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March 21, 2011

Chief Donald J. Lee, Jr.
Key West Police Department
1604 North Roosevelt Boulevard
Key West, FL 33040

Dear Chief Lee,

I am writing to commend one of your officers on her alertness, appropriate response and wisdom in dealing with a situation that could have resulted in negativity and probably additional law-breaking on the part of the perpetrator but due to her actions ended with (I'm sure) relief, better self-control, and an enhanced appreciation for Key West.

On Tuesday March 8th I was driving through the intersection of Duval and Greene Street when an intoxicated young man, apparently miffed that I was crossing the street on the green rather than stopping to let him pass against the light, threw his drink in the open side window of my vehicle. No sooner had I stopped and stepped to the rear of the vehicle than Officer Diane Lipinski had literally collared the miscreant and was moving him to the sidewalk. I moved my vehicle to the side of the street and returned to where Officer Lipinski had the visibly shaken youth in handcuffs. She told me that she would leave it up to me what she should do with him. After a long moment's consideration I informed the young man that he needed to respect and appreciate that people live and work in this town so that he can come and enjoy himself and further that he should be extremely thankful to the Officer for being open-minded enough not to just haul him off to jail. I hope that he was but I certainly am thankful to Officer Lipinski for seeing that the scare and the subsequent second chance was no doubt all that was needed to ensure his future restraint and keep everyone's attitude on the positive side.

I appreciate that patrolling Duval during Spring Break must be tiresome and frustrating but Officer Lipinski had the presence of mind to not let that interfere with turning a bad situation into good. I believe that she conducted herself not only as an effective police officer but also an ambassador of good will and wisdom, and we couldn't ask for any better than that from our officers.

Best regards,

Terry Strickland, General Manager
Yankee Freedom II Dry Tortugas National Park Ferry
Past President, Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce

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