

Coconut Telegraph

March 2026
Volume 21 Issue #235
Prestige Publishing, Inc
101425 Overseas Hwy.
PMB #628
Key Largo, FL 33037

Deadline

for the Coconut
Telegraph's
next issue is **Thursday,**
March 19, 2026

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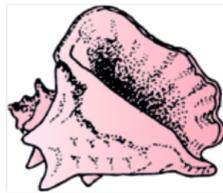
Editor/Sales/Distribution

Denise Malefy

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(leave a message)
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**Floridians hunt and catch
pythons, wrestle alligators,
walk barefoot on asphalt hot
enough to fry eggs, swim with sharks,
launch boats in lightning storms,
go surfing in hurricanes,
and do manual labor in swamp heat
that melts tools —
but get absolutely crippled
by temperatures lower than 50°.**

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Temptation Never Sleeps — A blog by Luke Sommer Glenn

I walked in the store, passing the tables full of baked goods and sweet treat specials, into the fruit and vegetable section to grab healthy crap, like bananas and apples. One thing I noticed was the price of beer and soda has increased exponentially in the last 6 years since I cut those types of beverages from my routine. Especially the good beer.

I still have the occasional soda pop, but I had my last beer on my birthday in 2020. No more fun stuff of any kind for me. Marijuana doesn't count. What used to be just for fun is required maintenance now. That and I've never gotten so high that I had to apologize for shit that I didn't remember doing the next day. Getting drunk on the other hand, I've had to apologize for plenty of things I didn't remember doing.

I used to eat plenty of nuts and raw carrots, but I have a lack of teeth these days. Too many years of sucking on cough drops while singing and chewing tobacco at the same time took its toll and I now must avoid all things crunchy or hard. I used to chew on ice on long road trips to avoid having to stop and take a piss every two hours.

I used to love crunchy peanut butter with that rich, roasted peanut taste, but now I am reduced to boring-ass creamy. I use the all natural stuff but who the really knows? The FDA labeling division leaves a lot to be desired. Words and phrases like "organic" and "grass fed" have no meaning until they are defined by the corporate agriculture industrial complex.

Now that I've made it past the cheap, easy for me to eat treats, passed by the beer aisle and all the nuclear sugar cereals that I loved as a kid (though there are way more

these days); I have to resist the temptation of the frozen food aisle.

Extremely convenient, frozen salt bombs that have enough preservatives to keep the turds it makes discoverable to the next race of intelligent species that inherit the Earth after we go extinct; pizzas, Salisbury steak, and ZZ Top even likes the chicken if the sauce is not too blue... 2 1/2 minutes in the microwave and you're ready to eat, with a few cold spots here and there. Just don't look at the ingredient list on the back... does anyone even call them "TV dinners" anymore?

The worst temptation for me though, is ice cream. My dad would sit down and eat an entire half gallon box. He sometimes liked to split open a cantaloupe, shovel out all the seeds and fill that hole up with vanilla ice cream. He struggled with being overweight for as long as I can remember, he would blow up to 400 pounds then crash diet his way down to 250 pounds and repeat...

My mom's father was a dairy farmer and I remember making fresh ice cream after a hail storm up on the farm one summer, using the fallen ice and real cream. You cannot appreciate farm fresh cream unless you've had it. Nothing in the store is remotely close, not even. So, it runs in my DNA.

Unfortunately, if you're trying to lower your cholesterol and especially triglycerides, dairy fat is the ultimate worst. Cut out dairy and eat lot of beans for a month and you will be free of the high fat content in your blood. And that means pudding as well. I love pudding. Legumes really are the magical, musical fruit. You might have a Beano before...

At the checkout is an entire array of impulse temp-

tations. That's where they stick things that look like it's M&M's but it's actually "lemon meringue flavored M&M's" or the "peanut butter, cinnamon bun M&M's." They put those there because nobody in their right mind would buy them if they knew what they were. The packaging resembles regular M&M's so this hapless soul throws them to the clerk real quick as I give in to the temptation, and they make it in the bag. That's the advantage of self check out - there isn't enough room in the area for impulse items to be displayed. (The area is surrounded by impulse items, however.)

Nothing worse than getting home, opening the bag, popping the evil treat into my mouth and then realizing, it's nasty. It's only then that I look at the bag and realize, "What the @\$%? I promised myself I wouldn't be fooled again. No wonder they were buy one get one free!"

Dollar store treats are at your own risk, for some reason they can sell the stuff the other stores can't, loop holes that allow them to sell products with banned dyes and a higher chance of being stale or moldy. It only appears to be more affordable, but they sneak in smaller sizes, cheaper packaging that is harder to open among the myriad other illusions.

Waking up in the middle of the night with a sweet tooth and leg cramps is its own unique torture. In an effort to save me from myself, my wife hides the sweets. She is 5 foot tall and hides everything down low knowing that it pains me to bend over. She has secret chocolate stashes all over the house.

She's the type that will take one bite out of a two bite cupcake and hide the other

Luke Sommer Glenn is a local entertainer and Conch Character.

For more info:
www.lukesommerglenn.com

half bite in the fridge somewhere until it turns into a hardened clump, but at least (in her mind), I didn't eat it. It's her job to torture me every day and part of that torture is making sure I live long enough to be sufficiently tortured. I'm not sure who holds the measuring stick but I'd like to kick them in the balls...

Is it just me or do the scanners at the Publix sound similar to slot machines or a video game sound? To me, it sounds like losing money, I can't get out of the store fast enough.

The Winn-Dixie in Tavernier has increased their prices after briefly lowering them enough to sucker us Key Largo people down after losing our crummy Winn-Dixie. Now I noticed their prices are just about the same, if not higher in some instances. They seem to be struggling to keep up with the increased traffic from Key Largo.

But it's not just the grocery stores that have the impulse snack items, hardware, drug and department stores all sell crap at the counters that's bad for people like me. It's like finding a bar at a Denny's; I came for breakfast, but left with a buzz...

