



STORM FORCES CANCELLATION OF 1ST DAY OF KEY WEST WORLDS — B1 \$3.00

Wednesday

November 6, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 221 • 15 pages

which discusses native plant options in the landscape and some of the wildlife that will be attracted by the use of native plant species. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Farmers Market

The Farmers Market will be held from 2 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 1, in Truman Waterfront Park. For information, visit facebook.com/kwfarmersmarket or kwfarmersmarket.com.

Poetics event

The College of the Florida Keys will host

Gabrielle Calvocoressi at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 7 at the Tennessee Williams Theatre, 5901 College Road on the Key West Campus. The poet will present a live reading of her work and take questions from the audience.

Drama Club fundraiser

The Key West High School Drama Club will present its Fall Showcase Fundraiser "Through the Decades" at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 8-9, at Williams Hall, 729 Fleming St. Tickets for general



Weekend Edition

November 9-10, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 224 • 64 pages

\$3.00

Woman's Club, is hosting a Museum Community Appreciation Reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 21, for museum staff, docents, tour guides and concierges. Attendees are asked to bring their organization's rack cards to distribute, tour the Hellings Curry Museum, and meet other museum staff and tour guides. RSVP at [evite.com/event/02EF-PMBOUWRLUIAZSEP-POOCE36QQWQ](https://www.eventbrite.com/event/02EF-PMBOUWRLUIAZSEP-POOCE36QQWQ)

Tuga Clinic opens

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County, in collaboration with The College of the Florida Keys and Rural

Health Network, has opened the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus, 5901 College Road. The Tuga Clinic will provide general health services to CFK employees, students, and the public. Initial hours for the Tuga Clinic will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays and 12-4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Call to homeowners

Old Island needs charming small and large homes to represent the city in the December, January, February and March Home Tours. For information, call [305-294-9501](tel:305-294-9501) or [305-304-2323](tel:305-304-2323).

COLLEGE SWIMMING

CFK Tugas compete in double meet in Miami

CITIZEN STAFF

The College of the Florida Keys (CFK) Tugas men's and women's swim teams competed in a double dual meet against

St. Thomas University and Ave Maria University on Nov. 2 at the Miami-Dade Aquatic Center. Despite being outnumbered, the Tugas demonstrated significant individual growth and team

progress.

Several CFK swimmers achieved personal best times during the meet. Isabella Oliverio excelled in the 100-yard backstroke, while Kaemon Fagley

set new personal records in the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyle, as well as the 100-yard backstroke. Eddie Kertis improved his time in

More **TUGAS** | B5



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CFK

The CFK 2024 Tugas swim team prepares for their meet; back row, from left, Drew Lebsack, Eddie Kertis, Lucas Montiel de La Nuez and Kaemon Fagley; front row, from left, Teagan Lavin, Isabella Oliverio and Victoria Mayor.

Tugas/ from B1

the 100-yard breaststroke, as did Drew Lebsack in both the 100-yard and 200-yard butterfly events.

The meet proved to be a milestone for the Tugas, with five swimmers qualifying for nationals in a total of 11 events. Oliverio secured her spot in the 100-yard backstroke and 200-yard individual medley. The men's team saw Fagley, Kertis, Lebsack and Lucas Montiel de la Nuez qualify for various individual and relay events.

The Tugas will next compete in the Gulliver Gobble-Gobble November Last Chance Meet in Pine Crest on Nov. 23-24.

Before that meet, however, the Tropic Cinema will host a movie fundraiser for the Tuga teams on Sunday, Nov. 10.

The public is invited to support the CFK men's and women's swimming teams and catch the inspiring



Women's swim team captain Isabella Oliverio swims in a butterfly event.

film "The Swimmers." Based on a true story, the film follows the journey from war-torn Syria to the 2016 Rio Olympics. Two young sisters embark on a harrowing journey as refugees, putting both their hearts and champion swimming skills to

heroic use.

Showtime is 6 p.m., and tickets are \$15.

All ticket proceeds will support the Tugas as they work to get to the National Junior College Athletic Association Swimming and Diving Championships in Buffalo, New York.



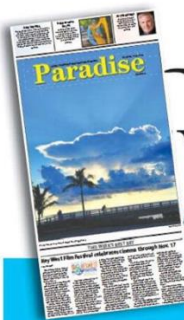
KEY WEST SOCCER TEAMS FACE OFF WITH PALMER TRINITY — B1 \$3.00

Wednesday

November 13, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 226 • 15 pages

Tuga Clinic opens

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County, in collaboration with The College of the Florida Keys and Rural Health Network, has opened the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus, 5901 College Road. The Tuga Clinic will provide general health services to CFK employees, students, and the public. Initial hours for the Tuga Clinic will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays and noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. To schedule an appointment, call 305-293-7500.



**YOUR GUIDE TO FLORIDA KEYS ENTERTAINMENT
— INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Thursday

November 14, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 227 • 32 pages

\$3.00

Retailers honor CFK as RISE Up partner

SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN

The National Retail Federation Foundation recently named The College of the Florida Keys as the 2025 RISE Up Partner of the Year.

Presented by Old Navy, the award recognizes the college for its success with the NRF Foundation's RISE Up training and credentialing program in Key West and for expanding the program across Florida.

"The College of the Florida Keys is an exemplary RISE Up partner, utilizing the training program to provide its students with the knowledge and skillset to navigate their entrance into the workforce and secure jobs in retail and elsewhere," NRF Foundation Executive Director Adam Lukoskie said. "The NRF Foundation is honored to recognize The College of the Florida Keys as the 2025 RISE Up Partner of the Year."

The RISE Up program has been implemented into the college's post-secondary education Project ACCESS (Accessing Community College Educational experiences, Social experiences and Skills for careers) program, helping prepare students with intellectual disabilities and autism for the professional world.

CFK/ from A1

Project ACCESS has taught RISE Up trainings across its courses since 2017, with students applying the teachings in the classroom and assignments like interviewing store associates to learn more about day-to-day operations.

“Project ACCESS serves students with autism and intellectual disabilities, helping them achieve workforce readiness,” CFK college success faculty Dr. Nina Medyk said. “The NRF Foundation’s

RISE Up curriculum is instrumental, especially for students with unique abilities, in providing opportunities for inclusion in the retail industry and elsewhere.”

“It’s a monumental recognition for The College of the Florida Keys to be named the

2025 RISE Up Partner of the year,” CFK President and CEO Dr. Jonathan Gueverra said. “Thank you to the retail industry for embracing this opportunity to give individuals who may not ordinarily have a chance to participate in the labor force.”



YOUR LINK
TO THE
ISLAND CHAIN

- KEY LARGO
- ISLAMORADA
- MARATHON
- BIG PINE KEY

FLORIDA KEYS FREE Press

KEEPING
YOU POSTED

FREEPRESS.
KEYSNEWS.COM

@FLKFREEPRESS

FACEBOOK.COM/
FLORIDAKEYSFREEPRESS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024 - VOLUME 38, NO. 46 - 28 PAGES

FREE

Marine science education grant recipients announced

MONROE COUNTY — United Way of Collier and the Keys (UWCK) has announced the recipients of its 2024-2025 Marine Science Education Grants.

This year, 16 schools and organizations will receive a total of \$35,264, benefiting approximately 6,465 students with hands-on learning experiences focused on marine science and conservation.

Grant recipients are Basilica School, the College of the Florida Keys Academy, Coral Shores High School, History of Diving Museum, Gerald Adams Elementary, Key West Preschool Co-op, MarineLab, Mote Marine Lab, Ocean Studies Charter School, Poinciana Elementary, REEF, Reef Relief, Reef Renewal, Seacamp, Sigsbee Charter School and Sugarloaf

School.

Now in its fourth year, the “Creating the Next Generation of Reef Stewards” grant program is part of a five-year UWCK commitment to invest \$180,000 in marine education throughout the Keys.

The initiative aims to foster environmental stewardship by providing students with opportunities to engage in marine science and conservation efforts.

“This program empowers students to connect with our marine environment on a deeper level,” said Jessica Dockery, UWCK Reef Revitalization Project liaison. “By supporting these experiences, we’re helping to inspire the next generation of reef stewards—those who will protect and sustain our ecosystems for years to come.”

One of the grant recipients, Gerald Adams Elementary, shared how the funding will impact their students:

“This grant will allow our fifth grade class to visit Dry Tortugas National Park by helping cover admission costs through the Yankee Freedom ferry. It ensures that every student, regardless of financial circumstances, can participate in this once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Through a partnership with the United Arab Emirates, UWCK is advancing reef restoration efforts while providing complementary education to ensure long-term sustainability.

For more information, visit uwcollierkeys.org/keysreefs.

KEY WEST WEEKLY

November 14, 2024

NEW CORRECTIONS DEPUTIES JOIN SHERIFF'S OFFICE

7 graduates are newly certified
for jail service



The College of the Florida Keys recently held a ceremony for correctional officer training academy graduates at the Key West campus. All the graduates will be certified corrections officers.

From left: Monroe County Sheriff's Office Bureau of Corrections Major Tim Age, and new Bureau of Corrections deputies Giovanni Garcia, Jonathan Guerra, Dylan Schirling, Omar Fisher and Ricky Velasquez-Cinto.

Not pictured: Bureau of Corrections deputies James Beasley and David McLaren. CONTRIBUTED



Key West Health Clinic relocates after lead found in building

WLRN Public Media | By [Julia Cooper](#)

Published November 15, 2024 at 1:06 PM EST



This week, several Monroe County offices were displaced after trace amounts of lead were found at the historic Gato building where they're housed in Key West.

Those closures are now affecting the local health department.

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County, one of several agencies usually operating out of the Gato building, is moving its clinic elsewhere.

Trace amounts of lead were discovered among construction material and further testing is ongoing.

Now, DOH Monroe's clinic services will be moving to the Tuga Clinic on the College of the Florida Keys campus in Key West.


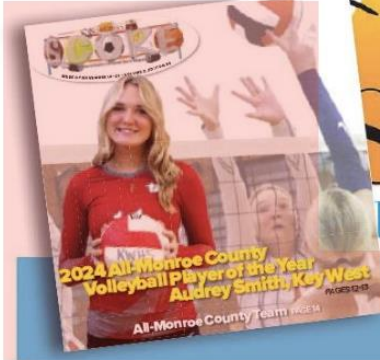
Partnering with Rural Health Network, the Tuga Clinic recently opened to fill the gaps in healthcare access identified in a 2022 Community Health Survey.

Appointments and walk-ins at the Tuga Clinic are welcome from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays.

READ MORE: [Florida's iconic Key deer face an uncertain future as seas rise](#)


This is a News In Brief report. Visit [WLRN News](#) for in-depth reporting from South Florida and Florida news.





KeysNews.com

Keys CITIZEN

Islands  One Voice

**YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO FLORIDA
KEYS SPORTS — INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Weekend Edition November 16-17, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 229 • 64 pages **\$3.00**

CITIZEN OF THE DAY



ROB O'NEAL/KEYS CITIZEN

Sara Rose Cagle came to Key West in 2016 to study marine biology at The College of the Florida Keys. Originally from San Diego, Cagle does crab and lobster research at Mote Marine on Summerland Key. 'I love spending time on the water and being surrounded by sharks, turtles and manatees,' she said.

KEY WEST

Tuga Clinic available

The Florida Department of Health-Monroe, in collaboration with The College of the Florida Keys and Rural Health Network, has opened the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus, 5901 College Road. The clinic will provide general health services to CFK employees, students and the public.

Rural Health Network will send a practitioner to the Tuga Clinic once a week. The Tuga Clinic will also use the organization's mobile unit, which has full dental capacities.

Initial hours for the Tuga Clinic will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays and from noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

To schedule an appointment, call 305-293-7500.



Health department in Key West moves temporarily after discovery of lead in building

WLRN Public Media | By Julia Cooper

Published November 18, 2024 at 10:48 AM EST



Facebook

The Gato building, a former cigar factory in Key West, was undergoing repairs when traces of lead were found in repair materials. The building has been home to many Monroe's administrative offices.

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County, one of several agencies operating out of the historic Gato building, is moving its clinic.

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County is among several agencies relocating after trace amounts of lead were found in the historic building where they're housed in Key West.

Lead was discovered this past week among construction material used for repairs at the historic Gato Cigar Factory Building, 1100 Simonton St.

The health department clinic services are moving to the Tuga Clinic, 5901 College Road, on the College of the Florida Keys campus in Key West. Appointments and walk-ins are welcome from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

The historic Gato factory was built in 1871 and operated through the height of Key West's cigar trade. In 1915, the building was destroyed by a fire and rebuilt five years later.

The building has been home to Monroe's administrative offices, including the health department, county administrator, social Services, solid waste.

The county is in the process of temporarily moving offices while lead testing and remediation is ongoing.

Partnering with Rural Health Network, the **Tuga Clinic** recently opened to fill the gaps in health care access identified in a 2022 Community Health Survey.

Copyright 2024 WLRN Public Media

Tags

[Health News Florida](#)[Florida Department of Health](#)[monroe county](#)[Key West](#)[health clinic](#)[lead](#)



Cruise ships stir up a hurricane's worth of sediment, Key West monitoring shows

WLRN Public Media | By [Jenny Staletovich](#)

Published November 19, 2024 at 12:05 PM EST



▶ LISTEN • 1:40



Courtesy Safer, Cleaner Ships

A Norwegian cruise ship churns up sediment as it motors into Key West Harbor.

When cruise ships lumber into Key West's shallow harbor, they can sometimes churn up a storm of sediment more potent than a hurricane, new monitoring by the city shows.

A year's worth of tracking by the College of the Florida Keys found 32 events where turbidity measurements not only exceeded limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency but often reached levels above what hurricanes like Helene and Milton generate when they pass by, according to Patrick Rice, principal investigator for marine research at the college.

"There's 32 events that exceed those turbidity standards over the past year. So it's like having 32 hurricanes, basically," Rice told city commissioners during an update last week.

"And none of those 32 events were an actual hurricane?" asked Commissioner Monica Haskell.

"No," Rice responded. "Those were all associated with the cruise ships."

READ MORE: [Florida muddies water on rule to protect coral](#)

...

Key West hired Rice to monitor turbidity, which can damage sea life including coral and seagrass, after state lawmakers and Gov. Ron DeSantis pre-empted a local effort to limit massive ships sailing into the port where channels are only about 34 feet and most ships have a draft of 27 feet. Port Miami, by comparison, is between 50 and 52 feet deep.

The city has since enacted its own ordinance on a city-owned docks, limiting ship arrivals to one a day at the only privately owned Pier B. In March, DeSantis and the cabinet [agreed to expand the lease space](#) at Pier B for 25 years to allow larger ships.

The city launched the study as part of an effort to improve water quality with a citywide master plan to better protect waters around Key West and several smaller islands within city limits.

In addition to turbidity monitoring, testing will also begin for chemicals found in sunscreens. An effort to ban sunscreens containing oxybenzone and octinoxate [was also overturned](#) by DeSantis. Other testing will look for evidence of sewer discharges in waters and potential leaching from an old landfill on Stock Island.

While the EPA sets a turbidity limit of 29 NTUs — a unit of measurement to determine the amount of cloudiness liquid — a 2021 Florida Department of Environmental Protection study found the limit needs to be higher to protect wildlife and recommended revising the rule.

The Clean Water Act requires the state to update its water quality rules every three years to reflect new findings. In September, [FDEP again postponed a revision](#) while it continues to study the matter.

Since a monitor was installed in late October 2023 near Mallory Square, 244 ships have motored into the harbor, ranging in size from small vessels capable of holding about 40 passengers to massive ships carrying more than 3,900, the study said.

Spikes in the amount of suspended sediment coincided with the arrival and departure of the big ships, Rice said, possibly caused by how the ships maneuver in and out of the shallow harbor.

...

"When the ships come in, especially on a windy day, they have to use their bow thrusters," he said. "The ship channel is not that deep. The hull, depending on the size of the vessel of course, is not far removed from the bottom of the sea floor."

At times, monitoring showed the clouds of sand lingered and moved with the tide, dissipating as it washed out but returning later when the tide washed back in. Blocking out the sunlight or settling can damage coral and other sea life.

Sediment churned up by the Port Miami dredge in 2014 killed about a half million corals on the reef nearby. Plowing up the bottom can also stir up toxins trapped in the sand, including bacteria that produces hydrogen sulfide and algae that fuels red tide, Rice said

Monitoring found the amount of sediment can spike at both shallow and deeper depths. In December, monitors detected turbidity at more than twice the EPA limit, and nearly equal to levels measured when Hurricane Debby [passed Key West](#) about 100 miles to the west in early August. The levels were about the same for Helene and Milton. Nine hours later, turbidity measured nearly four times the limit, coinciding with a ship's departure. In August, a ship churned up nearly seven times the allowed limit.

The tight harbor means that massive ships need to thread a narrow route in and out. The channel leading into the port is about 34 feet deep and only about 300 feet wide, with reefs rising on either side as high as 16 feet. Many of cruise ships that sail in and out are just six to seven feet from the bottom and can be as wide as 128 feet.

Dredging the harbor could eliminate some of the sediment, Rice said. But he warned that it would need to be managed carefully.

"A maintenance dredge, just removing the top layer of sediment, not making it deeper so the bigger ships can come in," he said.

With coral reefs and seagrass meadows already stressed from rising ocean temperatures - a 2023 heat wave killed swaths of coral in the nearby Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary including [the last stands of wild elkhorn](#) - Rice said he hopes to add more monitors to better understand how currents and tide move the turbidity around.

"The goal is to provide that information," he said. "But for now, all I can see is by measuring the tide and seeing if it's an incoming tide or an outgoing tide."

An earlier version of this story misspelled the given of a Key West city commissioner. It's Monica Haskell, not Monika.

Sign up for WLRN's environment newsletter Field Notes to receive our insider's guide for living in South Florida's changing landscape. Get original reporting and recaps, with context, delivered to your inbox every Friday. [Subscribe here](#).

Miami Herald

FLORIDA KEYS

FWC investigators concluded one of their own killed a Keys snorkeler. Was there a cover-up?

By **David Goodhue** and **Grethel Aguila**

Updated November 20, 2024 10:54 AM |  2



Devin Michael James Ordway, 27, was killed while snorkeling near Key West. Two investigators with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission say one of the agency's officers accidentally ran over him in his boat. The FDLE, the agency that investigated, said it could not determine whose boat killed Ordway. *Daytona Beach News-Journal obituary*



Only have a minute? Listen instead

Powered by **Trinity Audio**

00:00



1.0x

18:29

Two years ago, U.S. Navy veteran and soon-to-be father Devin Michael James Ordway was snorkeling near Key West on the lookout for spiny lobsters.

He never surfaced. After a frantic hours-long search that included his friends, police, state fish and wildlife officers and the U.S. Coast Guard, Ordway's body was found on the ocean floor, not far from where he had been swimming.

...

The boats the FDLE referred to, photographed from a camera located at the College of the Florida Keys in Key West, were crossing the area north of the canal in deeper water, the FWC investigators concluded.

The two FWC investigators also said the canal has one point of ingress and egress and can't be crossed east to west, or west to east, as it's too shallow.





Stream Scene —
Inside and online

KeysNews.com

KEYS CITIZEN

Many Islands  One Voice

**YOUR GUIDE TO FLORIDA KEYS ENTERTAINMENT
— INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Thursday

November 21, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 232 • 32 pages

\$3.00

THE DOCTOR IS IN



PHOTOS BY ROB O'NEAL/KEYS CITIZEN

Florida Department of Health-Monroe Director of Nursing Dr. Mark Roby is seen in the new Tuga Clinic at The College of the Florida Keys.

Jennifer Lefelar, Public Information Officer for the Florida Department of Health-Monroe, receives a flu shot recently from registered nurse Nadine Balbi in the new Tuga Clinic at the College of the Florida Keys. The Tuga Clinic is a collaboration between CFK, the Florida DOH-Monroe and Rural Health Network. It is located in the Student Center on the college's Key West campus and provides general health services to CFK students, employees and the public. The Tuga Clinic is staffed by DOH-Monroe and Rural Health Network personnel, with support from CFK nursing students. Services at the clinic include, but are not limited to, medical exams, immunizations, physicals, family planning, treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV testing, maternal health, Healthy Start, and WIC (nutrition program) for pregnant women, smoking cessation, drug and alcohol education, Narcan distribution and dental services. Hours are Mondays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Tuesdays through Thursdays, noon to 4 p.m. Walk-ins welcome. To schedule an appointment or for information, call [305-293-7500](tel:305-293-7500).



Holiday Edition

November 27-28, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 236 • 36 pages

\$3.00

KEY WEST

Tuga Clinic available

The Florida Department of Health-Monroe, in collaboration with The College of the Florida Keys and Rural Health Network, has opened the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus, 5901 College Road. The clinic will provide general health services to CFK employees, students and the public.

Rural Health Network will send a practitioner to the Tuga Clinic once a week. The Tuga Clinic will also use the organization's mobile unit, which has full dental capacities.

Initial hours for the Tuga Clinic will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays and from noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

To schedule an appointment, call 305-293-7500.

TODAY IN KEYS HISTORY

1884: There were 645,000 cigars, 14 bales of sponge, and 112 hides shipped from Key West to New York over the previous week.

1904: Herbie "Dutchy" Melbourne was convicted of the murder of Key West police officer Clarence Till and sentenced to be hanged.

1947: A brief, violent storm with winds of 86 mph at Boca Chica struck the Lower Keys. The storm left most of the city without electric and telephone service.

1964: An urgent plea was sent by the Old Island Restoration Foundation to Bishop Coleman Carrell of the Miami diocese to save the historic Mary Immaculate Convent building. The much-loved structure was used as a school, and the diocese had plans to demolish it "to improve educational facilities."

1977: The Florida Keys Community College Board of Trustees voted to name the college's Fine Arts Center for renowned playwright and Key West resident Tennessee Williams.

1987: Jimmy Buffett held a benefit concert for Save the Salt Ponds and Reef Relief at Key West's Wickers Field before a sell-out crowd.

KEY WEST WEEKLY

November 28, 2024

CFK ACADEMY LOSES ITS PRINCIPAL

Wendy McPherson leaving Keys to care for aging parents

W **MANDY MILES**
mandy@keysweekly.com

Students at Key West's newest high school, CFK Academy at the College of the Florida Keys, got some bad news last week, when principal Wendy McPherson announced she is leaving the school and the Keys.

The longtime educator and former principal of Marathon High School told students that Dec. 6 will be her last day, as her aging parents' health challenges require them to relocate to mainland Florida.

College of the Florida Keys president Jonathan Gueverra told the Keys Weekly that McPherson's departure is part of a larger and troubling trend of "locals leaving the Keys for economic and medical reasons."

"She's really great, and I'm sorry to see her go," Jack Mitchell, a ninth grader at CFK Academy, told the Keys Weekly last week upon learning the news.

Jack's mother, Stephanie Mitchell, added, "We're all sorry to see her go, as she has accomplished so much for the Academy in such a short time."

McPherson was the first principal of the charter high school, which opened in August 2023 in a newly constructed building on the Key West campus of the college.

CFK Academy focuses on college and career readiness with its curriculum centered on science, technology, engineering and math as well as career technical education. Project-based learning experiences provide students with hands-on engagement in the learning process beyond the traditional classroom to develop communication, critical-thinking and communication skills.

Academy students are encouraged to earn college credit through the college's dual-enrollment program in



Wendy McPherson is a longtime Florida Keys educator who served nine years as principal of Marathon High School and is currently the principal of CFK Academy collegiate charter high school. She is leaving that post Dec. 6 to care for her aging parents in mainland Florida. CONTRIBUTED

college classes on the same campus. Motivated students can graduate with their high school diploma as well as an associate's degree, certificate and/or industry certification.

McPherson took the helm of CFK Academy after a nine-year tenure as principal of Marathon High School.

McPherson began her career of more than 30 years as a teacher at Sigsbee Elementary for 11 years before working as a district administrator and English/language arts coordinator. She then served as an assistant principal at Sugarloaf School and Marathon High School before becoming principal of Marathon High School. McPherson was named Principal of the Year twice by the Monroe County School District, in 2016 and 2022. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Florida State University, a master's degree in educational leadership, curriculum and instruction from University of West Florida, and a doctorate in educational leadership from Southeastern University.



CFK ACADEMY LOSES ITS PRINCIPAL

Wendy McPherson leaving Keys to care for aging parents

W **MANDY MILES**
mandy@keysweekly.com

Students at Key West's newest high school, CFK Academy at the College of the Florida Keys, got some bad news last week, when principal Wendy McPherson announced she is leaving the school and the Keys.

The longtime educator and former principal of Marathon High School told students that Dec. 6 will be her last day, as her aging parents' health challenges require them to relocate to mainland Florida.

College of the Florida Keys president Jonathan Gueverra told the Keys Weekly that McPherson's departure is part of a larger and troubling trend of "locals leaving the Keys for economic and medical reasons."

"She's really great, and I'm sorry to see her go," Jack Mitchell, a ninth grader at CFK Academy, told the Keys Weekly last week upon learning the news.

Jack's mother, Stephanie Mitchell, added, "We're all sorry to see her go, as she has accomplished so much for the Academy in such a short time."

McPherson was the first principal of the charter high school, which opened in August 2023 in a newly constructed building on the Key West campus of the college.

CFK Academy focuses on college and career readiness with its curriculum centered on science, technology, engineering and math as well as career technical education. Project-based experiences provide students with hands-on engagement in the learning process beyond the traditional classroom to develop critical-thinking and communication skills.

Academy students are encouraged to earn college credit through the college's dual-enrollment program in college classes on the same campus. Motivated students can graduate with their high school diploma as well as an associate's degree, certificate and/or industry certification.

McPherson took the helm of CFK Academy after a nine-year tenure as principal of Marathon High School.

McPherson began her career of more than 30 years as a teacher at Sigsbee Elementary for 11 years before working as a district administrator and English/language arts coordinator. She then served as an assistant principal at Sugarloaf School and Marathon High School before becoming principal of Marathon High School. McPherson was named Principal of the Year twice by the Monroe County School District, in 2016 and 2022. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Florida State University, a master's degree in educational leadership, curriculum and instruction from University of West Florida, and a doctorate in educational leadership from Southeastern University.



Wendy McPherson is a longtime Florida Keys educator who served nine years as principal of Marathon High School and is currently the principal of CFK Academy collegiate charter high school. She is leaving that post Dec. 6 to care for her aging parents in mainland Florida. CONTRIBUTED

UPPER KEYS WEEKLY

November 28, 2024

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

COLLEGE CAN DO BETTER BY ITS STUDENTS & FACULTY

Dear Editor,

It's no secret that living in paradise comes with a hefty price tag. In Monroe County, the cost of living has skyrocketed, with rent prices jumping over 20% in just the past two years. Faculty and staff at the College of the Florida Keys (CFK) are feeling the squeeze, living paycheck to paycheck, and many are being priced out of paradise altogether.

Despite this, CFK administration is offering its faculty, advisors and assistant directors/success coaches virtually no cost-of-living adjustment — less than 1% in most cases. Faculty and staff represented by the UFF-CFK union have been trying to negotiate a fair contract since March, but after months of rejected compromises, we are at an impasse. The administration's refusal to provide meaningful wage increases isn't due to budget constraints. Under President Jonathan Guevera's leadership, CFK is thriving, with programs growing, new bachelor degrees offered and student enrollment nearing a 20-year high.

CFK itself commissioned a compensation study that revealed salaries needed to increase by 19% for faculty and 8% for non-faculty. Yet the administration chose to slash the bargaining unit's salary budget by 2%, cutting the budget for non-instructional staff by a staggering 10%. Meanwhile, the college underspent last year's salary budget for the bargaining unit by over \$400,000. Our proposals, all within the college's budget, have been repeatedly rejected.

CFK's new salary step plan — a step in the right direction — still falls far short. Most faculty who have been at CFK for at least a year would see raises averaging just 1.7%, while brand-new hires would earn the same starting salaries as experienced faculty. This

inequity sends a clear message: dedication and experience do not matter.

The administration has made it clear where its priorities lie. While CFK Academy teachers at the college's new charter high school received raises of at least 3.5% — deservedly so — we've been told college professors "don't work as hard" as K-12 teachers. This dismissive attitude ignores the vital work we do. We teach dual-enrollment students, help students secure housing and access public services, serve as career coaches and provide critical emotional and academic support. Without us, there is no CFK.

Our students are paying the price for the administration's decisions. Faculty turnover is at nearly 30%, and multiple positions remain unfilled. Many of us are forced to take second or third jobs to make ends meet, leaving less time and energy to dedicate to our students.

CFK has the resources to do better. The administration's decision to fight faculty in costly legal battles rather than offer fair wages is poor management and bad for the community as a whole. A thriving college needs thriving faculty.

We are proud of the success of our students and programs. We are honored to be a part of their journey. But without a fair contract, CFK risks losing the very people who make this success possible.

CFK can and must do better — for its students, its staff and our community.

Sincerely,

Charles Goulding
President, UFF-CFK
Nicole McCoy
Lead negotiator, UFF-CFK
Alex Ledgerwood
Vice president, UFF-CFK

SWIMMING



CFK Tugas compete at Gulliver Gobble-Gobble Meet

PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE OF THE FLORIDA KEYS

Tugas' Drew Lebsack swims in a butterfly event

SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN

The College of the Florida Keys' Tugas swim teams participated in the Gulliver Gobble-Gobble November Last Chance meet on Nov. 23-24, at Gulliver Prep School in Miami.

The men's and women's teams achieved significant milestones, including personal best times and more qualifications for the national championship, scheduled for March in Buffalo, New York.

Several swimmers recorded personal bests during the meet, according to a news release from the college.

Among the women's team, those swimmers achieving personal bests were Teagan Lavin in the 100-yard butterfly, 200-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle, Victoria Mayor in the 50-yard freestyle and 50-yard backstroke, and Isabella Oliverio in the 50-yard butterfly.

More **TUGAS** | **B3**



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE OF THE FLORIDA KEYS

Members of the CFK men's and women's swim teams, from left, Kaemon Fagley, Lucas Montiel de La Nuez, Teagan Lavin, Victoria Mayor, Drew Lebsack, Isabella Oliverio, Athletic Director Lori Bosco and Eddie Kertis.

Tugas/ from B1

On the men's team, those setting personal bests were Kaemon Fagley in the 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard individual medley and 100-yard freestyle, Eddie Kertis in the 50-yard breaststroke

and 100-yard breaststroke, Drew Lebsack in the 100-yard butterfly, 200-yard freestyle, 50-yard butterfly and 200-yard butterfly, and Lucas Montiel de la Nuez in the 50-yard breaststroke

Six swimmers qualified for national events in a combined total of

16 events.

For the women, Teagan Lavin qualified in the 50-yard butterfly, while Isabella Oliverio qualified in the 100-yard individual medley and 50-yard butterfly.

For the men, Kaemon Fagley qualified in the 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard

freestyle and 100-yard individual medley, while Eddie Kertis qualified in the 50-yard breaststroke and 100-yard breaststroke, Drew Lebsack qualified in the 100-yard butterfly, 200-yard freestyle, 50-yard butterfly and 200-yard butterfly, and Lucas Montiel de la Nuez



Lucas Montiel de La Nuez and Kaemon Fagley prepare for warm-up.



Lucas Montiel de La Nuez received a rubber duck for winning his heat in the 50-yard freestyle.

qualified in the 50-yard breaststroke, 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard breaststroke.

The swim teams' next competition will be Tuga Time Trials at the CFK Pool on Saturday, Dec. 7.

Meanwhile, this Giving Tuesday on Dec. 3, CFK encourages Tugas

fans to donate to the CFK Foundation to support the athletes on their journey to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) National Swimming and Diving Championship in Buffalo, New York in March. Donations can be made at CFK.edu/GIVE.



PHOTO PROVIDED

The College of the Florida Keys swim team has garnered 16 qualification bids to the NJCC National Championships and are raising fund to make the trip to Buffalo, New York, in March of 2025.

Support the Tugas this GivingTuesday

This GivingTuesday on December 3, the College is encouraging Tuga Fans to donate to the CFK Foundation to support the athletes on their journey to the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) National Swimming and Diving Championship in Buffalo, NY in March 2025. Donations can be made online at CFK.edu/GIVE.





NEW HEALTH CLINIC AT COLLEGE OF THE FLORIDA KEYS

Collaboration offers primary care,
dental services & more



Representatives from the College of the Florida Keys, the Florida Department of Health in Monroe County and Rural Health Network celebrate the opening of the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus. AMBER ERNST-LEONARD/Contributed

The Florida Department of Health in Monroe County (DOH-Monroe), in collaboration with the College of the Florida Keys (CFK) and Rural Health Network, last month opened the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus.

The Tuga Clinic will provide general health services to CFK employees, students and the public, including: Primary care, dental services, family planning, HIV testing and counseling, PrEP, STI testing and treatments, immunizations, school health physicals, occupational health physicals, Narcan education and distribution, smoking cessation, substance use education and referrals, WIC, maternal health and Healthy Start.

"Data from the 2022 Stock Island Community Health Survey highlighted the need for affordable, accessible medical care where our residents live, work and play," said Carla Fry, administrator and health officer for the health department. "We treated the survey responses as actionable data and got to work on a solution."

Jonathan Gueverra, president of the college, was happy to get the school involved in the health partnership.

"CFK will always be this community's college," Gueverra said. "We live up to this goal by being the solution or a part of the solution. The Tuga Clinic is one more example of CFK in action to solve a problem. We are proud to be a

partner and the host in this collaboration that will improve the health and wellness of our students, employees and neighbors, while providing clinical practice opportunities for our future health care professionals."

Jennifer Lefelar, public information officer for the county health department, was the principal investigator for the department's 2022 Stock Island Community Health Survey, which highlighted the critical need for a medical clinic on Stock Island.

"Data from the survey, conducted by DOH-Monroe, support the need for Stock Island residents and workers to gain access to a medical clinic much closer to where they live and work," said Lefelar.

Rural Health Network will send a practitioner to the Tuga Clinic once a week. The clinic will also use Rural Health Network's mobile unit, which has full dental capacities.

"Rural Health Network is excited to expand access to medical and dental care for Monroe County residents through this collaborative effort with the College of the Florida Keys and DOH-Monroe," said Amy Halstead, CEO of Rural Health Network.

Initial hours for the clinic will be from Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from noon to 4 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call 305-293-7500.

— Contributed

KEY WEST

Tuga Clinic available

The Florida Department of Health-Monroe, in collaboration with The College of the Florida Keys and Rural Health Network, has opened the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus, 5901 College Road. The clinic will provide general health services to CFK employees, students and the public.

Rural Health Network will send a practitioner to the Tuga Clinic once a week. The Tuga Clinic will also use the organization's mobile unit, which has full dental capacities.

Initial hours for the Tuga Clinic will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays and from noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

To schedule an appointment, call 305-293-7500.

KEY WEST

Tuga Clinic available

The Florida Department of Health-Monroe, in collaboration with The College of the Florida Keys and Rural Health Network, has opened the Tuga Clinic on the CFK Key West campus, 5901 College Road. The clinic will provide general health services to CFK employees, students and the public.

Rural Health Network will send a practitioner to the Tuga Clinic once a week. The Tuga Clinic will also use the organization's mobile unit, which has full dental capacities.

Initial hours for the Tuga Clinic will be from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays and from noon to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

To schedule an appointment, call [305-293-7500](tel:305-293-7500).

KEY WEST WEEKLY

December 12, 2024

KEY WEST WEEKLY / DECEMBER 12, 2024

NEW PRINCIPAL TO HELM CFK ACADEMY IN JANUARY

Ja-Ronika Veldheer
is also VP of
secondary education



Ja-Ronika Veldheer will start as CFK's vice president of secondary education and principal of CFK Academy in January.
CONTRIBUTED

The College of the Florida Keys (CFK) announced Ja-Ronika Veldheer as the new vice president of secondary education and principal of CFK Academy. She will start full-time as the leader of the college's tuition-free public charter high school in January 2025.

Veldheer has 17 years of K-12 education experience with specialization in curriculum and instruction, English Language Learning (ELL) and educational leadership. She is currently an assistant principal at Key West High School and held the same role at Marathon High School. Veldheer started her career as an elementary school teacher in Blue Springs, Missouri and has 15 years of experience in the classroom, teaching and providing additional strategic support for students. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Missouri and a doctorate in educational leadership from Baker University.

Veldheer and her husband Thomas have one daughter. She has lived in the Keys for seven years. In her free time, she likes to travel with her family, beachcomb for sea glass and try new coffee shops.

More information is at cfk.edu/CFKAcademy.

— Contributed

Barroso selected as city manager

CITIZEN STAFF

The Key West City Commission, by a 4-3 vote, selected Brian Barroso as city manager at their meeting on Thursday, Dec. 12, at City Hall.

The selection was the final step in a process that began in June when then-City Manager Al Childress was fired by a different city commission, and former Assistant City Manager Todd Stoughton, who had resigned from his position, agreed to return as interim city manager.

Barroso beat four other candidates for the post, including Jim Brownlee, Rod Delostrinos, Steve McAlearney and Mark Sohaney.

Barroso currently lives in North Carolina, where he has worked since 2014 as a senior vice president at Truist Bank in charge of 21 branches. Before that role, he worked at First State Bank in Key West from 2004 to 2014. While in Key West, Barroso was a Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority board member and treasurer, an



adjunct business professor at The College of the Florida Keys and a Key West Chamber of Commerce board member.

Although a starting date wasn't given, Barroso has six months to return to Key West.

In the cover letter he submitted with his application for the city manager post, Barroso said, "I thrive in high-pressure and fast-paced situations, striving for positive results by applying my leadership and management

abilities. Further, I possess expertise in finance and acumen for maximizing performance and inspiring colleagues. I am able to visualize success and identify unconventional yet highly effective strategies for achieving it. I have skillfully balanced organizational objectives and productive relationships, strategizing and recommending ways in which to achieve and maintain a competitive business edge."

More **MANAGER** | **A3**



City/ from A1

"Right now, as it stands, is the ILA terminated because it was not renewed," Kaufman asked.

"No, that was not the motion, the motion to renew failed, Ramsingh replied. "There would have had to be a motion to terminate that got approved, but that didn't happen. There is a motion to renew, which the ordinance requires us to do every year. That motion failed," he explained.

"I need to dig into the

ILA and the grants and all these things that came up in the last few days to determine our options," Ramsingh added, seeking to postpone the decision until January's meeting. Commissioners approved the postponement, with Kaufman the lone dissenter.

A resolution sponsored by Commissioner Donie Lee proposed to request the maximum amount of Building Permit Allocations (BPAS, also known as ROGOs) from the State of Florida Department of Commerce

and Monroe County, based on the 2023 hurricane evacuation clearance times. Commissioners passed the motion, but amended the hurricane evacuation time from 26 hours to 25.5 after a lengthy discussion.

Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Art in Public Places Board selection of three unique public art works from Billy Kearins (exterior mural), Craig Gray (exterior stone carving) and Sally Binard (interior mural) for the Frederick Douglass Community Center, 111 Olivia St., in a

total amount not to exceed \$80,000.

Newly seated District 6 Commissioner Aaron Castillo, who represents Bahama Village, wanted to be sure the substance and content of the artwork was appropriate to Bahama Village. He was reassured by Liz Young, Public Arts Administrator, they would have input into the substance of the art, which is to celebrate the village's past and future and created by people living in Key West.

katrina.nichols@keysnews.com



Weekend Edition

December 21-22, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 253 • 64 pages

\$3.00

CFK hires new principal of CFK Academy

The College of the Florida Keys has hired Ja-Ronika Veldheer as the new vice president of secondary education and principal of CFK Academy. She will start full-time as the leader of the college's tuition-free public charter high school in January.



Veldheer

Veldheer has 17 years of K-12 education experience with specialization in curriculum and instruction, English Language Learning (ELL) and educational leadership. She is currently serving as an assistant principal at Key West High School and held the same role at Marathon High School.

Veldheer started her career as an elementary school teacher in Blue Springs, Missouri. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Missouri and a doctorate in educational leadership from Baker University.

Veldheer, who is married to husband Thomas and has one daughter, has lived in the Keys for seven years.

MARATHON WEEKLY

Dec. 26, 2024

ONLY IN THE FLORIDA KEYS 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2024 headlines proved it – you can't make this stuff up

W ALEX RICKERT
alex@keysweekly.com

"Florida Man" may be the stereotype, but there are plenty of times each year when "Florida Keys Man" (or woman) steals the spotlight from the bigger moniker. Stories like these are the gifts that keep on giving, and here are a few of the headlines that made us scratch our heads and go "Wait...what!?"



County road crews repair a section of road damaged by iguanas that tunneled next to an old culvert to lay eggs. MONROE COUNTY/Contributed



Ethan Robert Layne. MCSO/Contributed

Man in tractor rampage intended to kill two people on CFK campus

A 22-year-old Key West man went on a rampage behind the wheel of a tractor at the College of the Florida Keys on May 4 with the intent to kill two people, police said. Ethan Robert Layne, 22, allegedly drove a tractor through the lobby of one of the college's dorms, then used the bucket attachment to destroy plumbing in the building before ramming a truck in the parking lot and striking another vehicle. No injuries were reported in the rampage, which ended after a police officer fired several shots at Layne while he was in the tractor.



UPPER KEYS WEEKLY

December 26, 2024

ONLY IN THE FLORIDA KEYS 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2024 headlines proved it – you can't make this stuff up

ALEX RICKERT
alex@keysweekly.com

"Florida Man" may be the stereotype, but there are plenty of times each year when "Florida Keys Man" (or woman) steals the spotlight from the bigger moniker. Stories like these are the gifts that keep on giving, and here are a few of the headlines that made us scratch our heads and go "Wait...what!?"



County road crews repair a section of road damaged by iguanas that tunneled next to an old culvert to lay eggs. MONROE COUNTY/Contributed



Ethan Robert Layne. MCSO/Contributed

Man in tractor rampage intended to kill two people on CFK campus

A 22-year-old Key West man went on a rampage behind the wheel of a tractor at the College of the Florida Keys on May 4 with the intent to kill two people, police said. Ethan Robert Layne, 22, allegedly drove a tractor through the lobby of one of the college's dorms, then used the bucket attachment to destroy plumbing in the building before ramming a truck in the parking lot and striking another vehicle. No injuries were reported in the rampage, which ended after a police officer fired several shots at Layne while he was in the tractor.





FLORIDA KEYS NEWS

Eclectic Events Highlight Florida Keys' 2025 Calendar

June 2025

The **College of the Florida Keys Swim Around Key West** (June 14); swimaroundkeywest.org) is a 12.5-mile endurance swim, open to individuals and relay teams, around the island of Key West through Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico waters. Organized by The College of the Florida Keys, it's billed as the only sanctioned, insured and U.S. Coast Guard-permitted swimming race around Key West. Associated events include shorter open-water swims.

GRADUATION CONGRATULATIONS



CFK/CONTRIBUTED

Monroe County Recycling Coordinator Melody Tuschel, who earned a bachelor's degree of applied science in supervision and management and gave the student address, leads classmates in moving their tassels to the left to symbolize graduation, as the College of the Florida Keys President and CEO Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, left, looks on. CFK held its 69th commencement exercises for the fall class of 2024 on Thursday, Dec. 12, in the Tennessee Williams Theatre on the Key West campus. Forty-five graduates donned blue-and-orange graduation attire to receive their respective diplomas for bachelor's degrees, associate degrees and certificates. CFK's spring semester begins Jan. 10. Information about academic programs, steps to become a student and ways to pay for college can be viewed at CFK.edu/FutureStudents.

Miami Herald

Cruise ships stir up a hurricane's worth of sediment, Key West monitoring shows

BY JENNY STALETOVICH
WLRN News

When cruise ships lumber into Key West's shallow harbor, they can sometimes churn up a storm of sediment more potent than a hurricane, new monitoring by the city shows.

A year's worth of tracking by the College of the Florida Keys found 32 events where turbidity measurements not only exceeded limits set by the U.S. Environmental Pro-

tection Agency but often reached levels above what hurricanes like Helene and Milton generate when they pass by, according to Patrick Rice, principal investigator for marine research at the college.

"There's 32 events that exceed those turbidity standards over the past year. So it's like having 32 hurricanes, basically,"

Rice told city commissioners during an update last week.

"And none of those 32 events were an actual hurricane?" asked Com-

missioner Monica Haskell. "No," Rice responded.

"Those were all associated with the cruise ships."

Key West hired Rice to monitor turbidity, which can damage sea life including coral and seagrass, after state lawmakers and Gov. Ron DeSantis pre-empted a local effort to limit massive ships sailing into the port where channels are only about 34 feet and most ships have a draft of 27 feet. Port Miami, by comparison, is between 50 and 52 feet deep.

The city has since enacted its own ordinance on a city-owned docks, limiting ship arrivals to one a day at the only privately owned Pier B. In March, DeSantis and the cabinet agreed to expand the lease space at Pier B for 25 years to allow larger ships.

The city launched the study as part of an effort to improve water quality with a citywide master plan to better protect waters around Key West and several smaller islands within city limits.

In addition to turbidity monitoring, testing will also begin for chemicals found in sunscreens. An effort to ban sunscreens containing oxybenzone and octinoxate was also overturned by DeSantis. Other testing will look for evidence of sewer discharges in waters and potential leaching from an old landfill on Stock Island.

While the EPA sets a turbidity limit of 29 NTUs — a unit of measurement to determine the amount of cloudiness liquid — a

2021 Florida Department of Environmental Protection study found the limit needs to be higher to protect wildlife and recommended revising the rule.

The Clean Water Act requires the state to update its water quality rules every three years to reflect new findings. In September, FDEP again postponed a revision while it continues to study the matter.

Since a monitor was

SEE SHIPS 8A

FROM PAGE 7A

SHIPS

installed in late October 2023 near Mallory Square, 244 ships have motored into the harbor, ranging in size from small vessels capable of holding about 40 passengers to massive ships carrying more than 3,900, the study said.

Spikes in the amount of suspended sediment coincided with the arrival and departure of the big ships, Rice said, possibly caused by how the ships maneuver in and out of the shallow harbor.

"When the ships come in, especially on a windy day, they have to use their bow thrusters," he said. "The ship channel is not that deep. The hull, depending on the size of the vessel of course, is not far removed from the bottom of the sea floor."

At times, monitoring showed the clouds of sand lingered and moved with the tide, dissipating as it washed out but returning later when the tide washed back in. Blocking out the sunlight or settling can damage coral and other sea life.

Sediment churned up by the Port Miami dredge in 2014 killed about a half million corals on the reef nearby. Plowing up the bottom can also stir up toxins trapped in the sand, including bacteria that produces hydrogen sulfide and algae that fuels red tide, Rice said.

Monitoring found the amount of sediment can spike at both shallow and deeper depths. In December, monitors detected turbidity at more than twice the EPA limit, and nearly equal to levels measured when Hurricane Debby passed Key West about 100 miles to the west in early August. The levels were about

the same for Helene and Milton. Nine hours later, turbidity measured nearly four times the limit, coinciding with a ship's departure. In August, a ship churned up nearly seven times the allowed limit.

The tight harbor means that massive ships need to thread a narrow route in and out. The channel leading into the port is about 34 feet deep and only about 300 feet wide, with reefs rising on either side as high as 16 feet. Many of cruise ships that sail in and out are just six to seven feet from the bottom and can be as wide as 128 feet.

Dredging the harbor could eliminate some of the sediment, Rice said. But he warned that it would need to be managed carefully.

"A maintenance dredge, just removing the top layer of sediment, not making it deeper so the bigger ships can come in," he said.

With coral reefs and seagrass meadows already stressed from rising ocean temperatures - a 2023 heat wave killed swaths of coral in the nearby Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary including the last stands of wild elkhorn - Rice said he hopes to add more monitors to better understand how currents and tide move the turbidity around.

"The goal is to provide that information," he said. "But for now, all I can see is by measuring the tide and seeing if it's an incoming tide or an outgoing tide."

This story was produced in partnership with the Florida Climate Reporting Network, a multi-newsroom initiative founded by the Miami Herald, the South Florida Sun Sentinel, The Palm Beach Post, the Orlando Sentinel, WLRN Public Media and the Tampa Bay Times.



Weekend Edition

December 28-29, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 257 • 64 pages

\$3.00

City to seek new water-quality monitoring partner

KATRINA NICHOLS
Keys Citizen

Key West City Commissioners are seeking a new water-quality monitoring partner, and that search is expected to be a discussion item at the January commissioners meeting, according to City Attorney Ron Ramsingh.

Currently, a city ordinance requires water-quality monitoring of the nearshore waters around

Key West. Ordinance 8-3 is titled "Coral Restoration; water quality monitoring," and it states: "The City of Key West shall establish a fund for the express purpose to restore and maintain coral reefs adjacent to the City of Key West. The City of Key West shall engage certified independent qualified reef restoration experts to be identified by resolution of the City of Key West annually to

restore and maintain such reefs. The City of Key West shall also establish a water-quality monitoring fund for the monitoring of water-quality violations of Section 80-2 in the waterways of the City of Key West via certified independent qualified water-quality monitoring expert or governmental entity to be identified by resolution annually."



The College of the Florida Keys has been a partner in the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the city since April 2023. A vote to renew the contract was on the November agenda but was postponed to the December meeting.

The city and the college have been partners on CFK's EPA grant to monitor water quality in

the Key West Harbor and ship channel, as well as other areas of concern, and also on a Key West Water Quality Improvement Plan. The agreement outlines the respective responsibilities of the city and CFK regarding funding, equipment, services, deliverables and insurance.

At the Dec. 12 city commission meeting, a motion was made in the morning session by Commissioner Sam

Kaufman and seconded by Commissioner Monica Haskell to approve a resolution to postpone a vote on renewing the ILA with the college. The motion did not pass.

After a discussion of procedure and Robert's Rules of Order between Ramsingh and City Clerk Keri O'Brien during the afternoon recess, the item was carried over to the

More **WATER** | A10

KEY WEST

CFK donates toys to Samuel's House

Friends, employees, and board members of The College of the Florida Keys brought dozens of new toys for local children and non-perishable food items to CFK's annual Caribbean Holiday Party on Dec. 16, hosted by CFK President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra and wife Josephine.

The toys were donated to Samuel's House, a Keys-based nonprofit organization that offers housing and supportive services for homeless women and intact families. The food was donated to Tuga Shelves, the college's food pantry on the Key West campus for food insecure students.

"At this time of year, our community comes together to celebrate and to share," Gueverra said.

"The toys and food donated at our holiday party not only bring smiles to those in need but also embody the spirit of generosity and compassion that defines The College of the Florida Keys."



PHOTO PROVIDED

CFK President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra and his wife, Josephine Gueverra, present Maria Protopsaltis, Samuel's House deputy director, and Tara Salinas, Samuel's House executive director, toys collected at CFK's annual Caribbean Holiday Party.

BLAST FROM THE PAST: FKCC Christmas Swim Meet, Dec. 15, 2001

RON COOKE
SCORE

Florida Keys Community College hosted its annual Christmas swim meet Saturday, Dec. 15, 2001 at the Mario Mitchell Aquatic Center on Stock Island.

Bone Island Swim Club, of Key West, and Amphibious Assault, from Marathon to Islamorada, competed against five Miami teams.

The most exciting event of the day featured Bone Island and Key West High School standout swimmer Liza Davia and Mhyria Miller from Marathon and the Amphibious Assault team competing in the 50-yard freestyle in their respective age groups. Davia took first place in 15-and-Older with a 25.70 and Miller in the next lane competing in the 13-14 age group turned in a 25.78.

Davia also collected a first in the 15-and-Over 100-yard backstroke with a personal best of 1:07.52 and seconds in the 100 butterfly and 100 breaststroke.

Miller's 1:06.22 was a personal record in the 100 back for a first place and grabbed first in the 110 fly with a 1:03.00. She also placed second 100 breast and 100 freestyle.

Bone Island's Laura Finlon took second in the 15-and-Over 100-yard backstroke swimming to a 1:08.69, Caleb Lemons, 8, swam to second place in

the 25-yard breast with a 23:84 and Kiersten Mar-ian, 12, blazed to a 36:28 finish in the 50-yard freestyle for first in the girls 13-14 age bracket. Keeya Singer, 9, took first in the girls 9-and-Under 100-yard freestyle and the Bone Island boys 8-and-Under team swam to a 24:45.09 first-place in the 100-yard medley and the girls 8-and-Under took second in the 100-freestyle relay.

Julia Lozano, 6, took three second-place finishes for the Amphibious Assault team in the 25 fly, 25 breast and 25 free as teammates Shelby Brown, 8, won the 25-yard breast with a 24.55 and second in the 25 back at 23.46. Carley Brownlee, 17 flew to first in the 100 fly with a personal best of 1:07.91 and a pair of second places in the 50 free and 200 free at 27.70 and 2:17.95 respectively.

Amphibious Assault's Richie Coleman, 13, hustled his way to second in the 100 breast, Nicole Glade, 12, swam to her best time ever in the 100 free at 1:08.68 and took first in the 50 fly second in the 50 back.

Luke Knight picked up to first and two seconds with a personal best of 1:03.41 in the 100 free and captured the 50 breast with a 37.00, 33.22 in the 50 fly and 29.36 in the 50 free, while brother Tim, 14, had a first in the 100 breast and three third-place finishes — two of which were personal bests in the 100 fly and 100 free.

Cara O'Neill, 15, was first in the 100 breast, second in the 100 free and third in the highly competitive 50 free at 28.00.



PHOTOS BY RON COOKE/SCORE

Members of the Bone Island Swim Club talk between events at the 2001 meet.



Bone Island coach Lori Bosco talks to team members at the FKCC Christmas meet on Dec. 15, 2001.



Amphibious Assault's Gabby Olsen celebrated her seventh birthday as part of her team's 100-yard medley relay in the FKCC Christmas meet on Dec. 15, 2001.

BLAST FROM THE PAST: FKCC Christmas Swim Meet, Dec. 15, 2001



Bone Island swimmer Kate Patton dives in for the 50-yard freestyle in the 15-and-Over age bracket.




PHOTOS BY RON COOKE/SCORE

Amphibious Assault's Luke Knight of Islamorada competed in the backstroke leg of the 200-yard medley relay.

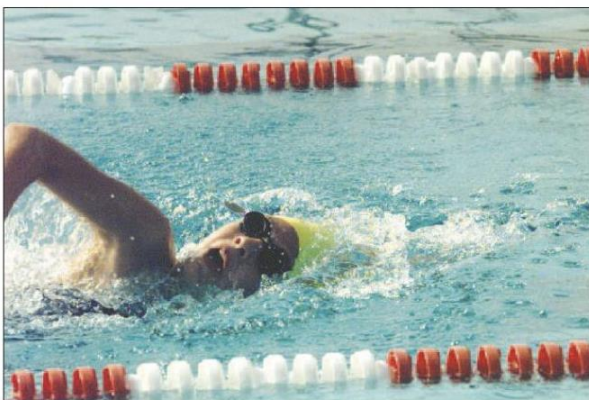


Bone Island swimmer Alicia Garcia mounts the starting blocks for the breaststroke leg of the girls 10-and-Under 200-yard medley relay.



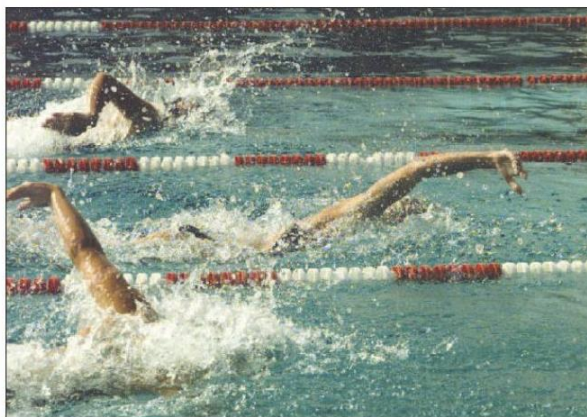

FLORIDA KEYS AQUEDUCT AUTHORITY
PROVIDING QUALITY WATER SERVICES TO THE KEYS

BLAST FROM THE PAST: FKCC Christmas Swim Meet, Dec. 15, 2001



PHOTOS BY RON COOKE/SCORE//

Kiersten Marian, 12, of Bone Island Swim Club pours it on in the girls 50-yard freestyle event. Marian finished first in her age bracket with a personal best of 36.28.



Mhyria Miller, top, and Liza Davia, center, stroke the last 5 yards of the 50-yard freestyle event on Dec. 15, 2001 at the FKCC pool.

BLAST FROM THE PAST: FKCC Christmas Swim Meet, Dec. 15, 2001



Mhyria Miller, left, and Liza Davia toe the blocks for the start of the 50-yard freestyle on Dec. 15, 2001 at the FKCC pool.

RON COOKE/SCORE



Philadelphia Eagles
running back
Saquon Barkley

KEYS CITIZEN

KeysNews.com

Many Islands  One Voice

BARKLEY ON VERGE OF BREAKING SINGLE-SEASON RUSHING RECORD — B1 \$3.00

Tuesday

December 31, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 258 • 16 pages

CORRECTION

A story in the Dec. 28 edition of The Keys Citizen about the city seeking a new ILA partner for water-quality monitoring should have stated a motion was made during the morning session to approve renewing the ILA between the city and The College of the Florida Keys. The motion did not pass. The Citizen regrets the error.

The Keys Citizen corrects all errors of fact. If you find an error in fact in The Citizen, call [305-292-7777](tel:305-292-7777), Ext. 710266.



Weekend Edition

January 4-5, 2025 • Vol. 149 No. 3 • 64 pages

\$3.00

City expected to approve new manager at meeting

KATRINA NICHOLS
Keys Citizen

Key West officials are expected to seal the deal with proposed new city manager Brian Barroso during the Tuesday, Jan. 7, city commission meeting at City Hall.

Barroso's proposed employment contract, with a \$215,000 annual salary, is listed on the consent agenda. According to the meeting agenda, a consent agenda item is considered routine and enacted by one motion with no separate discussion, unless requested by a commission member.

If approved, Barroso's contract includes a six-month probationary period followed by a wage increase of \$15,000, bringing the annual wage to \$230,000 after the first six months.

At the Dec. 12 meeting, city commissioners selected Barroso for the city manager post with a 4-3 vote, with commissioners Monica Haskell, Mary Lou Hoover and Sam Kaufman offering different selections.

The city manager is responsible



Barroso

for overseeing the administration of all city departments, appointing department heads, and managing city employees. He will also develop and implement city-wide policies, including the strategic and comprehensive plans set by the city commission. The role involves fostering positive relationships with elected officials, city staff and the public while ensuring the smooth operation of public services such as safety, utilities, and maintenance. The months-long selection

process began in June 2024 when then-City Manager Al Childress was fired by a different city commission, and former Assistant City Manager Todd Stoughton, who had resigned from his position, agreed to return as interim city manager.

WATER QUALITY ILA

Key West City Commissioners are seeking a new water-quality monitoring partner, and Commissioner Sam Kauffman has sponsored a discussion on the matter for Tuesday's meeting.

Originally listed on the agenda as "a resolution to approve the

attached 'Water Quality Partnership Interlocal Agreement' (ILA) between the City of Key West (City) and The College of the Florida Keys (CFK) for creation of a Water Quality Partnership Program," the item was since been withdrawn.

The same item was postponed from November to December and then to January, but CFK President and CEO Dr. Jonathon Gueverra canceled the institution's participation in the partnership. City commissioners are expected to discuss putting the contract out to bid.

More CITY | A10

HILL INDICATES HE WANTS OUT OF MIAMI AFTER LOSS — B1 **\$3.00**

Tuesday

January 7, 2025 • Vol. 149 No. 4 • 16 pages

COLLEGE SWIMMING



A swimmer on the winning women's team from Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, competes in the Orange Bowl Swim Classic Friday, Jan. 3, 2025, at the Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo. A team from Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, topped the Men's Division, where The College of the Florida Keys squad took third. The classic concluded the winter collegiate swim training season in the Florida Keys.

New England teams take top honors at Orange Bowl Swim Classic in Florida Keys

SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN

Teams from Stonehill College of Massachusetts and Rhode Island's Roger Williams University took top honors in the Women's and Men's divisions, respectively, at the 22nd annual Orange Bowl Swim Classic

staged Friday, Jan. 3, in the Florida Keys.

The Stonehill Skyhawks women swimmers won their division with 96 points, while the Roger Williams Hawks male swimmers won with 121 points.

More SWIM | B3



Women competitors in the Orange Bowl Swim Classic dive in to begin one of 24 heats Friday, Jan. 3, at the Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo. The team from Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, placed first in the Women's Division, and Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, placed first in the Men's Division. The men's team from The College of the Florida Keys finished third.



PHOTOS BY STEPHEN FRINK

Swimmers on the second-place women's division team from Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, compete in the Orange Bowl Swim Classic on Friday, Jan. 3, at the Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo. A team from Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, placed first in the Women's Division and a Roger Williams University male team placed first in the Men's Division. The classic is an integral part of South Florida's annual Orange Bowl Festival and concluded the winter collegiate swim training season in the Florida Keys.



A swimmer on the winning women's team from Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, competes in the Orange Bowl Swim Classic on Friday, Jan. 3, at the Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo. A team from Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, topped the Men's Division. Second place in the women's division also went to Roger Williams University, while a team from Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, Canada, placed second in the Men's Division.

Swim/ from B1

Second-place finisher in the women's division was Roger Williams University, followed by Canada's Mount Allison University in third.

In men's, the Mount Allison University

took second place, while The College of the Florida Keys took third.

Staged at the Jacobs Aquatic Center in Key Largo, the event is an integral aspect of South Florida's annual Orange Bowl Festival and caps the winter collegiate swim training season in the Florida Keys.

KEY WEST WEEKLY

January 9, 2025

COLLEGE'S 2025 LECTURE SERIES OPENS WITH TALK ON GALAPAGOS FISHES



Jack Stein Grove, pictured with a Galapagos giant tortoise, will present at the Upper Keys center on Wednesday, Jan. 15 and at the Key West campus on Thursday, Jan. 16. CONTRIBUTED

The College of the Florida Keys will open its 2025 VIP Series with back-to-back presentations on Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. at CFK's Upper Keys center in Key Largo and on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 7 p.m. in the Tennessee Williams Theatre on the Key West campus.

Marine scientist, author and CFK alumnus Jack Stein Grove will present "Galapagos Fishes, from the Shore to the Abyss and from Darwin to DNA." Drawing from 50 years of research and adventures in the Galapagos Islands, Grove will discuss the natural history and diverse wildlife of the famous archipelago. Grove graduated from CFK in 1972 before setting sail on his first expedition to the Galapagos in 1975 as an undergraduate of the University of West Florida.

His research has been published in numerous scientific and popular articles. He wrote "Fishes of the Galapagos Islands," published by Stanford University in 1997, which included a foreword by Jean Michele Cousteau. His new comprehensive book about the fishes of the Galapagos is scheduled to be released, open access, in 2025.

In its 11th season, the college's VIP Series features the views, ideas and perspectives of speakers of local, regional and national prominence. CFK's 2025 VIP Series is sponsored by Essential Net Solutions. Tickets for each event are \$5 at the door. Admission is free for students at CFK and Monroe County schools.

More information is at 305-296-9081 or CFK.edu/VIP.

— Contributed

UPPER KEYS WEEKLY

January 9, 2025

COLLEGE'S 2025 LECTURE SERIES OPENS WITH TALK ON GALAPAGOS FISHES



Jack Stein Grove, pictured with a Galapagos giant tortoise, will present at the Upper Keys center on Wednesday, Jan. 15 and at the Key West campus on Thursday, Jan. 16. CONTRIBUTED

The College of the Florida Keys will open its 2025 VIP Series with back-to-back presentations on Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. at CFK's Upper Keys center in Key Largo and on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 7 p.m. in the Tennessee Williams Theatre on the Key West campus.

Marine scientist, author and CFK alumnus Jack Stein Grove will present "Galapagos Fishes, from the Shore to the Abyss and from Darwin to DNA." Drawing from 50 years of research and adventures in the Galapagos Islands, Grove will discuss the natural history and diverse wildlife of the famous archipelago. Grove graduated from CFK in 1972 before setting sail on his first expedition to the Galapagos in 1975 as an undergraduate of

the University of West Florida.

His research has been published in numerous scientific and popular articles. He wrote "Fishes of the Galapagos Islands," published by Stanford University in 1997, which included a foreword by Jean Michele Cousteau. His new comprehensive book about the fishes of the Galapagos is scheduled to be released, open access, in 2025.

In its 11th season, the college's VIP Series features the views, ideas and perspectives of speakers of local, regional and national prominence. CFK's 2025 VIP Series is sponsored by Essential Net Solutions. Tickets for each event are \$5 at the door. Admission is free for students at CFK and Monroe County schools.

More information is at 305-296-9081 or CFK.edu/VIP.

— Contributed