

City of

Key West

Winter 2012-13

Observe Black History Month With A Cemetery Stroll

A Cemetery Stroll honoring Black History Month is planned for Saturday, February 23rd. During the stroll, groups of visitors will be escorted to gravesites where interpreters will tell the stories of the deceased in brief monologues.

Gravesites to be visited include: George Adderley; Willie Ward; Roosevelt Sands, Sr.; Frank Adams; Nelson English; Thomas Romer; Ellen Welters Sanchez; Sandy Cornish; and the U.S. Battleship Maine Memorial. The groups will depart from the Frances Street gate every 20 minutes beginning at 9 am. The strolls will last approximately 90 minutes.

This is a terrific opportunity to learn first-hand about many of the African American people who contributed to Key West's history. Space is limited to 30 people per group and pre-registration is required. A donation of \$10 (cash or check) per person to the Historic Florida Keys Foundation is recommended.

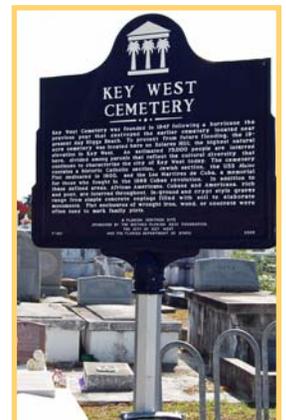
This event is sponsored by the City of Key West, the Historic Florida Keys Foundation, and the Friends of the Key West Historic Cemetery Committee.

You can register for this unique learning opportunity by calling Cemetery Friends Committee member, Cynthia Edwards, at 294-8503. This is a private telephone so you can leave a message and your call will be returned. A second Cemetery Stroll is planned for Saturday, April 6.

The cemetery sits in a nineteen acre park-like setting where Bahamian mariners, Cuban cigar makers, Spanish-American War veterans, soldiers and civilians, millionaires and paupers, people of all races, Catholics, Protestants and Jews rest side-by-side echoing the island city's diverse heritage.

The Key West City Cemetery was established in 1847 following the disastrous hurricane of October 11, 1846 where the then beachside cemetery was unearched due to the winds and seas. This continues to be an active cemetery with about 100 interments a year. Some 80,000 people have been buried within its iron fencing.

The Historic Key West Cemetery is open every day at 7:00 A. M. and closes during summer months at 7:00 PM and at 6:00 PM during winter months.



CITY OF KEY WEST

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Commissioners

District 1: Jimmy Weekley

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City Manager

Bob Vitas

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Questions? Comments?

If you have information for the next City newsletter or would like to see something added to the publication, please contact Communications Manager Alyson Crean at acrean@keywestcity.com. This newsletter is a publication of the City of Key West.

The City of Key West released the 2012 Annual Report, giving the community an insight to the accomplishments of city government over the past year throughout the various departments. The report is available on the City's web site at www.keywestcity.com

"With a great sense of pride, the management team and I are pleased to present an overview of last year's accomplishments," said City Manager Bob Vitas. "The foremost goal of this report is to provide the community with a transparent accounting of the major accomplishments we have completed to make your city a better place to live, work, play and call home."

This is the fourth year that the Annual Report has been an electronic-only edition. That means a "green" report and an important savings of precious taxpayer dollars. However, if anyone is unable to access the electronic report, the City can supply a print copy. Call Communications Manager Alyson Crean at 809-1058.

Cleared from FEMA List

Over 1,700 Key West homeowners and business will be receiving long-awaited notices in the mail, notices that their properties are no longer part of a county-wide list of endangered species habitats.

The City's planning department has been able to clearly ascertain that 1,713 parcels were erroneously placed on a list of more than 50,000 parcels in Monroe County that were recommended for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. The list is a settlement agreement of a 20-year lawsuit initially aimed at protecting habitat on Big Pine Key.

The implications of the list were that FEMA would be unable to insure those properties that were built on habitat. However, it was immediately clear that many of the parcels were not suitable habitat at all, especially in the well-developed city of Key West.

The removal of these parcels from the list represents several years of work towards that goal. There are still several properties that need to be removed, and the total expected to be taken off the infamous list will be close to 2,300.

"What this means to you," reads the notice, signed by Planning Director Don Craig, "is that if you apply for a building permit, your property will no longer first be subject to an endangered species assessment. Additionally, if there comes a time when you wish to sell your property, this will be one less bureaucratic hindrance you will encounter."

The post cards are all the proof a property owner needs that the survey has been completed and the parcel cleared from the list.

Anyone with questions about their property can call the City's FEMA Coordinator Scott Fraser at 305-809-3810.



Employee Service Awards

The City of Key West has a hard-working and dedicated group of people whose service ensures city residents and visitors a clean, safe community. The following City staff hit some important milestones in the months of December, January and February:



Roger Wittenberg
Director
Finance Department
1/13/88
25 years



Sgt. Robert Allen
Sergeant
Key West Police Department
12/9/87
25 years



Capt. Ray Alvarez
Captain
Key West Fire Department
1/27/88
25 years



Diane Linipski
Officer
Key West Police Department
1/6/03
10 years



Portia Navarro
Executive Assistant
to Assistant City Manager
1/23/03
10 years



Sgt. Bradley Lariz
Sergeant
Key West Police Department
2/17/03
10 years



John Newcomer
Transfer Station Mechanic
General Services
2/26/03
10 years



William Kennedy
Parking Meter Tech
Parking Department
11/5/07
5 years



Lazaro Diaz
Lead Certified Mechanic
Community Services
2/11/08
5 years



Thaddeus Calvert
Officer
Key West Police
Department
2/14/08
5 years

COMMISSIONER JIMMY WEEKLEY HONORED



The Florida League of Cities has recognized long-time City Commissioner Jimmy Weekley as an Outstanding Public Servant of Florida for his 20 years of elected service to the community.

“This is a very rare event for the Florida League of Cities to celebrate 20 years of elected service,” said the League's Jim McGinn as he presented the award during the December commission meeting.

McGinn noted the significant sacrifices involved in serving the community for so long, as well as the level of public trust necessary to be elected to such a position.

“With these years of service come commitment, discernment and the strong leadership skills that bring tremendous value to the municipalities of Florida,” said McGinn.

Weekley commented that, when he first ran for office in 1985, he had no idea that he would be serving in office this long.

“Some people have called me nuts for doing this,” he said, “but it's something I truly truly enjoy doing, something I love doing.”

He said that, as long as he has the capacity and the community asks it of him, he will continue to serve.

Excellence in Wastewater Operations



The City of Key West and OMI were honored in Tallahassee recently with the Domestic Wastewater Plant Operations Excellence Award from the state Department of Environmental Protection. The award recognized the City for outstanding wastewater treatment plant operation, maintenance and compliance with state requirements.

Key West's Richard A. Heyman Environmental Pollution Control Facility is one of just seven statewide to be recognized with this award, which acknowledged the hard work and dedication necessary to provide the community with the best water treatment and conservation efforts in the state.

“I was honored to accept this award on behalf of our outstanding team,” said Key West Utilities Manager Jay Gewin. “And the credit is shared by the community in their realization of the importance of protecting our nearshore waters.”

In the attached photo, Key West Utilities Manager Jay Gewin accepts the Domestic Wastewater Plant Operations Excellence Award from Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Water Resource Management Division Director Mark Thomasson.

Recognizing KWPD Retirements



The Key West Police Department bid farewell to two valued members. Officer Alvaro Rodriguez (left), who served with honor and integrity for nearly 28 years, retired in January.

"During his long and admirable career, Officer Rodriguez has garnered numerous letters of praise and commendation from the citizens he has served so well," said Chief Donie Lee. "He has earned the respect of his colleagues and the community for his tireless dedication and professionalism."

Sgt. Garfield Williams (right), also said goodbye to his Key West Police family after spending just under 20 years protecting and serving paradise.

Four Officers Receive Lifesaving Commendations



On March 17, 2012, Officers Gary Celcer, Tricia Milliken and Brian Leipold responded to an urgent call at the soccer field at Key West High School where a man was possibly experiencing a heart attack. When they got to the scene, they saw several people gathered around a man lying on the ground. Two people were doing CPR on the man who was later identified as Wayne Clark. After a quick assessment, the officers discerned that Clark was not breathing and had no pulse.

The quick response and unwavering actions of Officers Celcer, Milliken and Leipold made the life and death difference for this man. Key West

On January 11, 2013 Officer Darnell Sealey responded to a call from Two Friends Patio Bar on Front Street where a man had collapsed on the floor. An employee had initiated CPR. The man's wife reported that he had a history of heart attacks. Officer Sealey arrived and continued CPR until rescue personnel arrived.

A rescue team member remarked that the man's life was probably saved by Officer Sealey's appropriate response. It was later reported to rescue workers that the heart attack victim was recovering in the ICU at Lower Keys Medical Center. Officer Sealey's fast assessment in a critical situation and his quick actions probably made the difference between life and death on that day.

Hard Work Means Better Service

The City of Key West's parking meter technicians recently expanded their expertise to better serve the community.

William Kennedy and Pavel Theinert are now Manufacturer Certified Technicians for the City's parking paystations.

Kennedy and Theinert participated in an intensive 3-day course provided by Cale America, the company that manufactures the paystations being placed throughout the city.

"The parking division congratulates them for their hard work and dedication," said Parking Manager John Wilkins. He noted that this increased knowledge makes them more efficient technicians, which benefits the taxpayers of Key West.



Community Members Win Holiday Float Awards

Though every entry into this year's Holiday Parade was a winner the moment it brought a smile to a child's face, four entries earned special recognition from the judges. City Manager Bob Vitas awarded plaques to the winners during a January City Commission meeting.

Best Commercial: Affiliated Design & Construction Managers, LLC

Best Youth Group: Key West Sports Academy

Best Non Profit: Boys & Girls Clubs of the Keys

Honorable Mention: Fifth Street Baptist Church

The City of Key West wants to thank the community for this amazing effort. In addition to the hundreds of people who volunteered their time to participate, City officials particularly want to thank Joe Mather, Nancy D'Amato, Lenny Whitley, Rusty Ennis and Richard Faibisaner for their tireless help as well as the City staffers who donate their time to ensure a truly magical parade.



Best Non Profit



Best Commercial



Honorable Mention



Best Youth Group

Coles Honored for Dedication



In honor of her dedication to the community, Key West Mayor Craig Cates proclaimed January 31st Wendy Coles Day during a January City Commission meeting. Coles, who has served as the tireless executive director of the Southernmost Homeless Assistance League, is retiring after seven years.

Mayor Cates noted in the proclamation that Coles has been unselfish in her work to help the homeless become “productive and contributing citizens.”

“Wendy Cole's exceptional compassion, understanding and efforts have resulted,” reads the proclamation, “in furthering the development and transformation of the Homeless Services Programs available to these Monroe County and City of Key West residents.”

Police Department Names Officer and Civilian of the Year

Key West Police Chief Donie Lee today named the Officer of the Year and the Civilian of the Year for 2012. Deglys Chavarria is Officer of the Year.

Since he came to work for the Department in 2005, Officer Chavarria has earned commendations for his dedication to the safety and well-being of the community. He grew up in Key West, and his interest in the Department started with his involvement in the Police Explorer program. Officer Chavarria is a tireless volunteer, and serves as the president of the Police Athletic League. He invests countless hours for the children of the community, collecting holiday gifts, raising funds, and assuring their safety. He is a positive role model for the youth of Key West, a friendly colleague, and a dedicated professional.

Chief Lee noted that Officer Chavarria exemplifies the ideal of a child growing up in the community and giving back to that community when he's grown.

Denise Richardson is Civilian of the Year.

Since her arrival in 2010, she has served an invaluable role in special services, overseeing the Department's personnel and payroll.

Richardson's level head and astute organizational skills enhance the Department. She is able to balance the skills needed to maintain personnel records, process payroll and track departmental changes while being personable, professional and friendly with Department members. In addition she always finds time in her busy schedule for many volunteer efforts.

Keys Federal Credit Union's Chief Financial Officer Scott Duszynski presented them each with a check for \$500.



Capt. Scott Smith, Chief Donie Lee, Denise Richardson, Deglys Chavarria, Scott Duszynski, Capt. JR Torres.