

# Matecumbe Neighbors



Newsletter of the Lower Matecumbe Key Association

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October 2014

## Do We Need a Pep Talk?

The Lower Matecumbe Key Association has nearly 250 members representing a significant percentage of homeowners on the island. LMKA has been active on Lower Matecumbe and in the entire area for 28 years now. We hope that members have benefited from the work of the association, the opportunity to meet neighbors, and to learn about the people and events that mean so much to Lower Matecumbe.

The Association has had an impact on the way things are on our island by undertaking projects to improve Lower Matecumbe, lobbying local government when there are needs, complaints or ideas, and creating friendships through the informational meeting programs and other events.

Without the interest of our members, the work cannot succeed in the future as it has in the past.

The Board appreciates the fact we have so many members interested in joining, but the board cannot keep up the mission of the association without more volunteers to help. There are several vacancies on the Board. If the newsletter is to continue on a regular basis we need people to help write stories or just provide ideas for stories. Before the board ticks its neck out+we need to hear from members about issues of concern. We need program ideas and help putting the programs together.

We think the \$20 annual family membership fee just may be the best money you could spend...considering the accomplishments of LMKA over the years and the opportunity it provides to keep property owners informed, whether they live here fulltime or not.

But without more folks getting involved, the Association may not be able to continue. Please volunteer. It takes so little time to serve on the board, submit ideas for projects or newsletter stories, suggest a meeting program or volunteer to be a program! Volunteers are priceless!

Let us know what you think about the future of the organization and what direction you'd like LMKA to pursue. Send an email reply.

**Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer. ~Author Unknown**

## Election Day is Coming

The November 4 election will have significant consequences for our state and our local government. If you will not be here to vote, be sure you get an absentee ballot.

In Islamorada we have four council seats being contested. Mike Forster had no opposition and was automatically re-elected to Seat 5 for a 2 year term. Mayor Ted Blackburn is not seeking a second term.

Seat 1: Incumbent Deb Gillis vs Buddy Pinder

Seat 2: Incumbent Dave Purdo vs Dennis Ward

Seat 3: Incumbent Ken Philipson vs Jim Mooney

Seat 4: Paul Bates, Bob Johnson, Chris Sante, Janet Wood

Every vote is critical. Take the time to learn about the philosophies of each candidate. In a few days you will receive more information about this election and the results of a questionnaire sent to each candidate. Consider their positions carefully. There are important issues impacting our island.

While there are 4 candidates running for Seat 4, there will be no run-off. If the vote is evenly divided, the winner could receive just over 25% of the votes!

You will also vote on a binding referendum to change the Village Charter, one intended to preserve our small town atmosphere. The Village has always restricted the permitting of structures over 10,000 sq ft except for public or semi-public buildings. But the code allows Council to override and approve larger structures. The amendment would take away the override. Council has never denied a permit for a structure because it is over 10,000 sq ft.

Another controversial issue on the ballot is a Florida Constitutional Amendment that would allow medical use of marijuana.

You can check your voting status and review the ballot at

[www.keys-elections.org/Voters/My-Registration-Status.aspx](http://www.keys-elections.org/Voters/My-Registration-Status.aspx)

**Watch for further Village Council candidate information from Lower Matecumbe that should be in your InBox in the next week.**

Do you have concerns...contact the Islamorada Village Council.

Email Village Clerk, Kelly Toth, at [clerk@islamorada.fl.us](mailto:clerk@islamorada.fl.us) and ask her to distribute your email to council.



Mayor  
Ted Blackburn



Dave Purdo



Mike Forster



Vice Mayor  
Deb Gillis



Ken Philipson

### Interesting Links

[Www.islamorada.fl.us](http://www.islamorada.fl.us) .... Get a wealth of information... staff and their contact info, meetings scheduled, agendas, minutes, links to Village Charter, Comp Plan and Village Code and much more. Even candidate financial reports. Provide your email address for email news updates from the village. You can also watch council meetings online—go to webcast on the home page menu.

[IslamoradaMatters.com](http://IslamoradaMatters.com) ... information about the Sea Level studies and impact on Islamorada

[ReynoldsWaterIslamorada.com](http://ReynoldsWaterIslamorada.com) ... Wastewater updates. For weekly updates on wastewater construction progress, “like” Reynolds Water Islamorada on Facebook.

<http://www.fdotmiamidade.com/current-projects/monroe-county.html> —for Florida Department of Transportation current projects in Monroe County

<http://www.firmkeys.org/> - go here and join—Fair Insurance Rates in Monroe—they are doing an incredible job working to get us all better insurance rates.

## Lower Matecumbe Key Association Statement of Purpose

The Lower Matecumbe Key Association, Inc. shall actively work to preserve and enhance the quality of life and environment through participation and democratic process by the residents.

Goals shall include:

1. Monitoring activities such as zoning and construction.
2. Communicating with all members to alert them to potential problems or opportunities.
3. Coordinating the efforts of the individual neighborhood associations on common objectives.
4. Providing an open forum for presentation and discussion of issues.
5. Taking appropriate action on behalf of the membership.

Board of Directors:

Hermine Zavar, Dennie Zettwoch, Rosemary Duke, Fernando Franco

Newsletter: Sue Miller, editor

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**The opinions in this newsletter are not necessarily the opinions of the Board of Directors of LMKA.**

Articles submitted with opposing points of view are encouraged.

## New in Town:

**Subway and SubZero Ice Cream and Yogurt:** Now opened in Islamorada at MM82.6 in the Whistle Stop Plaza. Try it out and experience the science of ice cream... Ice cream made from liquid Nitrogen! Made to order, flash frozen right before your eyes!

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## Wastewater Update:

**Pumping Station:** The lot next to Lower Matecumbe Fire Station 19 has been cleared and is where the pumping station will be located that will pump our wastewater north to the next pumping station at the Islander. The property is expected to be filled because of the low elevation.

**Force Main:** Pre-trenching has been underway for a couple weeks along U.S. One between Columbus Drive and Robbie on the bay side of the highway. Pre-trenching is just beginning south of Columbus Drive. (Pre-trenching- digging a trench under the existing utilities to assure no water mains or fiber optic cables will be impacted when the sewer force main is laid)

Laying the force main on the fill between Upper and Lower Matecumbe and under the four bridges (yes about 40 feet under the bottom of the channels!) has been completed and Reynolds is working on restoration work - bike path, sod, etc.

**Low Pressure System (LPS):** The areas north of MM75.3 will be connected to a low pressure system instead of a vacuum system. The low pressure lines have been installed in some neighborhoods by trenching through the paved roadways instead of disrupting what is in the right of way next to the pavement. Re-paving the roads will be done when the trenching is completed, long before homeowners connect to the sewer lines. Several neighborhoods on the Oceanside, MM76.5 and south, will be re-paved in the next couple weeks. Soon they will do directional drilling to place the pipes under U.S. One for future connection to the bayside sewer main from the Oceanside properties. With directional drilling under the highway, there is no disruption of traffic. The grinder pump installations on private residential property (1-4 units) are expected to begin after the first of the year once a majority of easements have been signed giving the Village the right to install, operate and maintain the grinder pumps located on private property. The Village contractor will install, operate and maintain the grinder pumps and the village will charge property owners \$25/ft for installation of the pipe from the grinder pump to the connection on the street. The property owner must provide 220 electrical service to the grinder pump.

**Vacuum System neighborhoods:** Work will begin within the next couple weeks in Tollgate, White Marlin Beach and Sandy Cove neighborhoods where they will be working on the layout of the vacuum system and doing 60ft digs to locate utilities. For Port Antigua, a joint project will be undertaken- putting in the sewer pipes and vacuum pits and at the same time FKAA will be replacing the water mains. The Port Antigua area will therefore be delayed until both projects are ready to go.

**Deadline:** The entire sewer system is to be completed village-wide by December 2015. Once the lines are in, pumping stations operational, vacuum pits and/or grinder pumps installed in neighborhoods, residents will be given a notice to connect. Thirty days from that notice, whether connected or not, individual water bills will include a charge for sewer. A typical family is expected to pay about \$80/month for the sewer charge, over and above the water bill though partially dependent on water usage. This charge is in addition to the two wastewater assessments previously approved.

**NPK:** The wastewater from the North Plantation Key system that was previously treated at the village treatment plant at MM90 is now piped to the treatment plant in Key Largo. Hundreds of vacuum pits need to be replaced in that system to prevent continuing salt water intrusion that is problematic to treatment plants.

# Alligator Light



Alligator Light has been a treasured part of the beautiful vista that makes Islamorada's ocean panorama so exceptional. The lighthouse is the centerpiece of the Islamorada logo created for the new Village over a dozen years ago by local artist Jeanine Bean. Alligator, located about 4 miles off the Islamorada shoreline, was named to honor a U.S. Navy Schooner %Alligator+that sank nearby in 1822.

The 136 foot lighthouse was built of iron in 1873 at a cost of \$185,000. A 2000 pound hammer was used to drive the 12+iron pilings ten feet into the coral rock to support the structure. It still contains the original fourth order Fresnel lens that has a range of 12 miles. But the lighthouse no longer flashes white and red, every third flash red, with 5 second intervals between flashes. The light was deactivated in July and no longer acts as an aid to ships, warning of the shallow water along the reef line.

This lighthouse, along with 5 others along the Florida Keys, is owned and operated by the U.S. Coast Guard. The cost of maintaining the archaic lighthouses has become a major problem. The Coast Guard is in the process of replacing the lighthouses with 16 foot steel structures to aid boatersõ about 1/8 the height of the existing light. The one that will be placed next to Alligator Light is in the planning stages. Its light will be visible for about 7 miles.

The Coast Guard is in the process of looking for a suitable new owner for Alligator Light. The federal General Service Administration (GSA) will determine if the state or a local government wants to assume ownership. If not they will look for a non-profit next. If still no luck finding an entity that has the interest and funding to maintain the lighthouse, the lighthouse will be sold on the open market.

The GSA website contains this explanation about lighthouse sales:

## Preserving America's Historic Lighthouses

Lighthouses are an invaluable part of America's maritime heritage. These unique structures are a symbol of the strength and longevity of our country's trading practices and communal spirit. Many communities have developed preservation groups for their local lighthouses to ensure that they are well-maintained for future generations. After years of unflinching and faithful service as beacons to sea-farers and traders, the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act Program takes pride in its work with states, local communities, and the public to convey these historic properties to new stewards that will continue preserving their memories and historic significance.

## MISSION BLUE

By Dennie Zettwoch

Those of us who live in the Keys are surrounded by and love the sea. Please allow me to recommend a must-see documentary about our oceans and what needs to be done to save them. MISSION BLUE is part action adventure and part expose of the eco-disaster that is already taking place under the surface of our oceans. It features Sylvia Earle, a 79 year old who is the %Rachael Carson+of the oceans. She suggests building a global network of marine protected areas, hope spots much like underwater national parks, to protect the natural systems that keep humans alive. Remember, 50 to 85 percent of the oxygen we breathe comes from tiny ocean plants called phytoplankton. The whole thing is very entertaining while being educational and eye opening. Watch with the kids.

MISSION BLUE was produced by Netflix and can be streamed free if you subscribe. If not, find someone who does and spend an hour and a half with them while you watch together, or get on the computer and find another way to stream online. Make the effort. It is that good. Below is a review of the movie taken from Rotten Tomatoes.

"MISSION BLUE follows world renowned oceanographer Sylvia Earle on her personal mission to save the ocean. Sylvia Earle - scientist, explorer, visionary - has spent over 6 decades exploring the ocean and the creatures who live there. MISSION BLUE documents Sylvia's efforts over 3 years as she takes on the greatest challenge of her remarkable life: a personal mission to reverse the destructive course our species is on before it's too late.+

Watch a %preview+of the movie at [www.netflix.com/WiMovie/70308278](http://www.netflix.com/WiMovie/70308278)

### Got Dead Honey Bees?

We need all the pollinators we can get, but something may be killing our honey bees. LMKA has heard of hundreds of dead bees on Columbus Drive, but we don't know where the hive is. Mosquito Patrol spraying could kill flying bees, but if a hive is registered with them, they will call and give the exact spraying schedule so protective measures can be taken. If you know of a feral (wild) hive that needs to be moved or protected, or see hundreds of bees dead on the ground from an unknown source, please contact Dennie at [denniempz@gmail.com](mailto:denniempz@gmail.com) so something can be done.

### Islamorada's Green Market

Have you been to Islamorada's Green Market? It was open two Monday's in September, but was met with such enthusiasm, that with continued support, it will be open EVERY Monday from 9AM to 2PM, October through March. Then probably every other Monday through the summer. It is hosted by the nonprofit Islamorada Foundation which has a mission to preserve and protect Islamorada's parks and green spaces. ([theislamoradafoundation.org](http://theislamoradafoundation.org) or fb)

The Green Market is held at the Southwinds Park, MM82.1 oceanside. There are between 25 and 30 vendors offering a variety of quality and tasty goods such as:

- Assorted fruits and vegetables: conventional, organic, and Caribbean
- Bulk dry organic pastas in a variety of shapes and flavors
- Bulk nuts and seeds
- Orchids
- Spices, teas and local honey
- Fresh baked breakfast breads, cookies and pastries
- Artisan cheeses and breads
- Grass fed beef and free range chicken
- Limited hot lunch offerings, empanadas, arepas

Be sure to come next Monday, October 6, to experience and support our new open-air Islamorada Green Market. You will be glad you did.

## Lower Matecumbe In Danger of Flooding?

### Study: Village mostly safe from rising seas

BY ROBERT SILK, Free Press Staff

ISLAMORADA · Many of the village's public facilities are situated high enough to be relatively safe from the projected sea level rise over the next 50 years. But things are different on low-lying Lower Matecumbe Key, where the Overseas Highway and the fire station are significantly more vulnerable. Those are the conclusions of the contractor Erin Deady, whom the village retained in the spring to prepare a mitigation plan for rising seas.

The Southeast Regional Climate Compact, comprised of Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, projects that the sea level will rise 3 to 7 inches by 2030 and 9 to 24 inches by 2060.

Deady found that even 3 inches of sea level rise would cause nuisance tidal floods, the type that might cover a dock and then recede, to occur 10 times as often in Islamorada as they do now. But in many ways, much of village would be relatively unaffected unless seas rise much more than that.

Nine inches of sea level rise, for example, would impact only relatively small patches of shoreline on Upper Matecumbe, Windley and Plantation keys. However, it would flood 2 miles of roadways in the village daily, according to Deady's analysis. And it would bring sea levels above the current grade of the southbound Overseas Highway as it passes Lower Matecumbe's White Marlin Beach neighborhood.

Indeed, significant patches of the village's southernmost key would be inundated if sea level rises 9 inches. Meanwhile, if the sea rises 2 feet above the present level it would transform Lower Matecumbe and drown much of its vulnerable highway section.

All told, Islamorada's infrastructure is fairly well situated to withstand higher seas, according to the report. Electrical facilities are on high ground. So is the Key Largo wastewater plant, which treats Islamorada's sewage.

Many public buildings are also secure. Plantation Key School, for example, would be safely dry even if seas rise 2 feet. So would the village's administration building at Founders Park.

However, 14 of 25 buildings that Deady analyzed would have some risk of flooding in the 2-foot scenario, most notably the Lower Matecumbe fire station, a portion of which would be underwater.

Speaking before the Village Council last week, Deady said higher sea levels aren't going to force Islamorada residents to run for cover over the next five decades, but they will force them to cope. It's a lifestyle choice that people are going to be potentially making in the Keys, she said.

Deady will host the first of three village-sponsored community workshops on sea level rise at Founders Park on Oct. 7.

[rsilk@keysnews.com](mailto:rsilk@keysnews.com)

Sea Level Rise Workshop...5:30 PM Oct 7 Founders Park Community Room. Public Invited to participate...register at [IslamoradaMatters.com](http://IslamoradaMatters.com).

It is not just climate change· even minor tropical storm events will cause flooding in portions of Islamorada.

# GARBAGE REMINDERS

The new automated trash pick-up is working and we're recycling over 45% more this year than last!

**Schedule Change:** From MM76 and north to the end of the island, the **yard waste pick-up day is now Tuesday** instead of Friday.

## **Household Garbage/Recycling Pick-up:**

The new cans for household garbage (dark green can) and recycling (blue can) with Advanced Disposal imprints are the only containers that will be picked up by Advanced Disposal. It is an automated system so the driver collects the garbage without ever leaving the truck.

## **Loose items, garbage bags, or other garbage cans will not be picked up.**

Call Advanced Disposal if you want additional containers- recycle containers are free. You pay extra for additional household garbage containers.

**Yard Waste:** You must provide your own cans for yard waste - up to six per week.

Some folks allow their yard service to use neighbor's trash cans leaving the neighbor with no cans to use for themselves. If your yard requires more cans, get your own or ask before you use! While the limit each week is 6 cans, you can set up an account and pay for extras. Call Advanced Disposal for details.

**Reminder:** Pursuant to Village Code, trash and recycling containers may be placed by the roadside the day before a scheduled pickup day, and must be removed from the roadside by 8:00 p.m. on pickup day.

**We all must pitch in to keep Islamorada neighborhoods beautiful.**

**Trash cans should not spend days each week on the street ... it's against the code.**

## **Help by spreading the word**

**Advanced Disposal: 305-853-3433**

### **The Fill Between Upper and Lower Matecumbe**

Meetings with state and local government officials and community leaders are being conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to create a master plan for the fill. The official in charge with FDOT, Patty Ivey, does not want to include LMKA representatives or residents until the process is further along. She would not provide the documents they are working with for our review. We were however, able to obtain some documents via a public record request submitted to the Village, including plans for construction of a boat ramp and a list of ideas being discussed. Let us know if you would like a copy of these materials related to the Fill.

At a recent meeting, participants from FDOT and Islamorada discussed the possibility of the Village buying or leasing a 2-mile stretch of the fill from FDOT so they could have more control over regulating the area.

The Association has been concerned about the excessive traffic and crowds every weekend, damage to the shoreline, the number of tents and canopies anchored to mangroves, trash left behind and maintenance costs paid by our taxpayers. The area has become quite unsightly in a location that has always been one of the most beautiful spots in the Village.