

Artist of the Month Laura Quinn



Story by Rachel R. Peine; photos by Rich Peine

Everyone knows Laura Quinn as the founder of the Wild Bird Center in Tavernier. If it's 3:30 in the afternoon, she's carrying a bucket of fish toward the beach, accompanied by two dogs and a flock of hungry pelicans. But when she's not feeding the birds or working in the hospital to save a cormorant like the wounded one we found skittering across the highway recently, she may be out back in her workshop, carving lifelike, brightly painted herons, owls, or egrets. The realistic details for the carvings, like the Little Green Heron I'm admiring, come from live herons in the salt pond, photographs or even rescued birds that didn't survive.

Laura has been carving for many years, since she first met her husband, who liked to sail. "The guy who runs the tiller and the sails does all the work, and the other guy just sits there. So I needed something to do." Her inspiration came from watching the birds that flew above the sailboat. This was back in the '80s when new bridges were being built for the Overseas Highway. Laura

and her husband owned a motel in Lower Matecumbe, where the highway workers stayed.

Laura carves the bodies of the birds from a wood called Water Tupelo. "It doesn't split, and there's no grain to it." She showed us a block of wood - it's light in color and light in weight. First, Laura cuts the basic shape with a bandsaw, then sands it down, and finally uses a Dremel-like tool (her brand is Freedom) for the final details. She uses acrylic paint and completes each bird with a coat of varnish. She inserts a needle into long beaks for support so they won't break. Once the body is done, she attaches the legs, made from metal rods, and adds the feet, which are twisted wire. "My" Little Green Heron is standing on a base of coral rock, but the others have driftwood bases.

There's been a run on Laura's carvings lately, with three being sold in the past week. Right now it'll take a while to replenish the supply, because she's working on a custom order for a Great Blue Heron. The Little Green Heron's still there, along with

an owl and an egret, but they might not be there long. If you're captivated by the Little Green or a Great Blue, you can always request a custom piece.

Laura Quinn's carvings are on display in the shop of the Wild Bird Center, 93600 Overseas Highway in Tavernier. The Center is open everyday during daylight hours, and admission is free. If you want to see more pelicans than you

can imagine in one place, definitely go at feeding time. Laura and the dogs will be heading down to the bay, with her flock waddling behind her.

For special orders or more information about Laura's carvings and the Center, call: 305.852.4486. The Wild Bird Center website is <http://www.fkwbc.org>, and you can also email the Center - Info@fkwbc.org.

Looking to buy property in the Keys?

Free Real Estate Referral Service
305-453-4994 • fax 305-453-4998

It's a buyer's market!

A Landmark Key Largo Restaurant

Inside Dining 5-10 Wed—Sun • Outside Tiki Bar Open 7 Days

Seafood • Steaks • Ribs • Pasta

CASUAL DINING — REASONABLE PRICES

**EARLY BIRD
SPECIAL ENTRÉES**
\$15.95
5 to 6:30 pm

Locals Night Every Wednesday
20% Off - Monroe County Residents

TIKI BAR **11AM-10PM**
Open 7 Days **Cold Drinks & Light Fare**

305.451.3142
13 Seagate Blvd.
Key Largo, FL • MM 100

Katie Suzan Celebrates Milestone at Marine Bank

Marine Bank wishes Katie Suzan "Happy Anniversary!" Katie, Vice President and Islamorada Branch Manager celebrated 11 years with Marine Bank.

"Katie's customers consider her a financial doctor. They trust and confide in her, and that is invaluable to our bank," said Teresa Condas, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "We're incredibly fortunate to have Katie on our team and hope for another 11 years, at least."

When asked what keeps her going after 11 years, Katie said simply, "I love my customers." Born in Mattapoisett, MA, Katie moved to the Keys when she was 12 years old. Having started her career with the

original Marine Bank in the 1980s, Katie is Marine Bank's longest tenured employee. Katie was named Officer of the Year in 2002, and was promoted to Vice President in 2005.

Marine Bank is a community-based financial institution operating in Monroe, Collier and Charlotte Counties, Florida. The company has nine offices from Key West to Key Largo, and three offices on the west coast of the Florida. Marine Bank focuses on commercial, residential and consumer lending, as well as all types of traditional deposit and banking products. Marine Bank also supports online banking services at www.ourmarinebank.com.



Katie Suzan at far right, with her branch staff, from left to right, Joani Towe, Jackie Gomez, and Karin Lindback.

Entertainer of the Month

....Continued from page 3
Rambin' Man" to "Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign."

Luke loves living in Key Largo. He says, "I really feel fortunate to be in Key Largo. It's a beautiful place, and everybody's wonderful. You know, you can tell a lot about a community by what they do when somebody's down and out. This community rallies and does benefits all the time. It's a beautiful thing."

You can hear Luke:
• Saturday afternoon at Gilberts from 1-5
• Monday at Snook's from 5-9
• Friday & Saturday nights The Luke Sommer Glenn band at the Caribbean Club
• Sunday with Grateful Ted at the Island grill from 2 to 6.
Luke may be scheduled to play solo, but don't be surprised to see other pickers joining him on stage. You're guaranteed a good show.

REMEDY'S HEALTH FOOD

Working hard to give back to the community... Remedy's Health Food

MACRO GREENS™

Nutrient-Rich Super Food Supplement

All-Natural Health-Building Ingredients

- Promote Wellness
- Improve Digestion
- Boost Energy & Metabolism
- Calm Food Cravings
- Strengthen Immune System
- Lose Weight Naturally
- Detox and Cleanse Gently
- Stimulant-Free Energy

Reg \$39.99— Now only \$33.99

**Organic Produce
7 Days a Week**

**Store Hours:
Mon, Tues, Thurs. Fri 9-6
Wed, 9-9, Sat. 8-6, Sun. 10-7**

305 451-2160 100670 Overseas Highway, Key Largo

Award-Winning Artists

Voted #1 Tattoo Studio in the Keys

*THE OLDEST TATTOOS AND PIERCING
STUDIO IN THE FLORIDA KEYS*

**Custom Work
Available and Preferred
Tattoo and Piercing
Eyeliner and Eyebrow Tatooing**

*25 Years Experience • Physician Inspected
Open 7 days a Week*



Key Largo Illustrations

102991 Overseas Highway
Key Largo, FL 33037

www.keylargoillustrations.com

305.451.4464

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED