

**December 19, 2011 - Florida Keys - L. E. Shaffer: Florida Keys Journal Week in Review.** Xmas, New Year, yada yada, I remember one holiday way back when. I was twelve. I got a microscope, and for my birthday December 27, I got a pair of binoculars. I used those binoculars clear up to going away to the Navy. Now I enjoy those holidays through my twelve grandchildren and their parents. Have a happy, happy, merry, merry. Christmas, Christmas.

FKAA is the wastewater and stormwater systems billing department for Key Largo and soon Marathon. FKAA lost \$400,000 income for Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District. Okay, Marathon must have its own billing department. This is as if we have had this discussion before. Otherwise, Marathon will end up with the failed system for billing, after FKAA crashes.

I hope that you noticed our new-look website. We went retrograde with a simple look, navigation, and more advertising options. The surveys showed that people want their online newspapers to presents its news up close and personal, get right to the point, and reach the targeted audience. That audience wants the local political news current and based on reliable sources.

Read that story on the *Weekly* about all those two-dollar bills. I like the idea. Whenever I get my spending money the last couple of years, it is a roll of dollar coins and twenty two-dollar bills. For me it is a way to talk with all kinds of Marathon residents and businesses.

Islamorada Mayor Reckwerdt vs. Paul Bates and assorted complaints, alleged code violations, and just throw the mud against the wall and see if it sticks. Marathoners, aren't we glad that we have a stable city council?

For those keeping track of such things, I was in the hospital for a week in Miami VA's Ward 11CD, which is the ward for recovering surgery and emergent care patients. I have a cane now to walk comfortably. I figure that I have something to shake at people so they are either mad or feel sorry for me. Symphony is never wrong. [Insert laughter here]

Monroe County Manager Roman Gastesi a while back was asking for a \$3,600 raise in the face of a struggling economy in the Florida Keys. I still cannot believe the audacity of that request. Better yet, reduce upper administration by 50% through attrition. Or is that too complicated for you, Roman.

To be fair, Roman withdrew his request later. What that means, county residents, is business as usual like a 5% raise for county employees. I am sure his little \$3,600 for the use of a county vehicle will be back. Mark my words, one way, or another.

Here is a concern from the few to the many. Should the FKAA board be appointed or elected [ejected – I thought it funny]? It is time for us, the Florida Keys, to grow up and elect the board, not an appointed one. It is time for the supposed big dogs to get off the porch and live in the real world.

I can remember holiday cheer back some fifty years or so back. You considered yourself happy with a lump of coal. Now there is electronics in everything. Look at your favorite TV show on a small smartphone or a computerized wacky-yack cat toy mouse. Electronics is into everything.

