

All Hail the New Mayor



By Sammie Mays aka The Gonz

If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it's probably one of those obnoxious rubber chickens.

Six weeks ago I was Roto-Rootered on U.S. 1 and against my will my doctor has begun weaning the pain meds from my hot little happy hands. Can't say as I blame 'em though, when your patient is running around the Florida Keys with a rubber chicken proclaiming to be "Mayor!" it appears to be getting close to calling on the services of the men in the white coats. It hasn't been easy this year being me.

A quick recap of the first months of my turning Fifty: While shopping for gym shorts at the Florida City Wal-Mart, I was attacked by female gang members in the Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen Department. Next, an adventurous evening of dining on blowfish lead to an emergency room visit via ambulance and a hospital stay when diagnosed with "Honorable Fugu" poisoning. And to top that off, of no fault of my own, I totaled my car. I gave up, rolled over and said "UNCLE!" three times, and was going about my business trying to blend in as just another crazy in the Conch Republic when all of a sudden - BAM! I'm the Mayor of Islamorada! Hey I am just as surprised as you are.

Raised on South Mississippi politics in the Gulf Coast town of Pass Christian, a playground

for New Orleans elite and a hideout for Mafioso's, I was no babe in the woods. At the age of two my grandparents and parents thrust me onto the campaign trail - cutting my teeth on the art of public speaking and playing the cute kid card while asking for votes. I learned an invaluable lesson from my childhood experiences and had planned on avoiding politics as an adult (mostly because I have a lot to hide). I'll tell ya, lately it's got me thinking that I am not in control of this ship.

Take a close look at the chicken in the photograph. Look a little closer. Now for those of you who know your island history you know that that's not just any old skanky rubber chicken - that rubber chicken is *THE Official Islamorada Mayoral Rubber Chicken!* And to the person who holds *THE Islamorada Mayoral Rubber Chicken* historically holds the title of 'Mayor of Islamorada' and that today my friends would be me!

To date Captain Al Flutie has been the longest reigning Mayor in the history of island. He held *THE Islamorada Mayoral Rubber Chicken* and office for some thirty years. Dave Whitney, the former publisher/editor of the Free Press told me that after Flutie's death the locals were raising funds for something or another and that *THE Official Islamorada Mayoral Rubber Chicken* (with its Mayoral title)

was auctioned off for \$18,000! Yea that was the good ole days, when bribing a politician was expected and buying your way into public office was the only way to campaign.

One of the perks of being Mayor of Islamorada is the never ending parade of cocktails that is bestowed upon you. Because of the island's unique electoral process (he who holds *THE* rubber chicken holds the title of Mayor), a vast number of chicken thieves wielding alcoholic beverages have popped up over time. Like



New Mayor and Her Chicken

in any office, when out in public, the Mayor should be weary of the chicken scam. First of all, anyone obsessively ogling the chicken is probably an aspiring politician and/or chicken thief. When the friendly cocktails begin pouring in, it is a sure fire sign that the chicken scam is in motion. Waiting in the wings, the chicken thief bides his time while the Mayor slowly gets stewed. The budding politician/chicken thief is an expert at detecting inebriation and at precisely the right moment he makes a grab for *THE Islamorada Mayoral Rubber Chicken* and it's bye-bye office! It's been recommended that I have the chicken surgically attached.

Because of my background I have actually discovered that I am very well suited for public office. Besides diggin' on my new "Mayor Gonzo" moniker, my first undertaking as Mayor has

kept me extremely busy running up and down the island chain making promises I have no intention of keeping.

In this stage of the game I'm not quite sure of what all I plan on accomplishing as Mayor, but if my Whistle Stop Rum Runner Investiture Party (which Comcast filmed and you can catch on channel 5 and 19) is any indication of things to come, well, I suppose I'll be doing a lot of cocktailing.

To clear up any confusion in closing, there is one last issue I feel I must address. You may have already heard of the other woman who is using the same Mayoral title in Islamorada as I - and that other woman would be Cathi Hill. As fate would have it and as weird as it is, Cathi and I became Mayors of Islamorada on the exact same day (Thursday, March 17th 2008), and although we share the moniker, our job descriptions couldn't be more different. Cathi was appointed Mayor by the five Village Council Members and deals with the serious day to day issues of the island (please direct any gripes, moans and groans to her office), and while I was elected by chicken proxy and deal with the surreal issues - you may direct any and all invitations for dinners, public appearances, parties, yachting excursions and monetary donations to my office at the Whistle Stop. And just for the record folks I am *THE* first female Mayor in the history of Islamorada. My Investiture took place in the AM while Cathi's Investiture took place in the PM.

Cock-a-doodle-do,

Mayor gOnZo Mays

Sammie is a former member of the National Enquirer's elite team of "Foreign Legion of Journalist." She is the feature entertainment/travel writer for Travel Host magazine of the Florida Keys and Key West and the Host for Comcast channel 5 "Spotlight on the Keys." The Gonz can be reached at www.saminthekeys.com

Daniels Elected to Crane Point

Ben Daniels, Vice President and Middle Keys Lending Officer of First State Bank of the Florida Keys, has been elected to the Crane Point Board of Directors.

"The Florida Keys Land and Sea Trust is very excited about having someone of Ben's background and ties to our community join Crane Point," said Keith Douglass, Executive Director Crane Point. "We are looking forward to his addition to our Board of Directors."

Daniels has been in the Keys

since 1972 and is a member of several different organizations in the community including: The Marathon Jaycees; Marathon Chamber of Commerce; Marathon Rotary Club; Past Presbyterian Kirk of the Keys; Lower Keys Association Realtors; Pigeon Key Board of Directors and the Marathon Youth Club.

Crane Point's mission is to promote

environmental stewardship and the heritage of the Florida Keys. To find out more information on Crane Point, visit www.cranepoint.net.



Ben Daniels

First State Bank's Larson Scores with ACAMS

First State Bank is proud to announce that Vice President and BSA/AML Compliance Officer Susan Larson has received her credentials as a Certified Anti-Money Laundry Specialist.

The Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundry Specialists (ACAMS) is an organization which offers professional certification, resources and networking for those who must comply with Anti-Money Laundering and Bank Secrecy Act regulations.

Susan has been working towards her certification through ACAMS, and in a short period of time has gained the imperative knowledge that is needed in her field.

"This is a great achievement," said First State

Bank Senior Vice President, Risk Manager Elizabeth Miranda. "Only those with the right skills and experience will pass. The Bank appreciates the dedication, time and effort that are required to achieve this goal. Congratulations to Susan!"

Larson lives in Key West with her husband. She has been living in the Keys for almost twenty years.

First State Bank of the Florida Keys is a community

oriented financial services company with 13 full-service banking offices and 32 ATMs throughout the Keys.

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Susan Larson

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