



June/July -- 2009

Jim Malcolm Memorial Bicycle Safety Rodeo

Named for one of Key West's favorite bicycle safety advocates, this event carries on Jim Malcolm's love of self-powered vehicles. Volunteers, families and kids had a great time at what will likely be an annual event at Poinciana Elementary School.



Participants included all of the city's bicycle shops, each enthusiastic to teach kids about safety and help them learn how to maintain their bikes.

Once the bikes were checked

out, kids ran a series of courses to test their agility, their knowledge of turn signals and even their ability to control their bikes at very low speeds.

City Commissioner Teri Johnston was among the volunteers who helped kids test their skills during the Rodeo. Commissioner Barry Gibson also donned a green vest for the event.



After a thorough safety inspection, Key West Police Sgt. Garfield Williams sends this bike owner on to the next pit stop during the first annual Jim Malcolm Memorial Bicycle Safety Rodeo.



City employee John Wilkins said the whole event wouldn't have happened without the solid support of the city's bike shops.

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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 acreat@keywestcity.com. This newsletter is a publication of the City of Key West.

Thar She Blows!



Key West's newest artificial reef went down smoothly and on schedule on May 27. Within the first few days, divers were already exploring the amazing new attraction. According to the experts who made the initial dive in order to verify that the ship was sitting upright, fish were already taking up residence the first day!



The sinking is the culmination of 13 years of hard work and dreaming by project founder Joe Weatherby. Weatherby was surrounded by enthusiastic journalists when he dropped by the media boat *Fury* shortly after the ship went down.



Florida Rep. Ron Saunders, Rep. Dean Cannon, Monroe County Commissioner Mario DiGennaro and Rep. Doug Holder -- all ready to push the plunger to sink the Vandenberg. Though it made a good photo, these men had control of a good chunk of the financing that made the project possible. The actual explosive charge was left to the experts in the field.

Bank Robber Foiled by Exploded Dye



Robert Potvin, 38, was charged with one count of robbery following a June 5 bank robbery.

Potvin was captured around 6 p.m. when Monroe County Sheriff's Deputy David Lariz stopped a car for running a stop sign on Stock Island.

During the traffic stop, Lariz noticed red dye on the man's hands and called Key West Police detectives.

It all started that morning when a bearded man walked into Key West Bank, at 701 Whitehead Street and demanded money. A teller handed over an undisclosed amount of money concealing a packet of red dye set to pop open when the cash was jostled.

The man ran out of the bank and witnesses say they saw the red dye pack explode inside the man's pocket while he was fleeing the scene. When Key West Police officers arrived, there was money and red dye in the street. The robber allegedly took off down Angela Street on a bike.

Key West Police detectives issued a "Be on the Lookout" based on images captured by the bank's cameras and on witness statements. The BOLO described the suspect as having three to four day's growth of facial hair. However, Potvin was clean shaven when he was arrested. A witness who knows Potvin confirmed that the last time he saw Potvin, he had a neatly trimmed beard. It appears Potvin shaved his head and face some time during the day in hopes of avoiding capture. But he couldn't get rid of the red dye that stained his hands and abdomen.

Most of the money was recovered, some of it at the scene. Banks often conceal dye packets in tellers' cash drawers in case of robberies.

While Potvin was being interviewed at the Key West Police Department, detectives noted that he places his hands in the crack of his buttocks several times. He was warned that he could face added charges if he was found to be smuggling contraband into the jail, and Potvin admitted that he had a \$50 bill hidden in his buttocks. The bill contained red dye consistency with the currency found at the scene of the robbery.

After-School Students Visit Key West Garden Club

Students in Mr. Kenny's After School Class visited the Key West Garden Club in May, learning about tropical foliage as well as the unique history of the West Martello Tower.

They were able to smell the wonderful allspice leaves and see gigantic breadfruit growing in trees. The kids learned that some species of plants here in Key West were here when dinosaurs roamed the earth.

They particularly enjoyed the butterfly garden and the amazing fragrance of the nearby frangipani.

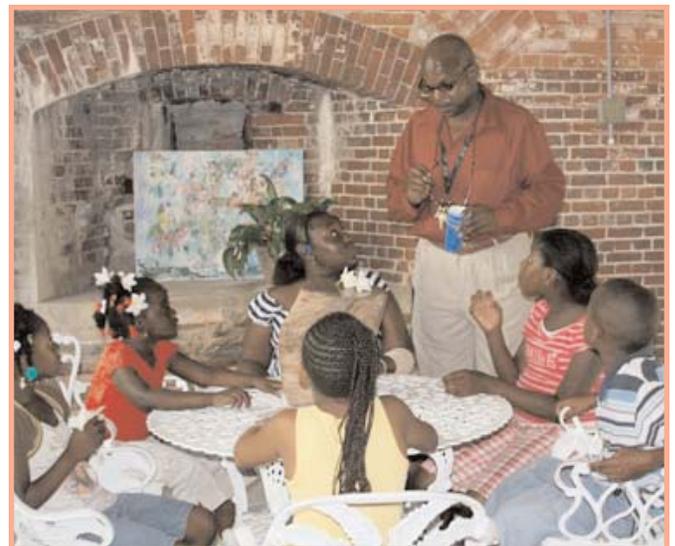
The afternoon was topped off by cookies and lemonade

served by Key West Garden Club Board members Kitty Somerville, Cherré Marchak, Debbie Crowley and Sue Sullivan.

The Garden Club was very happy to have a visit from the children and members said they hope they come back soon.

The After School Program provides a variety of activities for up to 150 kids in Key West, says Program Coordinator Kenny

Knowles. The program is sponsored by the city of Key West.



Dangerous Termite Nest Exterminated

In a city that boasts a nationally renowned historic district comprised of primarily wooden structures, Asian subterranean termites are not a welcome guest. That's why Key West's Urban Forestry Program Manager Cynthia Domenech-Coogle jumped into action when a gigantic nest of them was discovered in an elderly mahogany tree on Seidenberg Ave.

"This species is particularly destructive," said Domenech-Coogle. "They can even eat concrete."

Mark Weinberg, owner of Hammerhead Exterminators, successfully obliterated the massive nest, which extended from eye-level to some 20 feet into the canopy.

Saved once before by the late City Commissioner Merili McCoy, this stately old mahogany will continue to shade its corner of Key West.



Members of the local branch of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints collected a huge pile of debris at the Key West Cemetery.

Cemetery Sexton Russell Brittain, who assisted the group, was grateful for the help. Several truckloads of debris were collected. Brittain said that most of the debris was left over from construction.

Teardown Makes Neighborhood Safer



Someone had once called it home, but the house on Virginia Street has been slipping further into a state of disrepair over the years. No longer safe for habitation, the rundown structure was becoming unsafe to its surrounding community. Pieces were falling off. The entire house itself actually shifted on its foundation during hurricanes.

For some time, the city of Key West has been attempting to get the property owner to do the right thing and make the house safe - to no avail. Finally, the city took the neighbor-

hood's public safety into its own hands and tore down the structure.

Now parents can rest easy knowing that their kids won't be playing in the unsafe building and nearby homeowners won't have to worry about falling debris.

In the meantime, the city has tracked all of the costs involved in tearing down the house so that a lien can be placed on the property and taxpayers will have a chance to be reimbursed for the cost of making this private property safe for the entire community.

TELEVISED

PUBLIC MEETINGS

City Commission: June 2
HARC: June 9

City Commission: June 16
Planning Board: June 18
HARC: June 23

Code Compliance: June 24
City Commission: July 7
HARC: July 14

Planning Board: July 16
City Commission: July 21
HARC: July 28

Code Compliance: July 29