

# Conch Characters



Local musician Ray Jaworski joined Igor & Red Elvises onstage at the Lorelei for "Beers, Babes & BBQ" in late March.



The Keys Children's Foundation awarded a grant to the Friends of the Key Largo Library to benefit Key Largo children and their families. The grant will be used for programming and new materials for children. (L-R) Clare Meehan, TKCF; Chris Morgan & Christina Teasley, Key Largo Library; and Ralph Moore, TKCF. The library is open for in-person visits Mon., Wed. & Fri.; Curbside service Tues., Thurs. & Sat.



So far Pirates Cove Watersports has removed 2171 pounds (just over 1 ton) of debris from the ocean floor in Key Largo. Join us on our monthly clean up trips the second Thursday of every month.



Marlene Lindback, owner of the Lorelei, meets Chris "Elvis" MacDonald after his tribute show.



Moose Adult Easter Egg Hunt Band Tim Dressing and friends; Tim Dressing on keyboard and Fred Foltz on bass with John Baxter. Photo Shylon Martin.



Carolyn G from Sun 103.1 enjoys a piece of Lorelei's world famous frozen Key Lime Pie.



Frasier from the Lorelei is ready for anything. Photo Rob LeBrun.



Bill May (Fuzzy), Scott, Freddy & Marilee, at the Elks in 2016.



Joe Wallace stopped by the Lorelei on St Pat's Day to share his bagpipe music.



Prize table at the Moose's Adult Easter Egg Hunt. Photo Shylon Martin.

# Celebrating a Life Well Lived - Alma Pinder Dalton

by Marilee Free

"Survivor, kind-hearted, welcoming, humble, with an unsurpassed faith in God and people," are words I would use to describe Alma. I was lucky enough to meet her and her sister Dorrie years ago. They shared some homemade seagrape jam as they told us the story of surviving the 1935 Labor Day "Storm of the Century."

Alma, at age 11, sister Dorrie 8, and brother Joe, 5 years old survived the strongest hurricane ever to hit the United States. The roof flew off, their house was blown apart, and they were thrust into the raging storm waters, with fierce rain and wind so strong it could rip your skin off. They survived by floating on a mattress and tying themselves to a tree so they wouldn't be washed away into the Florida Bay.

In one interview Alma says, "we didn't have time to be scared" as the family scrambled into survival mode.

Their mom, Ida, was pinned down by debris, suffering broken bones. Father Bertrand was struck by flying debris. Both were hospitalized, but miraculously they survived as well.

Each child handled the natural disaster with grace, gratefulness and by never losing their faith. The remaining Pinder family, alongside the Parkers, Russells, Alburys and Cothrons, helped with the efforts to rebuild Islamorada. Despite Mother Nature's wrath, many members of these founding families continued to live in the Keys.

Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking with Corie McGraw-Abel, granddaughter of Alma, and a seventh generation Pinder. She is proud of her family's Conch Republic history and she's doing her part to preserve the sense of community that the Keys are known for. Her husband, Terry Abel is the fire chief

of Islamorada. Her oldest daughter attends USF in Tampa studying Biology and her youngest daughter goes to Coral Shores High School.

Corie and I both agree that more people should dive into the history of this island chain and learn the trials and tribulations of its founders. The rich history of this area is truly unique, with stories of survival, salvaging and rebuilding. (I am a guide for the Food & Fun Tours

in Islamorada and will tell stories about the history as



Alma as a young girl on Indian Key Fill. Photo contributed by Barbara Edgar, Matecumbe Historical Trust.

we walk and eat around the heart of Islamorada - once known as Pinderville. Website [www.flkeysfoodtours.com](http://www.flkeysfoodtours.com) or 305-393-9183 for rates and availability.)

Alma passed on Easter morning, April 4, 2021, she was 96. She was born in Key West on April 22, 1924 to Bertram and Ida Pinder. Her 96th birthday celebration in 2020 was at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, while the Keys were closed to tourists and non-residents. Family and friends organized a drive-by procession with fire trucks and police cars leading the way. Many were sporting signs, and some gave cards and gifts to this amazing woman as she waved back from the shade of her yard in Islamorada. She was in awe at how many people passed by that day to honor a true Keys pioneer.

On April 8th, 2021, Alma joined her brother and sister at their final resting place,

the Matecumbe Memorial Gardens outside the Islamorada Methodist Church. In a gathering of about 100 people paying their respects to a woman who warmed hearts



Photo: Corie McGraw-Abel.

and touched souls with her stories and home cooked meals. She was the last of two survivors who lived through the horrific hurricane on Labor Day 1935. Her unwavering spirit and faith will live on through Corie and other proud Conch Republic founding families.



Alma at her 96th birthday celebration in 2020 in Islamorada. Photo: Corie McGraw-Abel.