

| FALL EDITION |

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KEY WEST'S

# Pat CROCE



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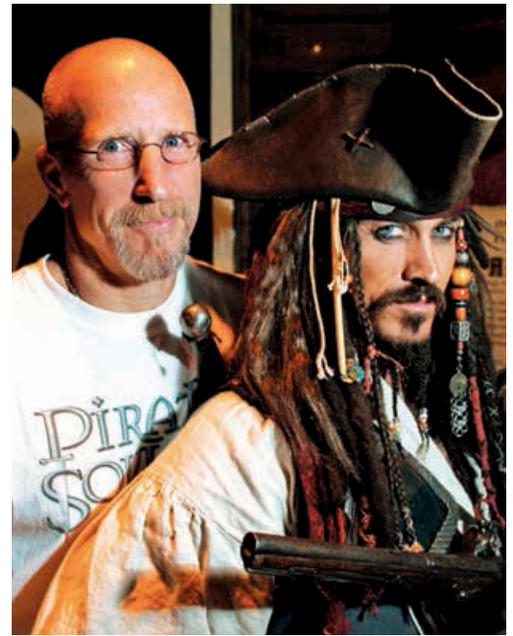
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ABOUT THE COVER

Pat Croce, left, poses with in-house pirate Johnny O'Kelly inside his Pirate and Treasure Museum of St. Augustine, Florida.

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| Photo by Rob O'Neal |



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COVER STORY

## PAT CROCE

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A top-down photograph of a forest floor. The ground is covered with a dense layer of brown, dried leaves and twigs. Several bright green apples are scattered throughout the scene. In the lower-left and lower-right areas, numerous small, dark ants are visible, some clustered around the apples. A single, thin, light-colored stick or twig runs vertically down the right side of the frame. The overall lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the textures of the forest debris.

# SHADY CHARACTERS

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LIFE AND DEATH IN THE  
HARDWOOD HAMMOCK FOREST

*by Karuna Eberl*





# A WALK IN THE WOODS REALLY RESTORES YOUR HEART AND SPIRIT

~ Kristie Killam



“Sea grapes are under-appreciated,” says Kristie Killam. She’s nearly sprinting down the trail, darting around puddles from the recent afternoon downpour. She’s said a lot of interesting things on this hike, like white-crowned pigeons feed their young with milk made from poisonwood berries. But the sea grape quote was the only one I was able to write down legibly, while ducking branches and trying to keep pace.

Killam works as the sole park ranger for the Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuges Complex. She’s agreed to show me the world’s deadliest tree, just a 7-minute walk through the hardwood hammock on No Name Key. Back in 1521 a Calusa warrior dipped his arrow in its poison, before delivering a fatal shot to Ponce de León, or so historians speculate. The manchineel, a.k.a. arbol de la muerte, or tree of death, is just one of dozens of native Keys trees with an alluring and often preposterous story to tell.

Elsewhere in the Keys lives the manchineel’s heroic counterpart, whose name translates to “tree of life.” Wood from the vibrant, purple-flowered lignum vitae was used to craft the Holy Grail and Merlin’s wand, or so wrote 15th-century scholars. Lignum vitae was more provably used to ease a slew of ailments, from gout to tuberculosis. Curing Columbus’ syphilis was its greatest downfall. The marauder began its export to Europe. Commercial demand rapidly grew for the ultra-dense, waterproof, self-lubricating wood, and it was soon used in everything from propeller bearings to billy clubs.

| **Previous Page Spread:** Manchineel (*hippomane mancinella*) is highly poisonous, but can be easily identified by its green, crab apple size fruit. A close look at the leaves shows tiny barbs or points around the edges. It grows in the Key Deer and other Keys wildlife refuges. Touching any part of it can cause blistering. It’s also not a good idea to eat it, burn it, or take shelter under it in the rain. **Opposite Page:** Seagrapes (*coccoloba uvifera*) have unmistakable big, round leaves which are great for writing love letters on, explains Robin Robinson with a sly smile. Robinson is an award-winning author and past president of Key West Garden Club. Sea grape trees also provide vital shade and windbreak for houses and wildlife. The grapes themselves are enjoyed by birds and people alike, straight off the vine or as jelly and wine |

| Photos by *Karuna EBERL* |



| **Above:** The strangler fig (*ficus aurea*) dates back to prehistoric times. Over all of those years its developed one of the strangest pollination systems. A specific species of female wasp crawls into the figs to lay eggs and die. Once the queen's eggs hatch, the male wasp chews a hole to the fig's exterior, not for their own escape, but rather to create an opening for the females to exit. The females will pollinate another fig as queens. The strangler fig's nooks, crannies, caves, and root canopy make homes for thousands of other forms of life, from birds to insects, lizards and frogs |

It sounds exceptionally melodramatic, having trees of life and death growing here and there. But in fact, those two are just the understory of a far greater tale. In the Keys every native tree is literally a matter of life and death, explains Killam. Florida Keys trees and bushes are unique because most of them use berries for seeds, not pods. The berries provide food for hundreds of species of local and migrating birds, reptiles, and our few mammals - not to mention the importance of their flowers to the bees, wasps, butterflies, moths and other pollinators. All trees also harbor hundreds of different small insects, which make for a nutritious meal.



“Migratory birds start their northward-bound migration as far away as South America and can travel hundreds and hundreds of miles to northern latitudes,” says Killam, still walking in full stride. On cue, two white-crowned pigeons flap through the forest. These shy birds spend part of their year here, and migrate south. They survive primarily on the berries of the poisonwood, and also dine on the fruits of sea grapes, bolly and shortleaf and strangler figs.

Besides overhunting in the Caribbean, the white-crowned pigeons’ main struggle for survival is diminishing habitat from development. Fortunately, this is something humans here can actually help with. Key West tree and bird champion Fran Ford went so far as to create a Key West poisonwood park and pigeon preserve. While most people probably won’t want to plant something so toxic in their yards, any native tree or shrub can make a huge environmental impact for the pigeons, as well as the songbirds and butterflies.

“What kind of plants you have dictate what animals can survive,” says Killam. “Almost no creatures use the non-native royal poinciana for something other than a perch and hundreds that use the gumbo limbo or strangler fig. If you have a choice, consider adding natives. Even one tree can make a difference to a bird making it back up north or dying along the way.”

We arrive at the manchineel tree. Actually, I walk straight past it before Killam points it out. It’s surprisingly unassuming. The leaves look just about like most others in the canopy. Despite its name, no one’s actually died from the manchineel in recent history, but every part of it can cause one’s skin to burn and blister. Should a branch brush across one’s face, temporary blindness is likely. It’s so toxic, many experts say don’t even breathe near it, and definitely don’t stand under it in the rain. But here next to the trail, it looks like any other plant just doing what it needs to survive.



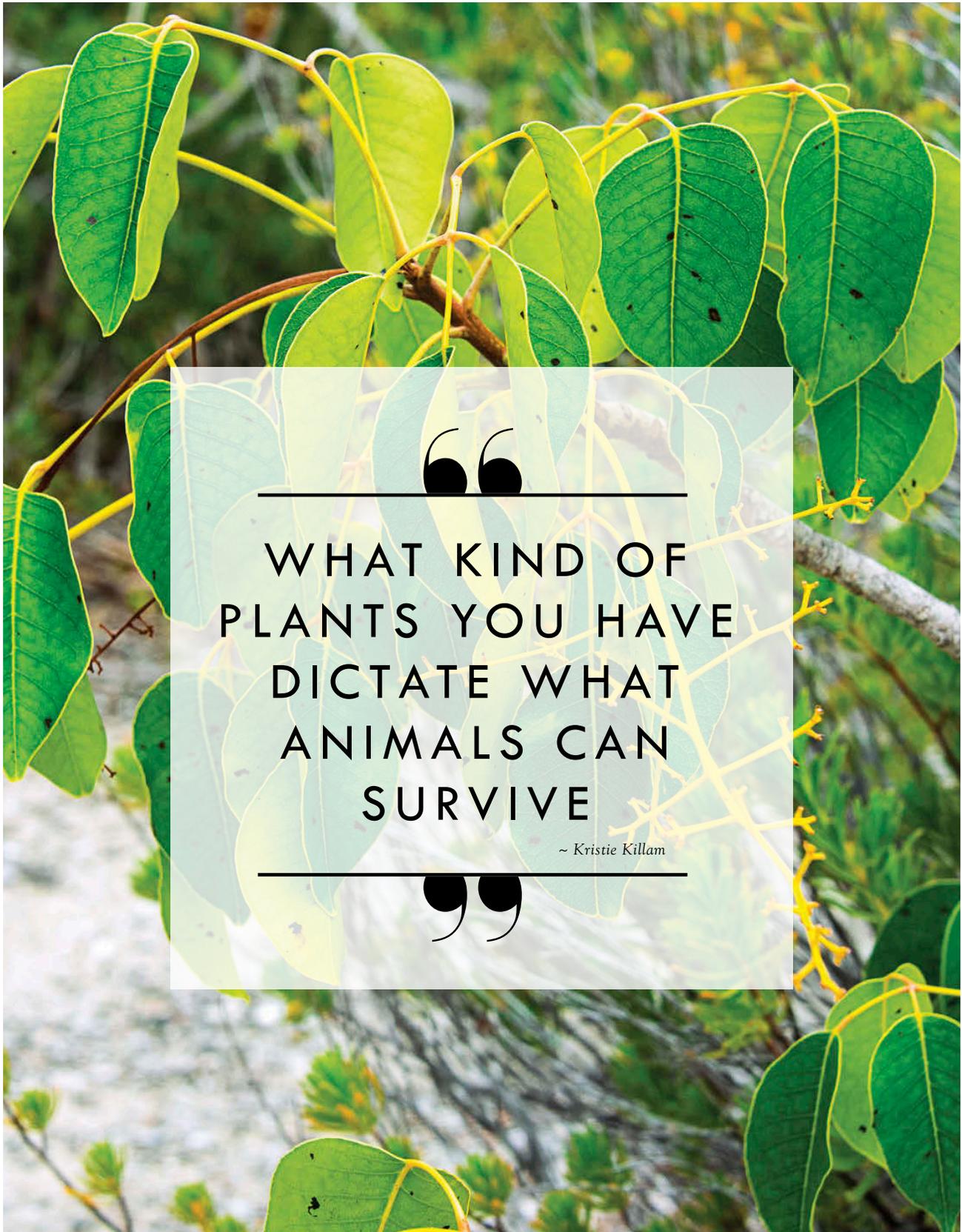


The pigeons don't seem to eat the manchineel. I'm not sure if anyone knows if that's because of its poison, or because the fruits are simply too big to swallow. Not much is known to eat it, except possibly iguanas. But then again, not much is known about it at all. Some of the chemical compounds in its poison can't even be identified. Like the lignum vitae, it's nearly extinct in Florida; though it has yet to be studied enough to realize its purpose in the native ecosystem or the pharmaceutical wonders it may hold.

What we do know, though, is that sea grapes are definitely underrated. As we walk back to the road, we talk about how how most trees are under-appreciated. They give life not just to birds, but to everything on the planet.

Killam stops and points up at a particularly tall slash pine, hiding amongst its leafier cohorts in the forest. As she stares at it, she whispers. "Trees are also important to people's souls. A walk in the woods really restores your heart and spirit." 

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“  
WHAT KIND OF  
PLANTS YOU HAVE  
DICTATE WHAT  
ANIMALS CAN  
SURVIVE

~ Kristie Killam

”

| **Opposite Page:** SilverPalm (*Coccothrinax argentata*) A particularly graceful stand of silver palm greets visitors traveling on the Overseas Highway at Bahia Honda. It's not just the unusual silver color under the leaves that make this tree so beloved. Its berries are coveted by many birds, its flowers by bees, and its fronds by everything it shades from the sun. While many species of palm are native to the Florida Keys, surprisingly enough the iconic coconut palm is not | **Above:** Poisonwood (*Metopium toxiferum*) is like poison ivy but 100 times more potent. To the threatened white-crowned pigeon, however, its berries are a vital meal. Poisonwood is found on most trails here, often flourishing in ground disturbed by development. Its droopy leaves can have black spots, which help in identification |

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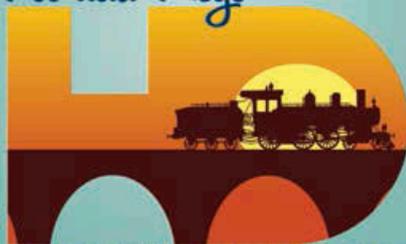
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DIVERS BRING TO LIGHT THE TRAGEDY,  
and bright side, of a sunken *pirate slave ship*.

# *unshackling* a shadowy

# past

*As dawn broke over the water, Captain Grover awoke to an incredible sight. A ship lay on its side, dashed into the reef. More than 600 people were hanging from the rigging, struggling to stay alive. As fortune had it, this situation was Grover's specialty. As a wrecker, his job was to save lives and cargo.*

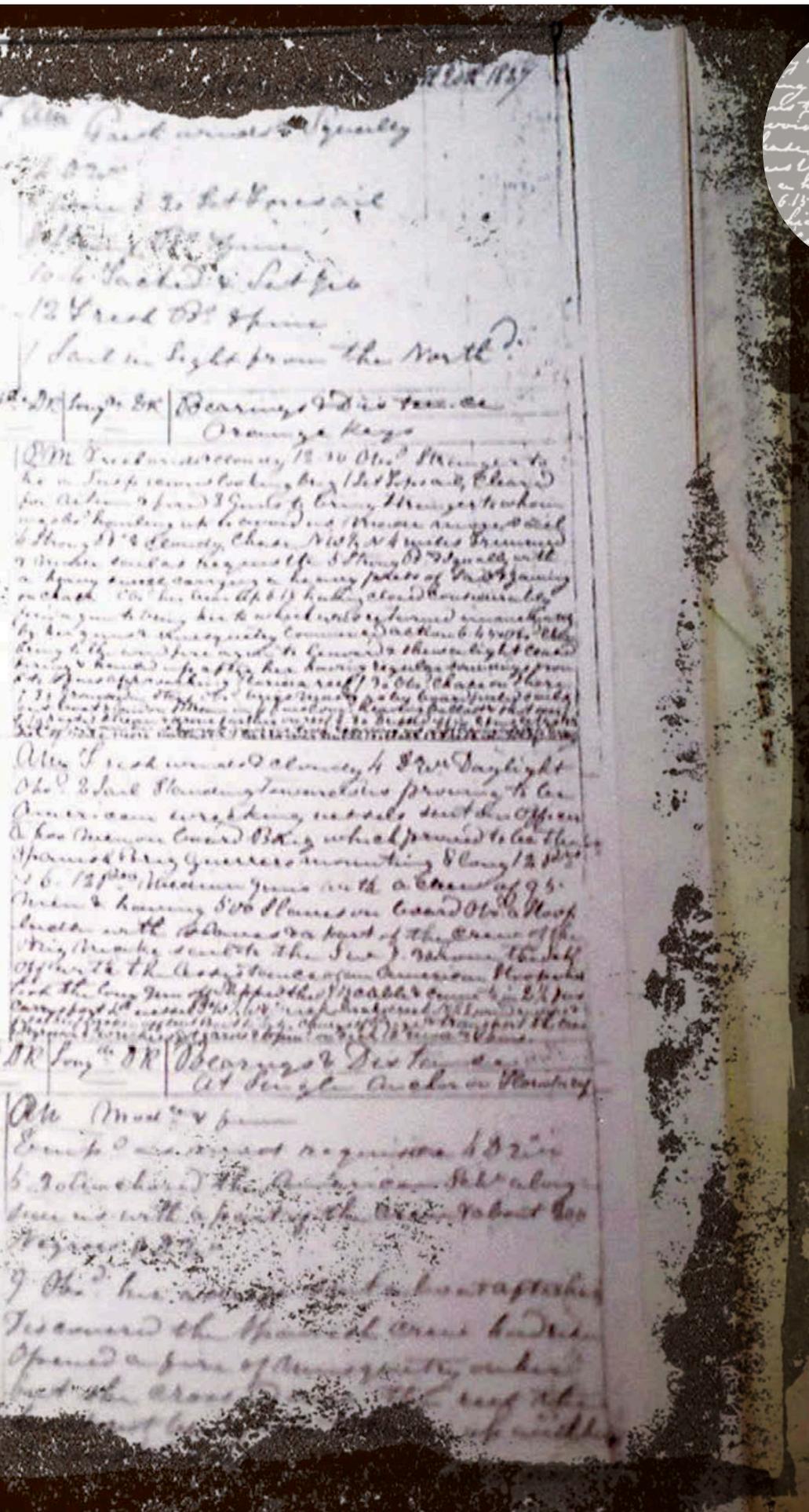
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by *Karuna* EBERL

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The

rover rushed to the scene and soon realized it was a slave ship. The Spanish brig Guerrero held 561 Africans and 90 crew.

A couple miles away rested the British warship Nimble, stranded but intact. Both ships had struck near Carysfort Reef off the Upper Keys.

It was December of 1827. Though slavery was legal, the slave trade had been banned for two decades. The Guerrero's captain Jose Gomez didn't care. There was still a lot of money in it. And after thousands of miles at sea, he had been almost home free. The slave markets of Cuba were just 250 miles away.

During this time, the British policed the Florida Straits for illegal slave ships, like the Guerrero. So the day before, when the Nimble's captain Lt. Edward Holland spotted Gomez, the chase was on. The two ships raced west through the Florida Straits. Though the weather turned rough, the Nimble caught the Guerrero at dusk. A firefought erupted. Both ships drifted toward the reef. Then, to Holland's surprise, Gomez held up a lantern to signal surrender. The Nimble ceased fire. But Gomez was lying. He hoisted his sails in a last-ditch escape attempt. It didn't work. Fifteen minutes later, the Guerrero hit the reef with such force the hull tore open and both masts broke. Forty-one prisoners died. The Nimble's crew said the screams crossed two miles of ocean.

Fearing the same fate, Holland ordered his men to change the sails. But moments later he heard the gut-wrenching sound of his own hull dragging along the reef. The crew threw ballast and cannon balls overboard to try to free the ship, but it was to no avail. They were stranded.

Left: Lt. Edward Holland detailed the tragic events of December 19, 1827 in his captain's log. He was just 26 when his ship, the Nimble, ran aground while pursuing the illegal slave ship Guerrero.

“You  
can  
imagine  
the  
captain’s  
thinking  
at the  
time,”

says historian Gail Swanson, who first discovered the story and ardently pieced it together from scattered, dusty archives. “Lt. Holland’s duty was to save the people on the ship from a lifetime of slavery in the Cuban fields. In doing that, he accidentally ran them to their doom off the waters of Key Largo, and he could do nothing to assist them. His ship could not sail.”

Around 20 years ago, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary divers armed with Swanson’s research took up the search for this piece of sunken history. Their effort was then joined by Corey Malcom, Director of Archaeology for the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage

Society, RPM Nautical Foundation, as well as archaeologists from Biscayne National Park and divers from the non-profits National Association of Black Scuba Divers and Diving With a Purpose, a mostly African-American group who actively help document Florida Keys shipwrecks.

“There’s a lot of significance tied up in this,” says National Park Service archaeologist Chuck Lawson, who’s been spearheading the search in Biscayne for the last seven years. “No archaeologist is going to sit here and be responsible for this stretch of water and not want to find this shipwreck. It fills in the gaps of the triangle trade and a history that was taken from people.”

Indeed, many historians agree that the Middle Passage, or slave trade, is a piece of world history vital to understanding who we are as a society today. It’s a piece that gets only a cursory glance in history books, perhaps because the story is so overwhelming. An estimated 15 million Africans became slaves in the New World. For every one who reached here, six times as many died between capture, internment, and the ocean journey. That puts estimates at 90 million for the total number of Africans killed and enslaved from the 1500s through the 1800s. Some hope the 41 who died aboard the Guerrero might help us to decipher this behemoth concept.

“The enormity of the [Middle Passage] becomes surreal,” says Capt. William Pinkney, former master of the Freedom Schooner Amistad educational vessel. “It loses its significance in the way we’re able to digest it in our minds. But if we can focus on smaller-range disasters, our brains can wrap around that.”

Tragically, the saga of the 41 ended at the reef, but when the wrecker Grover arrived he began to rescue the 520 survivors. Women and children were first, loaded onto a fishing boat that headed toward Key West. More survivors, along with pirate captain Gomez and his crew filled Grover’s vessel. Anticipating Gomez’s ruthlessness, Holland ordered all weapons thrown overboard. But when Grover’s crew gathered for dinner, Gomez snuck out, cut the anchor line, hoisted the sails, and headed for Cuba.

The next morning, the Nimble and another wrecker with survivors set sail for Key West. Surprisingly, it was four days later when Grover and the fishing boat



by Brenda Altmeier, FKNMS



by Matthew Lawrence, ONMS



by Corey Malcom



by Corey Malcom



by Susanna Pershern, Submerged Resources Center, NPS



by Corey Malcom



Photo by Don Kincaid



by Corey Malcom

by Dylan Kibler





arrived to port, both with no Africans on board, but plenty of tales of hijacking. In all, just 121 of the 561 Africans made it to Key West. Despite the wreckers' heroic efforts, many suspected foul play. The wreckers would get no money in Key West from a cargo of people. As such, Cuba might have been tempting. The true story may never be known. Holland, however, had problems of his own. The customs collector was demanding payment for the salvage. Fearing the loss of a British warship to the wreckers, Holland pulled anchor in the night and left the Africans in the hands of the Conchs.

In 1827 Key West was the only colonial settlement south of St. Augustine. The town of just 500 residents struggled with the influx of new guests, many of whom were ill. The Africans surely struggled as well. They had endured capture, internment in African slave camps, a pirate raid at sea, a 4,000 mile journey in a disease-ridden hold, a fierce gun battle, and a violent shipwreck. Now stranded in Key West, they could communicate with no one.

Soon rumors spread that Gomez was arming a ship in Havana to raid Key West for the rest of his human cargo. The town rolled out cannons and put the militia on 24-hour watch. The attack never came, but over the next three months Key West's deputy marshal faced numerous threats and bribes from people trying to take possession of the Africans. Unable to ensure their safety, he sent them to St. Augustine. It is here that the Africans' entwinement with the Keys ends. The rest is an equally enthralling tale, best left for another day.

Today, most agree the Guerrero lies somewhere near the boundary of the southern edge of Biscayne National Park and the National Marine Sanctuary. Malcom, who also oversees the archaeology of the Henrietta Marie slave ship on display at the Fisher Museum, has recovered a number of artifacts he strongly believes are from the Guerrero and Nimble.

"Everything fits," he says, "it's just the issue that there's nothing with a name on it so it's tough to say with 100-percent certainty."

Thanks to a new National Park Service funding initiative designed to advance the understanding of African American history in our parks, this summer

Chuck Lawson's team in Biscayne is undertaking a massive survey of the southern end of the park. So far they have two potential sites, but he, too, stresses the difficulty of absolute identification.

"We all hope that we find it because this is one of the most important historical stories that Biscayne National Park would have to share if it's here," he says, adding that it's still a win even if they don't find it. "This search is without a doubt going to substantially enlighten the archaeological knowledge and historical record of the park."

FKNMS, Malcom and Lawson all intend to keep up the search until such time as the Guerrero is identified with absolute certainty. Most likely it will be in sidestep with the tireless volunteer efforts of the Diving With a Purpose team, who have been instrumental with keeping everyone's enthusiasm at its peak.

"Any archaeology, any history helps put our modern lives into perspective," says Malcom. The more we can do to bring awareness to [the Middle Passage], the better understanding people will have of why things are the way they are today. With sites like the Guerrero, you can make it a physical thing and no longer an abstraction. You know those stories happened for real, and that's where the power is in archaeology."

For more information on the history of the Guerrero, try [www.theguerrero.org](http://www.theguerrero.org).

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Diving with a Purpose members have been searching for the Guerrero for 14 years. They've helped document many other shipwrecks in the Keys, including the Acorn and Hanna M. Bell | by Matthew Lawrence, ONMS

**PHOTOS FROM PAGE 21**

**Top Row:** The iron shot conservation was excavated from the suspected grounding site of the Nimble | 1820s-era blue-edged pearlware dish fragment. Guerrero and Nimble artifacts are on display at the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Museum | A member of Diving With a Purpose examines an anchor believed to be from the Nimble

**Middle Row:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration researchers look for magnetic anomalies that might indicate a shipwreck | National Park Service archeologists Chuck Lawson and Josh Morano document cultural remains in Biscayne National Park | Iron ballast ingots are believed to be from the site of the Nimble's grounding. The crew threw such objects overboard while struggling to free the ship from the reef

**Bottom Row:** Diving With a Purpose co-founder Ken Stewart observes the work of lead instructor Kamau Sadiki as he draws a sketch | Iron shots located in last two images are now on display in the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Museum



# get CULTURED

by Sarah GOODWIN | Photos by Brian BASHAM



THIS EDITION:

## CARIBBEAN QUEEN *Junkanoos*



**COLORFUL, JOYFUL JUNKANOO.** At carnivals throughout the Caribbean and South America, flamboyant junkanoo bands create a sound sure to make listeners' hips want to wiggle. In Key West, revelers enjoy junkanoo bands every October at the Goombay Festival in Bahama Village. A “goombay” is a traditional Bahamian goatskin drum, and the festival honors the island's rich Bahamian history.

Key West's own African-Caribbean percussion band, the Caribbean Queen Junkanoos, love to join in the fun. Unmistakable in their bright costumes festooned with long feathers, these vibrant performers embody the festival's celebratory spirit. They're the perfect complement to Key West's 10-day costume party, Fantasy Fest.

| **Opposite Page:** Carrie Groomes of Key West puts on the headpiece of her traditional Caribbean Junkanoo outfit before the Island Heritage Festival parade | **Above Top:** Members of the Caribbean Queen Junkanoos in their bright costumes festooned with long feathers parade through Key West | **Bottom:** The Caribbean Queen Junkanoos head up Duval Street during the Island Heritage Festival |





The tradition of junkanoo traces back to holiday parades of Africa. Most folklorists agree the word “junkanoo” evokes the name “John Canoe,” or “January Conny.” In some traditions, he’s an African prince or a tribal chieftain. Others say he was a Gold Coast merchant, some say a mercenary soldier. Our hero seems to have led an army and overthrown a fort, then used diplomacy to secure the right of slaves to celebrate a traditional holiday, which took place on or near what the British call “Boxing Day.” The slaves donned masks and costumes and made music using simple, homemade instruments. What we know for sure, then and now, junkanoo brings everyone out to hear the joyful noise.

To hear a sample of Key’s junkanoo tradition at its purest, look for a recording called “Key West—Junkanoo Band,” released by Folkway Records in 1964, available in vinyl, as a CD or an MP3. The album features the Lofton “Coffee” Junkanoo Band, who played bells, claves, maracas, a conga drum and a musical saw. They chanted songs called “Conch Ain’t Got No Bones,” “Sponger Money,” “Sapodilly Limbo,” and “Sarah Lend Me Your Pigeon.”

Caroline Cash, founder of the Caribbean Queen Junkanoos, explains how she became involved with junkanoo. “My father raced sailboats, and I spend a lot of time in Nassau growing up. There, I fell in love with Calypso. The first instrument I played was a ukulele, then I graduated to guitar. In the early 60’s, I was in my early 20’s, and folk was all the rage, so my early musical career was mostly folk.”

“I’d heard junkanoo before, loved it, and I was thrilled to find a junkanoo band in Key West when I started coming here. Nobody seemed to care that I was a white woman, so I started playing with them sometimes.”

Cash smiles at the memory. “These men were amazing musicians, but they didn’t have time to focus on the business aspects of the band. Most of ‘em didn’t even own telephones. So I took on the role of booking agent. If I found us a gig, I would have to go into the neighborhood where most of these guys lived, which at the time was rather dangerous, and try to find them to tell them we had work.” Cash chuckles. “We never knew how many musicians would actually show up for a job.”

At first, according to Cash, the men were happy to get more gigs. Then, some new members complained Cash’s presence smacked of what we now call cultural appropriation, junkanoo, as a tradition, being predominantly male and black. In the end, Cash was phased out of the band.

Cash sighs. “None of ‘em had the heart to just kick me out. They knew I loved performing the music, wearing the costumes. Eventually, they sort of faded away, and I didn’t see anyone else in the Keys carrying on the tradition. So I decided to start my own junkanoo band. We’ve been performing now 15 years!”

*“We never knew how many musicians would actually show up for a job” - Caroline Cash*



Junkanoo music varies island to island. Cash's group plays instruments with names like Nassau woman bells, Samba whistle, djun djun bah, triple tongue double man bells, and djembe. Naturally, some blow conch shell horns. Sometimes, stilt walkers (moko jumbies) join the procession. Occasionally, the procession includes members of the Brothers of the Royal Tribe from the African Village of Oyotunji, near Sheldon, South Carolina, where Cash spends summers. They add their traditional style of junkanoo to the celebration.

"I've got plenty of talent on tap," says Cash to anyone interested in hiring the band for parties, weddings, festivals, or even funerals. The group can even lead a funeral procession with a dirge to the cemetery, then play something uplifting and joyous after the interment to escort the group to the wake. For such solemn occasions, band members dress all in white, the ceremonial African color for mourning.

For anyone assuming Caroline Cash is the Caribbean Queen in the band's name, she gently corrects them. "Caribbean Queen was a popular song by Billy Ocean in the 80's. I really loved that song. I just thought it would be a fun name for the band." 

**Left:** A Caribbean Queen Junkanoo member on stilts is part of the junkanoo celebration.

**Opposite Page:** A colorful, feathered Junkanoo drummer walks through Bahama Village in Key West. The original music of junkanoo in the Bahamas was played with goombay goatskin drums, cowbells, conch shell horns (later replaced by bicycle horns), and whistles.



Left: "Koral," is the resident mermaid who lives at Hawks Cay Resort.

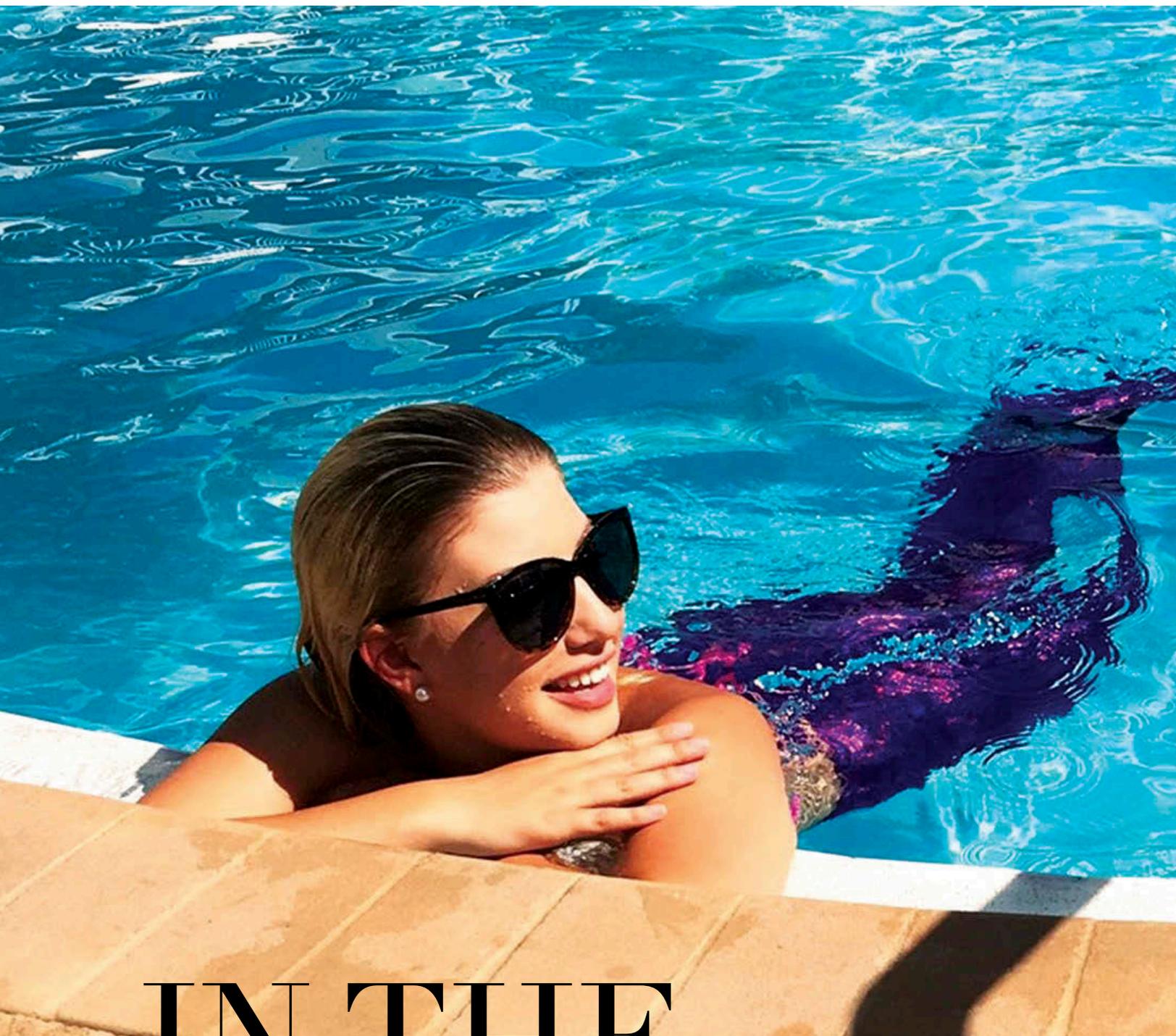


# M er m a i d S

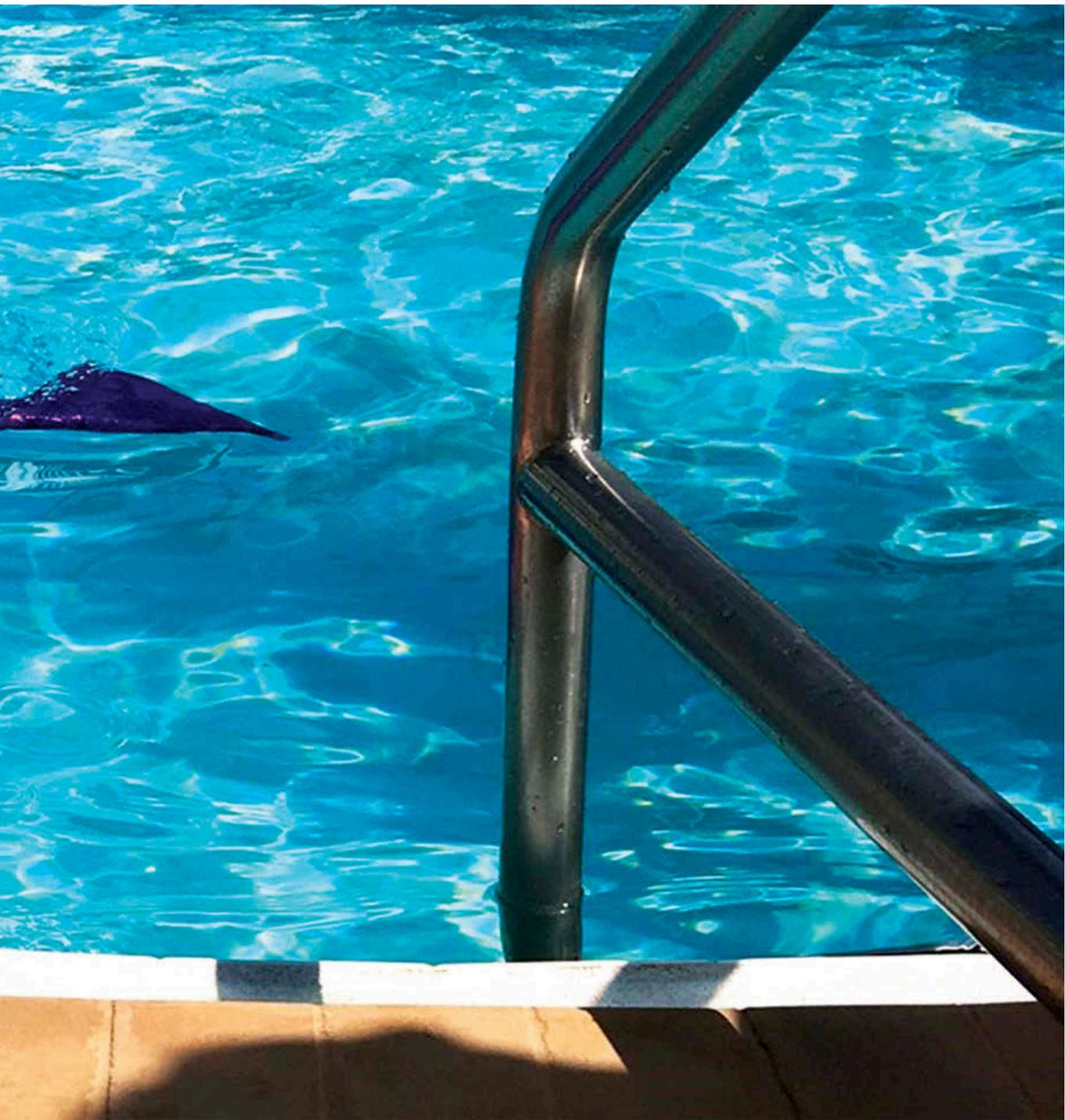
**+PIRATES AND DOLPHINS**  
AT HAWKS CAY RESORT

BY SARAH GOODWIN

| Photo Contributed |



# IN THE *Florida Keys,*



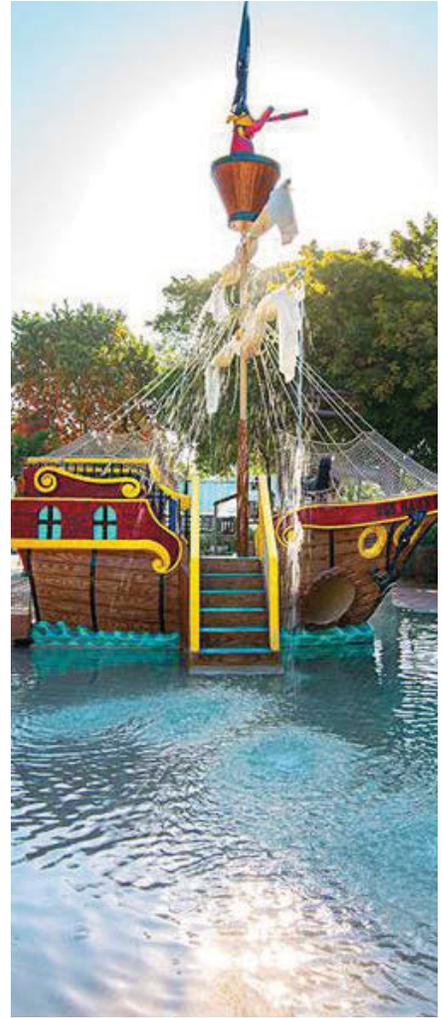
**Left:** The Mermaid Experience at Hawks Cay brings the mystical and magical creatures to life.

kids don't do princess parties, theme park rides, or magicians. For our little island-hoppers, it's all about mermaids, pirates and dolphins. Luckily, your budding marine biologist can experience all these at Hawks Cay Resort in Duck Key.

This family-friendly, 4-star resort features five giant pools, one just for adults, a luxurious spa, restaurants, and plenty of activities. The West-Indies inspired decor of the rooms and villas evoke feelings of shady, breezy peace. Light woods accent the furniture, and muted greens and yellows bathe the spaces in lazy afternoon - hues. Beyond it all lies the tranquil blue of the ocean.



| Photos Contributed |



This is the perfect place to have a Mermaid Experience. If you've never heard of the Mermaid Experience, you must not have kids. Recently, it's become a fixture at family-oriented Florida resorts, and in some parts of the state, you can even rent a mermaid or merman for house-parties. The merfolk entertain, tell stories, and swim with the kids. Guests can even purchase their own mermaid tail directly from the resort.

Meet "Koral," resident mermaid who lives at the Hawks Cay Resort in Duck Key. Watch her swim like a dream in the resort's saltwater lagoon, her blue tail swishing gracefully behind her, her white hair flowing softly. She's so much more than pretty, though. This mermaid sings, entertains, reads, swims with the guests, and even instructs adult aqua yoga classes.

Koral's backstory is a salty tale of woe and redemption. Poor Koral became entangled in ocean debris, but just when she thought herself doomed, Captain Hawk, the resort's charming resident pirate, untangled her and set her free. Now, Koral serves as a luminous, living reminder of why people must not litter. Koral loves children, and enjoys helping people reach their wellness goals.

Sheldon Suga, Managing Director of Hawks Cay Resort, explains. "The Mermaid Experience debuted this Memorial Day at the resort. Kids love it because it's so very interactive. I think for most guests, their favorite part is the photo sessions. It's a memory the whole family will look at for years to come."

If your kids are too old and too cool to want to play with mermaids, Hawks Cay also offers them a chance to go eye-to eye with live dolphins. That's right, Hawks Cay is the only hotel in mainland United States with its own trained dolphins! Adults and older children can interact with a pod of playful, intelligent Atlantic Bottlenose dolphins and their handlers. Choose either the 25-minute Dolphin Discovery, or a three-hour long, intensive Dolphin Trainer for a Day. Those too young, too old, or not interested in swimming can get a session of interacting with the dolphins dock side, as long as they don't mind getting splashed. Staff photographers catch magic moments throughout each session.

Suga sums it up nicely: "At Hawks Cay, we live to create unique, memorable experiences for our guests." 

| **Left and Above:** Guests get to interact with dolphins dockside at Hawks Cay for either a 25-minute or a three-hour long, intensive session |  
 | **Above:** Mermaids practice flipping their tails in the resort lagoon | The pirate ship pool is part of the unique attractions of the resort |



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305-451-0565  
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79867 Overseas Hwy  
mm 79.9 Oceanside  
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[LazyDaysRestaurant.com](http://LazyDaysRestaurant.com)  
*Reservations Recommended*

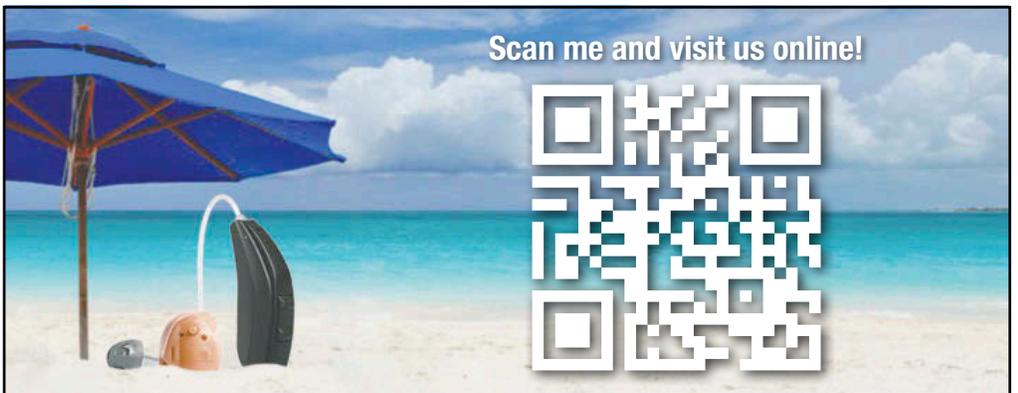
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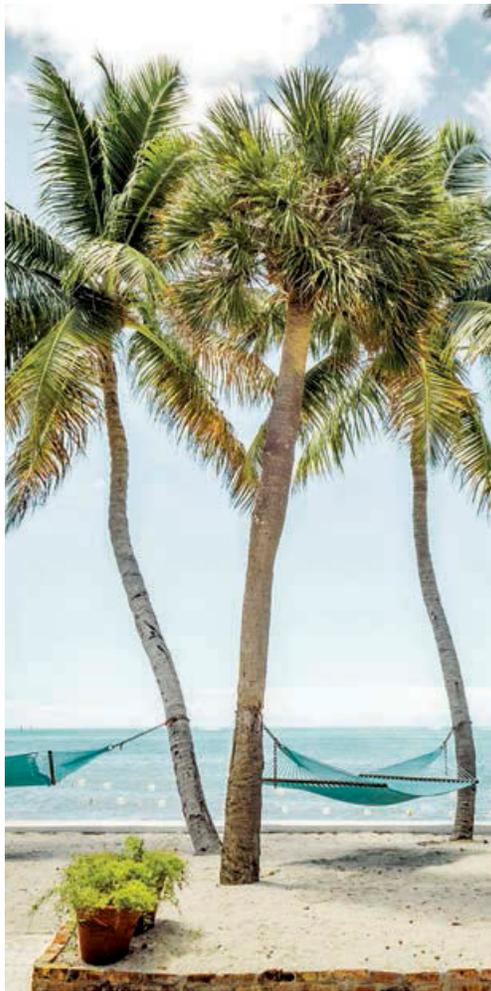
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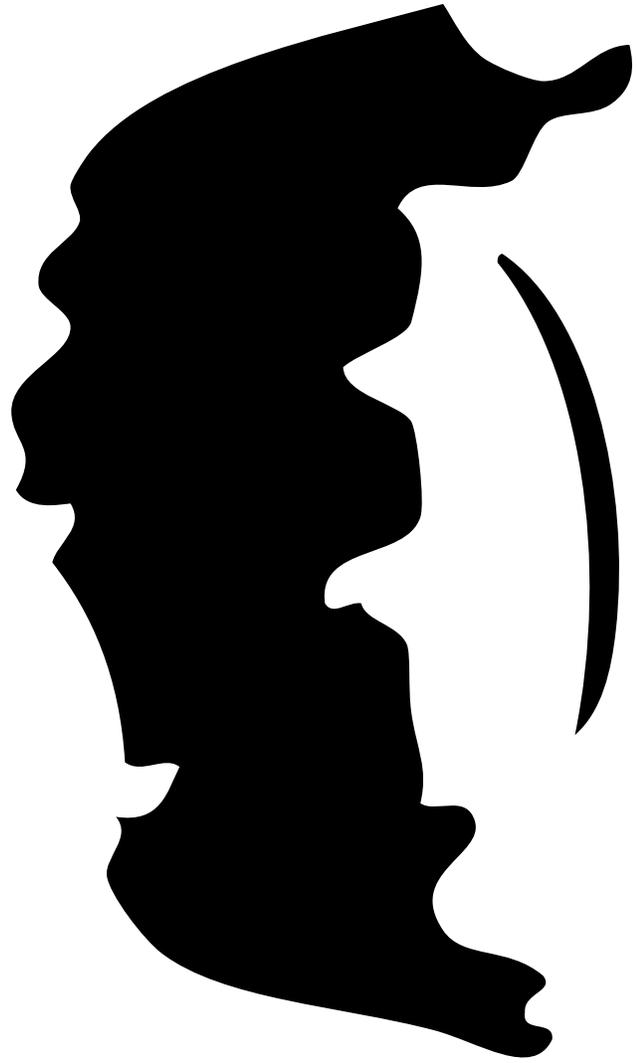
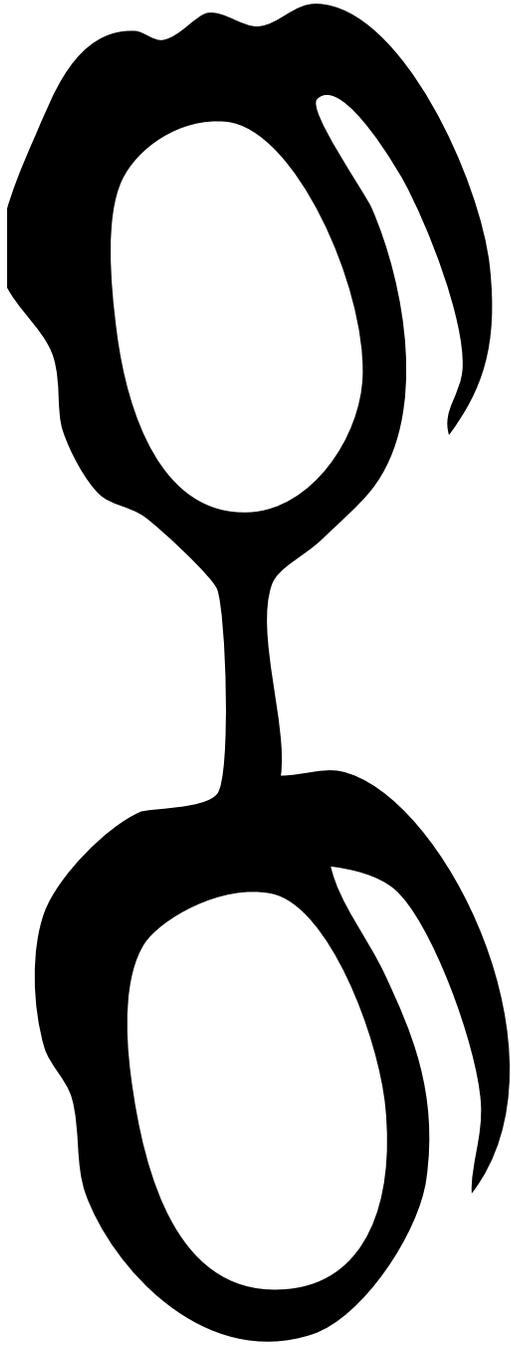
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# PAT CROOCE

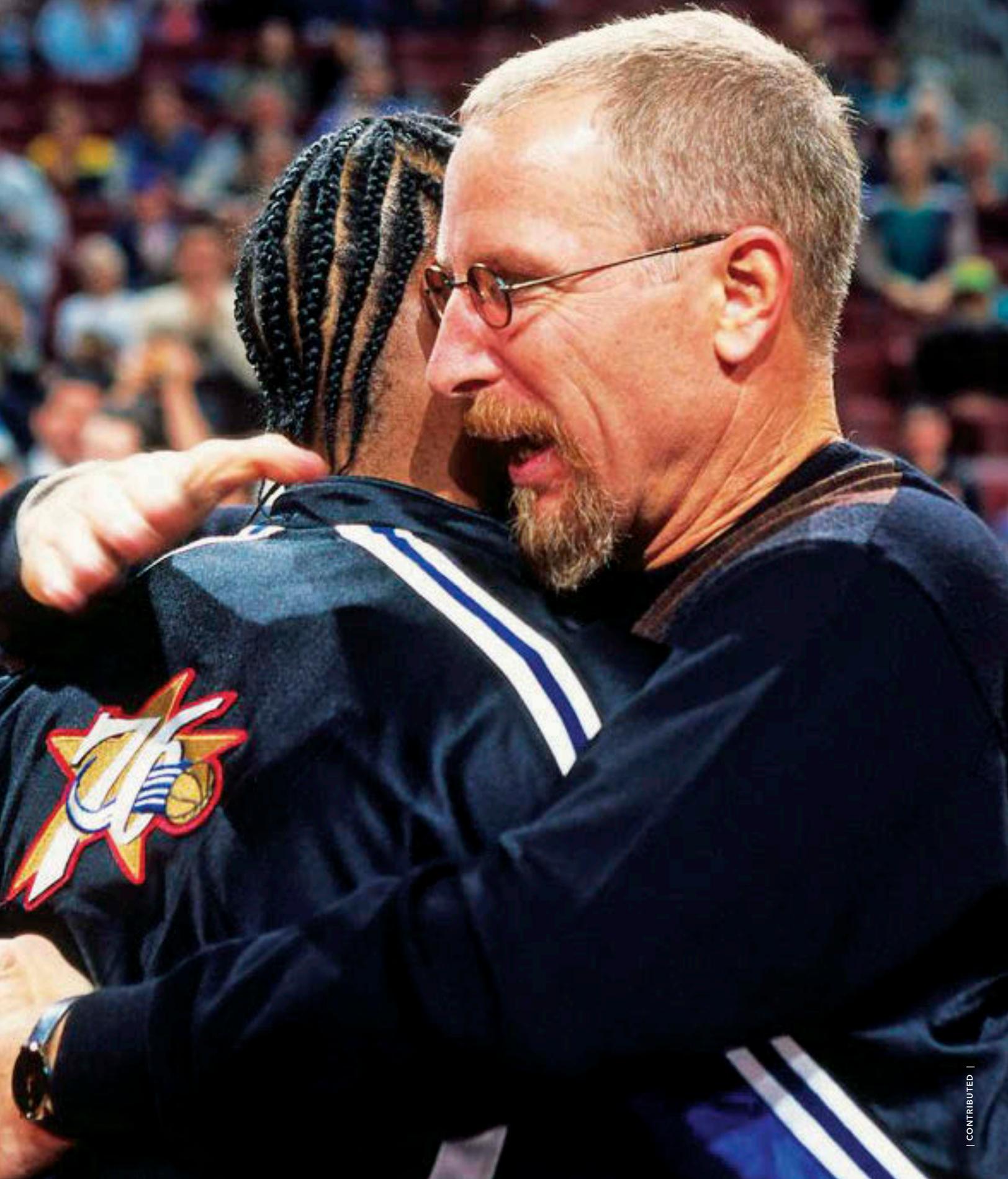
A PIRATE'S SOUL AT PEACE

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BY KAY HARRIS

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Below: Philadelphia 76ers  
Team President, Pat Croce  
hugs Allen Iverson #3 of the  
Philadelphia 76ers circa 2000  
at the first Union Arena in  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania





# IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY,

Pat Croce is perhaps best known as the emotional and charismatic former president and owner of the Philadelphia 76'ers, credited with launching the career of NBA great Allen Iverson and putting the team on a championship track. ✦

J

ustifiably proud of his promotion from the training room to the head office, Croce could have retired on those laurels alone, but much like a perpetual motion machine, the man is a whirlwind of activity, conquering all in his path like warriors of old. However, rather than conquering armies, Croce is far more interested in conquering personal goals, from his black belt in Taekwondo to his vision of a knighthood after searching for Sir Francis Drake.

But here in the Keys, Pat Croce is better known as a neighbor, friend, entrepreneur, ambassador -- and occasional pirate.

It was his fascination with pirates at an early age, inspired by Errol Flynn's performance in "Captain Blood," that set Croce on his collision course with destiny.

A move to Key West after his retirement from the 76'ers led to the creation and purchase of several landmark restaurants and bars, including the Green Parrot, Charlie Mac's, Turtle Kraals, and Half Shell. But the move also allowed him to pour his pirate soul into his Pirate Museum, which, alas, did not fare well in the Southernmost City.

Croce had to make the painful but intelligent decision to move the museum to St. Augustine near the historic fort in 2010, enabling him to reach a broader audience of pirate enthusiasts and allowing him to connect with the state's curators, who allowed him unfettered access to secret vaults under the Capital in Tallahassee.

"It was unbelievable. They basically told me to take whatever I needed for the museum. It's a collection of artifacts that's second to none."

Today, the successful and unique St. Augustine Pirate and Treasure Museum that Croce says is best described as "Smithsonian meets Disney," houses some of his private collection in addition to the state treasures, including an extremely rare authentic Jolly Roger flag and a treasure chest belonging to pirate Thomas Tew.

Explaining the difference between pirates such as Tew or Blackbeard and privateers such as Sir Francis Drake, Croce explains, "The different between a pirate and a privateer was one stroke of a pen. That's it. That letter from a marquis would turn a pirate into a privateer for the realm, giving them 20 percent of their 'booty' in exchange for the crown's protection."

In return, the privateers also served as unofficial fleets in the frequent battles on the high seas.

His fascination with Drake led him to purchase copies of his diaries and to dive off the coast of Panama in search of Drake's legendary burial place. Alas, no sign of the 16th Century nobleman's body was found, dashing Croce's hope of his own knighthood for bringing Drake back to his English homeland.

But an insatiable curiosity and an even more insatiable appetite for life brought Croce to a different recognition in January 2015, right after his 60th birthday.

It could only have been fate that led him on his new path, and in the mysterious ways of the universe, it happened on the porch of his own establishment, the Green Parrot, where Pat Croce's life was turned upside down in the most innocent of ways - through the arrival of a book.

"I was sitting there with a friend by the little free library, where people bring books to share, and a woman had just dropped off a number of books. I picked one up, and it was the Dalai Lama's 'Art of Happiness,' he says.

The book hit him like lightning bolts tend to do but rather than shaking him up, it calmed him down. Really, really calmed him down and turned his focus from being a driven Type A personality into a peaceful, meditative, Zen, happy and centered human being, at one with the world and understanding an entirely different kind of strength.

“That book led to many OTHERS, and I came to know the deep essence of who I AM.”



Left: (Top photo) Pat Croce poses at the entrance to his Pirate's Soul museum

Left: (Bottom photo) The personalized key guard on the treasure chest of Captain Kidd that was made in Leith, Scotland



| J. PAT CARTER/AP |



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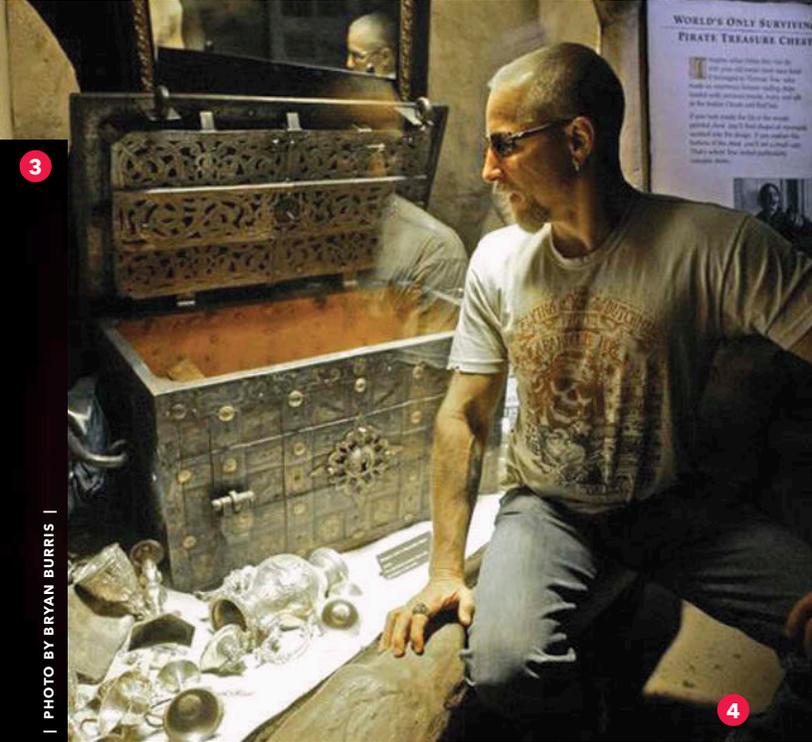


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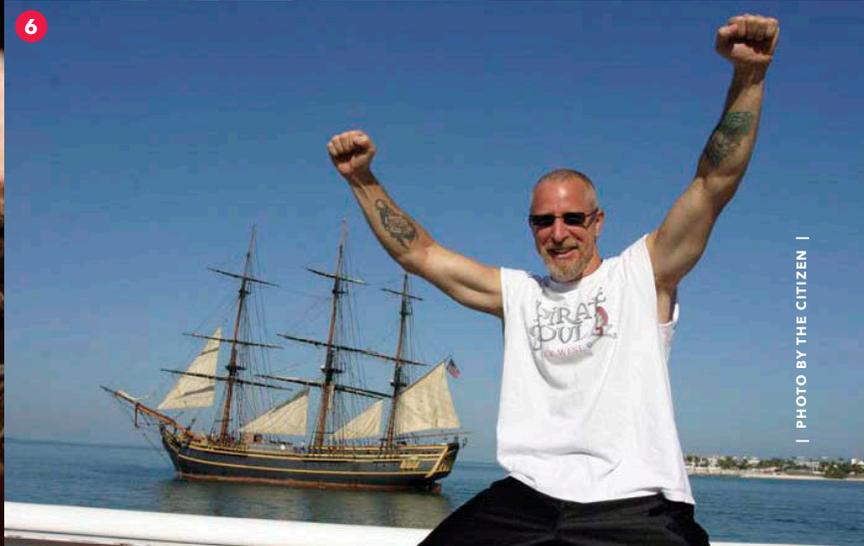


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| PHOTO BY BRYAN BURRIS |



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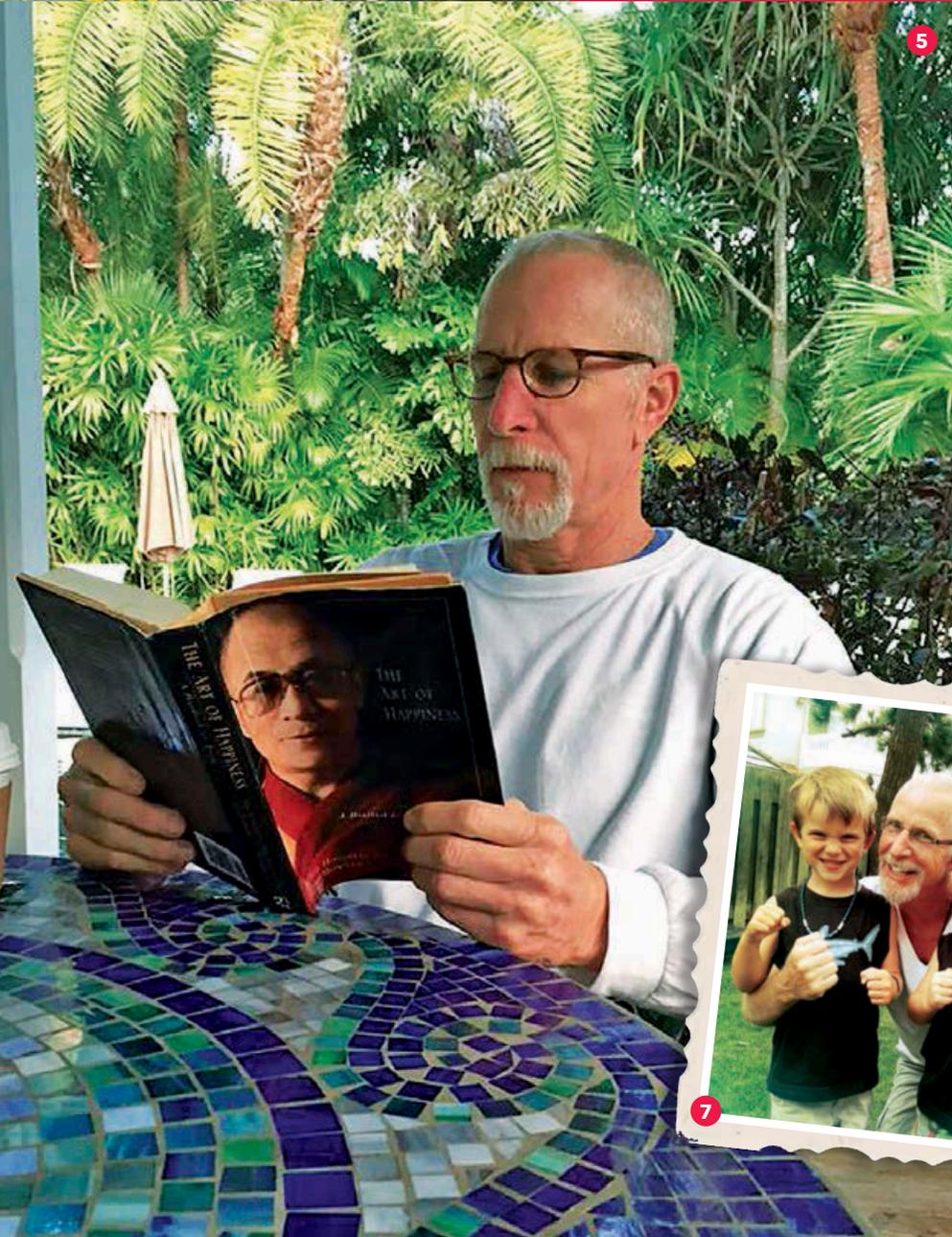
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| PHOTO BY THE CITIZEN |



| PHOTO BY ROB O'NEAL |

1. Pat Croce dives on a sunken wreck in Panama
2. Pat , owner of the Half Shell Raw Bar, Turtle Kraals, Charlie Macs, Island Dogs, and The Green Parrot with John Vagnoni
3. Holding a silver skull that was recovered from the Spanish treasure ship Atocha, which sank off the Florida coast in the 17th century
4. Captain Thomas Tew's 17th century Treasure Chest is part of Croce's private collection located at the St. Augustine Pirate and Treasure Museum
5. Pat Croce is shown reading the book that inspired his life change, "The Art of Happiness" by the Dalai Lama.
6. Pat Croce admires the H.M.S. Bounty as she sets sail from the Hilton marina on her way to Boothbay Harbor, Maine
7. Croce with his grandsons Charlie and Mac. I wonder if they like BBQ?



| CONTRIBUTED |

**T**

oday, he and his wife are only part time residents of Key West, concentrating their time at a retreat in Pennsylvania close to their son and daughter and their grandchildren.

His son and son in law run the businesses while Croce is happily and meditatively retired, building a Zen garden and writing daily in his journals, and frequently sending inspirational thoughts and quotes to friends.

Croce's new silent, still and stress- free life has refocused his life and his energy, and he has learned to enjoy "just this" every day. He no longer wears a watch; he has one word tattooed on his wrist – "Now."

It seems his pirate soul is now at peace. **NS**

**“NOW AND THEN WE HAD A HOPE THAT IF WE LIVED AND WERE GOOD, GOD WOULD PERMIT US TO BE PIRATES.”**

- Mark Twain in "Life on the Mississippi"



# KEYS WIDE EVENT CALENDAR

## FIVE TO TRY

### KEY WEST

**OCTOBER 27**  
**THE SMALLEST PARADE**  
Artists, craftsmen, model makers and creative types are encouraged to participate, making floats.

### BIG PINE

**NOVEMBER 25**  
**LOWER KEYS ART FESTIVAL**  
Highlights of this holiday event include live music by local entertainers, food, exhibits and locally produced arts and crafts.

### MARATHON

**NOVEMBER 18**  
**ANNUAL PROM IN PARADISE**  
What adult wouldn't want to go to prom again? This adult, subtropical Prom in Paradise is for a good cause, to benefit the Florida Keys SPCA shelter animals.

### ISLAMORADA

**NOVEMBER 2-5**  
**BEACH ROAD TRIP WEEKEND**  
This event features a large group of people taking a road trip to party on the beach, night and day, for an entire weekend.

### KEY LARGO

**NOVEMBER 10-11**  
**ANNUAL KEY LARGO BRIDGE RUN**  
Runners can enjoy the sunrise where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Gulf of Mexico while participating in a race.



## KEY WEST

**AUGUST 31- SEPTEMBER 4**  
**EIGHTH ANNUAL KEY WEST BREWFEST**  
More than 150 beers and micro-brews are on tap at this "tasty" annual event. Beer dinners, beer brunches, happy hour parties, pool parties, late-night parties, seminars and the Signature Tasting Festival Event are some of the offered activities.  
**800.354.4455**  
[www.keywestbrewfest.com](http://www.keywestbrewfest.com)

**SEPTEMBER 3**  
**DONOVAN FRANKENREITER**  
California surf-rocker Donavon Frankenreiter joins us September 3rd for an evening of heartfelt soft rock with an opening performance by Matt Grundy. Donavon Frankenreiter's new album, "The Heart," officially marks the start of the singer-songwriter's second decade as a solo recording artist.  
**305.985.0433**  
[www.thekeywesttheater.com](http://www.thekeywesttheater.com)

**SEPTEMBER 6 - 10**  
**WOMENFEST KEY WEST**  
Thousands of singles, couples and groups of women flock to Key West each year for this renowned celebration for lesbians and their friends. Activities generally include dance parties, poolside gatherings, sailing and snorkeling, live music, comedy performances and more.  
**305.294.4603**  
[www.womenfest.com](http://www.womenfest.com)

**SEPTEMBER 7-11**  
**LGBT ART & CULTURE REVOLUTION**  
Two Islands - One Week - Be a Part of History! Begin with an Art, Wine & Dine Experience in Key West, then be transported back in time to Cuba for the trip of a lifetime.  
**954.699.6556**  
[www.keywesttocubafest.com](http://www.keywesttocubafest.com)

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**TIG NOTARO**  
Tig Notaro is a comedian, actor and writer originally from Mississippi. Rolling Stone named her one of the 50 best stand-up

comics of all time. Tig remains a favorite on late night talk shows, public radio, tours around the world regularly and most recently sold out Carnegie Hall. Show starts 6:30 p.m.  
**305.985.0433**  
[www.thekeywesttheater.com](http://www.thekeywesttheater.com)

**SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 15**  
**WINE DINE KEY WEST**  
Dine, Shop and Relax during this month-long moveable feast. Cuisine connoisseurs can enjoy multi-course prix fixe meals at several Key West restaurants during WineDine KeyWest. Restaurants include casual waterfront spots, trendy bistros, eateries specializing in fresh Florida Keys seafood and award-winning gourmet emporiums. Local spas and chic boutiques are also participating in the celebration. Register free online.  
[www.winedinekeywest.com](http://www.winedinekeywest.com)

**OCTOBER 6 - 8**  
**SOMO MARATHON & HALF MARATHON**  
This event is one of a kind! The Southernmost Marathon & Half promises just that- 26.2 or 13.1 miles of ocean and gulf views, as well as iconic Key West landmarks. A full weekend of events include the race and a Sunday Paddle Board race for the Special Olympics of Monroe County.  
[www.somokeywestmarathon.com](http://www.somokeywestmarathon.com)

OCTOBER 13-16  
**SIXTH ANNUAL STANDUP  
PADDLE INVITATIONAL**

Join a 2-mile paddle board and beach obstacle course to support Special Olympics Florida Monroe County. This all-levels event is fun for beginners and experienced paddlers alike. Race is to be a loop style course offering a great view for our spectators. Registration fee \$35. Board rentals available through Lazy Dog.

305.923.0288  
[www.specialolympicsflorida.org](http://www.specialolympicsflorida.org)

OCTOBER 20-29  
**38TH ANNUAL  
FANTASY FEST**

This outrageous 10-day costuming and masking celebration features flamboyant masquerade competitions including one for pets, a headdress ball, exuberant promenades, street fairs and a grand parade that stars marching groups, island-style bands and lavish floats. The 2017 festival theme is "Time Travel Unravels."

305.296.1817  
[www.fantasyfest.com](http://www.fantasyfest.com)



OCTOBER 24  
**TOAD THE WET SPROCKET**

While most will feel the comforting familiarity of the Billboard-charting hits, "Walk on the Ocean", "All I Want", "Something's Always Wrong", and "Fall Down", new fans will also be well familiar with their new hits such as "California Wasted" which continues to climb the charts. Show starts 8 p.m.

305.985.0433  
[www.thekeywesttheater.com](http://www.thekeywesttheater.com)

OCTOBER 27  
**THE SMALLEST PARADE  
IN THE UNIVERSE**

A dazzling event from 5-9 p.m., at the corner of Caroline and William streets, at Key West Waterfront Brewery. Artists, craftsmen, model makers and creative types are encouraged to participate, making

floats no larger than 18 inches! Proceeds benefit the MARC house. Up to \$2,000 in prizes.  
[www.thesmallestparadeintheuniverse.com](http://www.thesmallestparadeintheuniverse.com)

NOVEMBER 5-12  
**36TH ANNUAL WORLD  
CHAMPIONSHIP RACES**

Super Boat International returns with teams from all around the world who compete April through October in the National Series Points races and conclude in November for the famous Key West World Championships. High-speed offshore powerboats race in Key West Harbor and surrounding waters to continue Key West's longstanding tradition in this annual challenge. A portion of the 6.5-mile course runs through Key West Harbor, meaning smooth water where racers can achieve speeds above 140 mph and provide fans breathtaking displays of skill and power.

305.296.6166  
[www.superboat.com](http://www.superboat.com)

NOVEMBER 15-19  
**KEY WEST FILM FESTIVAL**

The festival's lineup is to feature screenings and special events hosted at landmark venues throughout Key West, including the San Carlos Institute, Studios of Key West and Key West Theater. The four-day program is to include several films from multiple genres and categories as well as social events with filmmakers, actors and film lovers.

305.747.8563  
[www.kwfilmfest.com](http://www.kwfilmfest.com)

DECEMBER 6  
**KEY WEST  
LIGHTED BIKE RIDE**

The Lighted Bike Ride helps to gather the needed toys for the struggling, working families of

Key West for the holidays. At the Holiday Helpers Store, eligible parents walk through the store, empowered by the ability to pick free, new toys their children will want instead of just allocating non-specific toys to parents. The ride is a family event beginning with a registration/check-in at 6 p.m. with the Lighted Bike Ride beginning at 7:00 p.m. Families and individuals with lighted and decorated bikes ride through the streets for the community to see. Registration for the ride is one unwrapped toy for the Key West Holiday Store.

305.809.5000  
[www.wesleyhouse.org](http://www.wesleyhouse.org)



NOVEMBER 25  
**BIG PINE &  
THE LOWER KEYS  
ISLAND ART FESTIVAL**

Highlights of this holiday event include live music by local entertainers, food, exhibits and booths featuring locally produced arts and crafts. Festivities traditionally take place on the grounds of the Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce, MM 31 Oceanside.

305.872.2411  
[www.lowerkeyschamber.com](http://www.lowerkeyschamber.com)



OCTOBER 7  
**THE MARATHON  
GAMES PENTATHLON**

Join a five-event, Keys style Pentathlon, featuring swimming, kayaking, standup paddling, driving frozen "golf" balls and a footrace. Intrigued? Hosted by the Florida Keys Country Club, proceeds from this uniquely Keys event are to

support local non profits. Up to five-person team athletes can register.

305.587.9830  
[www.marathongames.com](http://www.marathongames.com)

NOVEMBER 12  
**20TH ANNUAL TASTE  
OF THE ISLANDS**

Hosted by the Marathon chapter of Business and Professional Women, the award-winning event draws several thousand attendees and features local restaurants, live entertainment, vendors and artists, a tribute to veterans, fashion show, activities for kids plus live and Chinese auctions. Proceeds benefit the BPW/Marathon scholarships for residents of Monroe County. To be held at Marathon Community Park, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

305.923.9976

NOVEMBER 18  
**DANCE UNDER THE STARS  
AT SECOND ANNUAL  
PROM IN PARADISE**

What adult wouldn't want to go to prom again? This adult, subtropical Prom in Paradise is for a good cause, to benefit the Florida Keys SPCA shelter animals. Each ticket includes a complimentary happy hour and three-course gourmet meal provided by the Lighthouse Grill at Faro Blanco Resort and Marina. Silent auction, 50/50 raffle and photographer to capture your best Prom poses. Tickets are available in person at the Marathon Campus at 10550 Aviation Blvd.,

305.743.4800  
[www.fkspca.org](http://www.fkspca.org)

DECEMBER 3  
**MARATHON LIGHTED  
BIKE RIDE**

The Lighted Bike Ride helps to gather the needed toys for the families of Marathon for the holidays. At the Holiday Helpers Store, eligible parents walk through the store, empowered by the ability to pick free, new toys their children will want instead of just allocating non-specific toys to parents. The ride is a family event beginning with checkin at 6 p.m. with the ride beginning at 7 p.m. Families and individuals with lighted and decorated bikes ride through the streets for the community to see. Registration for the ride is one unwrapped toy for the Marathon Holiday Store. Register online.

305.809.5000  
[www.wesleyhouse.org](http://www.wesleyhouse.org)

# ISLAMORADA



SEPTEMBER 15 -  
OCTOBER 15

## WINEDINE ISLAMORADA

Dine, shop, relax and play during Islamorada's first restaurant month, a moveable feast for the senses! Cuisine connoisseurs can enjoy multi-course prix fixe meals at several Islamorada restaurants, including casual waterfront spots, trendy bistros, eateries specializing in fresh Florida Keys seafood and award-winning gourmet emporiums. Local spas and chic boutiques are also participating in the celebration. Register free online.  
[www.winedineflakeys.com](http://www.winedineflakeys.com)

## SEPTEMBER 15 - 17 18TH ANNUAL HERMAN LUCERNE MEMORIAL BACKCOUNTRY FISHING CHAMPIONSHIP

Named after the man known affectionately as "Mr. Everglades," the event is headquartered at the Islander Resort, A Guy Harvey Outpost. Anglers are challenged to target fish in multiple species only in the boundaries of Everglades National Park, fishing areas that Lucerne favored.  
[www.hermanlucerne.com](http://www.hermanlucerne.com)

## SEPTEMBER 20 IMMERSE YOURSELF! FREE LECTURE SERIES AT HISTORY OF DIVING MUSEUM

Each month's third Wednesday features this free-admission presentation series, starting at 7 p.m. Museum exhibits are open late (entry fee applies). This month's topic of "Searching for Batista Gold" features speaker John Hazelbaker from Hammerhead Marine.

305.664.9737  
[www.divingmuseum.org](http://www.divingmuseum.org)

## SEPTEMBER 23 FIFTH ANNUAL SWIM FOR ALLIGATOR LIGHTHOUSE

In the event's fifth year, swimmers participate in a 9-mile roundtrip race from Islamorada to the Alligator Lighthouse and back. Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Pool in Islamorada, helping provide scholarship opportunities to those in need, and preserve treasured historic lighthouses on Florida's coastal waterways.

305.664.7149  
[www.swimalligatorlight.com](http://www.swimalligatorlight.com)



## OCTOBER 26 HAUNTED HISTORY: ROBERT THE DOLL RETURNS TO ISLAMORADA

Doors will open at 5 p.m., lectures start at 6 p.m. \$25 for non-members, includes museum admission, light appetizers and cash bar. Free for members. All lectures are at Keys History & Discovery Center, 82100 Overseas Highway, MM 82.  
305.922.2237  
[www.keysdiscovery.com](http://www.keysdiscovery.com)

## SEPTEMBER 29-30 CONCH SCRAMBLE "ON THE WATER" GOLF TOURNAMENT

Join an on-the-water wacky weekend charity golf tournament that brings together four-person teams to enjoy a game of nine holes by boat, to "drive" biodegradable golf balls toward floating greens -

without any sand traps. A live or silent auction as well as a 50/50 cash raffle also are planned. Proceeds benefit local Keys charities.  
[www.conchscramble.com](http://www.conchscramble.com)

## OCTOBER 6-7 10TH ANNUAL MAD DOG MANDICH INSHORE & OFFSHORE FISHING CLASSIC

Anglers compete in an offshore division targeting dolphin, kingfish, tuna, wahoo, snapper and grouper; and new this year is an inshore division in which anglers compete for mangrove snapper, spotted sea trout, redfish, snook and tarpon. A portion of the proceeds of this boat/team tournament are to benefit Mariners Hospital Oncology Services. Headquartered at Postcard Inn Beach Resort & Marina. Top Offshore and Inshore division cash prizes.

305.667.0399  
[www.maddogclassic.com](http://www.maddogclassic.com)

## OCTOBER 6-8 ROBERT JAMES SALES BAYBONE CELEBRITY TOURNAMENT

The second tournament in the Redbone Trilogy targets permit and bonefish to raise money for cystic fibrosis research. Past participants include legendary angler Stu Apte, former Denver Bronco and Tampa

Bay Buccaneer Mark Cooper and Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Wade Boggs.

305.664.2002  
[www.redbone.org](http://www.redbone.org)

## OCTOBER 8-11 ISLAMORADA FALL ALL- TACKLE BONEFISH & PERMIT CHAMPIONSHIP

Known locally as the "Fall All-Tackle," the three-day fishing challenge attracts energized newcomers to face seasoned veterans, in a competitive format since 1970. Up to 25 participants can fish in the tournament. One angler per boat pairs with a licensed captain to vie for division winners' trophies. Bonefish are to be scored by length, not weight.

305.587.1460

## OCTOBER 20-22 LADIES LET'S GO FISHING!" KEYS UNIVERSITY

Female fishing fans can learn or polish angling skills during the award-winning weekend seminar. More than 8,000 female graduates have immersed themselves in the annual lighthearted yet skill-heavy curriculum to learn and hone abilities in offshore, bottom, inshore and fly fishing.

954.475.9068  
[www.ladiesletsgofishing.com](http://www.ladiesletsgofishing.com)

## OCTOBER 27-28 FALL BACKCOUNTRY FLY CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Tournament anglers are to compete to catch the most inches of snook and redfish on fly in a challenge where one inch equals one point. Awards are to be given to the series grand champion, the anglers who catch the largest snook and redfish and the king of the backcountry.  
[www.bfctournament.com](http://www.bfctournament.com)

## NOVEMBER 2-5 BEACH ROAD TRIP WEEKEND

This lively event features a large group of people taking a road trip to party on the beach, night and day, for an entire weekend. The festivities consist of uniquely themed all-inclusive parties with complimentary drinks and food, parking and shuttle service over a three-day span in Islamorada.

954.608.3131  
[www.brtweekend.com](http://www.brtweekend.com)

NOVEMBER 15  
**FLORIDA IS A LAND  
REMEMBERED, WITH  
RICK SMITH JR.**

Doors open at 5 p.m., lecture starts at 6 p.m. \$25 for non-museum members, which includes museum admission, light appetizers and cash bar. Free for museum members. All lectures are at Keys History & Discovery Center, 82100 Overseas Highway, MM 82 in Islamorada, on the property of the Islander Resort, a Guy Harvey Outpost.  
**305.922.2237**  
[www.keysdiscovery.com](http://www.keysdiscovery.com)

NOVEMBER 16-18  
**CHEECA LODGE & SPA ALL-AMERICAN BACKCOUNTRY TOURNAMENT**

Anglers compete for prizes and trophies in this annual event targeting snook, redfish, bonefish, tarpon and permit. Proceeds benefit the Guides Trust Foundation. Highlights include a beachside barbecue and an awards banquet characteristic of Cheeca's casual elegance.  
[www.cheeca.com/experience/fishing](http://www.cheeca.com/experience/fishing)

NOVEMBER 30 -  
DECEMBER 3  
**ISLAMORADA SAILFISH TOURNAMENT**

The first leg of the triple-crown Florida Keys Gold Cup Championship series is the only tournament in the series to offer a junior division for anglers age 16 and younger. Unlimited anglers are allowed per vessel.  
[www.islamoradasailfishtournament.com](http://www.islamoradasailfishtournament.com)



SEPTEMBER 22-24  
**TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN  
BACKCOUNTRY  
CHALLENGE**

For 18 years this annual tournament has offered anglers the opportunity to win coveted trophies for trout,

snook and redfish. A popular auction showcase and Sunday evening dinner are open to the public. Proceeds support local vocational scholarships for all ages, and Take Stock in Children scholarships for financially challenged Upper Keys students.  
**305.331.052**  
[www.keylargorotary.org](http://www.keylargorotary.org)

SEPTEMBER 28 -  
OCTOBER 1  
**REEF FEST**

Join Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) in a celebration of marine conservation. Morning activities include ocean adventures of kayaking, snorkeling and diving, all alongside marine life experts. Afternoons feature free seminars from renowned experts in topics like Marine Mammals, Shark Behavior, Deep Sea Exploration and Emerging Ocean Issues. Evenings boast food, drinks and fun with friends old and new. All events are open to the public.  
**305.852.0030**  
[www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)

OCTOBER 6-8  
**SIXTH ANNUAL  
DOWNTOWN KEY LARGO  
SONGFEST**  
A host of elite Nashville songwriters are to liven up Key Largo stages during this Columbus Day weekend festival that features music in genres including jazz, blues, rock and roll, country and contemporary pop. In addition, music lovers can enjoy the stories behind yesterday's favorites and today's popular hits.  
**305.619.0172**  
[www.keylargosongfest.com](http://www.keylargosongfest.com)

OCTOBER 18 - 22  
**FIFTH ANNUAL HUMPHREY  
BOGART FILM FESTIVAL**  
The Humphrey Bogart Film Festival is to screen a rotating selection of Bogie classics and a group of movies celebrating the man the American Film Institute named "America's greatest male screen legend." The festival, hosted by the screen legend's son, Stephen Bogart, is the only event of its kind, and is backed by the Bogart Estate. The 2017 theme is scheduled to celebrate the 75th anniversary of 'Casablanca.'  
[www.bogartfilmfestival.com](http://www.bogartfilmfestival.com)

NOVEMBER 10-11  
**NINTH ANNUAL  
KEY LARGO BRIDGE RUN**  
Runners can enjoy the sunrise where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Gulf of Mexico while participating in the out-and-back race that crosses a portion of the Florida Keys Overseas Highway, including the Jewfish Creek Bridge.  
**305.451.1642**

DECEMBER 9  
**KEY LARGO  
LIGHTED BIKE RIDE**  
The Lighted Bike Ride helps to gather toys for the struggling, working families of Key Largo for the holidays. At the Holiday Helpers Store, eligible parents walk through the store, and can pick free, new toys their children will want. The ride is a family event beginning with checkin at 6 p.m. with the Lighted Bike Ride beginning at 7 p.m. Families and individuals with decorated bikes ride through the streets for all to see. Registration for the ride is one unwrapped toy for the Key Largo Holiday Store. Register online.  
**305.809.5000**  
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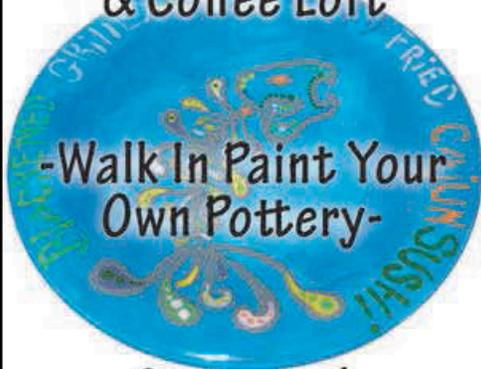


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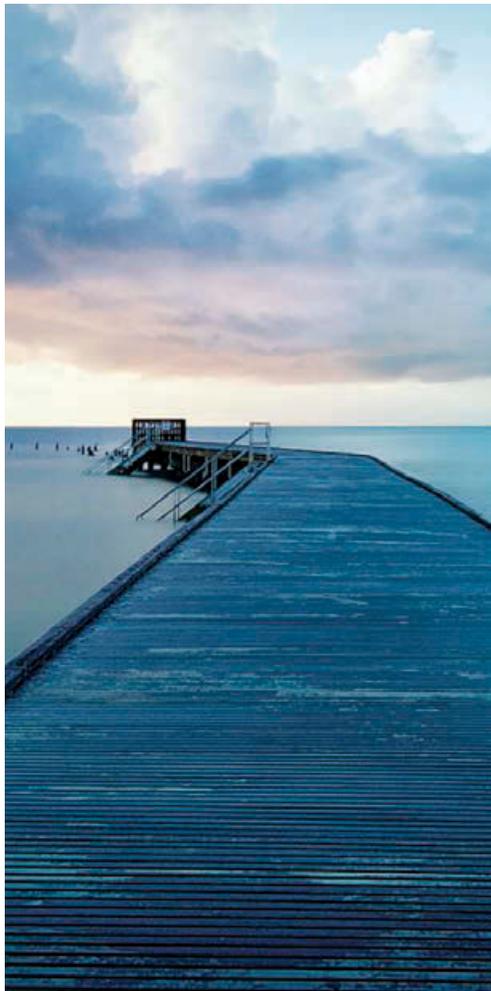
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