



City of

Key West

November 2011

'Tis the Season!



Santa and the Missus arrived at Bayview Park just as the City's holiday tree was lighted on November 28th, kicking off everybody's favorite time of the year.

View from the Top



As we enter the holiday season, we can share a sigh of relief that, though we remained well-prepared, we were not called upon to deal with a hurricane.

Together, we have accomplished a good many things, and everyone can be proud of the way each of you has risen to the challenge and served this community to the best of your ability.

We finished the move to our new - albeit temporary - facility, and your flexibility and dedication shows in how smoothly this transition went.

We can look back on 2011 as a year where we, yet again, were able to do more with less, and we did it well. We were able to mill and pave one of the roughest bits of Old Town roadway --- Eaton Street - and accomplish that task in an amazing four days. We now have a truly beautiful public facility as a result of rehabbing the old Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center Pool. The Boys and Girls Club and other users of Bayview Park now have the restroom facility they needed. Smather's beach is beautifully renourished, the soccer field is well-lit and we continue to make our beautiful city accessible to every resident with sidewalks and curbs that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation. Citizens are now able to watch city government meetings on their computer - and not just live, but we can now offer video on demand.

These and so many other accomplishments are proof that we are a hard-working lot, dedicated to the quality of life that our citizens deserve and expect.

All the best to you for the holiday season.

Jim Scholl, City Manager



Key West Department of Transportation & Community Service Staff would like to wish Ben Gibson best wishes in his retirement. After nearly 30 years with the City, he will be truly missed. He was presented a plaque during a luncheon that gave everyone a chance to say good-bye.

CITY OF KEY WEST

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City Manager

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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.

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 month of November:



Michael Davila

Division Chief/Operations
Key West Fire Department
11/5/86
25 years



Gerzale Curry-Hill

HARC Assistant
Building
11/4/96
15 years



Luis Sanchez

Officer
Key West Police Department
11/26/01
10 years

Muench Commended Posthumously

The City Commission, the Historic Architectural Review Commission, the City Planning Department and the community joined in a tearful commendation and remembrance of the contributions of Dr. Nils Muench. He was honored with a posthumous commendation during Tuesday's City Commission meeting.

Muench served for five years as a member of the HARC board, and worked hard to preserve the city's historic integrity.

Rudy Molinet, who chairs HARC, remembered Muench as his mentor. "What struck me most was his commitment to the city," he said.

A permanent plaque on the walls of Old City Hall was unveiled by HARC Director Enid Torregrosa and Muench's partner Wendy Coles.

"Nils will always be remembered by this community," it reads "as a valuable citizen with a great passion in life. His common sense approach to preservation and his commitment to fairness in dealing with all business before HARC should serve as a role model for all future HARC Commissioners. Nils will be missed and remembered for his true commitment to preservation of the historic character of the community he loved so much."



Retirement Leads to Promotions



Driver/Engineer Robert Franco, Capt. Wayne Owen, Capt./Inspector Kenneth Wardlow, firefighter Benny Gomez, and retired Shift Commander John Bringle.

Thirty-year veteran Shift Commander John Bringle retired in November after a dedicated career with the Key West Fire Department.

Bringle served for 30 years with the Key West Fire Department. He started out in 1981 as a firefighter, and was promoted to driver/engineer in 1987. He was promoted to Captain in June of 1996. In 2006 he was named Shift Commander.

“John was extremely dependable, knowledgeable and well liked by his peers,” said Chief Fraga. “His assets and talents will be missed by the entire department. We all wish him well in his retirement.”

Capt. Mark Sellers was named Shift Commander, and former driver/engineer Wayne Owen was promoted to Captain. Driver Kenneth Wardlow was promoted to Captain/Inspector. Formerly a firefighter, Robert Franco was promoted to driver/engineer. In addition, Benny Gomez joined the Department as a firefighter.

Future Firefighters' Academy

Eight Key West High School students - a mix of juniors and seniors - spend the start of each school day at the Key West Fire Department, learning what it takes to be a firefighter.

These hard-working kids are attending the first local fire academy since 2007, thanks to a \$35,000 grant from the South Florida Workforce Investment Board. The students spend the first two periods of class training under the tutelage of professional firefighting experts, then finish their days with their regular high school curricula.

The Academy started up in August with the new school year, and already these cadets have completed their first responder CPR certification.

The two-year program trains future firefighters while they're attending their final two years of high school. After two years in the academy, they will have the equivalent training of a certified firefighter I, and be halfway through the training required to become a Key West Firefighter.

The South Florida Workforce Investment Board grant will go toward the expense of equipment, physical exams, drug screening, orientation, testing and more.

“We are excited about maintaining a pipeline that channels young people into rewarding careers in public safety,” said Rick Beasley, executive director for the South Florida Workforce Investment Board. “By supporting this unique endeavor, we are ensuring that students receive adequate training, earn a high school diploma, and become employable.” The program has been successful in the past, and Fire Chief



Shift Commander Steve Wells and Capt. Danny Blanco are two of the instructors of the fire academy. Left to right: William Fuller, Shift Commander Steve Wells, Daniel Laguna, Tim Mendizabal, Travis Funnye, Domingo Salas, Captain Danny Blanco, Yandry Rodriguez, Kaylee Devoe, Andre Guieb.

David Fraga says it's a great way to train local kids a career that will allow them to return to their hometown after the final training.

“This gives them the opportunity to experience fire training in a realistic environment,” said Fraga, “and it is good for the department because it gives us a leg up on recruiting and retaining good firefighters.”

Donation Helps Start Mobile Outreach



Monroe County Sheriff's Col. Rick Ramsey presented Key West Mayor Craig Cates and the Southernmost Homeless Assistance League's Executive Director Wendy Coles a \$10,000 check to help fight homelessness.

The generous donation will help support the Mobile Outreach Program, which hit the streets the very same day. The innovative new program is the result of a recommendation of the Mayor's committee on homelessness, a group of community representatives who have worked hard over the past year to come up with solutions to the city's homeless problem.

This pilot outreach program teams the Klaus Murphy Foundation, the Guidance Care Center, the Lower Keys Medical Center, the City, the Sheriff's Office and the Southernmost Homeless Assistance League in a program that reaches out to the men, women and children on the streets of Key West. The mobile center will provide very real support, whether it means help obtaining identification, veteran's benefits or simple wound care. This new approach is an active way of reaching out to people in need throughout Key West.

Safe Haven for Newborns

Key West Police Detective Janeth Calvert hopes that a near-tragedy involving a newborn baby will serve as a reminder that there is a safe haven where an unwanted baby has a fighting chance.

A Key West woman is facing felony child neglect charges after leaving a child she says she didn't want alone for hours at a time. She could have anonymously dropped that child off -- anytime in the first seven days of his life -- at a fire department, hospital or emergency medical station, in accordance with the state's Safe Haven for Newborns law.

Police were called to a local pharmacy in the early hours of November 11th because a woman seemed highly intoxicated in the aisles. Arriving on the scene, officers found the 34-year old slumped over a pile of baby supplies she had picked from the shelves. She was taken to the hospital where she told police that she hadn't seen her baby since the previous day because she had gone to work.

Worried for the safety of the child, officers went to her apartment and found a two week old baby boy alone on a bed dressed in just a diaper.

Detective Calvert interviewed the woman, her co-workers and friends, discovering that the woman had kept her pregnancy and the birth of the child completely secret. The investigation uncovered that she worked consistent shifts at a local eatery, then went out with friends, all the while the infant was back in the apartment unfed. The woman told Det. Calvert that she had given birth to the child, unattended, in her bed. She said she had wanted to give him up for adoption, but did not know who to go to.

There is a large triangular sign posted at the entrance to each Key West Fire Station. They read Safe Haven for Newborns. Every firefighter behind that door is trained to take custody - no questions asked - of any unwanted newborns. If a new mother is lost and overwhelmed, if she's frightened of repercussions, or even just temporarily feels she can't care for a new child, Florida law protects her from prosecution, as long as there is no abuse. It reads: "...any parent who leaves a newborn infant with a firefighter, emergency medical technician, or paramedic at a fire station or emergency medical services station, or brings a newborn infant to an emergency room of a hospital and expresses an intent to leave the newborn infant and not return, has the absolute right to remain anonymous and to leave at any time and may not be pursued or followed unless the parent seeks to reclaim the newborn infant."

Fortunately, the baby boy in this case survived. A child left in a Key West stairwell several years ago was not so fortunate. Perhaps, if these parents had been aware of this law, one death and one case of neglect could have been averted.

The number of a 24-hour toll free hotline is posted on each of the Safe Haven signs. Distressed parents can call 1-877-767-BABY at any time, before or after a birth, for guidance. The hotline, supported by the Gloria M. Silverio Foundation, is just one portion of a program that proudly proclaims "162 precious little lives saved... they all now have a future."

For more information, go to www.safehavenfornewborns.com.



Detective Calvert holds the two-week old infant

Welcoming Magic

The City of Key West today welcomed Carnival Magic on its first port call to the city with a traditional exchange of plaques. The ceremony was held aboard the magnificent new ship, which has a home port in Galveston, Texas. City and port staff, representatives of the Key West Bar Pilot's Association, the Chamber of Commerce and Caribe Nautical, as well as the city's shipping agent were all on hand for the ceremony.

This is the inaugural U.S. voyage of the large luxury ship.

In the photo, Mayor Craig Cates presented the ship's Captain Cutugno a plaque commemorating this first visit to Key West Harbor.



Chief Swears in Three New Officers in November

In the first photo: Key West Police Chief Donie Lee swore in two new officers. Officer Brian Leahy (center) is returning to the department after a little more than a year away from the Keys. The New Jersey native worked for the Key West Police Department from 2006 until 2010, serving several of those years in Special Operations. He earned his certification at the Florida Keys Community College Criminal Justice Academy.

Karl Malsheimer (right) was born and raised in Key West, and attended Key West High School. He too is a graduate of the FKCC Criminal Justice Academy.

Later in November, friends, colleagues and family gathered in front of the Key West Police Department to witness the swearing in of the department's newest officer, Monica Marie Young.

Young joins her husband Jesse, who has been a Key West Police officer since November 2008. Monica earned her law enforcement certification at the Florida Keys Community College, and was a deputy with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office from 2008 until accepting the position with the city. During those years she also served as an EMT with the local ambulance service.

Following the oath, Chief Donie Lee welcomed Monica to the department "family."

"This is where I've always belonged," she said. Young attended Daytona Beach College, Edison State College and Seminole Community College. She is also a former dispatcher and has worked for the Cape Coral Police Department and the Collier County Sheriff's Office.

