

Artist of the Month

"Gonzo Girl" Journalist Sammie Mays

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Most people try to break out of prison but this crazy southerner actually broke into one. Sammie Mays a.k.a. "Gonzo Girl" was commissioned by the most notorious newspaper on the planet, the National Enquirer, to get a picture of fallen baseball bad boy Pete Rose while incarcerated in a "Super Max" penitentiary. The lure of \$100,000.00 proved too much for her to resist.

The plan only concocted after some dirty-dog broke into her Key West Bar & Grill in the seaport town of Pascagoula Mississippi and stole her blind. "Not just liquor, money and beer - they stole the pool table, barstools, cash register and even air conditioning unit! I've always heard a bad artist borrows and a good artist steals. I wonder what they named the new bar." She said obviously amused by the incident.

A hell-raising 24-hr honky-tonk, "The Key" was the key to the musical beginnings for salt-water troubadour Jimmy Buffett. His one-legged Uncle Billy Buffett, a regular at the bar, struck a deal for his underage nephew to sweep and mop spilled swill from the floor in exchange for stage time. Clever Uncle Billy drank for free.

Busted, strapped for cash and desperate for a quick fix, Sammie posed as a musician, hid a camera inside a buster-out speaker cabinet, sweet talked the warden and herself right into the nation's toughest penitentiary and through hook and crook managed to snap the coveted picture of Pete In The Pokey! Sports Illustrated named it "Best of Year." When

I read her fascinating story "I shot Pete Rose" and more on her web site www.samthekeys.com, I literally held my breath until the very end. I'm surprised her antics haven't

out of workin' for Southern Bride Magazine," the famous photojournalist tells us. "Bridezillas give me the heebie-jeebies! I've been married 3 times myself and had to kill

and that some people are just way too serious. Miraculously she is a survivor of not one but two direct-hit category 5 hurricanes - Katrina and Camille and so far has managed to survive a death threat from her old editor in chief at the National Enquirer (name withheld to protect the guilty). But according to the Gonz, "Nothin' but nothin' is as bad or as painful as that gig with the bridal magazine - still to this day I hate pink chiffon."

Sammie is a creation herself. When we got together she walked into the bar at the Pilot House chomping on a Cuban cigar and offered me one. I politely declined and she said, "Why not? You probably smoke everything else!" The "Gonz" quit lighting up a while back but still loves the taste. We ask what brought her to the Keys..? "That smugglin' gunrunnin' Captain Tony Terracino down in Key West and besides it was as good a place as any to lay low until National Enquirer got over being pissed off at me." What do you plan to do next...? "Not a damn thing but sit here and order another beer."

If laughter is the best medicine then "Gonzo Girl" is certainly the Doctor. Heads-up! If you want meet the "Gonzo Girl" the Islamorada Chamber of Commerce Holiday Festival on November 30th at Founder's Park has snagged Sammie to debut her, too cute for words, "Pirate Night Before Christmas" story - her latest family friendly treasure where her "OL White Beard" Pirate Santa character comes to life on stage with the help of The Pirates on the Water!



Above: "Gonzo Girl" cigar smokin'. Photo by Elbows T. Mumbler

Right: Pete Rose in the Pokey Photo by "Gonzo Girl" Sammie Mays.



been turned in to a movie or maybe they have!

Retired from yellow journalism "Gonzo Girl" lives in the Upper Keys and is the feature entertainment writer for TravelHost Magazine of the Fla. Keys and Key West. She's also the host for Comcast Channel 5 "Spotlight on the Keys" - that is when her producer can catch up with her.

"Livin' in the Keys and writing sorted adventures and drunken tales of characters I encounter sure beats the hell

them all before it was over with - some people just don't know when to call it a day." She laughed taking a swig of beer.

When ask about her arrest and deportation on corruption charges from the Caribbean island of St. Maarten, Sammie claimed she was only trying to help educate the poor islanders

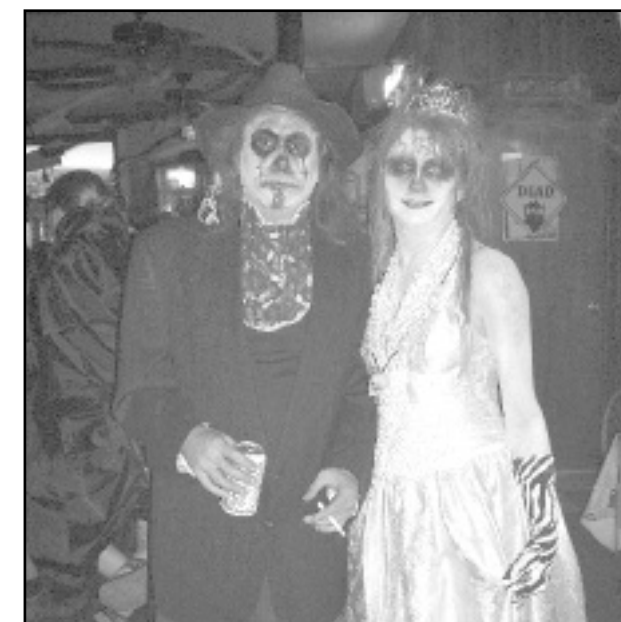
Haunted Halloween Happenings



Vivian Kay was frightening at the V.F.W. Haunted House.



The Key Largo Fire Station Haunted House graveyard was sooooo scary!



Louie and Dawn dressed up at the Paradise Pub.

Keys Katch



Check out this catch!
Bryan Roudebush recently caught this 43-pound Black Grouper.

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