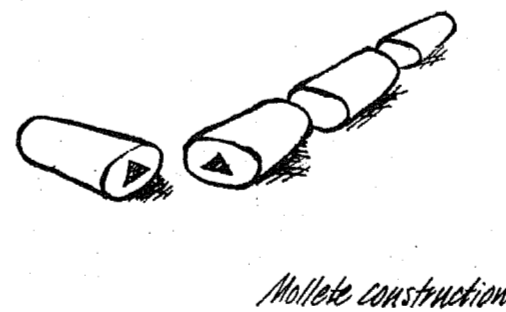


Well, apparently some people take their voodoo very seriously for suddenly Zelda was attacked by the occupants of the house. The ensuing battle attracted neighbors who managed to break up the fight.

Zelda made good her escape, and the next morning as the alley watched, the unfriendly neighbors "hopped like kangaroos" down the lane trying to avoid the lines of Blue Cheer.

Upset by the attack on Zelda, the alley residents urged her to press charges against the offensive neighbor. Charges were subsequently pressed and everyone in the alley went to court. The offending party was roundly fined and the resulting trial with Conchs and Miami lawyers turned out predictable to be one of the more entertaining episodes of Key West courtroom history.

Cesar occasionally makes odd short yelps in his sleep -- "Aiyeel! Hiyeel!" -- which used to startle Zelda, but she says it's nothing to worry about. He's driving cattle. In his dreams he goes back to the days of his youth when cattle were unloaded from boats at the north end of the island, then run through the streets of town to the Rest Beach pens at the other side of the island. All this is gone now, of course, and only in some folks' memory or in dreams can it be recaptured. Perhaps this is true of Old Key West as well.



Cesar's Recipe for Molletes that Pleased the Admiral

(Amount of ingredients depending on number of molletes to be made.)

Select from a good butcher a quantity of the mariposa or flank steak cut of beef, ham and pork and have this ground on the #2 grind. (The meat is useless if ground finer or coarser than the #2.) Put the ground meat along with tomatoes, peppers, onions and garlic cloves (chopped fine) and olive oil into a kettle and simmer for one day. When done cut stuffed green olives into rings and add to the pot. Strain this mixture and save the juice.

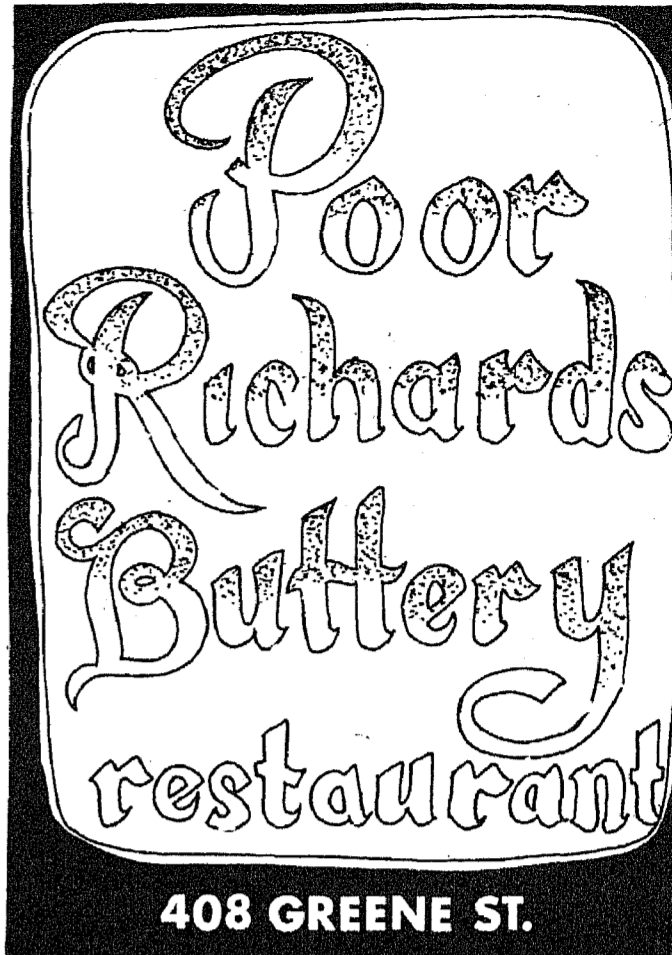
Cut a loaf of Cuban bread (without the twist down the back) into four sections. With a knife remove a small triangle from one end of each section and put aside. Hollow out the inside of each section with an iced tea spoon. Put two raisins in the back end of each hollowed section and stuff fat with the meat filling,

placing two more raisins in the middle and two at the other end. (More raisins make a difference in the flavor) Replace triangles. Dip stuffed molletes into juice saved from meat mixture. (This step is important as it seals the mollete and keeps it light in texture.) Dip each mollete into beaten eggs and deep fry in lard.

Zelda's Recipe for Black Beans:

(The Cuban consul said "The best black beans he had ever eaten.")

Saute in about two cups olive oil; one medium green pepper, two medium onions and one whole bulb of garlic chopped fine. Boil two pounds of black beans with salt until they start to split open. Add the other ingredients and simmer until the beans become creamy (a long time). Remove one cup of beans, mash with a fork and return to pot. (This thickens the mixture.) Enjoy.



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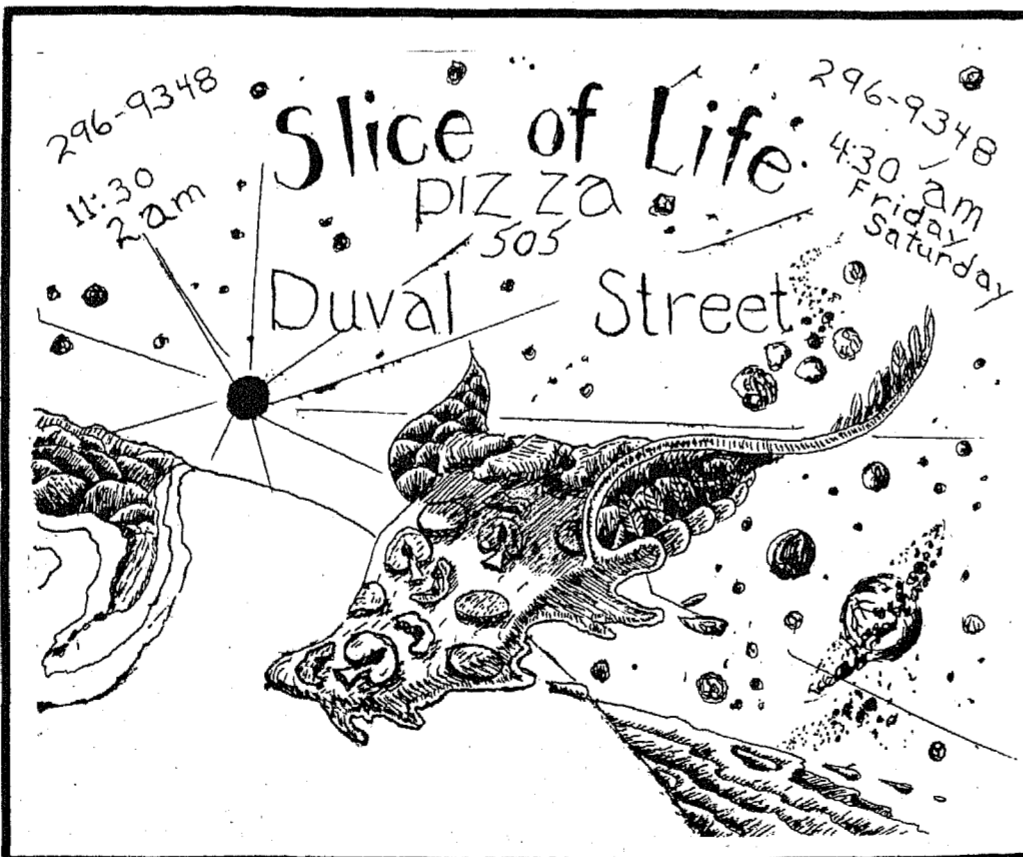
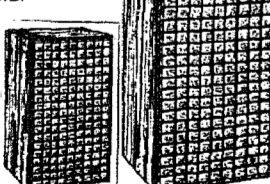


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Let me take this opportunity to thank Solares Hill, Bill Huckel and associates for getting this fine paper together again. It's been around off and on for the five years I've been in business here. It's been enjoyable this way. Hope to see it around a lot more. I say this almost on the eve of me leaving town again. For three years, Janet and I stayed in Key West and didn't go any farther north than Stock Island. The last two years we've been drawn to the road and have been in and out most of the time. For those of you that do business with us, we know our custom work has dwindled of late. But we will be around for many years.

In our shop now, we have other people's work as well and can have many things custom made. As I'll be traveling this summer and plan on having the shop open most of the time, I will be sending many quality items as I find them. As we're traveling Key West is always with us and the island is always easy to speak of.

As always, thank you Key West.

*Cannonball*  
CREATIVE DESIGN

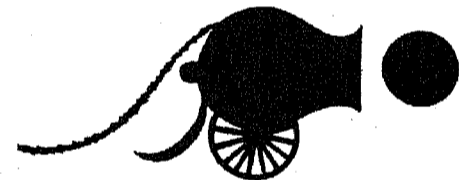
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### "TIME"

Time is just another way to stop  
We start dying the day we are born.  
What happens in between,  
Is what we must learn.

To learn you must be taught  
This is how you form what you are,  
Or thought you wanted to be  
Bring yourself to what you mean,  
Fulfill your life. Your dream.

In fulfillment will you give  
Take way or lie still in that lost thing,  
That is time! That word again  
Will it never stop,

No not even to give you some  
In order that you may do that  
Which you have never done,  
To be on time is to be late  
For time is absolute  
It brings you there and takes you away.

Time is lost with what we say  
Time is heard with each passing day.

I will listen if you must bring it forth,  
And give you time to lose,  
Not to hide what we must find.

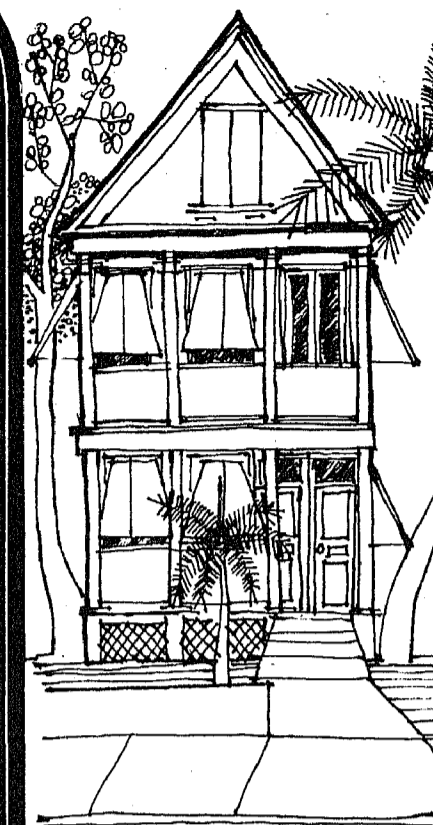
Time is forever lost,  
No matter what you have found.

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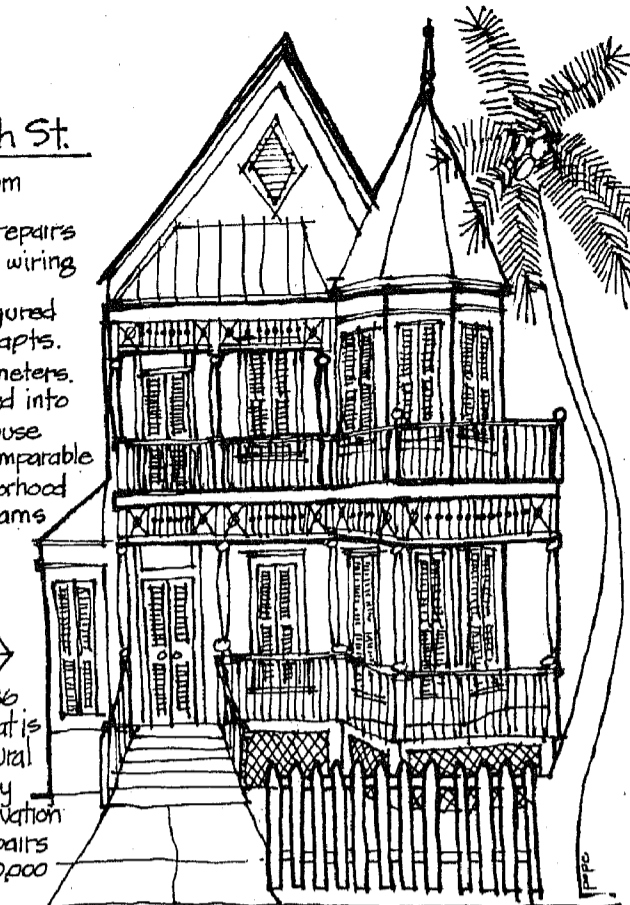
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### BOJANGLES

by Robert Vaughn

Key West  
for Warren Lowe

Slogans and early loves slide through  
the mind  
As if the mind were time.  
Bojangles dances soft-shoe on  
the edge,  
he to whom it seems impossible  
to say, goodbye.

He smiles at every diatribe  
and figureheads each bow  
beyond Rebecca,  
walks behind me  
on Duval

comes tapping through the folksongs  
of the born pretender to the common  
tune.

You said, 'all the way.

If we go all the way  
will that wandering Spade  
dance us back  
To where our Love lies buried  
on the Rock.

Or will he turn his back  
above Chinchorro where the  
reef is sharp enough  
to slice a minor third.

This morning I suspect he's  
everywhere we go forever  
And that our feet will  
beat his time at Valparaiso  
or at Valladolid.

from The Village Post 1970

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# Key West is probably

by Thurlow Weed

There is Key West with Mallory Dock at sunset, and the Pelican path, and there used to be the Midget.

But then there is Marrakech with the Place Djemaa el Fna, which means "Concourse of Sinners", with snake-charmers, story-tellers, and water sellers.

And London with the Baker Street stop on the Elephant and Castle subway line.

And north of London there is Hull, with a street called The Land of Green Ginger.

Above almost everything else there is Rome, with the medieval houses and cobbled streets of Rione Ponte, with Piazza Navona, with Campidoglio, and with more delights and reality than any city morally should have.

And there are lots of other places, such as Regensburg with the Gothic cathedral which has a statue of the Devil inside, and also one of his Grandmother. Such as Naples with Brownian Motion instead of traffic, and St. Cyr, and Vallauris, and Mintla Mintlaw, and lots of other places.

And there is still Key West, with ..... well, Key West is More than has.

What is Key West?

Key West is bullfight music trying to get out of your neighbor's radio.

KW is the gingerbread vanishing before the ruins cool after a big fire.

KW is standing helplessly by while plans are made to convert grand architecture into parking lots, and sometimes not having it happen after all.

KW is millions of worms inching frantically down the poinciana at dawn, with migrating warblers getting there first.

KW is trying to decide which place serves the best picadillo, and then trying each one again, and again, and again, and ....

KW is a one-man show. Here everything is individual except those things that matter.

KW is seeing FOR SALE signs littering what little is left of natural beauty, and knowing full well there is nothing you can do to stop it, short of buying it yourself, which you can't do because you are lean in purse.

KW is where "yes" means "yes", where "no" means "no", and where "I'll try" usually turns out to mean "no".

KW is using the lawnmower on the mildew in the closet after the rain.

KW is hearing live Mozart quartets in a restaurant patio while trucks change gears outside.

KW is watching one of those snaky kites near Harbor House suicide into a tree.

KW is watching a very old lady, who can barely walk, crossing a thundering arterial street every day on her cane to feed a neglected dog on the other side.

## valid...

KW is where some maintain that DePoo Hospital is the best restaurant in town.

KW is the back room at the bodega, especially on Saturday afternoon.

KW is dog-packs in the early morning streets, and discovering that they are friendly.

KW is Cayo Hueso Transit, the Gus-gua, chuckling through the town. Bus passengers once looked grim; now they smile.

KW is hearing the leap-frog effect of crowing chickens, how it starts 'way over there, passes loud through here, and subsides faintly 'way off that way.

KW is where if something can possibly go wrong, it won't; but sure things generally have a wheel come off somewhere.

KW is planting tender tomato vines in December and the next morning finding a chicken family scratching for roaches there. You chase them away and replant. The next day it may be a duck.

KW is swatting something on your neck and finding out it was a termite.

KW is planting fruit trees inside your wall by one rake handle's length, plus one foot.

KW is the parrot coming over each sunset. There are some who say that it squawks, but we all know that his wing needs oiling.

KW is a huddle of City Pigeons thwapping out of the bell tower at St. Paul's as Joe Lowe begins to play the carillon. It is also standing around Duval St. on Sunday morning at nine while he plays fanfares.

KW is trying to explain Key West to outsiders, what it is about here, and wondering why.

KW is the best place to come back to now.

KW is trying to remember a person's real name, instead of what everyone calls him, while looking in the phone book.

KW is where you can open a cheese store on all the moons you've been promised, and then sometimes having the moon itself, against all expectations, presented to you.

KW is where you're desperate to get away from and can't wait to get back to.

KW is where the rules are seldom enforced, where the traditions usually are, and where people tell you either everything or nothing. It is useless to wonder about that. Never try to explain it.

KW is watching wintering Vultures circle over the area known as Middle Spring. That is where the bus station is, and other neighboring buildings. Why do Vultures so often circle just there? Air currents?

KW is where a lot of people could be named by name, but don't want to be. This may well include you.

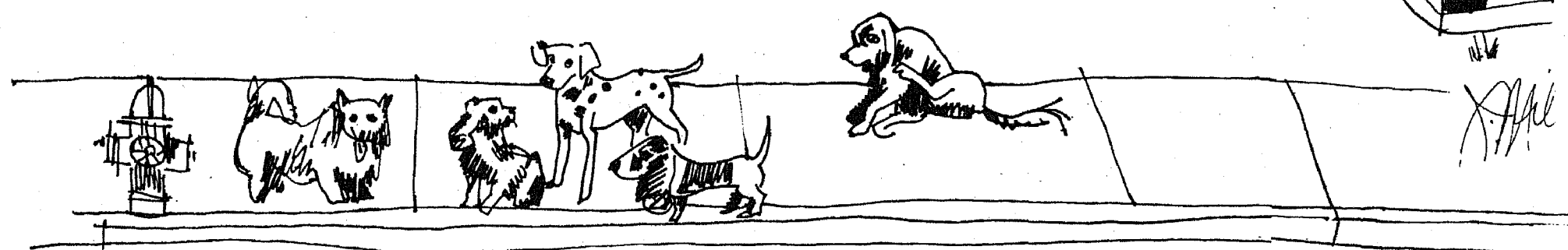
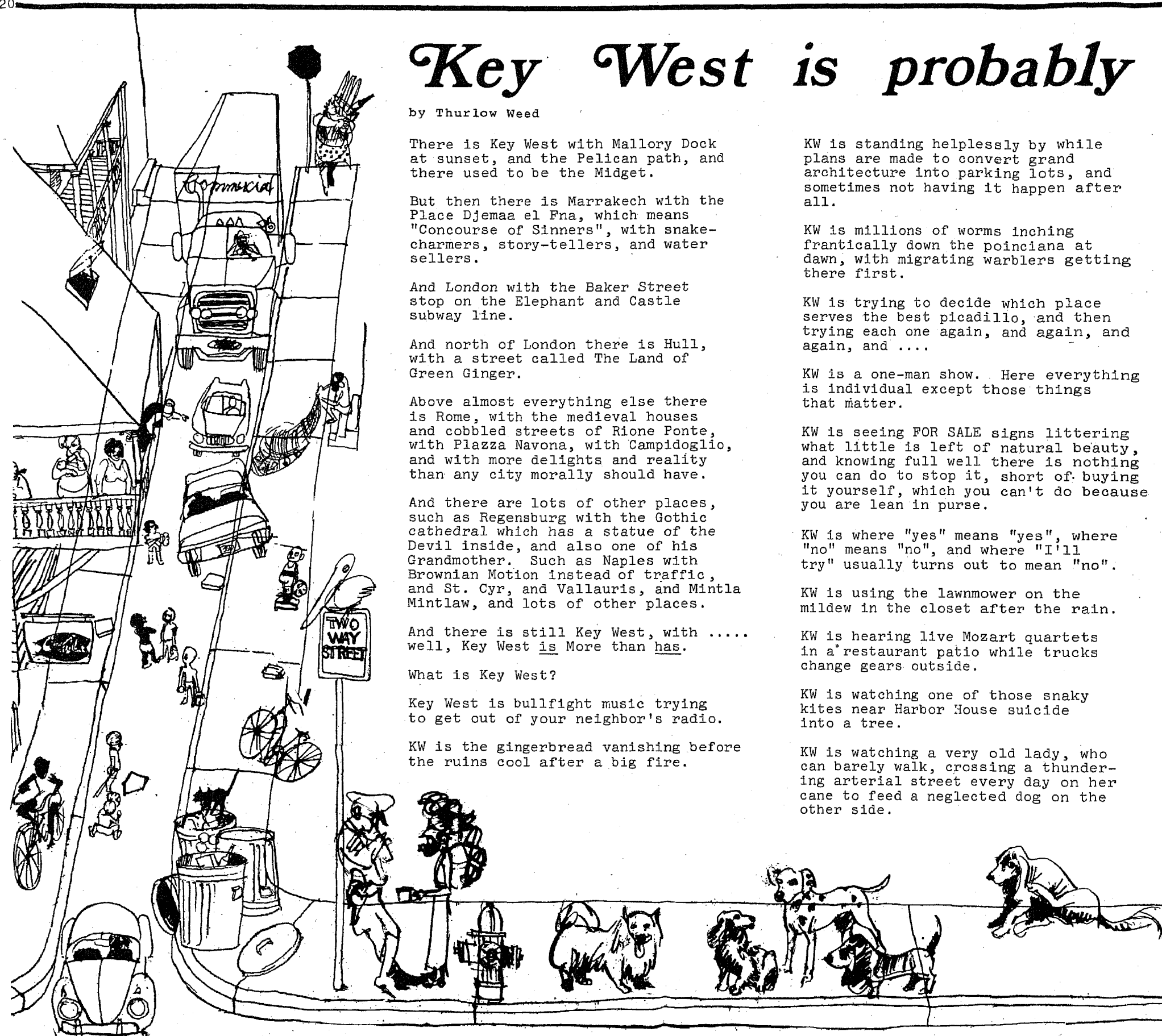
KW is going to the sunset and being blinded by the star performer. Unfortunately, sunsets must be witnessed from the east.

KW is the sound of the conch shell being blown, a phenomenon noticed mostly by strangers.

KW is not part of the Real World. If you don't believe it, go to Marathon, to Miami, or even to Bangkok (as some have done). When you get back you'll find that Key West is more real than you had thought.

KW is about like any other small town -- different from any other.

And yet, after a while, you begin to think that Key West is probably valid after all.



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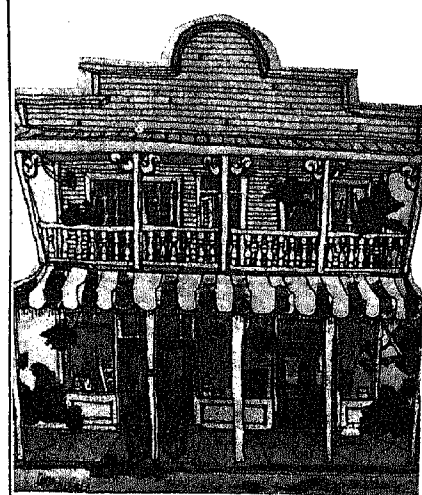
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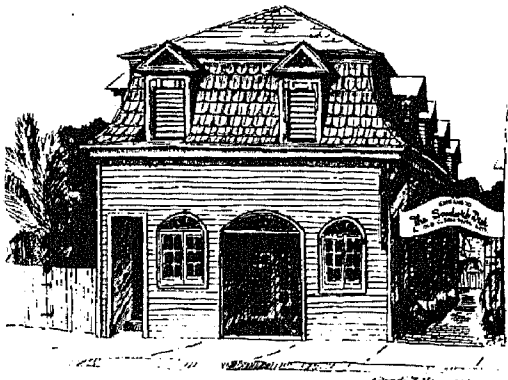
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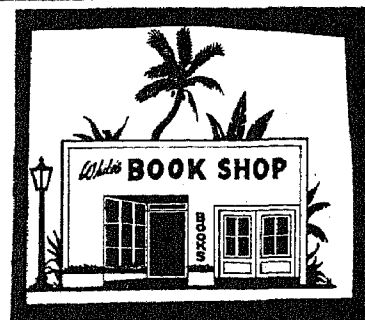
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# COMMON SENSE



RETIREES' IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

by Gil Ryder

### Economic Impact:

So many people think of the retirees as just old impoverished beggars but this is just not the case. Social Security payments to the over 65 group, who are residents of the area included in Zip Code 33040 (Key West to Saddle Bunch), amounted to \$4,092,000 yearly, according to 1974 figures (the last readily available). This does not take into account those drawing Social Security at age 62, those receiving dependency benefits, etc. However, in this community, as in any other, there is a percentage of elderly people in serious financial difficulties, who must receive economic assistance in order to survive. This assistance comes from the Federal level down to the County and City levels. Since almost any adult in the community pays taxes to all levels of government, it is safe to say that the local residents are making a definite contribution toward the survival benefits of the elderly indigent. On a national basis, the retirees existing at poverty level or below amount to approximately 20% of the retired population.

But the Key West area has an advantage not enjoyed by colder communities. Here the climate draws a large proportion of the more affluent retirees from other areas. These more affluent retirees (and they are in the preponderance), through their taxes, not only lighten the burden on the community which is caused by the elderly indigent, they actually make the retirees in general a very definite economic asset.

Very few, if any, out-of-state retirees come here with only Social Security to live on. Actual figures on over-all retirement income here are not available, but close personal involvement with these people indicates that the average couple coming here for retirement has sufficient funds to purchase a home, either for cash or carrying a very small mortgage, and still has a spendable income of \$8,000 a year or better. This means that they pay school taxes but send no children to school though in some instances they themselves will use school facilities. The taxes they pay also help maintain jails and feed prisoners, and retirees very seldom use the jail facilities. The income of these retirees does not come out of the local economy, but it very definitely goes into it.

Out-of-state retirees draw friends and relatives from all parts of the country to visit. These guests then ride the tour train, shop for souvenirs, take boat rides and fishing trips, use motels, take the host and hostess out to dinner, buy local arts and crafts, shells, etc. The host and hostess also buy extra food and drink while entertaining the guests.

The retirement dollar is a good dollar and a big dollar. The Social Security figure of \$8,000,000 plus is only the beginning of the story. It would be safe to figure retirement income from other sources would raise that figure to at least \$8,800,000 a year, plus whatever their guests spend.

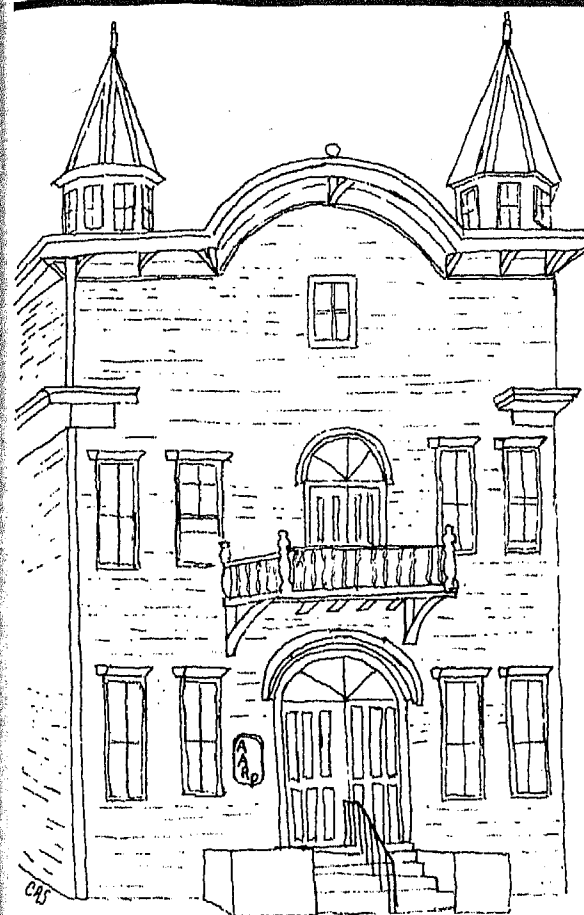
The retiree is definitely an economic asset. Local government, Chambers of Commerce, business groups, and other interested residents should keep these figures in mind when considering increased industrialization of the area. A million dollar a year payroll may look like a good deal, until we realize that it may drive away the \$8,800,000 (minimum) retiree payroll. We must also keep in mind that retirees do not suffer from strikes, layoffs or lockouts. The community with a good retirement payroll will survive a depression that would cause an industrial community economic collapse.

### Social Impact/Cultural Impact:

It would be difficult to separate the two, and it must be admitted that some retirees make no contribution whatever to the social and cultural part of the community. There are bound to be a few old grouches, bitterly resenting retirement, expecting to be insulted, cheated or otherwise mistreated by any they meet or do business with. They build a wall between themselves and the community and make little or no contribution to the community other than financial.

Fortunately, these are in the minority. Most retirees join one or more of the local organizations, attend meetings, art shows, flower shows, the theatre, etc., contributing enthusiasm as well as money, and getting personally involved in the subjects that interest them.

The local chapter of AARP worked hard to create the Monroe County Senior Citizens Recreation Center and, having created it, now manages the facility for the benefit



of all the senior citizens, at very little cost to the County and City. The local government is extremely cooperative, but it must be recognized that without the effort made by this particular group of retirees the facility would not exist. The Senior Citizens Recreation Center is very definitely influencing retirees on vacation in this area to purchase homes here and become permanent residents.

The Center is not necessarily the most important social and cultural impact made on the community by retirees, but it probably the most obvious. It is kept open and enjoyed 7 days a week by senior citizen cardplayers, pool shooters, chess players, domino enthusiasts, TV watchers, conversationalists, etc.

Anyone taking the trouble to check the various art shows and displays will find the retirees very well represented - and doing fine work. It must be good - it sells.

### Political Impact:

Retirees in the area are, by and large, independent thinkers in all matters, including political. They have the time and the interest to keep up with political and civic matters. Most are very well read and have the business or professional and educational background to understand

and analyze what they see, read and hear. They are not easily swayed by rhetoric or expensive advertising, but they do attend (or listen to those who do) City and County Commission meetings, Utility Board and FCAA meetings and hearings and, to a lesser degree, travel to Tallahassee to keep up with matters on a State level.

AARP has a joint State Legislative Committee, represented in this area by Mel Levitt, who reports at regular intervals. Such reports to members get a wide circulation among non-members, thus assuring retirees in general an intimate fund of pertinent knowledge.

It is doubtful that anyone could get the retirees to really vote as a bloc but, with information available laid before them, the majority of retirees will go over it analytically and independently and, still thinking independently, will arrive pretty much at the same conclusions, thus, in some instances, giving the same effect as a bloc vote.

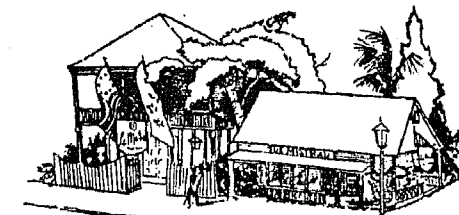
The political power of the retiree should be carefully considered by all aspiring and intelligent politicians. The retiree voters cannot be conned, frightened, flattered, nor appealed to by anything other than honest presentations of facts. They and they alone will analyze and evaluate the facts presented and vote their own independent convictions.

In general, they have no jobs to lose, no mortgages to be foreclosed, and do respond to pressures in these and related areas. They are not overly impressed by lawyers, doctors, educators, etc. They all have had friends or relatives in these areas for many years and really feel no need to tug the forelock when one of such status appears upon the scene.

The area retirees are politically aware and alert, tough-minded, and very, very literate. It is very obvious to any who care to review the past four or five years that the retirees have already had a tremendous impact on Key West and Monroe County. We cannot doubt that this impact will become even greater and more obvious as the future unfolds.

Note: Mr. Donald C. Dahnk of the Key West Social Security Office was extremely cooperative in researching the Social Security figures above. It is unfortunate that Social Security did not have available figures on the retirees between ages 62 and 65. Obviously, this would show an even greater retirement payroll in the area.

Further note: Gil Ryder is President of the Lower Keys Chapter of AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) and is area-wide representative for the Monroe County Council on Aging.



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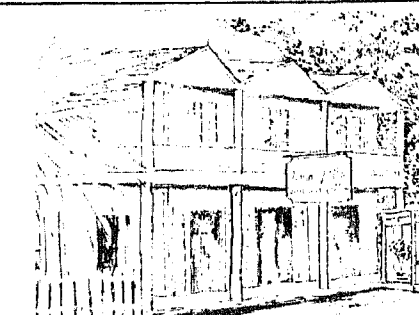


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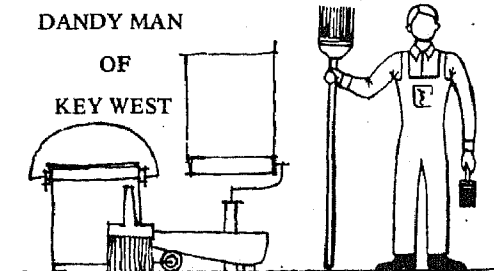
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# Old Island Anecdote

by Bud Jacobson

If nothing else, it's always been an enterprising community, according to the longtime Conchs, mostly because they were stranded here on an island with not much to occupy their sun-soaked minds and not much in their kicker to pay for entertainment.

One of the thousands of amusing tales about "private enterprise" back in the shirtsleeve days of the 1930's involves a White Street businessman named Jimmy Hide and his sidekick, Poncho. They operated out of the little frame house across from Gulfstream, and next door to Santiago's barber shop.

Jimmy wielded the barber's shears in those days, snipping away for nickels and dimes (that was when people used to get haircuts, none of coiffure-styling we suffer with today at \$10 a throw), and on the side, to keep the economy moving, Jimmy peddled bait to the fishermen--mullet, then, was going for two-bits a dozen--and Cuban food.

Poncho was Jimmy's roving salesman --an elderly Cuban with a high-pitched squeaky voice, he used to roam the by-ways of Key West, wheeling a distinctive old-fashioned brightly colored baby carriage which had been fitted with a glass-sided display case.

The display case perched on top of the handsome old baby carriage, made out of wicker and dangerously balanced on large curlicue steel springs, so it rocked and wobbled as Poncho roamed the streets, hawking his wares.

"I got molletes... I got bollos... I got Cuban mix," the old gent would holler in that high-pitched tone, pushing the wobbly carriage ahead of him. It was his pride and joy. His livelihood on wheels and business, at pennies in those days, was brisk.



Poncho would load up in the mornings and Jimmy would cast off the lines, sending him out into the marketplace, through dusty hot streets, in the little old lanes where old Cubans and Conchs, and the kids would buy their lunches or a snack for morning coffee.

Then one day Poncho left the baby carriage outside in the street while he was in a neighbor's house. When he came out, the gorgeous old thing was gone, along with his days supply.

Disappeared! Vanished! Not a trace! Poncho was stricken.

"What will I do," he moaned to his friends, "Jimmy will be angry. I've lost my baby carriage," and he wandered the streets, calling out:

"Anyone seen my baby carriage?"

Nothing.

Toward evening Poncho was near 411 William Street, a big tall three-story rooming house operated by the late Mrs. Else Koch. The reputation of the huge old place was not the world's best. She used to advertise it as "light house-keeping rooms" -- and the locals knew in those days, "light" was a mild word.

It was run like a turnstile flop-house with rentals figured out on an hourly basis, well patronized by some of the better known ladies of the night when they could entice a well-soused shrimp or sailor to the rooms.

Poncho asked about his baby carriage and Mrs. Koch took pity on him. Jimmy would scalp him if he found out it was gone.

"You can stay here for the night," she said, "I'll put you in a room on the third floor." That way it wasn't likely she'd rent an upper room in the middle of the night.

Poncho retired, weeping about his baby carriage.

In the dead of the night, he was awakened by the sounds of loud voices and girlish giggling at his door, and then rattling a key in the lock.

Poncho panicked.

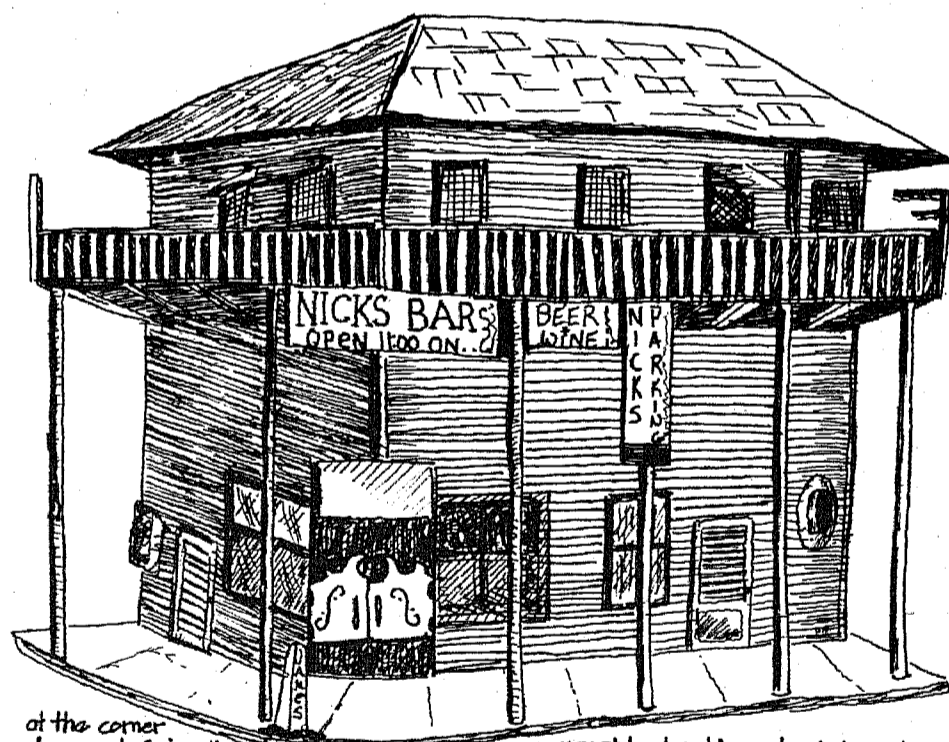
He slipped out of bed and hid under it as the overhead bulb flicked on and the legs of a tough old shrimp and his lady love could be glimpsed, staggering into the room.

The shrimp undressed and Poncho could see his clothes fall to the floor, and the girl exclaimed:

"My God, I've seen everything now!"

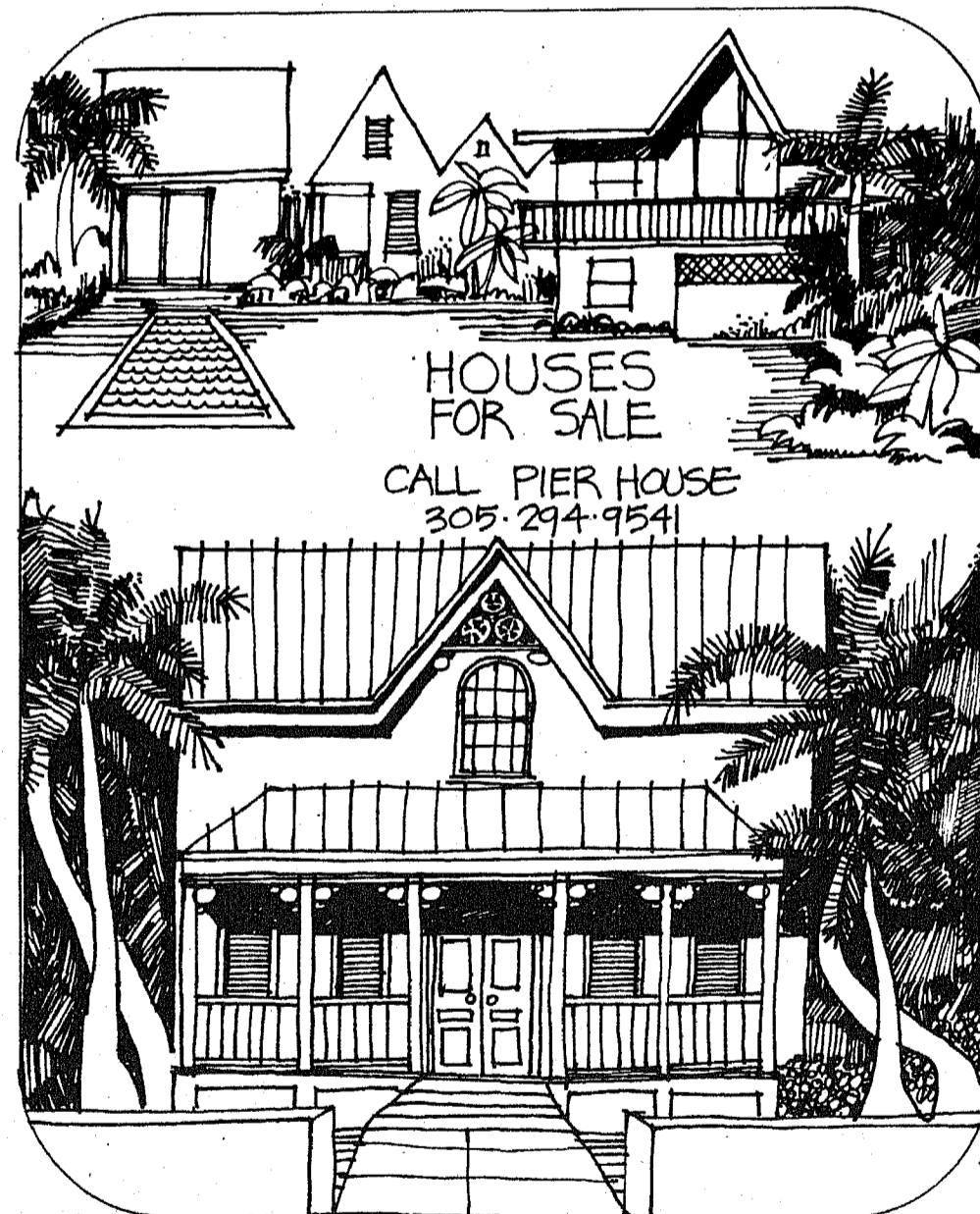
With that, Poncho pushed himself from under the bed and plaintively asked:

"Lady, if you seen everything, where is my baby carriage?"



at the corner James & Grinnell

neighborhood bar, tourists welcome outdoor beer garden coming soon



# THEATER

The Greene Street Theater, a vigorous challenge to the "established" stage in Key West, opens April 15.

The young group will utilize Tennessee Williams' touching play of madness and reality in New Orleans, "Suddenly Last Summer", as the opening vehicle.

The new playhouse, across Greene Street from Sloppy Joe's, has been months in planning and construction. They were shooting for a March 28 opening but needed more time, according to Jay Drury, a member of the board of directors of the Key West Society for the Performing Arts -- the official title of the hustling youngsters.

Drury insists the acting company, an official non-profit organization, is "not in competition with anyone". Others find it hard to believe. The aging Waterfront Playhouse may find the upstarts an exercise in talent and freshness. As the island's only active theater group for around thirty years, the Waterfront players have become a solid acting group but a wee short in imagination and tempo.

Roxanna Prosser has been announced as the lead in the new production. She is currently starring Off-Broadway in Roslyn Drexler's "She Who Was He".

What has more interest here is Janice White's return to the stage cast as Mrs. Venable. Miss White is as close to professional acting talent as any local resident. With that talent, and her past experience with the Players, she is in a position to challenge the professional Miss Prosser -- and many islanders will be waiting for the opening curtain.

It is all very healthy, wise and ambitious.

John J. Young

## THEY

After the knowledge had been applied  
they both lapsed into a Rubyist silence  
sipping rose honey from an egg shell;  
She with her pearls

He with his fine tools  
They with their bright imaginations  
kindling the light in many houses  
many times ago.

How could they not remember how fine they were?  
He being  
and she  
seeing

into the light of day.

A turnip fell  
head down  
to hide its turned down nose  
from the grocery marts  
of the neatly wrapped town.

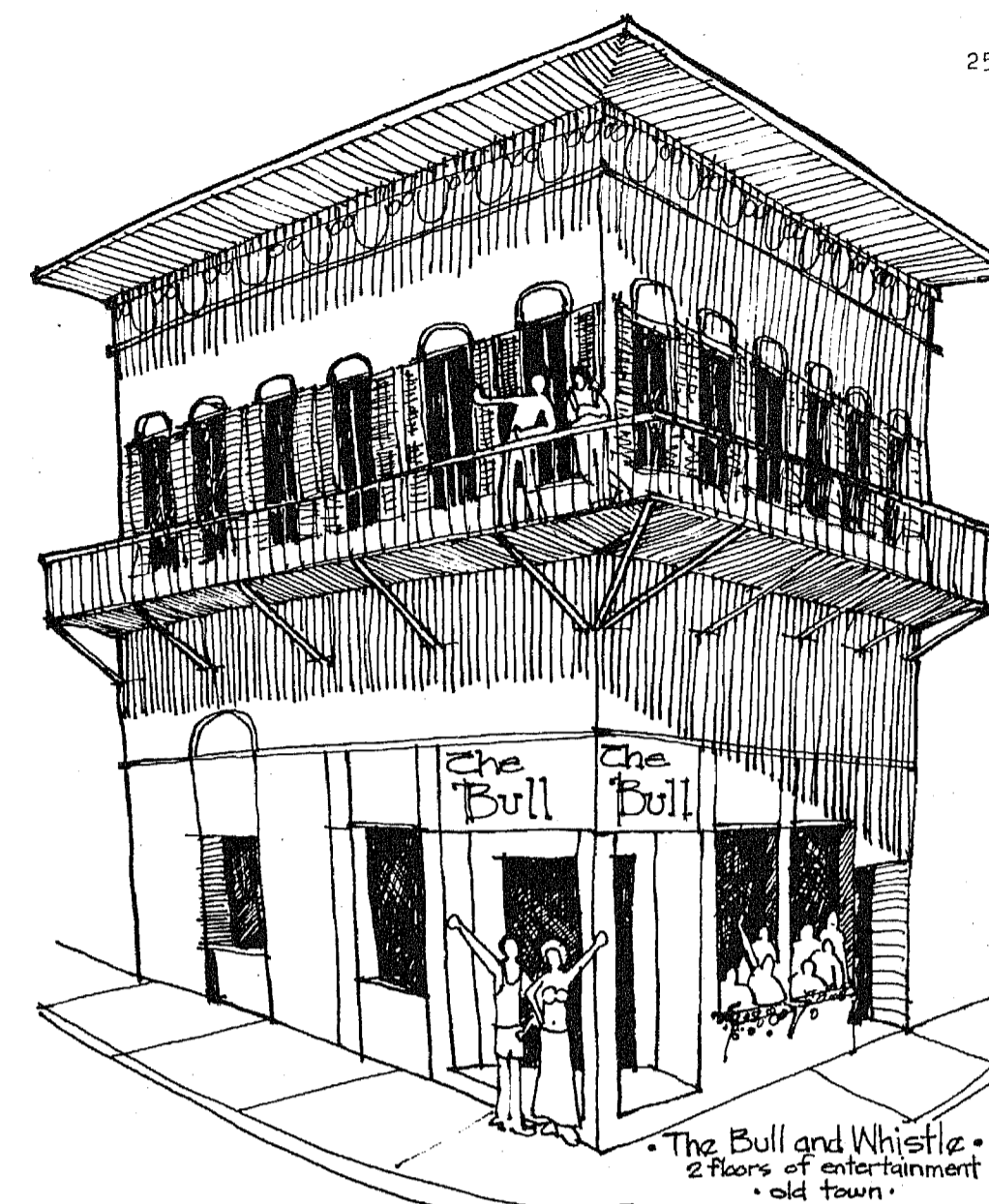
Phoebe Coan

**We'd like to thank all those people who made this ad necessary.**

The past five years have been enjoyable ones for us at the Rooftop Gallery so it seems fitting to thank those who have made it possible. From both the old location and our new quarters in Harbor House our thanks to the artists, people of Key West and visitors from throughout the U.S. and Canada... our sincere thanks.

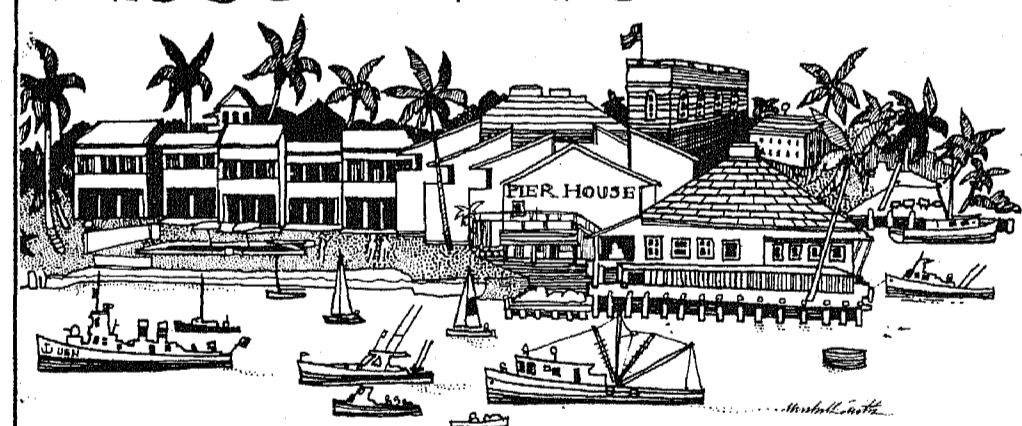
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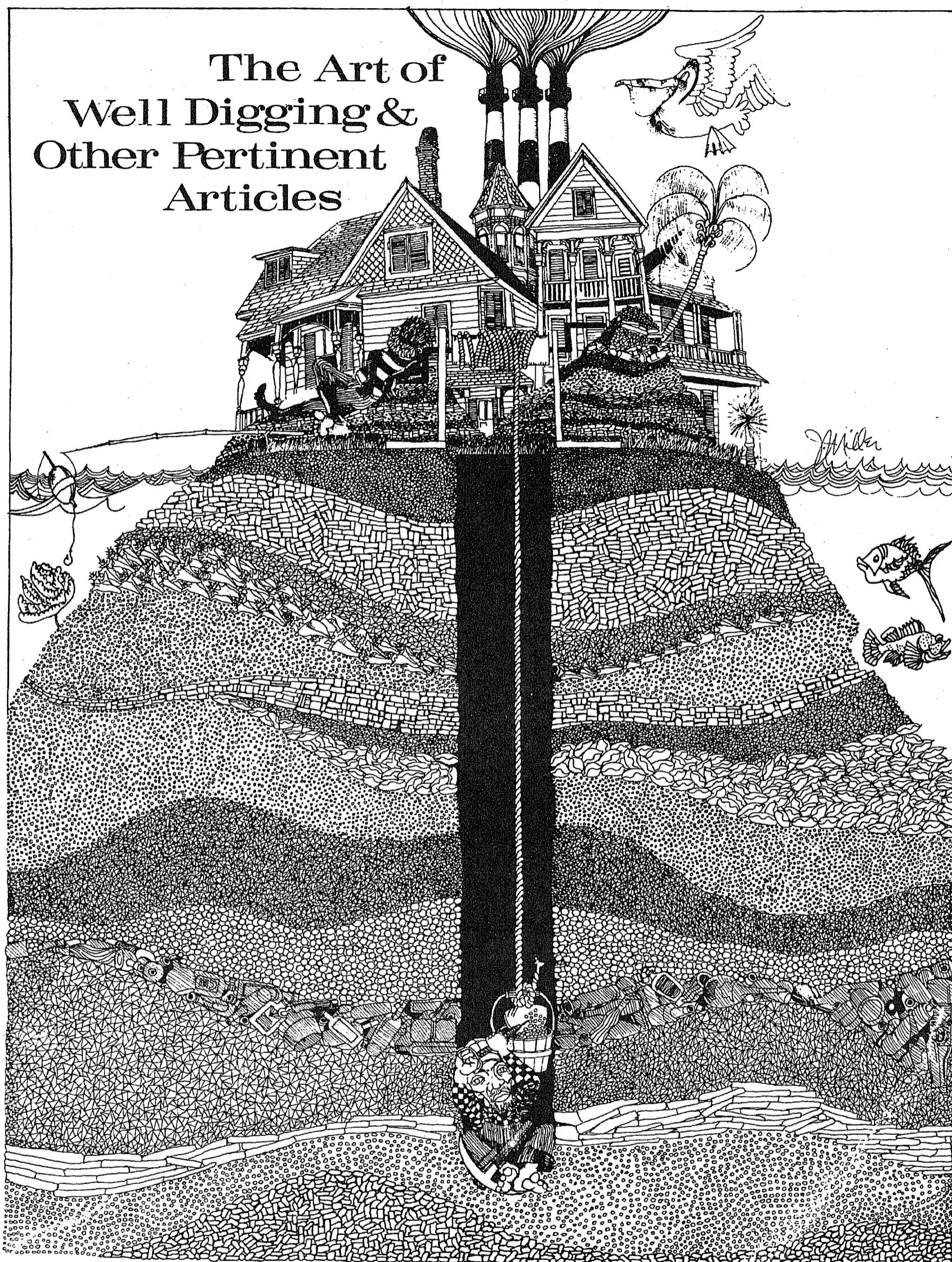
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