

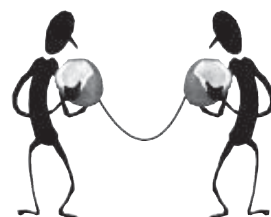
Coconut Telegraph

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Editorial: Protect Yourself

The Florida Keys is a chain of laid-back islands that have always been a magnet for pirates, thieves and grifters. Every week you hear about someone who got swindled. Thieves swoop down on us like vultures, coming from the mainland to cruise our neighborhoods looking for boats, waverunners, or motors to steal. Some live here. Our police do a great job but they need our help.

Where is it safe to shop? Every advertiser in this publication has been personally tested by me and recommended. They are very proud of their hard-earned reputations.

For cute, quality nautical items and stocking stuffers check out the new Island

Market behind the Dollar Tree. It is an air-conditioned upscale specialty gourmet market that offers free cheese tastings. There are fresh baked goods, art, do-it-yourself solar panel systems, teak furniture, island clothing, jewelry and much more! It is a fun and friendly place open Friday, Saturday and Sundays 9 to 5 pm.

Stay away from tourist trap businesses that seemed to have popped up overnight along the highway with a lot of things in the yard to draw your attention and suck you in. Are they compliant with county regulations? Do they have an occupational license on display? If you are not sure about them, call Monroe County at 305-453-8734 and find out. If you feel uncom-

fortable with someone, do a free background check on them through the Sheriff's Dept. website keysso.net. Under the "civil" link through Clerk of the Court, for example, you can find out just how many times that creepy boat canvas guy has been sued for bad or incomplete work. Tell all your neighbors! It is our civic duty to keep our homes safe from crooks and con artists.

So after the holidays if you wind up with some gifts you can't use or you just need to downsize your household, we recommend selling them on Ebay, Craig's list, a yard sale or on one of the local Facebook groups unless they are really valuable... then visit the Coral Financial Pawn Shop. They have been

in business in the Upper Keys over 30 years are the only ones licensed to make loans.

If you want to consign household items and clothing, pick a consignment shop that has run a reputable business for many years. Make sure you make a complete list and/or photograph every item you take there. Sign a contract. You are entitled to an accounting of your sold items and you should be paid by check at the agreed-upon time. If the consignment shop does not provide those things, do not do business with them!

And if you're feeling generous, remember that the Salvation Army Store and Marc Thrift Shop are happy to accept your items as donations.

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Morada Bay
ISLAMORADA, FLORIDA KEYS

Full Moon Party

SATURDAY DEC. 6TH

*2014 is Slipping Away!
Don't Miss The Last
Full Moon Of The Year!*

- *Live Music & DJs
- *Signature Cocktails
- *Beach Barbecue
- *Circus Performers

Ketel One VODKA

The Morada Bay Full Moon Party is a unique event; a fun and friendly celebration for residents and visitors.

* Morada Bay Beach \$20 * Pierre's Lounge \$30

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