



Crossing Guard Recognized for Going Extra Mile



City Manager Bob Vitas in March gave an appreciative recognition to Key West crossing guard Martha Fitch by awarding her the Extra Mile Award. For 13 years, he noted, Mrs. Fitch has been assuring the safety of the children who cross at the Montessori Charter School.

“She always goes above and beyond,” he said, noting that she knows the names of every child and every year she fills Christmas stockings for each and every child and staff member at the school.

“She is a true asset to our community,” said Vitas.

“My job is my joy,” said Fitch. “The children make my day. I accept this award with humility and great honor that so many people think so highly of me when all I do is love the kids and try to do my job. It’s been my pleasure all these years, and hopefully for many more.”

Among the community members were a number of children from the school who came to see one of Key West’s fine crossing guards recognized for the selfless job of keeping our children safe from traffic.

Serving the Community for 20 Years

Key West Community Services Director Greg Veliz in April presented two members of his department with gold watches in honor of their service to the City.

William Stafford is the Supervisor at the Douglass Gym. Charles Major, Sr., is a Coordinator at the gym.

Both men have dedicated 20 years of their life to the City of Key West, improving the lives of countless kids in the community.

Left to right: William Stafford, Greg Veliz and Charles Major, Sr.



CITY OF KEY WEST

Mayor

Craig Cates

ccates@keywestcity.com

Commissioners

District 1: Jimmy Weekley

jweekley@keywestcity.com

District 2: Mark Rossi

mrossi@keywestcity.com

District 3: Billy Wardlow

bwardlow@keywestcity.com

District 4: Tony Yaniz

tyaniz@keywestcity.com

District 5: Teri Johnston

johnston@keywestcity.com

District 6: Clayton Lopez

clopez@keywestcity.com

City Manager

Bob Vitas

bvitas@keywestcity.com

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.

Tarpon Pier



New floating docks are being installed to replace the decrepit Tarpon Pier at the Garrison Bight Marina. Once in place, the houseboats will be moved back and those residents will be thrilled to have these magnificent new docks. City Commissioner Mark Rossi has spearheaded this project in his district.

Hazmat Reponse



The Key West Fire Department's HAZMAT team decontaminated over a dozen people at the Key West Post Office on Whitehead Street as part of a precautionary protocol for a possible suspicious substance.

In April, emergency responders were notified that a package containing a threatening note and suspicious substance was received at the post office. The Hazmat team set up a decontamination area outside, and everyone in the building was carefully processed.

An FBI investigation found that the substance was not a threat. Despite the inconvenience, the quick action of the Key West Fire Department and Police Department was a reassuring response of the City's emergency services.

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 March and April:



Marta Cabaleiro
Permit Technician
Building Department
4/18/83
30 years



Charles Major, Sr.
Coordinator I
Community Services
3/18/93
20 years



William Stafford
Gym Facility Supervisor
Community Services
3/15/93
20 years



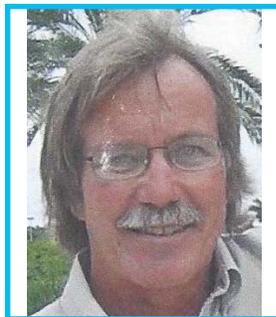
Julio Gomez
Officer
Key West Police Department
4/20/93
20 years



Louis St. Tilien
Maintenance Worker I
Community Services
3/10/03
10 years



Mark Finigan
Assistant City Manager
4/14/08
5 years



S. Taylor Reid
Bus Driver
KWDoT
3/14/08
5 years



Mary Anderson
Administrative Assistant
Key West Fire Department
3/11/08
5 years

WEIGH IN ON TREE PROTECTION



Do you have ideas and suggestions about the protection of Key West's tree canopy? Now is the time for homeowners, landscapers and certified arborist to share their vision. The Key West Tree Commission held a public workshop to explore potential changes to the City Code that protects Key West trees in April, and they are still accepting ideas and input.

This is an opportunity to discuss all or part of the existing ordinance and take a good look at what works and what doesn't. Anyone with input is encouraged to share their ideas with the City's Urban Forestry Manager Karen DeMaria 305-809- 3768 or with the Tree Commission.

All of the input will be reviewed in order to create a final proposed ordinance aimed at protecting the trees in our community and providing clear guidance to the people who grow and trim those trees.

For more information, check out the City's web site at www.keywestcity.com.

City Clerk's Office Recognized



Deputy Clerk Angela Budde, City Clerk Cheri Smith, Deputy Clerk Sue Harrison, Mayor Craig Cates.

A routine part of the procedure in any City Commission meeting is the reading by the City Clerk's Office of all proclamations. One recent proclamation, however, was different. Mayor Craig Cates personally read the "whereas"es while all three members of the clerk's office stood up beside him during the April City Commission meeting. Mayor Cates was honoring the entire City Clerk's staff in proclaiming the week of May 5th as Municipal Clerks Week.

The Key West City Clerk's Office is staffed with two Deputy Clerks that have achieved their Certified Municipal Clerk Certification in 2010 and 2013 and the City Clerk having achieved her Master Certification in 2007.

The office of the Municipal Clerk, Mayor Cates noted, is a time honored and vital part of local government that exists throughout the world and is the oldest among public servants. The office serves as the information center of local government, and each of the members has pledged to be ever mindful of their neutrality and impartiality, rendering equal service to all.

"I further extend appreciation to our Municipal Clerk Cheryl Smith and Deputy Clerks Sue Harrison and Angela Budde for the vital services they perform and their exemplary dedication to the community they represent," said Mayor Cates.

Citizen's Police Academy Graduates



Chief Donie Lee in April handed out graduation certificates to a large group of enthusiastic citizens who just completed the Key West Citizen's Police Academy.

This is the 12th class to graduate the program which gives the community a hands-on understanding of what it means to be a police officer. These participants, and those who have graduated before them, learned about everything from budget to crime scene investigation. They helped detectives solve a hypothetical crime, and each of them rode along with an officer in order to get a first-hand look at the duties and challenges faced by police officers.

Four New Officers Sworn in



Officer Ilon Fernandez



Officer Jeremy Tellier



Officer Michael Wolf

Officer Ilon Fernandez comes to Key West from Miami, where he graduated the Miami Dade School of Justice. He served with the U.S. Coast Guard Station Islamorada.

Officer Jeremy Tellier comes to the Department after serving 14 years in the Navy. Originally from New York, Officer Tellier has traveled all over the world. He was most recently posted to the Naval Air Station Key West.

Officer Michael Wolf has a long career in law enforcement, including formerly serving with the KWPD for two years. He served as a police officer in Missouri for nine years before coming to Key West and joining the Department. For the past several years, Officer Wolf has owned and operated a local business.

The Key West Police Department welcomes returning officer Kristopher Bouvier, who has come back to Key West after about a year and a half serving as a police officer on the mainland. He first came to the KWPD in 2010. He is a graduate of the Hillsborough County Community College Criminal Justice Institute. His background includes work as a detention officer. He also served five years in the U.S. Army.



Officer Kristopher Bouvier

Q and A for Right of Way Clearing

The City of Key West's Community Services Department is combing the city, ensuring public safety by clearing the line of sight along public rights of way as well as clearing walkways for pedestrians.

One of our most important duties as your City government is to provide safe streets and walkways for our citizens and visitors. That's why we have a new crew dedicated to bringing our sometimes dangerously overgrown rights of way into compliance with City Code and Federal law. Over the next 30 days, you can expect one of these crews to be working on your street. We have provided some answers to questions you may have:

Why are the crews here?

City and federal laws require that public rights of way allow pedestrian passage. Many of the rights of way in Key West have become overgrown and impassable for pedestrians. It's dangerous for pedestrians to step out into the street because foliage has overcome the sidewalk. Many intersections have become hazardous as well. Overgrown landscaping can block a driver's line of sight and cause an accident.

Who is responsible for the upkeep of the right of way from my property line to the street?

The property owner is actually responsible for this upkeep, in accordance with City Code. Additionally, the homeowner is liable if someone were hurt as a result of the overgrown foliage.

If it's the homeowners' job, why is the City doing this?

For a variety of reasons, many right of way areas have become dangerously overgrown. Increased traffic and decreased visibility have driven the City to act quickly in order to make our streets safe. In addition, the City is under a court order to ensure that all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are complied with on our streets. By cleaning up these areas, the City is providing a necessary public service. Property owners are strongly encouraged to take the initiative and trim these areas themselves and routinely keep them trimmed.

What are the ADA requirements, and what is the corresponding City Code?

Section 62-2 of the Code of Ordinances says it is unlawful for any person willfully to obstruct the free, convenient and ordinary use of any public right of way, street, roadway, alley, sidewalk, swale or public square. The ADA standards, which set the minimum requirements for avoiding obstructions, say that all landscaping shall be trimmed at least 80 inches above a walking surface and a minimum width of 36 inches for clear passage or the width of the sidewalk.

If I need to trim overgrown trees, do I need a permit?

The City must issue a free permit for most tree trimmings. The process is easy. If you're not sure whether a tree or shrub needs such a permit, call Karen DeMaria, our Urban Forestry Manager, at 305-809-3768.

Key West Ambassador Class 20 Graduates!



The Key West Ambassadors Academy graduated its landmark 20th class during last night's City Commission meeting. Twenty three enthusiastic citizens participated in the 14-week class. They join the more than 300 citizens who now have a better insight to the workings of City government. Each class of the Key West Ambassadors Program has been a special blend of dedicated, involved citizens.

During the first City Commission meeting in May, Assistant City Manager David Fernandez congratulated the graduates of Ambassadors Class 20. Three current city leaders -- Mayor Craig Cates, Commissioners Clayton Lopez and Tony Yaniz - were elected after finishing this program.

The program was established in 2003 and is fully facilitated by volunteers, all of whom graduated the program. Volunteers Lois Songer, Roger McVeigh, LeeAnn Holland and Patti Biga facilitated the class. NOAA's Craig Wanous graciously provides classroom space at the Florida Keys Eco Discovery Center.