



Dave and Suzie in the store.

Conch Captain Spotlight on Captain Dave Sheehan of Pirates Cove Watersports

by Marilee Free

to begin the business of bringing amazement and adventure to all who want to explore the reef and backcountry waters of the Upper Keys. He sincerely appreciates all the support from the Key's friends and families that have made his business successful in the last decade. He's been in the Marriott location since 2015, and the dive shop opened in 2018.

Dave's partner, Captain Michael Byars, works the parasail and dive boat. He is ordained and has performed five weddings at sea and one underwater wedding. On one trip someone was holding up a sign above Christ of the Abyss with a "Will You Marry Me?" proposal on it. Now that's unique, how could you say no?

Captains Brian Gundaker and John Ciulla operate the SEA STAR, providing snorkel and scuba tours by day. You can catch



John performing at Hog Heaven, Cheeca, Islander, Postcard Inn or Lobster Crawl in the evenings.

Captain Boyd Cooke has been running bayside eco-tours for Dave for almost two years. Boyd does up to five trips per day and is experienced with over 500 tours that never disappoint. You will see manatees, dolphin, birds of the Everglades and stunning sunsets.

Suzie Simpson is the 'glue that holds the business together,' says Dave. She coordinates the trips, shares her knowledge of the wrecks and reefs, offers boaters safety tips and tests each operator, and runs the office and store with Mako the shop dog.

The Pirates Cove Watersports shop features reef-safe shirts, clothing and dive accessories to make your day on the water complete.

So, get on out there folks, ride with Captain Dave or his crew, as they take you on a memory-making tour of the Key Largo area reefs and wrecks. Rent a wave runner, stand-up or kayak, Captain Dave's got something for everyone at Pirates Cove Watersports — Marriott or Big Chill locations. Call 305-453-9881 to book your fun today, or go to PCWatersports.com.

When you come to the Florida Keys, there is so much to do on the water! Captain Dave Sheehan offers the full array of sought-after activities: snorkel, scuba diving, eco-tours, sunset cruises, parasail, wave runners, private charters, boat rentals, kayak and stand-up paddleboard rentals, even bike rentals, all from his Marriott and Big Chill locations. Up to 49 people can go on the SEA STAR for a morning, afternoon or sunset trip.

The trips to the reef and wrecks are generally 3 ½ hour tours with two stops. Molasses Reef is Dave's personal favorite spot. He says, "Mo delivers...that is where you will see the big stuff." They will visit the spots with the best visibility, Elbow Reef, Christ of the Abyss, and Molasses Reef, to name a few. They also will take you to the wrecks, shallow wrecks in less than 35 feet of water include "City of Washington," and "Benwood." The deep-water wreck dives include "Duane," "Spiegel Grove" and "Bibb."

Captain Dave and his wife Christie moved to the Keys in 2008 from Delaware

Thrifting in the Upper Keys

Whether you are a parent with growing children and an endless need for clothing and toys, an antique collector, a real-estate agent staging a property, or a frugal homeowner looking for eclectic decorating ideas... look no further. The upper Keys thrift shops have something for you — it could save you money and miles on your car, and at the same time your hard-earned dollars will be going to a good cause.

As I look around my living room I see that all of my furniture was purchased from thrift shops here in the Keys. My favorite conversation piece is the "Twenty Buck Buck." He is a deer head mount I bought for \$20 from the old White Rhino store that closed years ago. Macnair Clothier, the owner of White Rhino, had acquired the mount on a cross country trip and photographed it with his family all over on their travels. There is something for everyone in these shops!

The Salvation Army offers the largest selection, and that includes furniture and sometimes appliances. Salvation Army



Above: Salvation Army crew: Manager Becky Corum, Nick Petrandis & Hank Stacy

manager Rebecca (Becky) Corum says "We offer fair and consistent prices. Wednesday is our big sale day. On Wacky Wednesday we offer half off on clothing and knick knacks. Once a month we offer a sale on furniture and art work too. Many homeless and needy are helped individually according to their needs."

The Salvation Army offers disaster relief and a plethora of things; too numerous to list here. Their hours are Monday thru Saturday 9:30 am to 5 pm. They are conveniently located at 99510 Overseas Highway next to Cafe Largo

and across from CVS Pharmacy in the southbound lane just past the traffic light.

Donations are gratefully accepted behind the building until 4pm every day except Sunday. If you are in need of a pick up, call 305-451-2882.

MARC Thrift Shop is at 90001 Overseas Highway, Tavernier in the Coral Isles Church next to Coral Shores High School. MARC is the acronym for Monroe Association for ReMAR-Cable Citizens, and it helps those who are differently abled. Your donations help provide for an amazing list of programs to help their clients lead productive and happy lives.

MARC opened the thrift shop because state and federal funding has been cut back and they need the money to provide the many

services for their clients. If you have ever had a family member with special needs, you can understand the service this great organization provides.

The thrift store manager is Carolina Zumbado, and she is a very busy person; she runs the store and helps with the clients.



There you will find clothing for all ages, knick knacks and jewelry made right there by the artist clients. In the photo you can see clients showing off Santa coconuts they made.

Pricing on store items fluctuates from \$1 to \$5 for clothes. They offer a boutique and always have a nice selection. A recent donation was a very generous, huge truckload of beautiful items from Ocean Reef.

The MARC store is closed Sundays and Mondays. They strive to be open until 4pm each day, but sometime they aren't staffed. The hours are not consistent so it is best to call first before making the drive. Their number is 305-852-3282.

SNOOKS BAYSIDE
More than a restaurant...

"Sweetwater Sundays"
AT SNOOKS BAYSIDE

Join Us for Our Famous Polynesian Luau February 15
Reservations a Must!

Laid Back Sunday Mornings with a Gorgeous View! Great Music with the Sweetwater Band from 12-4pm!
Stunning Setting • Spectacular Sunsets • Daily Music • Local Fish • Prime Steaks
305-453-5004 • www.snooks.com • Key Largo MM 99.8 Southbound Lane at Traffic Light & Down Our Private Drive

Garden Club of the Upper Keys



Speaker Kathryn DePoo, a Key West native and member of the Key West Garden Club. She is a founding member of the GLEE Key West Community Garden and currently serves as garden chairperson.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPING IN A SUBTROPICAL CLIMATE

January 21 at 11:00 am

at Francis Tracy Garden Center
94040 Overseas Hwy. (MM 94 bayside)

Our meetings, workshops and special events provide education and information on the fun of gardening in the Keys.

Come grow with us!

All are welcome.
gardenclubupperkeys.org



The MARC Store in Tavernier is always a fun stop.