

DRAFT

PROCLAMATION for BOCC agenda on Oct. 22, 2014/Key West.

PROCLAMATION**FRANCIS TRACY GARDEN CENTER – 50th ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS, in June of 1952, ten women formed the Key Largo Garden Club and membership meetings were held in private homes.

WHEREAS, by 1956, membership had increased and the club split with the new club named the Upper Keys Garden Club (now the Garden Club of the Upper Keys). Charter members, including Francis Tracy and Margaret Bond, signed the charter as a non-profit organization.

WHEREAS, by 1962 with 60 members, the need for a clubhouse was urgent. Dr. Fred and Margaret Bond offered property for a clubhouse, stipulating that it always be used for Garden Club purposes and that the clubhouse be named the Francis Tracy Garden Center.

WHEREAS, after fundraising for the building's construction, and securing a mortgage of \$8,000 for the remainder, a ground-breaking celebration was held. The official opening of the Francis Tracy Garden Center was in November, 1964.

WHEREAS, when the mortgage was satisfied in December, 1967, Francis Tracy at age 90, lit the flame to burn the mortgage of the building named in her honor.

WHEREAS, the Garden Club of the Upper Keys continues to improve and expand the uses of the Center, having it designated as a Wild Bird Sanctuary and also a Peace Park.

WHEREAS, the Garden Club of the Upper Keys continues to promote, develop, protect and conserve the natural beauty of the Upper Keys with educational gardening and environmental programs through its membership and volunteers and, 50 years later, the Francis Tracy Garden Center continues to serve as the center of these activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sylvia J. Murphy, Mayor of Monroe County, Florida, do hereby recognize the historical significance of 50 years of garden club activities and community events of the

FRANCIS TRACY GARDEN CENTER

The commemorative event celebration will be held on November 18, 2014.

Dated this 22nd day of October, 2014

Food/beverages					
Beverages, glasses	\$	Ellen/Martha	xx btls champagne & nonalcohol	Oct	donations or club purchase?
Appetizers, cake, etc	\$	Ellen/Martha		Nov	donations or club purchase?
Tables setup, décor	\$	Diane	inside & outside	Nov	
Servers/ in character		Edna?		Oct	
Slideshow					
Photos, enlarged, displayed	\$ 120	Lonell		Nov	
Music		Lourdes	inside & outside?	Sep	
Publicity					
		Lonell	Send to newspapers	Oct	
		Lonell	Contact Donna Dietrick, 1st Berski	Sep	
		Lonell	Invite press to event	1st Oct	
Ask for members to help that day		Lonell		Sep	

Total budget:

FRANCIS TRACY GARDEN CENTER CELEBRATES 50-YEAR MILESTONE

In November 2014, club members and invited guests will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the FTGC. It remains the center of Garden Club activities and Mayor Sylvia Murphy will present a proclamation by Monroe County to the GCUK recognizing its place in Upper Keys history.

The history of the FTGC started well before its construction did. You could say it all started in June, 1952 when ten ladies met at the home of Mrs. Everett Perkins and formed a club "of civic and cultural advantage to native plant growth in the Keys" named the Key Largo Garden Club. Original membership was limited to 20 members because meetings were held in private homes. By 1954 the club had grown so large that it split into two clubs - the original one to serve Key Largo area and the new Upper Keys Garden Club to serve Islamorada, Matecumbe and Plantation Keys. There were 15 charter members of this new club, including Francis Tracy and Margaret Bond, whose contributions to the club, as you'll see, have been everlasting.

By 1962, the Upper Keys Garden Club had grown to 60 members and needed larger meeting space. The decision was made to build a clubhouse. In 1963, Dr. Fred Bond and his wife Margaret offered an acre parcel of property on State Road No. 5 (Overseas Highway), a portion of tract C in Sunset Gardens, to be used for the new building. The Bonds stipulated that it be named the Francis Tracy Garden Center to honor charter member Francis Tracy for her many contributions to the Garden Club, her conservation leadership, and her dedication as the county's nurse. She was officially proclaimed "Angel of the Keys" by the Florida Keys Clinic in 1957 and by settlers whose ailments, injuries and heartaches she had ministered for 30 years, frequently using native plants. Also stipulated was if the FTGC should cease to operate for Garden Club purposes, the land would revert to the grantors. Mildred "Millie" Gasser was the president at that time and the first of 30 presidents who have presided over the club and the clubhouse since its inception, maintaining and keeping it for future generations of members, residents and visitors.

Building a clubhouse was a major undertaking for the small, nonprofit organization. Only those people involved know how many hours and how much work went into all the money-raising events—bake sales, rummage sales, flower shows-- needed to start the building. Dr. Bond arranged for financing of the building and the insurance. An \$8,000 mortgage was secured from the Bank of Florida in Homestead for the balance to complete the financing.

George Coffin of Islamorada donated drawing plans for the building, a one story CBS club house with screened porch. General contractor D. L. Skidmore of Islamorada was the builder, and subcontractors included, among others, Dixie Aluminum Products, Renuart-Bailey-Cheely Labor Company, and Naranja Rock Company. Many of them donated supplies and labor. The club's board of directors dug the first shovels of dirt during the ground-breaking ceremony in early 1964. Typical of older Keys' architecture, the clubhouse design was Bahamian cottage, built among the now towering Wild Tamarind, Mahogany, and Gumbo Limbo trees on the property.

The first meeting in the new clubhouse was held September 1964 but the official dedication and public opening wasn't held until November 1964. Over 200 members and friends were present to celebrate the event. Several donations of furnishings and equipment were received, including tables from Arthur Miller in memory of his wife Alma, one of the original members. Each club member had been asked to purchase one chair for \$3.75, and 100 were purchased. After three years of extensive and creative money-raising efforts, the club had raised the \$8,000 to pay off the debt and received an official "Satisfaction of Mortgage." In

December 1967, for her 90th birthday, Francis Tracy lit the flame to burn the mortgage papers for the building named in her honor. Fund raising projects continued for several years thereafter for furnishings and developing the grounds.

In her 1966 "History of the Upper Keys Garden Club", she had said, "A garden club is not a money-making organization primarily, but building a club house seemed a worthwhile cause for the Keys as well as the club."

Keeping with that thought, the Upper Keys Garden Club (now Garden Club of the Upper Keys) continued to improve and expand the uses of the property. The club's archives show numerous flower shows, art shows, quilt shows, and design classes were held, often including other clubs in the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs. In 1968, the property was designated a Wild Bird Sanctuary. To this day the club continues to support the FL Keys Wild Bird Center with routine donations. In 2010, the gardens were declared a Peace Park by Keys for Peace, providing space for people to meditate and reflect on nature. A peace bell-- a painted, modified scuba tank-- hangs in the gardens.

The FTGC today looks pretty much as it did in 1964 as there have been no additions or major renovations. It started as a yellow building with white shutters and a white front door; it's now yellow with green shutters and fuchsia front door. A granite cornerstone, salvaged by Rodney Albury from the 1874 wreck of the Mohawk off a reef near Tavernier, was placed in the southeast side wall during construction. It contained, among other documents, the names of all the members who had help build the clubhouse. This time capsular would later be opened, reviewed, added to, and resealed in 2007 with the assistance of local historian Jerry Wilkinson.

The gardens at the FTGC have evolved over the years into a place of beauty under the supervision of numerous dedicated club members. Some of the native trees planted by the charter members now tower over the property. The most recent planting renovations were started in 2013 with the implementation of an updated property master plan. There are already over 50 species of plants and trees planted on the grounds, each identified with both a botanical and common name as well as country of origin. Pathways lead you into the different areas and to the front door, which originally was flanked by hibiscus filled trellises. There's the palm circle, with Spindle, Bottle, and Buccaneer palms. There's the succulent garden where full sun is available and another garden that butterflies can enjoy. Among the trees are benches to sit and enjoy the view. And there are native trees and bromeliads everywhere, providing shade and a truly tropical feel to the property.

Maintenance costs have risen as the building has aged. There have been new roofs, paneling, painting inside and out, carpeting, updated electrical system, flooring and appliances to name a few. The FTGC has been and is currently used by several other organizations who appreciate the beauty of the property and whose donations help offset maintenance costs. GCUK also hosts a popular Garden Walk every year, with part of the proceeds used to maintain the FTGC as a part of Upper Keys' history.

In November 2014, club members and invited guests will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the FTGC. It remains the center of Garden Club activities and Mayor Sylvia Murphy will present a proclamation by Monroe County to the GCUK recognizing its place in Upper Keys history. GCUK is proud to maintain its historical clubhouse and gardens, and it should be!

(Historical photos reprinted with permission of the Keynoter Publishing Company Inc.)

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By 1962, the Upper Keys Garden Club had grown to 60 members and needed larger meeting space. It's not documented exactly how the idea started, but a decision was made to build a clubhouse. In 1963, Dr. Fred Bond and his wife Margaret offered an acre parcel of property on State Road No. 5 (now Overseas Highway), a portion of tract C in Sunset Gardens, to be used for the new building. The Bonds stipulated that it be named the Francis Tracy Garden Center to honor long-time member Francis Tracy for her contributions to the Garden Club and her endeavors as the county's registered nurse. She was officially proclaimed "Angel of the Upper Keys" by the Florida Keys Clinic in 1957 and by settlers whose ailments, injuries and heartaches she had ministered for 30 years. Also stipulated was if the FTGC should cease to operate for Garden Club purposes, the land would revert to the grantors. Mildred "Millie" Gasser was the president at that time and the first of 30 presidents who have presided over the club and the clubhouse since its inception, maintaining and keeping it for future generations of members, residents and visitors.

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INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date:

JAN 03 2014

GARDEN CLUB OF THE UPPER KEYS INC
PO BOX 373
TAVERNIER, FL 33070-0373

Employer Identification Number:
46-1027108
DLN:
17053332429022
Contact Person:
MRS. KREBS ID# 31072
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
May 31
Public Charity Status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990 Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
August 31, 2012
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
No

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined that you are a public charity under the Code section(s) listed in the heading of this letter.

Please see enclosed Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Sincerely,



Director, Exempt Organizations

Enclosure: Publication 4221-PC