

Back in Business



Two years after selling his H&R Block franchise, the Tax Guy, Jerry Gaddis is back.

Gaddis, former owner of the Key Largo H&R Block is at his new firm, Tropical Tax Solutions, in Cedar Towers MM 99.3. Since leaving Block he has taken more than 200 hours of tax education classes and passed the U.S. Treasury's Special Enrollment Exam to become an Enrolled Agent.

Tropical Tax Solutions is a full-service tax firm offering tax consultation, preparation and representation services. For more information call 451-4829 or visit www.TropicalTax.com.

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27th Annual Key Largo Steeplechase

In December, based out of Gilbert's Marina, catamaran sailors came from all around the United States and Canada to sail the 110-mile trek around the Upper Keys on high-tech, lightweight, high-speed beach catamarans.

The race began in Barnes Sounds, where the sailors headed north to Angelfish Creek, then down Hawk Channel with spinnakers flying to a first-day finish on Lower Matecumbe Key, a 70-mile jaunt. The first boat finished in just under four hours, averaging almost 18 mph, with top speeds over 30 mph.

Miamians Brett Moss and John Casey teamed up for the second year on a Marstrom 20 to win all the honors, both line honors and handicap, of the 2011 event. This was their second such victory in a row. Mike Phillips and Kenny Pierce, also from Miami, shadowed the leaders both days, but had to settle for second overall. They are previous winners of the event.

The race is not for the faint hearted. A complementary bottle of champagne is awarded to every one that simply makes the



Brett Moss and John Casey leading Mike Phillips and Steve Lohmayer.

entire distance and finishes. This year the event was not without problems for several of the boats. One team capsized in Hawk Channel and the skipper was separated from the boat with the crew unable to get back to pick him up. The crew notified the U.S. Coast Guard who arranged for Sea Tow to pick up the stranded sailor, unite him with his boat and crew, and go on to finish the race. Another incident happened at Card Sound Bridge when one of the boats decided to go under the bridge closer to the land to save some time, instead of the middle of the bridge, where it is highest. The mast hit the bridge and down it came.

This famous race, known around the world by catamaran sailors, was founded and is still managed by local Rick White and his wife Mary Wells. Rick has won the event a several times, but now prefers to just organize it.

Sponsors for the event are Catamaran Sailor Magazine (www.catsailor.com) and its store at www.OnLineMarineStore.com.

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