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Thinking out Loud

page 7

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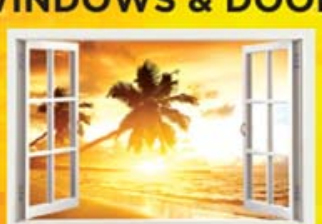

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Thinking out Loud

How one idea led to a career change in the Keys

The lined tugged, hard! "I got one," little Richard Mangel said in surprise and then yelled, "I got one!" Everyone jumped to their feet as the chorus of voices confirmed what Richard claimed. Sure enough, he hooked something. He hooked something big. The line was pulled tight and was darting back and forth like a string trying to hang on to a kite in a hurricane. Young Richard was in awe when a kite peeked out of the water. But it wasn't a kite. It was a sail.

Suddenly, in a display of strength, the sailfish leapt from the water and seemingly swam through the air as its tail whipped back and forth. All of the chaos on the boat halted and everyone just stared. When the fish reentered the water, everyone snapped out of it. Lots of hands and voices, including Richard's brothers and sister, got back to work and helped bring in the sailfish.

"It was the greatest Chinese fire drill I've ever seen!" Richard says with a laugh. "The day I hooked that fish is the day I got hooked on the Keys."

Decades later, Richard Mangel traded in visiting the Keys to living in the Keys. Now with children of his own, he shares similar family adventures in between running his own small business. Keys to Embroidery is a young, but quickly expanding local business that specializes in custom clothing and products. But it was a different specialty that first brought Richard to the Keys permanently.

Before becoming a small business owner, Richard was a teacher for twenty years. He taught every subject there is in middle school, including special education. When he learned Monroe County was looking for a specialized teacher, he jumped at the opportunity to make his dream of living in the Keys a reality. Richard taught in Monroe County School District for 12 years, until his career took an unexpected turn.

In addition to classrooms full of kids over the years, Richard has four children. Savana, 15, is a dancer and high school cheerleader. Hailey, 13, is a swimmer and loves soccer. Edison is six years old and already has a passion for baseball and soccer. And then there's little Sawyer. At 9 months old, his favorite activity is eating and giggling. Needless to say, they are a very active family. Between dance recitals, swimming competitions, Saturday games, and tickle sessions, you wouldn't think there was time for much else. Yet, a career change occurred in the midst of it all.

Less than two years ago, before Sawyer was born, a simple idea came to life. Richard's wife, Karina, wondered aloud about the costs of an embroidery machine. She had been ordering embroidered apparel from a friend in her hometown of Charleston, South Carolina, and thought maybe it would be worth doing on her own. After a short discussion, Karina headed to work as a nurse at Baptist Hospital in Tavernier, and Richard headed to the computer.

After some research, Richard placed the order and soon, he and Karina were on the road to pick up their new embroidery machine. By simply mentioning their new venture to friends, they already had orders pending before the machine was even plugged in! Word continued to spread so quickly that people were dropping and picking up products from Richard in the school drop off and pick up line. Impressed with Richard, the school offered him a year leave of absence to grow the business. Thankful for their support, Richard accepted and dove into their new business.

It all started with the one machine in their home. Within two months, they moved into a small facility. One month later, they moved into a 900 square foot facility. Today, less than two years after thinking out loud, Keys to Embroidery just settled into a 2,500 square foot facility. Richard has officially retired from teaching and is now a full-fledged entrepreneur.

"Without the help and support of our friends, and especially our parents," Richard says, "this dream of owning our own apparel shop wouldn't have been possible."

> ***Keys to Embroidery is a quintessential family business that has become a part of the community.***

They have helped sponsor and provide products for countless local events and fundraisers, including Fish for Holly tournaments, PKS Color Runs, Whale Harbor Bridge Runs, Conch Scramble Charity Golf Events, Pascal's Way, and more. They are also a regular donor and sponsor for Treasure Village Montessori.

Since COVID, Keys to Embroidery has also made over 16,000 Buff-style gator necks for local businesses and residents, and donated hundreds to the MC Sheriff Office and Fire Department to help keep them safe. They recently joined forces with Conch Republic Apparel to meet continuously growing demands for all things custom: embroidery, vinyl print, sublimation, and screen printing. All of this success and support because of one idea... and a sailfish.

Jerrica Mah is a writer, army wife, and freelance book editor, who loves to travel with her family.

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Sebastian Del Negro

With its salty shores and lush vegetation, the Keys is one of the states' most exotic getaways. For Sebastian Del Negro, however, it became his home after exotic adventures. Now, he's helping others make the Keys their home, or second home, as one of Coldwell Banker's newest and most promising real estate agents.

Though Sebastian is a new agent in the Keys, he's not new to the real estate game. In fact, that's not the only game he knows. Born in Argentina, Sebastian played professional Rugby for several years, leading to a globe-trotting life. He lived in Australia, England, South Africa, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia—and those are just the countries he could list off the top of his head. When he was 27, Sebastian was injured during a game while playing for Liverpool. He ultimately retired and moved back to Argentina to work with his father's company.

Sebastian isn't all rugby brawn and no brains, though. While playing professionally, he managed to squeeze in an industrial engineering degree with a masters in alternative fuels. He applied that knowledge to his father's company in Argentina, and then expanded it to the United States to run his own automotive company. Specializing in electric conversion kits for gas vehicles, he settled in northern Texas.

In order to escape the Texas heat, Sebastian and his family bought a second home in the Keys. They would visit regularly and found it harder and harder to return home with every visit. In 2014, Sebastian grew bored with his automotive business and decided to get his Texas real estate license.

"In my first business, it was the same thing every day. With real estate, every property is different and every client has unique needs," Sebastian explains. "That's why I love real estate so much. I enjoy getting to know the clients and the challenge of getting them exactly what they want."

Real estate also gave Sebastian the perfect outlet to move to the Keys. In 2019, Sebastian and his family upped their Keys' game by finally purchasing a boat. They visited in July, again in September, and then again for Thanksgiving. That boat finally tipped the scale. Sebastian drove his family back to Texas, sold everything, and drove a moving truck back to the Keys. And the family couldn't be happier.

"My 5-year-old son loves it here," Sebastian says, "In Texas, it was either too hot or too cold to enjoy being outdoors. Here, it's fishing and crab hunting and lizards and being outside all day and every day."

Sebastian is happily married to his wife, Dominique, who is a baker and photographer. They have two sons, their five-year-old "little cowboy," named Sebastian after his father, and baby Matias who is only two months old. Most days after work, Sebastian takes his oldest down to the dock to go fishing. He finds it rewarding that his son understands where food comes from, and that it teaches his son not to be wasteful and to appreciate the food on the table.

With his real estate experience in Texas, Sebastian was able to easily transition as an agent here in the Keys. He joined the Coldwell Banker Schmitt Real Estate team and was pleasantly surprised at how welcoming everyone was.

"I'm very impressed with Coldwell Banker. You'd think it would be a cut-throat environment, but it's not. Everyone in my office has been very nice and helpful, especially Maria Barroso who has become my mentor," Sebastian says.

> *"My colleagues make me feel at home, and so does the community."*

Sebastian has already been adopted as "Seb" in the community. Though he arrived in the Keys the day coronavirus shut-down orders were put in place, he hasn't missed a beat. The real estate market is booming in the Keys, despite the pandemic, and Seb has learned to adapt to the changes quickly. Perhaps his years adjusting to new countries and cultures prepared him to adapt so easily to the current environment.

Seb is looking forward to interacting more with the community once life begins to return to normal. He has been a part of the Rotary Club for over 20 years, spanning back to Argentina, and can't wait to be actively involved again. He was even awarded a Paul Harris Award for helping establish the "We Help You Grow" organization that feeds 700 kids breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day in Argentina.

Sebastian Del Negro, or Seb, as you'll come to know him, is a new face in the Keys community but one that will soon be recognized by everyone. He is committed to the Keys way of life, where working hard means you can play hard. And he is ready to work hard for you, so you can play hard too.

Jerrica Mah is a writer, army wife, and freelance book editor, who loves to travel with her family.

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You are responsible for your pets. If possible, animals should be removed during showings. Be aware that buyers and agents are sometimes attacked, and the owner will be held liable.

At an open house, be alert to the pattern of visitors' arrivals, especially near the end of showing hours. In some areas, a group of thieves will show up together near the end of the open house and, while a string of "potential buyers" distracts the agent, the rest of the group walks through the house, stealing any valuables they come across.

After an open house or a standard showing, make sure that all doors and windows are locked. Thieves commonly use open houses to scout for valuables and possible points of entry, then return after the agent leaves.

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SOLD - Key Largo

4 beds/3.5 baths with a great Bay View

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$1,975,000

SOLD - Key Largo

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The FACE BEHIND *the* MASK

Deputy Frank Westerband

Before COVID-19, superheroes were known for wearing masks to protect their identity. Now, our heroes are wearing masks to protect their community. Deputy Frank Westerband is one of the many essential workers in Monroe County that has a new addition to their uniform: a face mask. But with that mask comes a message. A message that a sense of community is what's truly essential.

Deputy Frank Westerband and his fellow officers are on a mission to spread that message, but it started long before COVID-19. The crime rate in Monroe County has steadily decreased over the past three years, and they accredit it to a community-centric mentality. Deputy Westerband explains, "If we see a need, we try to fill it. Our commanders, like Sergeant Joel Slough, encourage us to practically go out searching for people and families in need [beyond standard police work]. He also brings cases to us and we rally together to help any way we can."

And the officers don't have to be asked twice to help. In fact, they don't have to be asked at all. When COVID-19 hit, many people in the Keys lost their jobs overnight. Deputy Westerband could relate and wanted to help however he could.

"I grew up living paycheck to paycheck and can understand what a lot of families are going through right now." With some coaxing, he shared how he and a fellow officer donated over 200 pounds of food to the shelter at the beginning of the shutdown. They also donated groceries and gift cards to a single mom who lost her job.

On the Monroe County Sherriff's Office Facebook page, there are many posts about the officer's acts of kindness. But those posts are just the tip of the iceberg. Before COVID-19, many officers, including Deputy Westerband, would visit the rec center for a pickup game of basketball or just to hang out with the kids. Many community members don't know that the basketball court those officers and kids play on was made possible by a fellow officer.

"Sgt. James Hager coordinated the donation of the Dream Court with Officer Bobby White [from Basketball Cop Foundation] and Nancy Lieberman. Now, we use that court to show the local kids that we're here for them. We play some pickup games and if we lose, we have to buy them ice cream," Deputy Westerband says, and then he adds with a wink, "We lose a lot."

The officer's kindness spreads beyond people. Deputy Westerband helps organize events for the local SPCA and is also growing support for Forgotten Felines. Westerband and fellow officers helped rebuild the SPCA's cat patio, painted spay/neuter trailers, hanged awnings, and more. It shows the community that they care, and makes the Keys a better place to live for people and animals alike. The message comes across loud and clear, even to Deputy Westerband's son.

"I was really proud of my son when we cashed in a load of recycling. It came out to $400 and his first instinct was to donate it to the animal shelter,"

Continued on page 19 ▸

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Continued from page 17

Deputy Westerband says with a smile on his face. "And that's exactly what we did."

Deputy Westerband is the epitome of a family man. When asked what he likes to do in his free time, he replied anything that my son likes to do. His son is turning 12 years old, and they often go kayaking or to the skatepark.

COVID-19 has presented new challenges for the officers. Deputy Westerband explains that it is harder to identify suspects since they are wearing masks, and harder to read people's reactions. But, overall, he says that the community has taken a positive stance on the pandemic. He even compared it to how the community rallied together after Hurricane Irma.

"I grew up in Miami, where there is a lot of anti-police sentiment. But it's not like that here. Down here, the community is very supportive of us and we are supportive of them," Deputy Westerband says. "And we really work hard at it.

"More than anything, we want the community to know we're here for them."

Before moving to the Keys to help his mother, Deputy Westerband served in the U.S. Army. He attended West Point, and in the 7 years he served, he was deployed to 27 different countries as a Military Intelligence Analyst. His experience made him hypervigilant, which led him back into service as a MC Sheriff's deputy. Now, he feels reconnected to a brotherhood, and reconnected to the people he wants to help.

"We don't like to toot our own horn. We just want people to know that we're here. We don't want a parade for one good deed, we want to consistently do good deeds for our community," Deputy Westerband says with conviction. "It's all about building a better community, for everyone."

Jerrica Mah is a writer, army wife, and freelance book editor, who loves to travel with her family.

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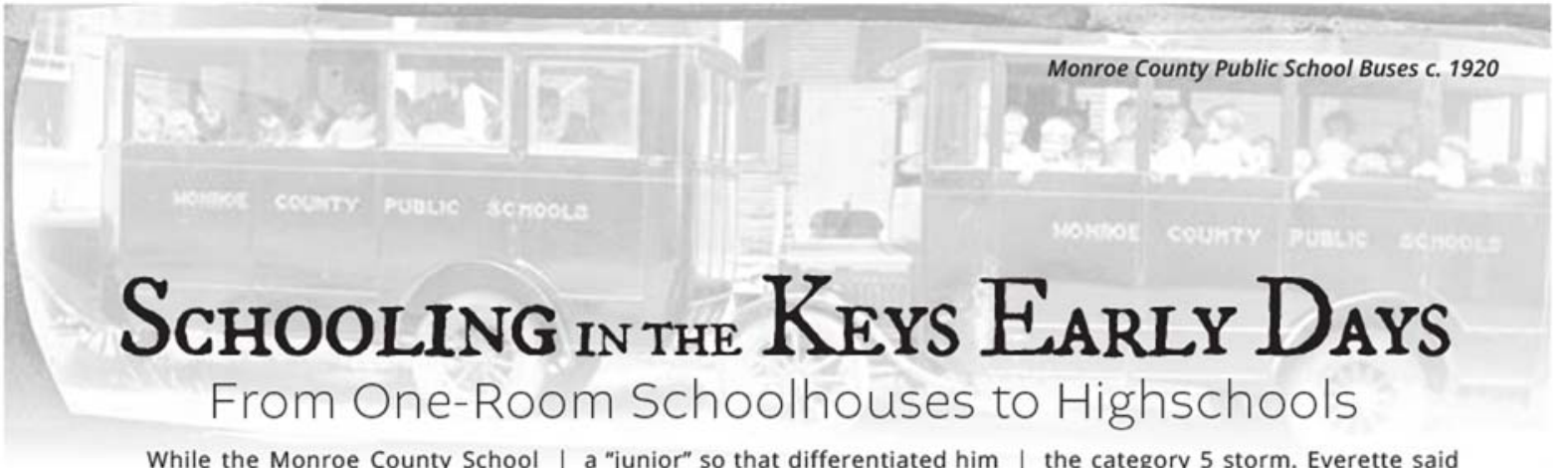

Monroe County Public School Buses c. 1920

Schooling in the Keys Early Days

From One-Room Schoolhouses to Highschools

While the Monroe County School District struggled to find the right path to re-open schools this fall, and how to socially distance on buses, a look back at schooling in the Keys early days showed education was even more haphazard. Once upon a time, school transportation was a Ford station wagon in which the rear seat had been removed and replaced with benches, and a parent volunteer was the driver. Another interesting parallel is how mosquito-borne illnesses and COVID-19 affect Keys schools. Records reveal the Rock Harbor Grammar School, near mile marker 98.5, and Matecumbe School closed in May 1925 because of mosquitoes.

Schools prior to the 1950s typically operated through eighth grade. The first Upper Keys high school, Coral Shores, opened in 1951, and added 12th grade in 1952, so it's of relatively new vintage. But schools sprouted up before then, according to community needs and availability of teachers.

Paul Everette Albury of Tavernier, who was born in 1928 and is better known as Everette because he was a "junior" so that differentiated him from his father, said he attended school in Tavernier at the age of five-and-a-half or six where the Sunshine Market is today. His first teacher was Jenny Seymour and 11 local kids attended school, nine of which were Alburys. It used to be Roger Albury's packing house, but was wiped out by the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935. It stood in the spot of today's Sunshine Market.

Original Key West High School c. 1926

A new building which was to serve as a storm shelter with two large rooms was erected Bayside in Tavernier. It was constructed by government workers who came down to help the Keys rebuild after the category 5 storm. Everette said the Tavernier School was put in that building and had grades 1-6 in one room and seventh through eleventh grade in the other half. He said his favorite subject was math.

For his senior year, Everette had to go to school in Key West. He journeyed down by bus – which ran 24/7 every hour – on Sunday afternoons and returned Friday afternoons. He lived with his grandmother, Sarah Knowles, during the school week. Everette recalled the servicemen in the Keys especially appreciated the regular bus service to get them between Key West and Miami. World War II was going on and Key West had a huge military base.

Asked about his plans upon graduation, Everette said he had no plans. He went to work where some of his family members worked, Tavern Stores, where Ace Hardware is today. The store took the whole building, said Everette, and his shift ran from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Later, in 1953, he became the Tavernier postmaster and served 30 years there. Before that, he received a free trip to Korea – serving in the war for 16 months in the area of communication and climbing poles to string wires.

Prior to Albury's experience, other settlers sought to get schools up and running. According to Historian Jerry Wilkinson, on September 8,

L > R in 4 rows as standing (later spouse): Back row 4; Charles Albury, Marjorie Albury (Matlock), Jenny Seymour (teacher) & Mary Elizabeth Albury (Arsua). Row 3; Elizabeth Albury (Peacock) & Avis Albury (Lund). Row 2; William Ray Albury, Edward Albury & Anthony Albury. Row 1; Lee Donaldson, Everett Albury, Madeline Albury (Murphy) & Joanne McKenzie.

Photo taken in 1934

Portrait of Marathon Students c. 1910

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Continued from page 22

1914, "John Roberts requested a new school at Planter and Ms. Elsie Warren taught grades 1 through 8 in a one-room wooden school.

In 1915, Lillian Knowles of Key West was hired by Key Largo lime growers, Thompson and Spencer, to teach 11 students in kindergarten through sixth grade in a little wooden house near the Largo Sound community park, said Wilkinson. "I brought the schoolbooks with me and taught every subject," Lilly said. "After 15 minutes of review, the children recited their lessons every morning. When classes were dismissed after noon, I began preparing lessons for the next day." Miss Lilly later married John Pinder and still later became a postmaster.

In the early 1920s, there was a one-room wooden school built on the beach of Upper Matecumbe, near where Cheeca Lodge is now, with Maven Meadows and Florence Pinder as teachers. Bernard Russell of Islamorada remembered Ms. Meadows boarded at his parents' house.

Around 1924, this little one-room wooden building was replaced by a two-room rock building, according to Wilkinson. Etta (Parker) Sweeting of Islamorada remembers being taught by Ferran Pinder (Florence's younger brother) and Charles "Prof" Albury in this building before the 1935 Hurricane washed it away. The hurricane left only the Rock Harbor School and a small school building at Tavernier standing, and they were damaged.

In the 1930s, Alma Pinder Dalton's first classes were in a one room schoolhouse at what is now the Islamorada Library. The 96-year-old moved to Key West with relatives to finish school but now she is back in her family home oceanside across from that library enjoying her golden years.

Wilkinson shared that Florida established a public school system in 1849, and by 1850, there were 97 public schools in Florida.

Continued on page 33

Douglas Elementary School c. 1930

Key West High Newspaper Staff c. 1939

Douglas High School c. 1930

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Brand new CBS 3 bd/3 ba home in the Key Largo Ocean Resort community, steps away from the ocean and close to amenities. Unique & modern design. Bright and airy with an open floor plan, high ceilings & large kitchen. Master en suite bedrooms with 1bd/1ba on first floor and 2 bd/2ba on second floor. High-end stainless steel appliances, wood kitchen cabinets, with quartz counter-top and glass tile back-splash. Call Seb Del Negro at 305.842.0559 with Coldwell Banker Schmitt Key Largo. Listing courtesy of Maria Barroso. refer to page 16

▲ KEY LARGO $182,000

Enjoy the outdoors all year round on your screened in porch in this roomy two-bedroom mobile home at Calusa Campground. Brand new central system for your cooling needs. Storage area and room to park your boat. This community offers a pool, marina, laundry, club house, playground area and security for your family. Contact Barbara Eads at 305.853.5982 with Barbara Eads Realty, Inc. refer to page 26

▲ WINDLEY KEY Call for price

Oceanfront Endless Sunrise Special!!! Two oceanfront lots in the Village of Islamorada with ACTIVE Building Permits. Start Building your Dream Home Today! This Fantastic Building Location offers a Cleared Building Site, Building Plans for a Gorgeous 4/3 Island Home, and Perfectly Located Close to Snake Creek for Immediate Ocean to Bay Boating Access. Call Jocelyn Tiedemann at 305.522.3652 with Island Equity Real Estate. refer to page 6

▲ KEY LARGO $249,000

Spacious home on a larger corner lot! Full car garage. Open floor plan with separate laundry room. Huge bonus - a concrete, full-car garage. Located in a family neighborhood close to schools, shopping, restaurants & easy commute to Miami. Contact Kelly Wilson at 305.394.6742 with LoKation Real Estate. refer to page 4

▲ KEY LARGO $699,000

Beautiful CBS home two stories 3 bed, 2 bath with beautiful kitchen and tiles through out the house. Reinforced concrete roof and CBS two car garage. Open porch area on the sides leading to a screened front porch. 594 sqft finished utility building. Dock with davits. Best deal in town! Contact Martha Noval at 305.394.3443 with All Keys Remax. refer to page 11

▲ KEY LARGO $165,000

Great opportunity here at Key Largo Campground. This pie shaped lot is ready for a 28ft or less RV. Enjoy this wonderful community offering a pool, club house, boat ramp, laundry area and beaches. This great community even allows daily rentals! Contact Barbara Eads at 305.853.5982 with Barbara Eads Realty, Inc. refer to page 26

▲ ISLAMORADA $1,975,000

CONGRATULATIONS to our buyers on their new Florida Keys Waterfront Dream Home!!! Situated in the Premier waterfront community of Venetian Shores. 5 bedroom, 5 bath, over 3,500 sq ft of living area. Elevator, oversize 2 car garage, 100' of water frontage, resort style pool with stone waterfall. Minutes to the Ocean and Bay. Call Shane Wilson at 239.851.3861 with Real Living Cypress Realty, INC, Shane Waterfront Wilson Team. refer to page 15

▲ KEY LARGO $1,050,000

Island Dream Ocean View Pool Home with Deeded 40 ft boat slip. Ocean Views from all Floors. Rooftop sun deck. Travertine marble floors, granite counters, open balconies w/ocean views. 3/2 concrete home with 15 x 30 pool. Wall & gated entrance. Garage. Boat slip is 200 ft. from ocean. Beautifully landscaped in great area with direct ocean access to world class fishing & diving. Centrally located with restaurants just blocks away. Call Terry Canto 305-394-3037, American Caribbean Real Estate. refer to page 19

For listings, Text or E-Mail Allan Pope today at 305-509-9340 or APope@KeysLifeMagazine.com

KEY LARGO $249,000

A perfect slice of paradise! You will fall in love with this charming Keys cottage located in the heart of Key Largo. This home is extremely well maintained and perfect for a weekend retreat, rental property or affordable Keys living. There is plenty of room for parking your car and boat. Plus, there is a marina just a few blocks away where you can go fishing, take a boat ride, or snorkeling trip. Only one hour from Miami. Contact the Robison Group at 305.781.7506 with All Keys Remax. refer to page 11

LOWER MATECUMBE $1,350,000

This double lot property is in the White Marlin Beach neighborhood with HOA park access. Extensive upgrades include new dock, new impact doors and windows, new roof with finished observation area for sunrise and sunset views, new tile floor on main level and new paint inside and out. Outdoor areas include large covered deck upstairs and a fantastic free form pool with canal side Tiki and wonderful new landscaping. Contact Judy Rossignol at 305.393.0523 with All Keys Remax. refer to page 11

KEY LARGO $178,000

Two-bedroom one bathroom apartment located in downtown Key Largo. Only available condo for sale in this small community! Designated parking and a place for you. Laundry facilities on main floor. This intricately connected community is waiting for you. Contact Barbara Eads at 305.853.5982 with Barbara Eads Realty, Inc. refer to page 26

KEY WEST $380,000

BUILD YOUR KEY WEST DREAM HOME NOW! Spacious 6,000 sqft cleared residential lot in desirable New Town, in an area near exclusive homes; includes the ability to build a main house with an additional accessory dwelling up to 600 sqft allowing plenty of room for a pool, a Tiki hut, or an RV, cars and boats. The city of Key West has issued a Build Back Letter which streamlines the process. Call Jeffrey Shamon at 305.942.7359 with Island Equity Real Estate. refer to page 6

KEY LARGO $1,895,000

Unobstructed panoramic Bay views from the ground to the roof top terrace of this beautifully remodeled 4 bd, 3.5 ba, 3 car garage home with elevator. Over the top kitchen with Wolf appliances, two subzero refrigerators. Custom granite. Marble flooring throughout. Complete home automation system. Plenty of dockage for all your water toys. Call Shane Wilson at 239.851.3861 with Real Living Cypress Realty, INC, Shane Waterfront Wilson Team. refer to page 15

KEY LARGO $875,000

Stunning sunsets from your porch every night of the year! Incredible bay views. Keys living with great porch, large tiki and concrete dock with 20k lb. boat lift. You'll love the new kitchen with large island in the center great for gatherings and entertaining your friends and family. Open & spacious overlooking the open water view. The perfect Keys home on the bay with quick access to the ocean via Adams Waterways. Private location with an easy commute from Miami. Call Terry Canto 305-394-3037, American Caribbean Real Estate. refer to page 19

KEY LARGO $995,000

GOOD VIBES and VIEWS! VIEWS! VIEWS! Oversized canal front home perfect for family compound. Sigh and kiss your worries goodbye! Seeing is believing. Adams Cut LoKation for easy boating Bay or Oceanside! Contact Susan Holler at 305.393.1695 with LoKation Real Estate. refer to page 4

KEY LARGO $1,325,000

Congratulations to our buyers on their new Keys home!!! Beauty abounds in this Coastal modern island home, with 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, garage, pool. With outstanding views of the beach and Florida Bay right outside your front door. There was no expense spared on this build, absolutely stunning!!! Did I mention with this property comes a private gated marina and private beach. Call Shane Wilson at 239.851.3861 with Real Living Cypress Realty, INC, Shane Waterfront Wilson Team. refer to page 15

KEY LARGO $1,649,000

Absolutely stunning custom Pool Home! This Island timeless beauty is spacious, comfortable and luxurious. 3-story with 5BR/4BA has enormous master suite. 70' of concrete deep-water dockage with boatlift & immediate ocean access for large vessels. Bring the yacht, bring the family, bring your friends, there's room for everyone. Chef's kitchen, Travertine floors throughout, impact windows & door and much more! Call Terry Canto 305-394-3037, American Caribbean Real Estate. refer to page 19

For listings, Text or E-Mail Allan Pope today at 305-509-9340 or APope@KeysLifeMagazine.com

▲ KEY LARGO $1,980,000

Beautiful views from this grand place. Master Suite on the top floor boasting turquoise waters from your every turn enjoy unique moon rises from your estate. Plenty of room for the family at this three-bedroom concrete oasis. 200-foot dock with boat lift. Contact Barbara Eads at 305.853.5982 with Barbara Eads Realty, Inc. refer to page 26

▲LOWER MATECUMBE $1,395,000

Spectacular Oceanfront Views!! Natural white sand beach!! Ocean front Duplex nearly 1/2 acre. 2 bed 1 bath on either side. Vaulted wood beam ceiling. Huge rear deck overlooking the ocean. Can be easily converted to 4 bedroom 2 bath single family home. Two legal enclosed downstairs rooms and a summer kitchen. Call Shane Wilson at 239.851.3861 with Real Living Cypress Realty, INC, Shane Waterfront Wilson Team. refer to page 15

▲ PLANTATION KEY $849,000

Great Plantation Key Colony home, CBS and concrete roof, on a wide canal leading to the bay with easy access to the ocean via Tavernier Creek. The home is functional and ready to move in, but it could use some modernizing and updates. There's a detached concrete garage with additional storage. The house offers a 50' dock for your boat and all your water toys. Make this your dream your dream home, in this wonderful and peaceful neighborhood. Contact Joe Vigo at 786.236.8647 with All Keys Remax. refer to page 11

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Continued from page 23

Key West was Florida's largest city with a population of 2,645 but there was no high school. Public schools began in Monroe County 20 years later.

The first written reference to a school in the Upper Keys was an 1877-1878 education report by Monroe County Superintendent J. V. Harris: "Key Largo School No. 5, at Key Largo, under instruction of Mrs. M. Johnson, with attendance of 22," Wilkinson said. He added he is not sure where the school was located; his guess is Planter, located near where Harry Harris Park is today. An 1891 report said there were five farms, a post office, Barnett Chapel and a schoolhouse there.

Sears school : Key West, Florida. c. 1870

Wilkinson also said the school could have been in Newport in Key Largo, near Mile Marker 100 oceanside. "In Newport, the Pinder family alone had six children, ages 13 and under, in the 1870 census... [In all], there were 62 children ages 6 through 17 in all of the Keys," the census showed. The county school board required 10 children to have a paid teacher, so sometimes, children as young as four went to school to increase the student number.

Historically early Upper Keys school teachers were from Key West. In the Upper Keys, they included Jennie Mae Johnson, Mavoreen Meadows, Elise Warren, Elizabeth Lowe, Mary Louise Pinder, Floyd Schrader, Gladys Ingraham, Dora Perez, Marie Haskins, Violet Kemp, and Grace and Ada Johnson. Teachers often lived with a local family as housing was scarce.

When today's students are asked to share tales of schooling during COVID-19, they can add to the history of Keys schooling challenges.

Ann Winters, a local Keys writer

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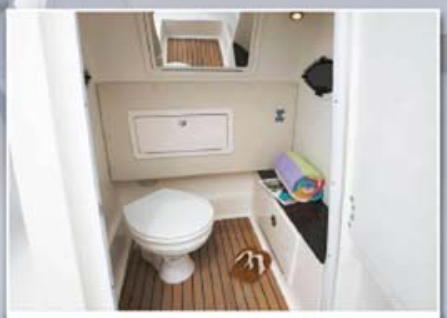

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