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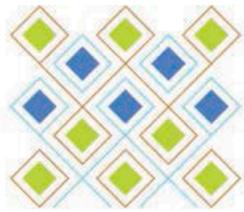
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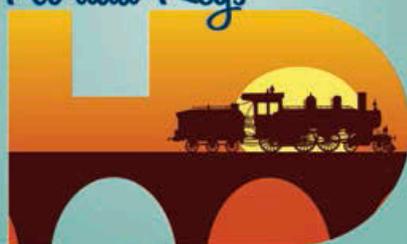
Stephen Frink boards dive boat following an in-water seminar conducted for his digital master shark photography program.

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**50 KEYS WIDE EVENT
CALENDAR**

Key West to Key Largo and
everything in between.

Balseros, they are called. It's a Spanish word for sea-faring rafters. Some spend months building their boats, secretly gathering available materials from which to improvise an escape craft. Their vessel might be a fishing boat, modified with high-walled gunnels so it can carry more people. Or it might simply be a blue tarp filled with buoyant spray foam, bedsheets for sails and a coffee-can rudder.

INNOVA

refugee
CRAFT
*carry history,
hope forward*

by Karuna EBERL



ATIONS

of desperation

Whether compelled by poverty, a natural disaster or fear of government persecution, generations of people have been driven to become *balseros*, risking their lives to cross the open ocean on the chance that after enduring several days of blistering sunshine, unpredictable waves, sharks, and jellyfish, they'll be lucky enough to bump into a tiny string of islands and the hope that they have to offer.

In just the last 20 years, more than 50,000 people from Cuba, plus tens of thousands more from Haiti and other Caribbean, South and Central American countries, have decided that this was their best option. Once they made it to shore, their once-prized, vital link to freedom - their boat - was suddenly obsolete, cast aside where it landed, reduced to just a bit of novel garbage tucked along the mangroves.

"For years, these boats were seen more or less as trash," says marine archaeologist Joshua Marano. "But what we can learn from their features and modifications really sheds a lot of light on the people who made them. When you start to pay attention, you can see the ingenuity and the thought process. You also start to get an idea of how desperate they must have been, to decide to cross with 20 people crammed into a boat the size of a Honda Civic."

Interests in migration by sea brought archaeologists and agencies like Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN), Biscayne

National Park, and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) together to document refugee craft. The collaboration resulted in a centralized database, where both scientists and community members can report their findings.

These vessels are quite unique. For example, some boats have hidden compartments in which to keep food dry. Many of their fabricators went to great lengths to fit car engines with propellers, and to figure out where to put exhaust pipes so they don't take on water.

A trait some boats share is a blue-painted hull. This helps camouflage it in the water, decreasing the odds of being intercepted by the Coast Guard, and for some it holds religious significance as a color of protection. Some also paint the bottom white, so if they do capsize, they are more likely to be seen and rescued. One such boat Marano found on Dry Tortugas also had freshly painted Santeria blessings to Yemaya, the goddess of the sea and all living things. Apparently she listened, as all 23 refugees aboard survived the crossing.



| **Above** (top and right): “Everybody likes to talk about the engines they find that have been repurposed out of cars,” says Joshua Marano, who has come across ones from all over the world, including some marked CCCP from the former Soviet republic | **Above** (left): Rosemary Abbitt and Nicole Uibel, employees of FKNMS, document the remains of migrant craft in the Marquesas. The craft were adapted to cross 90 miles of ocean, often carrying many people over their capacity. All of the vessels were documented in March 2017, before being removed due to environmental and navigational hazards |

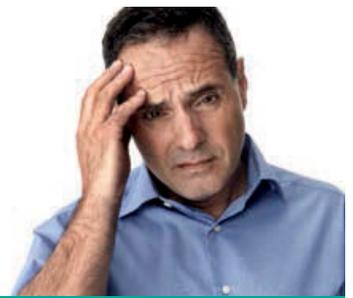
“It just shows it really must feel like your only option”

- Sara Ayers-Rigsby



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Photos by Brenda Altmeier |



Tragically, not all are so fortunate. No one knows for sure, but researchers believe at least one in four die on the journey. As such, documenting these craft becomes a way to keep a human face on a period in history that might otherwise be too broad and painful to relate to.

“Think about 500 years from now,” says Sara Ayers-Rigsby, an archaeologist with FPAN. “History tends to focus on world leaders and larger global political issues, but it doesn’t really address what’s happening to the average person, the person making that boat. Having that physical artifact documented is critical to telling that story of people fleeing governments with such intensity that they are using these makeshift vessels.”

Last spring as Ayers-Rigsby was helping document boats on the Marquesas, she was particularly taken off guard by an artifact she found - a child’s backpack.

“It is profoundly moving to see all of these things people had to leave behind,” she says. “You think about the story behind them. You think about if you were fleeing to a new country to start a new life, what would you bring with you. It just shows it really must feel like your only option.” 

Note: With last-year’s rescinding of the Cuban Adjustment Act, a.k.a. the wet-foot dry-foot policy, the refugee rafts have suddenly become a scarce commodity. Ayers-Rigsby of FPAN and Marano are encouraging community support for reporting abandoned refugee boats, regardless of how long they’ve been sitting there. Contact sayersrigsby@fau.edu with information, and for a link to the database reporting form. [FPAN is a program out of the University of Western Florida, partnering with Florida Atlantic University]

| **Left (above):** Brenda Altmeier, of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, is a driving force behind documenting refugee craft. “Crossing the ocean to freedom is an incredible time in history here in the Keys,” she says. She found these boots in a driftwood hovel on a beach, “I am not positive, but could see how somebody could get inside to protect themselves from the sun” |

| **Below:** Chef Martha Hubbard is seen at the Isle Cook's theater-style kitchen on Whitehead Street |
| **Inset:** Bill and Eden Brown inspect one of their wines |





IN GOOD TASTE

[*Isle Cook offers cooking classes, dinners, tastings
and a retail shop for home chefs*]

Isle Cook or, “I’ll cook.” It’s who you are, or it’s what you do. Either way, it all starts at 218 Whitehead St., where Bill and Eden Brown opened Isle Cook in February 2015 with the hope of encouraging people to answer the tired inquiry of, “What’s for dinner?” with a new and confident declaration of “I’ll cook.”

Their mission, “to promote enjoyment, knowledge and health in cooking and

eating.” And though the statement doesn’t specifically mention wine, this is Key West, and wine plays a role in everything Isle Cook is and does. The business is difficult to classify, because, like its name, it’s more than meets the eye. At first glance, Isle Cook is a fun and upscale retail shop for home cooks, offering all manner of small kitchen appliances, quality knives, tropically inspired dishware, wine and cocktail accoutrements,



| Photo by *Rob O'NEAL* |



silicone kitchen gadgets and an expertly curated selection of wines and craft beers that are available for customers to sample, buy, open and enjoy while shopping.

The shop also sells unbreakable dishes and glasses made of food-grade silicon, while another line of outdoor tableware is made from bamboo for use at the pool, on the boat or on the back patio.

But a further step inside also reveals an enviably equipped commercial kitchen, complete with an oversized, granite-topped dining island that can accommodate 12 to 14 people for private, catered dinners, wine and food pairing sessions, tasting menus and cooking classes that range in tone and flavor from spicy Thai food to a wildly popular Cook Your Catch class that starts with a charter fishing trip and ends with a chef-led dinner about proper preparation and various cooking techniques.

“I think when we first started, I assumed the retail shop would play a slightly bigger role in this venture than the dinners and cooking lessons,

but as it has turned out, the lessons, dinners and tastings have emerged to play a slightly larger part,” Bill Brown said. “But basically, things have worked out precisely as we had hoped and planned.”

To call Isle Cook a simple culinary store would be to ignore more than half its identity as a culinary center for Key West. It’s a delicious blend of all things tasteful and entertaining: food, wine and friendly education mixed with the ultimate in island hospitality.

There are no suits and ties, affected accents or competing egos at Isle Cook’s wine and food tastings. Besides, this is Key West; no one spits out wine.



Opposite Page (left): Eden Brown shows some flexible pot holders to friend and customer Marsha Williams | **Opposite Page (middle):** Isle Cook offers an eclectic curation of fine wines from around the world | **Above:** Chef - led dinners and lessons feature in - house Chef Martha, along with a variety of local chefs and restaurateurs |



| **Above:** Saturday afternoon tastings features wine and Chef Martha's culinary creations | **Right:** Pasta is one of the many dishes that have been served at Isle Cooke |

Isle Cook offers regular Saturday afternoon wine and food tastings hosted by Bill and Eden with in-house - and out of this world - Chef Martha Hubbard.

The \$15 afternoon tastings are lessons everyone enjoys learning - over and over again. The culinary curriculum every Saturday features four to five wines, which Eden introduces and explains while pouring all 12 to 14 participants a generous taste. Bill follows her, showing a map of the region that produces the wine and offering in-depth knowledge of the area and its winemaking history.

While the Browns keep the crowd lubricated and educated, Chef Martha explains her culinary creations that correspond perfectly with each wine. Guests work their way through four or five food samples that pair ideally with each wine.



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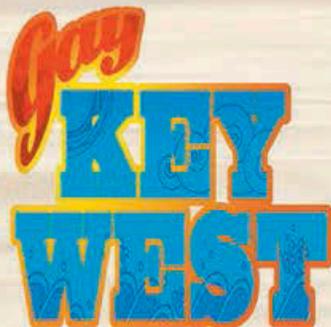
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The afternoons are carefully planned to taste good while teaching everyone something – and, of course, selling the tools needed to imitate the techniques that are taught.

Bill and Eden Brown both had been in private practice as clinical psychologists in the Washington, DC area for decades, Bill Brown explained, with an assurance that they don't analyze everyone who walks into the store. They had vacationed in Key West for 23 years, each visit lasting a little longer than the last, until moving permanently to the island in 2015 with the idea of opening a culinary store for home chefs that also offered wine tastings, cooking lessons, themed dinners and private chef-led dinners for special occasions.

“When we closed our practice, I moved into the world of higher education, first teaching and then as an administrator, but I was traveling all the time,”

- Bill Brown

| **Previous Page:** Isle Cook offers a wide array of cooking utensils, gifts and other kitchen-related products | **Right:** Chef Martha Hubbard offers food pairings at Isle Cook on Whitehead Street |

Meanwhile, Eden Brown went back to school to study filmmaking, but fell in love with writing. “Eventually, we knew we wanted to work for ourselves, and become integrated into a close-knit community, and we wanted to do it in Key West, where we could become a part of the community we’d fallen in love with more than 20 years ago,” Bill said.

Mission accomplished.

The chef - led dinners and lessons feature in - house Chef Martha, along with a variety of local chefs and restaurateurs.

“We want the chefs to be able to promote whatever it is they offer at their restaurants, so this becomes a really unique opportunity for locals, tourists and snowbirds,” Bill said, adding that tickets for the themed dinners start around \$80. Schedules, descriptions and menus are detailed on the Isle Cook website at IsleCookKeyWest.com and each one tends to sell out quickly.

“In addition to the chef-led dinners and cooking lessons, we’ve also hosted scores of bachelor and bachelorette parties, rehearsal dinners, wedding receptions, bridal showers, anniversary parties and reunions,” Bill said. “And



for our private events, the theme, menu and flavor is left entirely up the guests. We’ll work with them and with Chef Martha to come up with an ideal menu and fitting wines or craft beers.”

Stop in for a taste, a sip and the most enjoyable shopping experience on the island. Isle Cook tastes as good as it looks, and after two years of success, Bill, Eden and Martha are still cookin’. 

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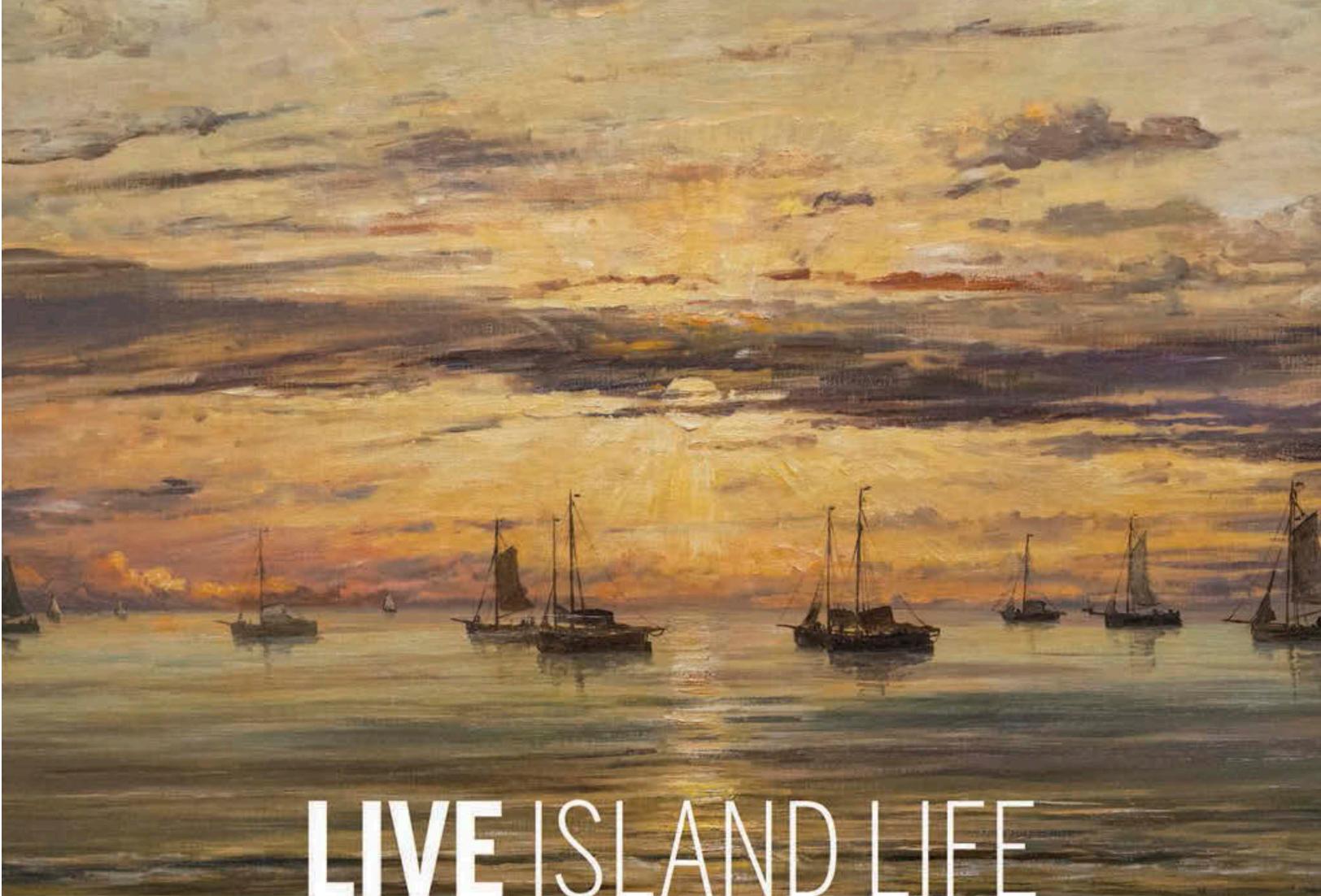
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get CULTURED

by Sarah THOMAS | Photos Contributed from Anna SWEET



THIS EDITION:

ANNA SWEET *galleries*



WOMEN UNDER WATER. There is a photograph now recognized in Key West as the Anna Sweet brand. It is an ethereal image in black and white: four nude girls underwater from behind, arms encircled like sister mermaids. While striking, the girls in the photograph are not professional models. Sitting in her sleek white gallery on Duval Street, Sweet points to the image and explains, “We met these girls on a yoga retreat in Mexico. People ask where I find these models, but these are just normal girls. It’s the way I’m capturing them, and the natural light, and painting their bodies, and so forth.”

| **Opposite Page:** “Divine & Pure” is the second image of a new series shot in Kona, Hawaii. “Lily” is strikingly beautiful in elegant form and color. Metallic C Print mounted to aluminum and overlaid with UV Resin, minerals, diamond dust, and glow pigment | **Above Top:** “Surf Angel” - radiating true “Maui Blue”, this piece is embellished with glow pigment that illuminates the piece after UV exposure. Metallic C Print mounted to aluminum and overlaid with UV Resin, minerals, crystals, glass, sea sand, and glow pigment | **Bottom:** Anna Sweet in her gallery located in the heart of Key West |



{ audry }

| **Opposite Page:** “Noble Strength & Night Rain” Audry along with her piece titled Amaya, the second image to this series, reflect complementary ways to take life’s plunge. Audrey is grounded while Amaya is whimsical. Metallic C Print mounted to aluminum and overlaid with UV Resin, minerals, mica, and diamond dust | **Below:** Anna submerges herself in her work while she photographs subjects in water |



The Anna Sweet Gallery upends the viewer’s expectations for underwater photography. The large images displayed on the walls are photographs that Sweet digitally merges with her original paintings. She says, “I paint light and color on each image, to paint it back to what I see, not just what the camera sees. I want to recreate that clarity and beauty that I see.” Sweet embraces a variety of processes; she typically prints on aluminum or metallic paper, sealing it with resin, and finishing each piece with materials unique to the subject and image.

“I embed minerals that give it that look of when light hits water. I use textures to emphasize the piece - diamond dust, mica, sand... with glass, I’m trying to

shape and create the way that lines and bubbles flow,” she explains. “I want to make it as natural and organic as possible, and still make it kind of out of this world, because it’s not just a photograph, and that’s what makes it even more beautiful.”

One piece called “Florence” is of a woman that appears to be levitating in space, her otherwise naked body sheathed in a filmy fabric seemingly composed of diamond dust, the light and minerals lending it a celestial quality. Sweet cites not only fashion photography - a devotee of Vanity Fair and Vogue from a young age - but also fine art as inspiration, particularly the works of Caravaggio and neo-classical painter Maxfield Parrish. Sweet explains, “I walk that line of sensual and elegant, and it’s not erotic - there is some discretion there. I really respect the Art Nouveau vision of women, these paintings and posters that represent women’s bodies with fabric and color and movement.”

A wide range of experiences defined Sweet’s trajectory in the art world. Growing up in Charlotte, North Carolina, Sweet’s family lived in humble quarters above her mother Connie’s art gallery. “My mom was feeding nine kids by making art, and there I was exposed to 19th century painters and the art world.” She cites her upbringing and her mother’s influence as helping “to create that hunger and that drive in me to make a living doing what I love.”

Sweet moved to New York to attend the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, eventually finding herself unable to renew her student loans to continue at the expensive arts school. During this time, Sweet cites an unconventional influence on her perception of the female form: working as a cocktail waitress at Scores, the famous Manhattan gentleman’s club. “At first, I was super timid and nervous,” she says. “And I just became fascinated with the way these girls presented themselves. They could be fifty or eighteen, whatever, and they all brought something to the table, and to watch them move and dance, I think it made me more edgy in my work.” In addition to the use of natural light, movement is perhaps the most arresting element of Sweet’s work.

“I paint light and color on each image, to paint it back to what I see, not just what the camera sees. I want to recreate that clarity and beauty that I see.”

- Anna Sweet

{ *florence* }

| Photo by *Anna SWEET* |



| **Above:** "To Flourish" Florence is a Metallic C Print mounted to aluminum and overlaid with UV Resin, minerals, crystals, glass, and diamond dust | **Right:** "Undersea Explorer" Chloe captures the wonder that accompanies our discovery of the unknown. Metallic C Print mounted to aluminum and overlaid with UV Resin, minerals, and sea glass |

Sweet interned for fashion photographers in New York for five years, finally moving to London to work for the globally recognized photographer Rankin. While interning in London, Sweet realized that she had become uninspired by fashion photography and set a new path.

“Up to that point,” she says, “I hadn’t taken my work as seriously - I invested in others. And I thought about how to develop my style and my vision.” She explains, “I had seen this French fashion photographer do a floating woman in a studio in Paris. It was a girl falling with the most beautiful fabric.” First considering recreating this effect in a studio, she says, “Then I went back to images I had taken in Mexico in a pool.” She points to an image of a woman perfectly suspended under water, toe pointed like a dancer, chin tipped to the edge of a surface, fabric billowing around her, back gracefully arched. “And I realized that’s what I wanted to do.”

Sweet decided to devote the same level of intensity - a breakneck schedule and fifteen hour work days - to her own work. Her parents were living in South Florida, and the first gallery that exhibited Sweet’s work was in Fort Lauderdale.

{ *chloe* }

| Photo by Anna SWEET |



“They sold out in about six months.” She expanded to galleries from Hawaii to London and went on to sell over 2.5 million dollars worth of original art before she was thirty. Sweet relied heavily on friends and family as models—she points out images of her sisters adorning the walls of the gallery.

“Ultimately, I wanted to have my own space and show how I view the world.” Sweet had previously lived in Key West, and she met her husband on the island. She credits the James Coleman Gallery as the first venue that helped her enter the Key West art scene, and she seized the opportunity when her current space opened on Duval. The doors of the Anna Sweet Gallery opened to the public just a week before Hurricane Irma hit. Fortunately, the space was unharmed, though it was a frighteningly apropos brush with nature for an underwater photographer.

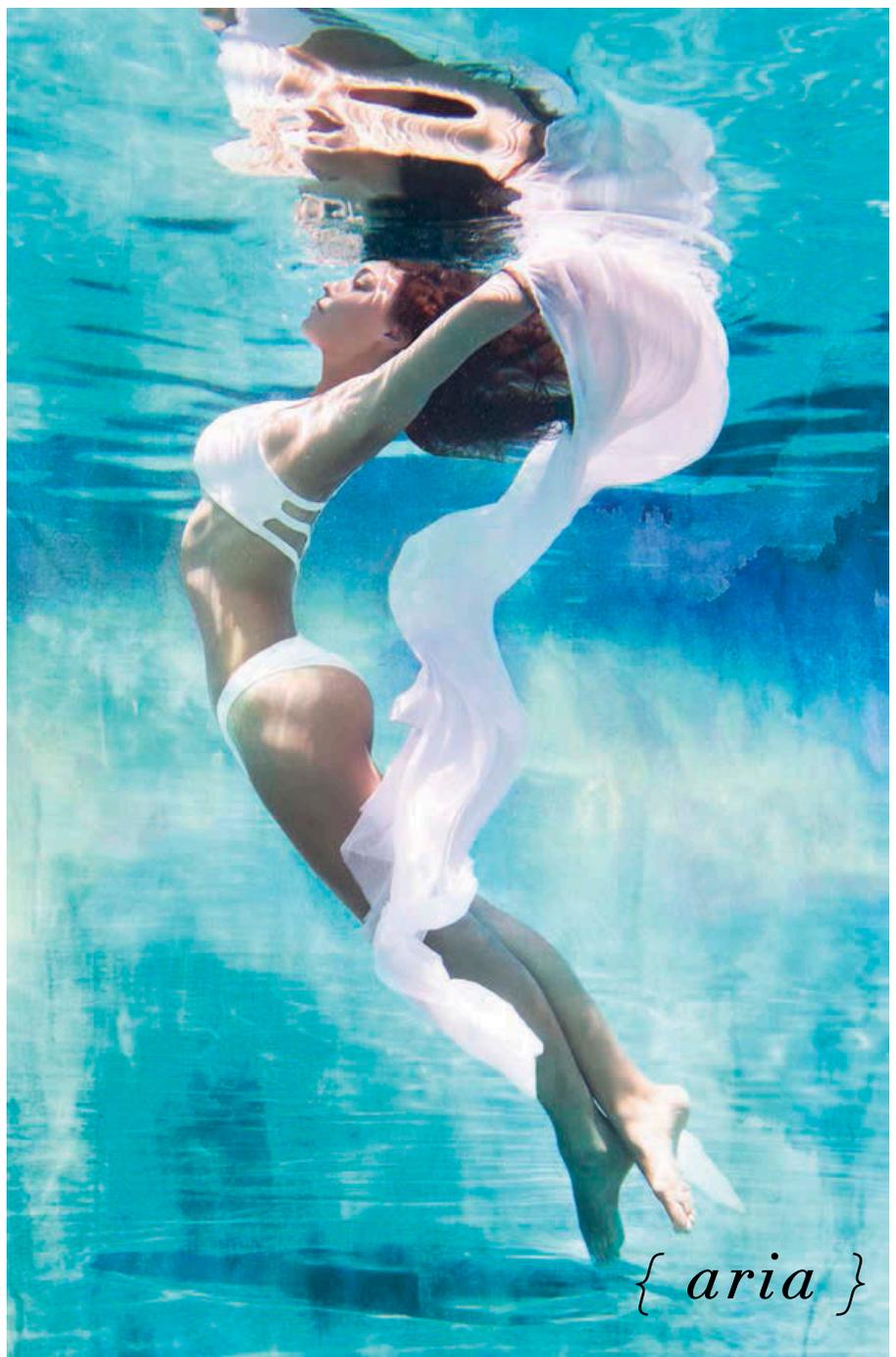
Next, Sweet has plans to shoot at Staniel Cay, Bahamas, which has world-renowned clear turquoise waters. “I’m excited to do some beautiful skin tones and putting the logistics together to bring girls of all different backgrounds, and we’ll see what comes out.” Does Sweet have designs to move away from the female form? Not any time soon. 

“My work is glorifying the fact that women are God’s greatest gift. And I could be a landscape photographer,” she pauses, “but I’d be so bored.”

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| **Right:** (top image): “To Live, To Breathe” Nature’s beauty shines deep in this portrait of Eve, the life of Maui. Metallic C Print mounted to aluminum and overlaid with UV Resin, minerals, and diamond dust | **Right:** (bottom image): “Lion of God” Aria is strong and carries a powerful faith. This piece is a part of a limited edition of two hundred and fifty and available in one size, aluminum print mounted to wooden box frame |

| Photos by Anna SWEET |





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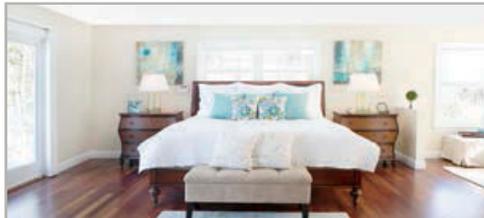
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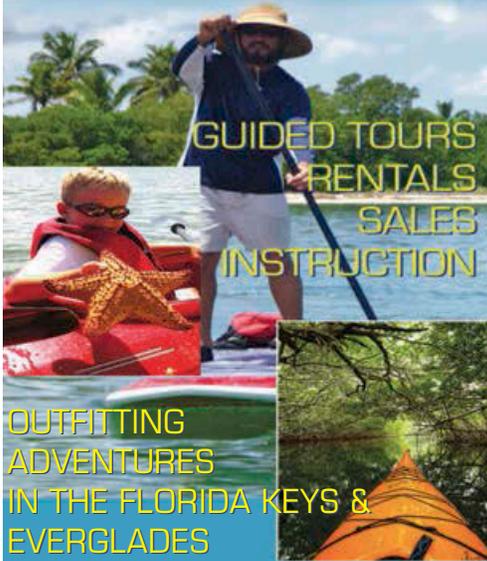
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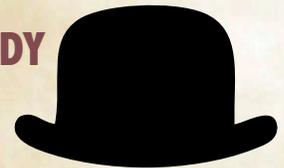


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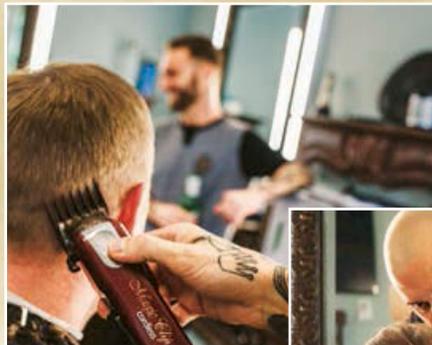
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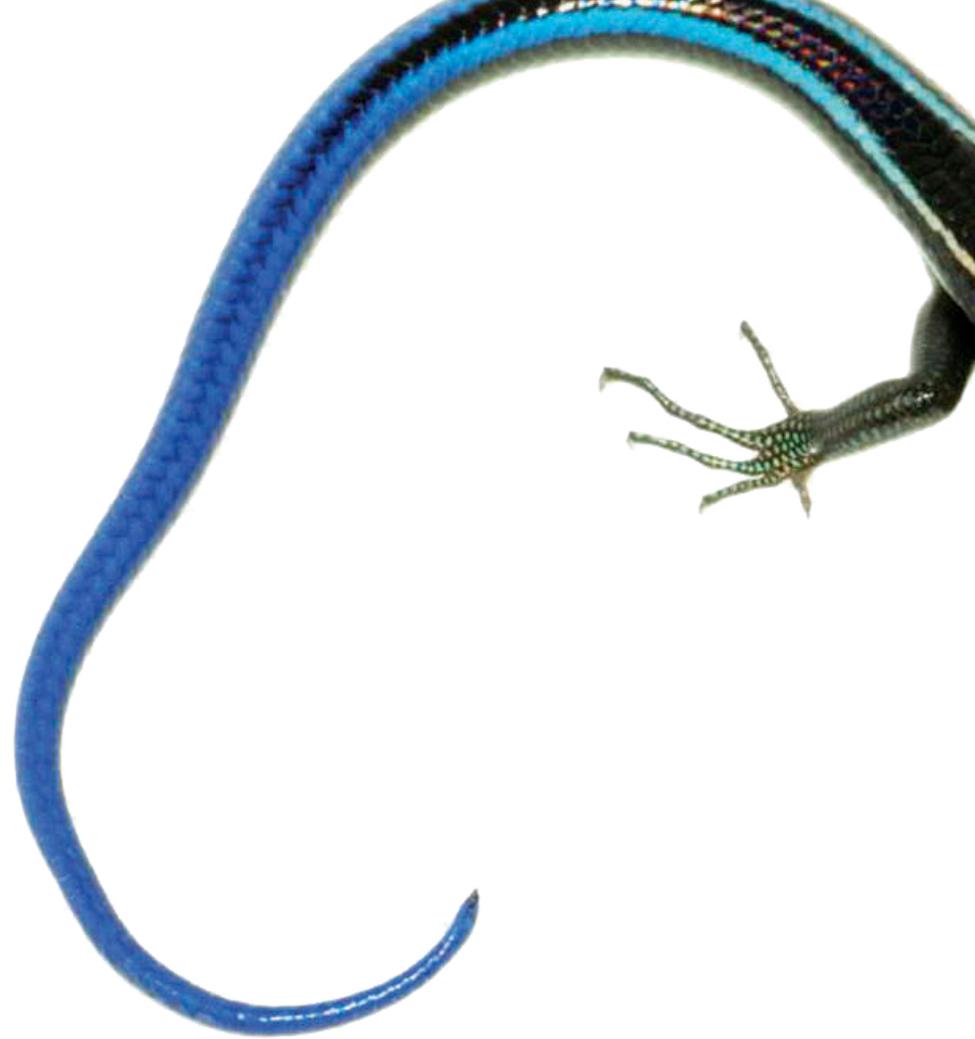
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A

SKINK STORY

THE BRIGHT TAIL OF A LOWLY LIZARD

by *Karuna* EBERL

What would our lives be like if we woke up tomorrow and all the skinks were gone?

“To the normal run-of-the-mill person down here, it would really not affect you in the slightest,” says wildlife biologist Adam Emerick. He says this, but looks dejected by the thought. For an hour now he’s been talking about skinks with the enthusiasm of someone who clearly cares about these creatures far beyond the fact that he’s paid to be a conservationist. ➔

STRIPED MUD TURTLE

The rare striped mud turtle grows to just 6 inches long and prefers slow-moving fresh water where it dines on carrion, bugs and plants. We don't yet know if it's genetically distinct from populations on the mainland, but it is able to live for

a short while in brackish water, which could be a Keys' adaptation. If things get too dry around the watering hole, it will aestivate, or hibernate for months within the mud. They don't bask much, so you're most likely to see them on the road

after heavy rains, or when it's time to lay eggs. Breeding females can travel up to a kilometer to the same nesting spot each year, which is like a human walking from Key West to Miami to give birth.



Few humans have ever laid eyes upon this elusive predator even though it lives on, or rather under, our beaches. Look past the high-tide line of crunchy, brown seagrass and bouncing sand fleas to the beach berm, then imagine a tiny lizard with a flamboyantly bright tail, wiggling underground through soft sediment layers, seeking out bugs. Voilà! The Florida Keys mole skink.

Emerick might just be their biggest fan. He's a biologist for the four national wildlife refuges here, and has been studying skinks since graduate school. Not much is known about the Keys mole skink. Studies from the '50s and '60s on other subspecies of Florida skinks revealed that females brood over their eggs until they hatch, which is an uncommon trait for reptiles. Our skink is also very rare, so rare that as climate change takes hold, this mysterious creature might be on the verge of oblivion.

To find out, Emerick spearheaded an ambitious study to learn more about the ecology and distribution of Keys mole skinks, plus four other rare Keys reptiles. He and a team of volunteers set up 932 cover-board habitats and dozens of freshwater traps, which they checked twice a week. After a year, they had found 99 skinks, 63 striped mud turtles, 17 Key ringneck snakes, 13 peninsula ribbon snakes, and none of their fifth study, the rock-crowned snake.

A study in the Lower Keys the size of Emerick's is rare and exciting. It offered many new insights into this shy lizard, especially its preferred habitat. Then, 50 weeks into the 52-week project, Irma rolled in, practically obliterating the soft beach berms on which the skink relies. The most-populated skink homes, like Long Beach Key, Bahia Honda and Long Beach State Park, were leveled.

"Right now I'm sitting on a large tract of land that used to be a wonderful heterogeneous environment where skinks could be found if you knew where to look, and now I'm hazard to find a single one," he says. "To see events like this in real time, it really drives the point home there are some drastic changes we need to plan for."

For the seven years preceding the hurricane, the skink had been a candidate for endangered species protection, based on how little is known about its populations, impending property development, and most significantly, the long-term concerns over sea level rise and intensified storms from climate change.



MOLE SKINK

Wildlife biologist Adam Emerick recently concluded a year-long field study of five rare Keys reptiles. Like many burrowing skinks, the Florida Keys mole skink's limbs are small in proportion to its body, which allows them to propel themselves through loose soil by wiggling, eliminating the

need to to move their legs back and forth. "They are remarkably fascinating," he says. "They are perfectly adapted to their environment." These skinks are endemic to the Keys, sport a distinctive red-orange or pink tail, and max out around 6 inches in length. Keys mole skinks are one of five

subspecies endemic to the southeast. Both the Keys mole skinks and their cousins on the Gulf, the Cedar Keys mole skinks, are geographically isolated, and live so close to the water that current climate change predictions put them in grave danger over the coming years.

Less than a month after Irma, the government denied its protection, along with 24 other species, including the Pacific walrus. That prompted a lawsuit, which was recently filed by the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity.

Emerick tries not to get too involved in the politics of the skink. His objective field reports get handed to other biologists and planners, who draft plans that eventually land on the desks of the upper reaches of government for a ruling. But he isn't thrilled by the decision, and worries about the skink's survival.

"It's a shame to potentially lose it before we even know what we're losing," Emerick says. "It's really depressing. It's kind of the state of conservation here right now. There's an urgency of getting information as fast as possible."

So what would it matter, if a reptile that weighs no more than a penny and lives a life of almost complete seclusion from humans, disappeared forever? Well, it depends on whom you ask.

From a scientific standpoint, the skink's isolated evolution provides a rare opportunity to unravel mysteries of natural selection and to give insight into the Keys' ecological and geological history. From a legal stance, skinks' beach-front homes make them the proverbial canaries in the coal mine for climate change. When they are flooded out, so are we.

The success of the skink's last stand, however, may ultimately lie outside the scope of politics and science. It might simply come down to whether enough people care to make a difference. The idea of a species' right to exist, regardless of its charisma or immediate use to humans, is a journey from endemic self-importance into an existential tapestry of morality and spirituality. That takes some effort to think about. Add to that the fact that reptiles already suffer from an image problem that pre-dates organized civilization, and that's a pretty big hurdle to overcome.

Despite all of that, Emerick holds out hope in the resiliency of nature, and in the survival of the skinks. For now, he has had to put aside his research to focus on more pressing habitat management, like uprooting exotic plants, replanting native ones, and as manpower allows, monitoring sea turtle nests. Still, he aspires to put in a good word for the skinks, and for the rest of the reptiles.

| Photo Contributed by U.S.F.W.S |

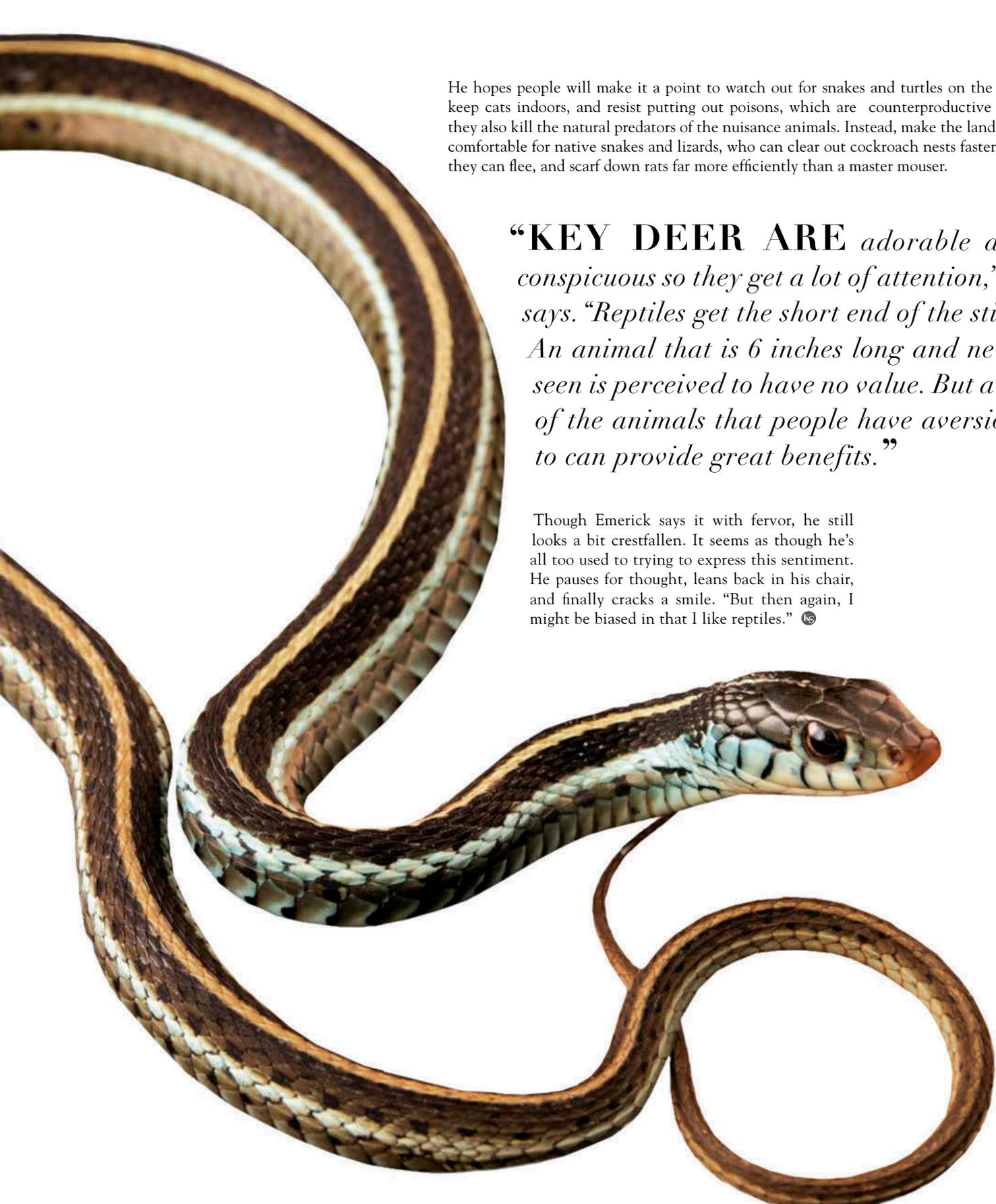


KEY RINGNECK SNAKE

Over the year - long study, Emerick's team found 17 Key ringneck snakes, which are a subspecies believed to be endemic to the Keys. They are tiny, topping out at 10 inches, and rare. If you are lucky enough to spot one, it will probably be in the garden or the



shed. They enjoy hangouts with fresh water and prefer meals of insects, frogs, and reef geckos. They are venomous, but because their fangs are in the rear of the mouth, and the venom is for immobilizing tiny prey, they have zero ability to envenomate humans — though they might douse you with a nasty musk if you bother them.



He hopes people will make it a point to watch out for snakes and turtles on the road, keep cats indoors, and resist putting out poisons, which are counterproductive since they also kill the natural predators of the nuisance animals. Instead, make the landscape comfortable for native snakes and lizards, who can clear out cockroach nests faster than they can flee, and scarf down rats far more efficiently than a master mouser.

“KEY DEER ARE *adorable and conspicuous so they get a lot of attention,” he says. “Reptiles get the short end of the stick. An animal that is 6 inches long and never seen is perceived to have no value. But a lot of the animals that people have aversions to can provide great benefits.”*

Though Emerick says it with fervor, he still looks a bit crestfallen. It seems as though he’s all too used to trying to express this sentiment. He pauses for thought, leans back in his chair, and finally cracks a smile. “But then again, I might be biased in that I like reptiles.” 

PENINSULA RIBBON SNAKE

These semi-aquatic, nonvenomous snakes grow to 2 feet, and enjoy being around fresh water, where they feed on all life stages of frogs and small fish. They are

elusive, but on occasion can be spotted on roads, especially ones that bisect wetlands. They hunt largely by sight, so their oversized eyes make them easier to identify.

Help out the research and report sightings of any of these animals to Emerick; adam_emerick@fws.gov.



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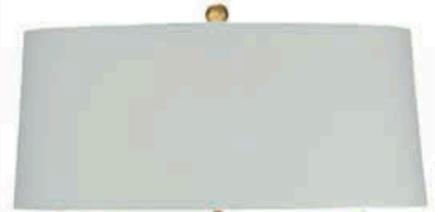
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S
F

Stephen Frink's first underwater camera, a Nikonos II, was purchased from a surfer in Seal Beach, Calif. for \$50. Armed with that and inspired by seeing his photographs develop during a black and white photography class at California State University - Long Beach, his life was taking baby steps to what it would become. His first equipment upgrade was to a housed Bronica C, a medium format camera with a capacity of only 12 exposures, so he aimed for quality with that limited number of shots.

UNDER THE SEA WITH
UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER

STEPHEN
FRINK

| **Right:** Several years ago there was a massive congregation of jellyfish and Portuguese Man-O-War on the reefs of the Upper Keys and all the way to Jupiter, FL. It was bad for diving, but good for photo opportunities. Frink shot this over/under of the Man-o-war using a Seacam housing, superdome, and a Canon 14mm lens. The near proximity was not without hazard, as he was badly stung a moment after this image was captured |





One of the most frequently-published underwater photographers in the world, Frink has lived in Key Largo for 40 years. After years of photography, he compiled his photographs in several books, including in 1996: *Wonders of the Reef*; the *Florida Keys Dive Guide* two years later and the *Cayman Islands: Dive Guide* a year after that. Frink stays busy traveling the world with camera in hand.

How did his stellar vocation begin? Humbly enough as a photo-processing retailer after working a job in Colorado making custom color prints for an advertising photography studio. Then, Frink rented part of a dive shop in Key Largo in 1978 where he rented cameras to tourists as well as developed and processed tourists' E-6 slides from film cameras. He practiced scuba diving in his spare time and experimented with underwater photography. Next, fate intervened. When a photographer from *Sport Diver* magazine could not complete an assignment in the Keys due to weather, the magazine gave Frink the opportunity to submit his work instead. He borrowed a wide-angle lens, convinced a dive shop employee, Pamela Marr, to be his model and the magazine was happy with the results. Another assignment followed, which was a gig in 1982 in the Cayman Islands. Frink has been on the road ever since. Soon, he had his own underwater photography column,

| **Opposite Page (Clockwise):** The HMS *Endymion* is a historical shipwreck sunk off Salt Cay, Turks & Caicos Islands. The wreckage of this steamship is scattered by the many decades of wind and waves but Frink found a small bit of superstructure and was barely able to fit beneath it to frame this diver and blue tang, *Acanthurus coeruleus*, through a porthole | Probably the best place on the planet to photograph manatees is in Three Sisters Spring near Crystal River, Florida. Here Frink used a fisheye lens to get close to the manatee and capture a bit of the underwater environment as well | This school of Blackfin barracuda (*Sphyræna genie*) was photographed in the clear waters of the Bligh Water region of Fiji using a Canon 5Ds and 16-35mm lens at 16mm | The Red Sea remains of Frink's favorite exotic destinations for the combination of clear water, vibrant soft corals, and accessible marine life. These blue-cheeked butterflyfish are endemic to the Red Sea, here fortuitously framed by red and pink soft coral colonies | This school of bigeye were photographed at Little Brother Island off the southern Red Sea |

| **Above:** In recent years it has become known that hammerhead sharks are known to congregate in the shallow waters off Bimini, Bahamas. Often it is the anglers who know of such behaviors before even the scuba divers do, but in this case it was the shark researchers working with Dr. Sonny Gruber at the University of Miami who first identified this phenomena |

| Photo by *Stephn FRINK* |





| **Above:** On a recent trip to the Cuba's Gardens of the Queen, Jardines de la Reina, Frink had the opportunity to photograph the American crocodile back in the clear water mangroves. In order to provide a sense of scale and a human referent, his daughter, Alexa Frink, swims in the background |

| Photo by *Stepehn FRINK* |



| **Above:** One of the major benefits of diving the Florida Keys for the underwater photographer is that with decades of Sanctuary protection the marine life does not associate the presence of divers with peril. Diving in a Marine Protected Area (MPA) is far different than diving areas open to hook-and-line or spearfishing. As underwater photography requires proximity, the MPAs are extraordinarily productive for marine life imaging. In this photo, a queen angelfish photographed on Molasses Reef, Key Largo |



illustrated, of course, with his own photos. He traveled the world for 17 years for Skin Diver magazine, and then was director of photography for Scuba Diving for another nine years. Now, he is the publisher of Alert Diver, a coffee-table quality, quarterly magazine for the Divers Alert Network.

Frink is perhaps best known for his work with underwater models. He credits their eyes for leading people into the photograph. "The best models will have a certain sensitivity, approaching fish with a Zen-like consciousness so as not to scare them," he said. His best underwater model became his wife, Barbara Doernbach. She noticed she could receive modeling feedback underwater through a reflection in the camera's dome. The pair also communicated in their aquatic realm with specific hand signals.

In 1985, the couple founded WaterHouse Tours and Reservations, a dive travel specialty company which organizes tours catering to the needs of underwater photographers. Stephen has been the tour leader for more than four dozen tours to dive resorts and on live-aboard boats in exotic destinations including the Red Sea, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Africa, Australia, Palau, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and the Socorro Islands.

For those seeking to excel at underwater photography, Frink teaches the Stephen Frink Digital Masters class annually in Key Largo.

Stephen is the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Achievement Award, which was presented at the Our World Underwater Film Festival in Chicago, as well as 2016 NOGI Award in the Arts category by the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences. The NOGI is the diving world's oldest and most prestigious, international award. In September, Frink will travel to Grand Cayman to be inducted into the International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame. 

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AVENUE Q

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APRIL 21

FIRST DAY OF NATIONAL
PARK WEEK:
DRY TORTUGAS

National Park Service is offering free entrance in celebration of National Park Week at Dry Tortugas National Park

MARATHON

APRIL 14

37TH ANNUAL
SEVEN MILE BRIDGE RUN

A field of 1,500 runners participate in the annual foot race across the longest bridge of the Florida Keys Overseas Highway.

ISLAMORADA

APRIL 8

BAYJAM 24

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KEY LARGO

MARCH 30 - 31

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FOR DIVERS

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KEY WEST

MARCH 27- 28

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MARCH 28

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MARCH 29 - APRIL 4

**WATERFRONT
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AVENUE Q

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**STUDIOS OF KEY WEST
PRESENTS:**

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MARCH 31

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WEST PRESENTS:
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ImprovBoston's alumni have been featured on The Daily Show, America's Got Talent, and Last Comic Standing, to name a few. They show you what the big deal is, and play a bit with the locals, fresh off their workshops this week. Show starts 7 p.m.

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APRIL 16

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APRIL 17 - MAY 5

RED BARN THEATER PRESENTS: CRY IT OUT

Cooled up on maternity leave and starved for conversation, Jessie invites her funny and forthright neighbor, Lina, also a new mom, for coffee. Despite their vastly different finances, they become fast friends during nap times...while someone watches from the mansion on the cliff overlooking Jessie's yard. This comedy with dark edges takes an honest look at the absurdities of being home with a baby, the dilemma of returning to work, and how class impacts parenthood and friendship. Show times and tickets online.

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APRIL 19

SOUTH FLORIDA

SYMPHONY PRESENTS:

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

Symphonie Fantastique is an epic for a huge orchestra. Through its movements, it tells the story of an artist's self-destructive passion for a beautiful woman. Nimrod Borenstein's "If You Will It It Is No Dream", based on words of Theodore Herzl, was composed as a celebration Israel's 70th Anniversary. Performance at 7:30 p.m., Tennessee Williams Theater.

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APRIL 25 - 26

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

THEATER PRESENTS:

KINKY BOOTS

Kinky Boots is Broadway's huge-hearted, high-heeled hit! With songs by Grammy and Tony-winning pop icon Cyndi Lauper, this musical celebration is about the friendships we discover, and the belief that you can change the world when you change your mind. Inspired by true events, Kinky Boots takes you from a gentlemen's shoe factory in Northampton to the glamorous catwalks of Milan. Show times 8p.m., Tennessee Williams Theater

www.keystix.com

APRIL 28, 2018

KEY WEST

PADDLE CLASSIC

Presented by Lazy Dog Adventures, challenge includes a 12-mile Elite Race around the island and a 4-mile open race. Other events include a kick-off registration party, paddleboard clinics and races for kids.

305.304.4259

www.lazydog.com/events/paddleboard-classic

MAY 3 - 26

WATERFRONT

PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS:

THE LEGEND OF GEORGIA MCBRIDE

Casey is an unemployed Elvis impersonator in need of a quick buck. In desperation, he takes up a job offer from drag queen Miss Tracy, to fill in for her drunk partner at a night's cabaret performance. Turns out he's a natural, and soon he's decked out in sequins and warbling Barbara Streisand with the best of them. However, he's kept his new job secret from his wife Jo, who's starting to wonder about her husband's newly unleashed feminine side.

305.294.5015

waterfrontplayhouse.org



MAY 9 - 13

KEY WEST SONGWRITERS' FESTIVAL

The annual showcase of music features America's foremost performing songwriters, with concerts staged in intimate, audience - friendly island settings. The festival revolves around five days and nights of big stars in intimate settings, introducing audiences to the faces, voices and stories behind the songs.

305.304.0814

keywestsongwritersfestival.com

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MAY 4 - 6

THIRD ANNUAL PAPIO KINETIC SCULPTURE PARADE

If one man's junk is another man's treasure, then the late Key Largo folk artist Stanley Papio was a treasure hunter extraordinaire. Fans of "outsider art" can celebrate the renegade metal sculptor's legacy with a people-powered parade of mobile sculptures crafted in the spirit of his extraordinary creations. The Papio Kinetic Sculpture Parade features colorful sculptural floats, tricycles with exotically costumed riders, fantastically decorated bicycles and other moving works of art- all powered by human effort alone - and are to follow a route along the length of Key West's Duval Street.

305.295.6616

www.papioskineticparade.com

MAY 18 - 20

KEY WEST CO-ED MAHI MASTERS

In this challenge, cash prizes are awarded to the male and female angler scoring the highest total combined weight of three dolphin catches. There is no limit on the number of participating boats.

305.296.0364

JUNE 6 - 10

KEY WEST PRIDE

Key West shows its Pride every day, and this is your chance to be a part of the celebration! The five-day schedule includes daytime pool and beach parties, late-night drag shows, on-the-water adventures ranging from snorkeling and kayaking to glass-bottom boat tours, a street fair, a 10k relay for tutu-wearing runners and walkers, and pageants to select Mr., Miss and Ms. Key West Pride.

305.294.4603

www.keywestpride.org

JUNE 9

SIXTH ANNUAL VFW FISHING TOURNAMENT

Sponsored by the Southernmost VFW Post 3911, this family oriented inshore and offshore tournament offers cash prizes for dolphin, wahoo, tuna, snapper and grouper, along with prizes for heaviest fish by a lady angler, heaviest fish by a juvenile angler, pee-wee, senior angler and active service member. The heaviest Dolphin is worth \$3000.00.

All proceeds benefit VFW Relief Fund for Monroe County veterans, and local charities.

610.304.2392

keywestfishingtournament.com

JUNE 30 - JULY 4

SIXTH ANNUAL KEY LIME FESTIVAL

A wacky talent show, pie-eating and cooking contests and other tasty temptations await Key West visitors during the annual Key Lime Festival. Four days of culinary events for every taste are planned, including favorites from past years like the Key Lime Cocktail Sip & Stroll, and new favorites for Key Lime lovers.

www.keylimefestival.com

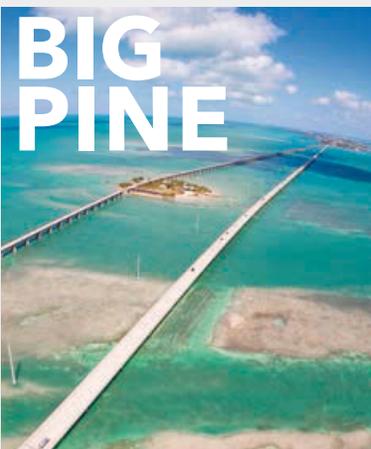
JUNE 30

FKCC SWIM AROUND KEY WEST

The officially sanctioned event is a 12.5-mile swim clockwise around the island of Key West that is open to all age groups. Individual swimmers and relay teams can compete. The route takes swimmers through the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, ending where they began at Higgs Beach.

305.809.3562

fkccswimaroundkeywest.com



JUNE 1 - 3

ORIGINAL BIG PINE & LOWER KEYS DOLPHIN TOURNAMENT

The Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce presents its 25th annual event, where anglers contend for more than \$35,000 in cash prizes and awards. A special cash prize of \$20,000 is awarded for the largest dolphin over 50 pounds. Additional prizes await winners in the open, ladies and youth divisions.

800.872.2411

www.lowerkeyschamber.com



MARCH 2 - 4

12TH ANNUAL SOMBRERO BEACH RUN

Each year, several hundred racing circuit runners are attracted by a weekend filled with sunshine and athletic fun. Stocked with food, drinks, music and entertainment, the event is to be staged at Sombrero Beach at the end of Sombrero Beach Road, mile marker 50. Awards are given to overall finishers in the 10k run, 5k run and 5k walk.

305.289.9868

www.sombrerobeachrun.com

MARCH 4

61ST ANNUAL KEY COLONY BEACH DAYS

Participants and visitors can enjoy this family event set for 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the grounds of Key Colony Beach City Hall, the day features vendors, food, live music and more. A Shriner's pancake breakfast starts at 8 a.m., a parade is set for 11:30 a.m. Free admission, free parking, old fashioned fun.

www.kcbca.org

MARCH 10 - 11

ORIGINAL MARATHON SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

One of the middle Keys' signature family events, delicacies from the waters of the Florida Keys highlight this annual munch-fest at Marathon Community Park. Sponsored by Organized Fishermen of Florida and Marathon Chamber of Commerce. Live music, vendor booths, sweets, treats and beverages make for a delectable weekend. An open-air boat show is to be staged at entrance to the festival.

305.743.5417

marathonseafoodfestival.com

APRIL 6-8

POPS STIGLITZ COED SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

All proceeds benefit marathon high school students interested in continuing their education at a college level. Event will be held at the Marathon Community Park.

305.731.3800

APRIL 14

37TH ANNUAL SEVEN MILE BRIDGE RUN

A field of 1,500 runners participate in the annual foot race across the longest of the 43 bridges that help comprise the Florida Keys Overseas Highway. Sponsored by the Marathon Runners Club. Bridge is to be closed from 6:45 a.m. to 9 a.m.

305.395.7040

www.7mbrun.com

MAY 3 - 19

MARATHON COMMUNITY THEATER PRESENTS: MAKING GOD LAUGH

Making God Laugh is a family comedy that takes place in four scenes, each ten years apart and set at various holidays. Beginning in 1980, the kids - a priest, an aspiring actress, and a former star football player - all return home where we learn of their plans as they embark on their adult lives. The "empty nest" parents contend with their own changes. "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plan..." Woody Allen

305-743-0994

www.marathontheater.org

APRIL 28

LIGHT IT UP BLUE AUTISM AWARENESS DINNER EVENT

Caribbean style dinner catered by Irie Eats, with entertainment

By Reel Ting Steel Drums and silent auction! \$50 per ticket (\$20 under 12). All proceeds benefit Autism Society of the Keys.

305.942.5172

MAY 4 - 6

MARATHON OFFSHORE BULL & COW DOLPHIN TOURNAMENT

Over \$30,000 in cash and prizes awaits the top anglers with the largest bull and cow combined, while other prizes are awarded to anglers catching the largest dolphin, wahoo, tuna and tripletail.

305-481-0495

marathonoffshoretournament.com

MAY 5 - 9

TARPONIAN TOURNAMENT

For enthusiastic tarpon anglers, silver kings mean springtime. This high-energy, three-evening tournament mandates that teams fish with a different captain each evening. Teams also rotate among the three major bridge channels in Marathon, so any potential "hot spots" are shared among all anglers.

215.542.1492

JUNE 2

BATTLE IN THE BAY DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

The waters off Sombrero Beach are to be transformed into a swift racecourse for a day of dragon boat racing that involves 20 paddlers moving in unison a combination of strength and teamwork. Sombrero Beach provides a pristine setting and unique, direct-from-the-beach launch for the sleek, 40-foot-long race boats. The festival is free and open to the public. Food, beverages, merchandise and a variety of entertainment are to be available shoreside.

813-426-3544

battleinthebaydragonboat.com



MARCH 3

KEYS COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND PRESENTS: FLORIDA HERITAGE IN STORY AND SONG

A free concert at the ICE Amphitheater at Islamorada's Founders Park, Bayside, MM

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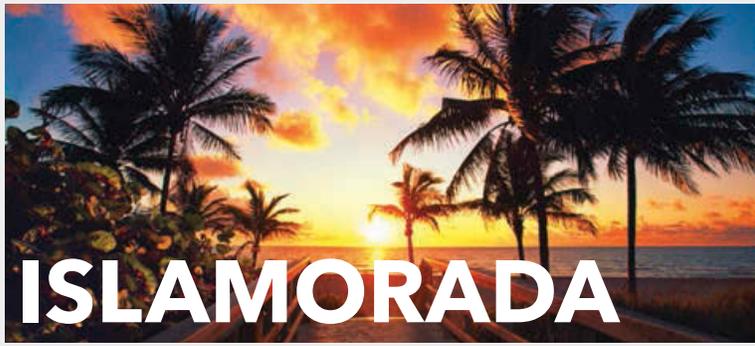
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87, Plantation Key. Performances are outdoors; no chairs provided, bring blankets. Starts at 4 p.m. Admission free for all concerts. Presented by Keys Community Concert Band. Musical highlights as well as poetry reader, and the Dulcimer Ensemble.
305-853-7294
keyscommunityconcertband.org

MARCH 6 - 9
JIM BOKOR'S ISLAMORADA ALL TACKLE BONEFISH & REDFISH SHOOTOUT
 Anglers vie for top-honor trophies for catches of bonefish and redfish in this newly formatted event, appealing to a broader spectrum of anglers. Awards also are to be given for total release points for each species and to the high-point angler for each day. An overall grand champion is to be named for both fish in the three categories.
305-587-1460

MARCH 18
THIRD ANNUAL ISLAMORADA SEAFOOD FESTIVAL & ART SHOW
 A festival benefiting Moose charities, featuring delicious, inventive seafood samplings from local chefs, with libations, local craft beers available. Showcasing works by Keys artisans, live music and family fun - a festive day for adults and children alike, as well as being pet-friendly. Free admission. Seafood Samplings are cash only. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Islamorada Moose Lodge, at 81573 Old Highway.
www.facebook.com/IslamoradaMoose

MARCH 24 - 25
27TH ANNUAL FLORIDA KEYS ISLAND FEST
 Music, art, food and fun complement this annual art show with nearly 100 artists and crafters, live music and a "Taste of

the Islands" foodie competition. Free admission, festival hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Founder's Park, mile marker 87 bayside on Plantation Key. On-site parking for a \$5 donation. Sponsored by the Islamorada Chamber of Commerce.
305-664-4503
www.islamoradachamber.com

MARCH 24
KEYS KIDS BUSINESS FAIRE
 The Brainery Kids Business Faire is a unique and creative one-day festival for young entrepreneurs ages 7-17 who enjoy creating and seek to showcase their talents to their community as merchants. Each child will learn vital skills in product development, branding, presentation, product pricing, packaging, goal setting and profit & loss management. The Faire plays host to performers, inventors, food vendors and fine artists who along with the young entrepreneurs celebrate a community rich in talent, drive and creativity. From 10am - 2pm at the Brainery 151 Morada Way.
305-394-5950
info@brainerykids.com

APRIL 8
BAYJAM 24
 This music and art festival features local and guest artists performing on the shores of Florida Bay at the ICE Amphitheater at Founders Park, mile marker 87 on U.S. 1. Attendees can savor the sounds from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. from the hammock-like performance center set against the aqua waters of Florida Bay.
www.facebook.com/keyiceFL

APRIL 21
FREE OUTDOOR POPS-IN-THE-PARK: YOUNG MUSICIANS CONCERT
 A free season-closing concert at the ICE Amphitheater at Islamorada's Founders Park, Bayside, MM 87,

Plantation Key. Performances are outdoors; no chairs provided, bring blankets. Starts at 4 p.m. Talented local students join the band!
305-853-7294
keyscommunityconcertband.org

MAY 03
MARRVELOUS PET RESCUES YAPPY HOUR
 6-8pm at Bayside Grille Restaurant in Key Largo - Meet some adorable pups, swap dog tales and enjoy cocktails with fellow dog lovers. Bring your own well behaved leashed dog and come meet the rescues adoptable dogs.
305-453-1315
info@MPRescues.org

MAY 04
FIRST FRIDAY - MONTHLY BAYSIDE BLOCK PARTY
 Key Largo's new monthly street party with local artists, crafts vendors, food, and more along US1 on the Overseas Highway at MM 104. Free Admission - park at any of the bayside businesses and walk the bayside bike path. 6-10pm Rain or Shine!
305-451-4803
www.keylargofirstfriday.com

MAY 4 - 6
NICK SHEAHAN DOLPHIN RODEO
 A tournament honoring the memory of Nick Sheahan, a Florida Keys student, funds from this event benefit a namesake community scholarship fund. Hosted at Tavernier Creek Marina, cash prizes and \$25,000 to the angler with the dolphin that beats the state record. Entry fee for adults is \$185, \$50 for juniors.
305-393-3733
www.nicksheahan.com

MAY 20 - 23
LOOP GOLDEN FLY INVITATIONAL TARPON TOURNAMENT
 Special flies, accurate casts and a bit of luck are the recipe for winning this prestigious challenge, using only a tournament-furnished tippet not greater than 16-pound test. Eligible tarpon must measure at least 48 inches in length to earn release points, and weigh at least 70 pounds for weight points.
305-587-1460

JUNE 13 - 15
41ST ANNUAL LADIES TARPON FLY TOURNAMENT
 The Ladies Tarpon Fly is an all release, fly fishing invitational that has attracted many premier lady fly anglers and guides throughout its history. The tournament participants range from the expert to the novice who is trying to improve her fishing skills.
917-607-8779
www.facebook.com/keystarpon



MARCH 24
KEYS COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND PRESENTS: FLORIDA HERITAGE IN STORY AND SONG
 Musical highlights as well as poetry reader, and the Dulcimer Ensemble. A free concert at the Murray Nelson Gov't & Cultural Center, MM 104. Starts at 4 p.m. Admission free for all concerts. Presented by Keys Community Concert Band. Musical highlights as well as poetry reader, and the Dulcimer Ensemble.
305-853-729
keyscommunityconcertband.org

MARCH 30 - 31
REEF LIONFISH DERBY FOR DIVERS PRESENTED BY WHOLE FOOD MARKETS
 Derby divers who successfully remove invasive lionfish from sanctuary waters can win for most, largest and smallest lionfish. Friday, March 30 from 6:30-7:30 p.m., Captain's Meeting is mandatory for the team captains, and all team members are encouraged to attend. Sunrise, Saturday, March 31 at Sharkey's Pub & Galley, teams may begin collecting lionfish. All lionfish must be turned into the scoring station by 5 p.m., scoring and public lionfish tastings, and Awards will immediately follow scoring.
305-852-0030
reef.org/derbies/winterderby

APRIL 28

CORAL RESTORATION FOUNDATION'S 6TH ANNUAL GALA

Presenting guest of honor, Richard Vevers of the hit Netflix documentary, Chasing Coral and Founder/CEO of the Ocean Agency. VIP guests are invited to attend this exclusive reception with our gala speakers. The reception will feature cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, as well as a chance to meet our Guest of Honor and connect with Coral Restoration Foundation leadership. Raise the Reef Gala starts at 7pm. Enjoy a sustainably sourced dinner, along with cocktails, music, and silent and live auctions benefiting Coral Restoration Foundation. www.gala.coralrestoration.org

MAY. 17 - 20

KEY LARGO'S ORIGINAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

Enjoy the food, entertainment and ambiance of Key Largo during this singers and songwriters event. Multiple "on the water" venues feature Nashville's hit songwriters and musicians as well as unique local entertainers. Presented by the Upper Keys Business Group.

305-394-3736

keylargooriginalmusicfest.com

JUNE 1 - 3

FOURTH ANNUAL SKIPPERS DOLPHIN TOURNAMENT

This tournament is headquartered at Skippers Dockside Restaurant, behind the Holiday Inn. Anyone, including captains and mates, are eligible to participate. Junior anglers must be under the age of 16 on the first day of the tournament. First-place team is awarded \$20,000 cash. Prize monies are given the top six teams, including \$10,000 to second place, \$5,000 for third place, daily-angler, lady-angler, junior-angler cash prizes and more.

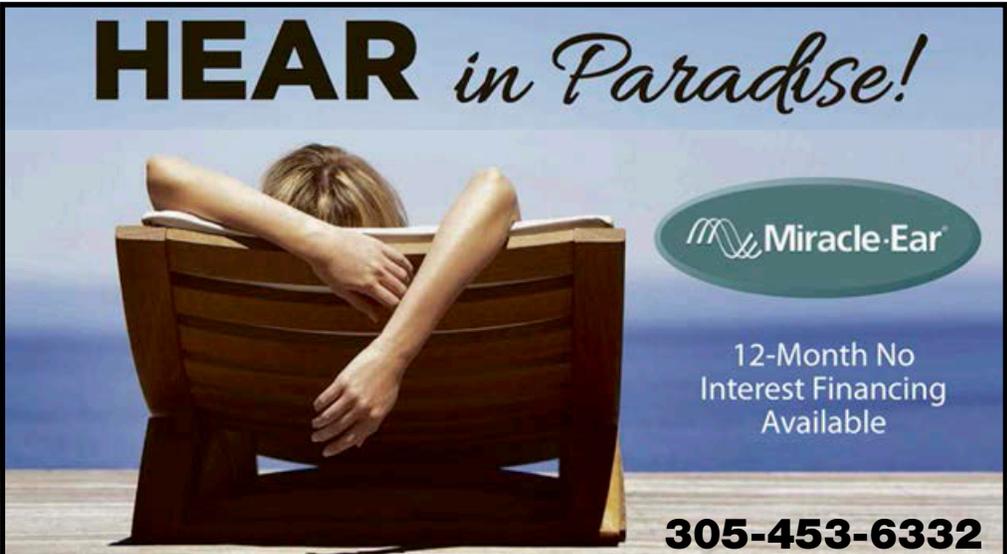
305-522-4868

www.skippertournaments.com

The Keys Style event calendar is provided by www.fla-keys.com.

If you would like to add an event to our three month calendar, please email any information to

*Editor: Kay Harris
kharris@keysnews.com*



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