

Big Mouth

this moment, this month, this year

Boca Grande: * an island, an idea

absolutely nothing

Dogs show off again

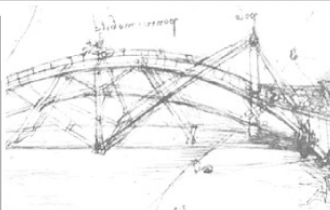
by SARAH VIREN
a writer

The competition was "ruff" during the Boca Grande Woman's Club Dog Show, on Saturday, April 12, with a singing Norfolk terrier duking it out against a golden retriever named "Hudson," a shih tzu whose grandfather won Best in Breed at Westminster, and a slobbering English bulldog, to name a few.

In the end the retriever won out. Yet judges and organizers say all the dogs were winners. The event, now in its third year in Boca Grande, is meant to be more fun than fight. It's a spoof of the "real thing." "It's a hoot," said coordinator and announcer Charlie Field. "Everybody loves dogs and the idea is that you have a puppy and you want to bring him out and show him to people."

Hundreds of people turned out for the show, held at the Boca Grande Community Center, where serious breeders and average dog-lovers come together to celebrate

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Leonardo da Vinci's design for a revolving bridge, pictured above, was an early model for the modern-day swing bridge.

Swing bridge suffers

This architectural feat also has sacrificial teeth

by SARAH VIREN
this writer

The historic Boca Grande Swing Bridge suffered a mechanical failure on Tuesday, closing the bridge to vehicle traffic for more than 90 minutes.

Boats using the Intra-coastal Waterway were also stalled an additional four hours while a repair crew fixed the problem.

The closure began around 2:20 p.m. during a routine opening for boat traffic. After the boats had passed under the span, the tender discovered the bridge would not close. According to Jim Cooper, GIBA executive director, the malfunction was caused by the failure of a "grid device," a

wedge-shaped piece of steel, which is actually designed to fail if too much stress is placed on the shaft that drives the mechanism that opens and closes the bridge.

"If the wedge binds up and puts too much force on the shaft, it's designed so that the gear will give up a few of its sacrificial teeth rather than break the shaft," explained Cooper.

When it was discovered that the bridge was broken, GIBA staff notified emergency personnel, the sheriff's office and the U.S. Coast Guard, Cooper said.

Staff also had to notify the Charlotte County School system because buses delivering children to Boca

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Something smells

by SARAH VIREN
the writer

An afternoon drive towards the toll bridge on Gasparilla Road can be enlightening and inspiring. Unless you have your windows rolled down.

Over the past month numbers of residents and visitors have complained about the strange yet awful smell that seems to be emanating from along the shoreline south of the toll bridge.

But never fear, it's not sewage, it's algae, rotting algae, according to Andrew Kelley, an environmental specialist with the Department of Environmental Protection.

Kelley visited the island about three weeks ago after Jim Cooper, executive director of the Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority, complained about the smell and asked someone from the

D.E.P. to come check it out.

Kelley showed up less than an hour later.

After smelling and looking around Kelley reached the same conclusion he's come to many times before on visits to bayous and island coastlines around Florida.

"There's been an algae bloom and the algae is rotting during the day when it heats up. You can see the algae oozing up on the shoreline," he says.

If it were a sewage leak, Kelley says, there would be a notable loss of water pressure in the sewage line. According to officials from the Gasparilla Island Water Association, this is not the case. Their sewage lines do not even extend as far as the toll bridge and they have noticed no loss of water pres-

please see SMELLY page A3

"Jiggers*" blamed

by SARAH VIREN
this writer

After releasing an anti-jigging advertising campaign last week, members of the Boca Grande Fishing Guides Association say they have no intention of backing down in their fight against the use of artificial bait, or jigs, to catch area tarpon.

"We want everyone to know that we've got a problem in Boca Grande," said Cappy Joiner, president of the guides association, which is funding the ads.

But many fishing captains who support jigging practices, including Rick Paolillo, director of the newest artificial bait tarpon tournament, say they are not looking for a war. They'd welcome compromise.

"I want to try to promote better harmony, to see if

there isn't some way for the groups to get together and use this resource," he said.

Paolillo and other captains say they were upset by the recent ad in the Boca Beacon, which features a picture of a tarpon with a jig in its side. The ad warns that jigs could snag or foul-hook a tarpon.

According to Paolillo, jigs don't intentionally snag tarpon and jig captains don't try to foul-hook their catches. Snagging occurs when the hook catches the tarpon outside of the mouth, often on the gills, eyes, fins or even the anus. Paolillo has banned any tarpon hooked outside the mouth from his tournament, the World Tarpon Championship. The WTC's predecessor, the

please see TARPON page A2

Yet another era ends

Loss of gas station means everyone must leave island to fill up

by SARAH VIREN
some writer

As demolition of the island's only gas station and auto repair shop began on Monday, residents passed this landmark slowly, watching the destruction of the parking lot, then the gas pump canopy, and finally the gas station itself. Some called it the end of an era. Others said

the change was inevitable.

Harold Bove, whose company Bove's Tractor Service was hired to manage the demolition project, said Island Auto has special meaning to him. He got his first job there after graduating from high school. At that time it was called Nabers Island Auto Service, after Clyde and Carolyn Nabers, its original owners.

"I hate to see it go," Bove said while preparing the main building for demolition. "As a kid I always remember it being here."

But Bove says the loss of this island landmark was inevitable, with rising property taxes and the escalating value of land.

The present owners of Island Auto Service are... please see ERA page A3

Boca Grande weather update

Expect skies dyed with bluebonnets, air like translucent lava and an apocalyptic storm promptly at 4 p.m. Afterwards, the night will hold a heavy sort of heat, one that reminds us of a face of a girl flushed with tears.



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Quote of the day

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.
-Code of Ethics, Society of Professional Journalists

DOGS, continued from A1

show is particularly hot, even for Florida, especially for April. Sweat makes slick the backs of my legs and rings tears round my hairline. I am parched and a bit hung-over and tired of smiling at dogs.

I am here, moored to this heat, because Gary looked up this morning and said, "Sarah, some things we must cover every time around. This is one." With this, he flashed a thumbs up, handed me the digital camera and went back to his emailing.

At the community's community center, bright and white and stucco, the dogs are already yapping and the PA screeches as Charlie Field tests his microphone.

"Hello? Oh. Hey fellows? 123. Testing."

Charlie has MCed every dog show since this fundraiser began and he will continue to do so every year after I leave, even after I move two more times, to Texas and then Iowa. Even then, when checking the *Boca Beacon* web site in

April, I will inevitably find a story about dogs and a quote from this pouch-bellied, white-locked gentleman who dons a top hat and knee socks with shorts, who must have had some career in radio, many years ago, before retirement and before Boca Grande.

Life is like that here: Things change. Change repeats. Somehow we fall back to the same place again. Every Sunday in summer the shrimp boat docks at Widden's Marine and some boathand plants a sign near the front door of Hudson's Grocery: "Shrimp Boat is In." Every weekday at 3, Gary dusts imaginary work soot from his cargo shorts, stands and announces: "Headed to my other office."

He then steers his golf cart one block to the Temptation, the oldest bar on this island, a long dark hallway with a green trimmed screen door that, when it opens, pulls a curtain of light from the shadow of the new customer across the concrete floor to the crease of the

wooden bar in the corner. There he sits and drinks and talks to Annie the bartender. She is a fat former fortune teller and the mother of my friend Amy, who works at bike shop in front of my efficiency apartment. Once, I convinced Annie to read my cards and she told me: "I see water in your future."

I, too, perpetrate this cycle. Every Wednesday morning, I pull my legs crossed in an office chair and type the weeks' news into a boulder-sized PC, occasionally glancing out the window and down to our Main Street. My fingers tap the same letters, conspiring to punch out the same words again and again: *Boca, island, fund-raiser, controversy, tarpon, fishing, Gasparilla, she said, he said, according to.*

Some weeks, sitting in that chair, I feel so familiar with the repetition of life that I write parts of a story before they happen. Life repeats and so I forget, in these moments, that each reiteration is never quite the same.

TARPON, continued from A1

now is the fishing spot for fans of the tarpon, a giant gamefish with a curmudgeonly jaw and years of fight locked into its prehistoric body. Every time I write about the tarpon, I remember my first time with one. I had been here for less than a month when one afternoon Gary stood up, heady with instructions: "We're taking you tarpon fishing. You gotta prove yourself."

Then suddenly it was midnight aboard the *Lil Priss* and a man everyone called Capt. Futch was handing me a pole thicker than my wrist and rapping his way through the tenants of catching tarpon: *Wait for the tug, when there is a tug, and you'll know the tug when you feel it, yell "Fish on." Then I'll gun the engine and you start reeling*

in, nice and steady, pulling the rod up and then winding that line back in, up and in. Nice and steady like I tell you.

There is nothing to prepare you for this. Reading *Old Man in the Sea* won't help, in fact it probably softened me, those romantic memories of Santiago and his marlin mixing in the humidity of the night, making ink out of the darkness in my line of sight.

I watched for a sign of that anthologized moment, the first bite. Fishing smaller prey, this happens with a small tug, a slight bob on your line that means contact made. With tarpon, I soon realized, the tug is a thunderstorm. It is a physicality more raw than literature and for this reason, when it happened to me, I was unprepared.

"Fish on!" I yelled when I felt it. I remember the lurch of the boat as Capt. Futch yanked us forward, anchoring the fish to hook, and me alone with my rod, some rough beast at the end and the moon just a chink of light in this all. It's in that instance that I recognized a life was tugging at my hands, that I understand this word "fight" people use here to describe fishing.

After half an hour of fight, I got my tarpon to the boat and looked it in the eye. These fish were named for their eyes. Tarpon: Megalops Atlanticus, Big Eye Atlantic.

Staring, thus, I hardly noticed Capt. Futch behind me, reaching over to deftly swiped a diamond scale souvenir from its back and then, in a flick, letting my fish go.

BRIDGE, continued from A1

on its functioning days) does just that, swing open. Lifting bridges tear in the middle like wounds: arch bridges balloon their bellies of concrete toward the sky. But a swing bridge flings its girth from its base to both sides, a dramatic hip toss played out in slow motion while cars idle, their concrete path deferring momentarily to the sea. These are mechanical beasts, archaic wonders. Like Jim Cooper, my love of this bridge pushes me to metaphor.

The bridge opens every half hour, but the first time I see its swing is a May dawn, soon after I started working here, soon after I graduated from college, after a five-year relationship had imploded, then sputtered to dust. In neutral, one in a band of break lights that flip to taillights as the bridge's guardrails lower, I am tuned to country radio, listening to the cycle of maudlin songs I use as protracted penitence for what I feel I did wrong. Without such guilt I would be nowhere.

When driving on to Boca Grande, the old railroad trestle stretches to your left and under it blue chokes the coast. Egrets nest in floodlights. The sky is a bowl turned upside down on top of us all. And I am the silent one in the green Camry waiting for the swing. It's so slow at first I don't notice, but then I look and see the bridge has pushed fully from the road, a movement that looks much like an an-

gler reeling back before casting and feels a little like sighing.

Before this bridge, the island was another world entire, one pinched from Florida's peninsula and spit into Charlotte Harbor, its only lifelines those railroad trestles and the steady inch of a ferry that opened at 8 a.m. and closed by dusk. Then everyone* lived here, the rich and their workers and the fishing drunks and their children who know the bayous like highways.

Now this place has room only for those who buy up land in multiple states: Michigan in the summer, Florida in the winter, Delaware most of the year.

One afternoon after I witnessed that first swing, Jim takes me down to the bowels of this bridge, pointing out its parts with decent diligence. There are gears the size of Monster truck tires and a ceiling made from metal beams.

"This bridge is 213 feet long, exactly," he tells me, nearly panting with the excitement of such exactness. I am groggy with heat that day and listen to that of this, the wonder of the swing lost in these dark corners filled with rust and grease and salt water. And it's as if Jim knows. He continues:

"Not everyone gets it, Sarah, but this here is incredible," he slaps a stall-wart beam. "Look."

I stop writing his words and do as he says. Just look. This bridge, it's gap.

Information Directory

Publisher
Dusty

Editor
Gary

The first thing you will notice about Dusty is his Harley Davidson golfcart. In Boca Grande everyone drives a golf car, but those most invested in their life here fashion these tiny wheels as stand-ins for personalities, either real or desired. So antique collectors have vintage carts and Dusty, 40 years into a mid-life crisis, has his cart to match his real Harley Davidson. The next thing you'll notice about Dusty is that he's lonely.

Before retiring to Boca Grande, Gary edited a scrapping daily newspaper somewhere in Pennsylvania. He has a distended belly. He thinks of himself as my mentor.

Writer
Sarah

You believe in me, even though you really shouldn't.

Make Boca Grande your new home....

- Deals include:
- A 3-bedroom villa for the low low price of \$1.9 million
- A fixer-upper for a cool \$700,000
- And our personal favorite, a magnificent family compound on the beach for just \$1.4 million.

Call today, move in tomorrow



Your narrator left you without a voice

STAFF REPORT

Minutes before driving out of town yesterday, Sarah Viren had a fleeting thought: "I am really fucking leaving this place."

It had been two years since the writer joined our community. In that time she was sucked in to the bog just as surely as the rest of us.

Sarah came to this island, as you will recall, fresh from those hippy liberal arts college a few hours north of here where she had studied literature and gender studies, whatever that means, and decided quite suddenly her last year of school to be a journalist. Only of course no reputable paper would

take her, so Gary, realizing this, offered her \$12 an hour without benefits to move down here. She said yes, rented a quaint little apartment next to Bike N' Beach, the one that just a year earlier had been a sushi shop, and started trying to get to know all of us.

"I remember one time she came to interview me about some small-time theft and didn't realize she had two buttons open on her blouse the whole time," laughed Capt. Steve Gehle. "There were three of us in the room and we could barely keep a straight face."

Others had more touching things to say about Sarah, who is leaving Boca Grande for a job at a news-

paper on another island, this time in Texas.

"Sarah once wrote a really nice story about the giant fish I make out of beer bottle caps," said Tori Kittridge. "She got most of the facts right."

Tori's step-daughter, who had a brief drunken affair with Sarah, refused to comment.

At the Boca Beacon, employees wished Sarah bon voyage with a round of drinks. Dusty was taking pictures, of course. Gary told her she was making a big mistake. "You need a few more years here, really, to hone the craft." Sarah tried not to stare at his chubby fingers.

Daniel, who worked in a small dark room in the back of the Boca Beacon office, laying out pages, gave Sarah one of his famous "BocaNuts," a coconut painted with images of island life. Sarah will keep that gift for five years, finally throwing it away when she moves from Texas to Iowa for graduate school.

"Why the fuck did I keep that for so long," she will think then.

As for her part, Sarah had little to say on the record about her time on this tiny, isolated island that some of us call paradise and others hell.

"I'll just say this," she remarked. "I won't forget."

ERA, continued from A1

era quote annoys me from the start, but in Boca Grande you can hardly keep from writing these words. Everything here eventually becomes an end of an era. The first end began in the mid-1700s, when the Calusa Indians, native Floridians who have been living and fishing on a chain of islands along the coast since 800 AD, forfeited their lives to Spanish weapons and diseases and then, destitute, handed over their homes too. Their successors fished the waterways and Big Mouthed pass, by then properly named Boca Grande, for a couple hundred more years undisturbed until the phosphate conquistadors marched in, pocketing coastline as they dug. These men, fertilizer-crazed, money-happy, saw in Boca Grande the perfect spot for a railroad to transport their minerals from the

Peace River to the mainland, up to Tampa and then rest of the world. It was their railroad that brought a breed of what we call "seasonal residents," the DuPonts, the Bush family, flocks of prep school graduates in pastel.

Distinguishing between these invaders and their predecessors is something of a sport in Boca Grande, a sort of one-upmanship of localness that pits year-long residents against those who can only stand Florida in the winter, the fishing guides against those who hire guides to taking them on fishing trips, those who can no longer afford property taxes against those who can. In this battle, I find myself, as with everything, *riding a gradient invisible*.

My friend Brandy tells me I am an outsider. Brandy had always been here. Her father, Dumplin' Wheeler, descended from the old guard. Grunt-voiced with

pale eyes rained by sun, Dumplin', like most old-timers, makes a living taking rich folks on tarpon fishing trips. But for years, he, his wife Dee and their daughter Brandy lived together in the island lighthouse – as its keepers. That was Boca's first beacon, a white burst on the island's southern tip flashing Morse Code to barges loaded with phosphate, boats filled with fish, ships carrying oil.

By the time I move here, though, Brandy and her family have been forced out, their beacon home transformed to museum. Inside Brandy's old bedroom grainy photos now hang, their images echoes. A gift shop near the old kitchen sells lighthouse key chains alongside local history pamphlets. And atop this is a newly automated light-keeperless.

Brandy teaches middle school math "off island,"

as we call it, and talks a lot about getting out of Boca Grande for good. She is pale with chubby pockmarked cheeks and squid ink curls. Some nights she and I ride golf carts, borrowed from rich folks, to South Beach Restaurant where we drink draft Amstel Light and play darts: Cricket, 501, 301. It doesn't matter what game.

Brandy always wins: "I've been playing all my life," she says. "You just got here."

Other nights, I am in South Beach alone with the tourists. Girls in the bathroom tug down tank tops, tighten sandal straps and talk about some D.C. club that is invite only for young Republican elite. The boys outside all wear seashell-colored polo shirts unbuttoned and don't look at me when I stop them near the bar, asking politely from where they've come.

SMELLY, continued from A1

Grande hosts plagues straight out of the book of Exodus. Gangs of iguanas hunt the island: thick, wrinkly green and muscular, darting across sidewalks commando-style, their eyes on some distant prize, their tails propelling bodies in a perpetual zigzag. These are prehistoric beasts, dinosaur cousins banished from civilization save for some fish tanks in New York City apartments and the sweltering reaches of Florida, where they run and breed, breed and run rampant so much so that one day a squeamish northerner on vacation here finds an iguana crawling up from the bowl of her toilet and phones us at the paper. She wants help.

The island also hosts blood-suckers: clouds of no-see-ums, quaint-sounding insects who feel much less so at dusk when they dig into my flesh, biting like horseflies but with a vanishing vengeance that forces us to swear, our bodies perched along the seawall, the pain eclipsing for moments the sunset, which seems more vivid here than anywhere else in the world.

The most noxious of all these plagues, though, is red tide, a seasonal disaster when algae grows too fast and too far and then, reaching the end of its cycle, dies in mass cataclysms of stench. The smell reaches up from the salt waters into the humidity and inches its way, cartoon-like, from there to the inside of passing SUVs and golf carts, so much so that people turn to each other, asking, "What in God's name?" And eventually someone calls the office of this newspaper, pleading again for answers. To which I respond, if not in exact words then at least in sentiment, "I'll get to the bottom of this." By "this" I mean both nature and the human nature that inspires people to complain about the nature they paid so dearly to live beside.

But Andrew Kelley only explains the former. I need someone else, someone wiser or more invested, to teach me about the people who settle here. Those Jim Coopers, Charlie Fields, Annie Conways and Dumplin' Wheelers.

They love this island, I realize, only each loves a different iteration of it.



World's Richest Tarpon Tournament
 JULY 6-7-8
This Tournament happens every single year - without fail!
 We make different posters, but it's basically the same thing again and again.
 The only change, in fact, is that we've overfished the tarpon. So most years, now, we only catch one or two and all grumble about the jiggers.
 Come join us!

Wiffenpoof fundraiser for new Island School!

Help build our new elementary school while listening to retired members of the Yale Wiffs sing their famous lines:

*We are poor little lambs
 Who have lost our way.
 Baa! Baa! Baa!
 We are little black sheep
 Who have gone astray.
 Baa! Baa! Baa!*

Crime Blotter

A 19-year-old Port Charlotte man escaped serious injury Wednesday evening when the car he was driving spun out of control on a rain-slicked Gasparilla Road and crashed into a tree. After escaping his wrecked white Honda Prelude, the driver paced up and down the sidewalk. "All he kept saying was he wanted a cigarette. He kept saying 'what happened to my car.' Oh my God, oh my God, what happened to my car," a witness said.

A 27-year-old Gasparilla Inn* employee was arrested

Wednesday evening, Jan. 22 after police say they spotted him urinating in the street. While investigating loud noises coming from the Inn's dorm area around 2:30 a.m. Wednesday, Cpl. Mark Vollmer said he noticed a man pushing and shoving another individual in the parking lot. According to police, the man then walked in the direction of the recreation room towards the edge of 8th Street where the offense allegedly took place.

Former Boca Grande builder Frank Patterson Hague, also known as Jennifer Patter-

son, accepted a plea agreement last week on charges that he bilked a Georgia man out of over \$300,000. He was charged in March, 2002 and has been in custody since his arrest. As part of the agreement, Hague will serve two years of house arrest and three years of probation. He also must repay the \$315,000 he took from Brown while overseeing the construction of his house.

While most of the island slept Monday night, at least two joyriders stole three golf carts and then crashed them into ditches, causing

considerable damage to the vehicles and nearby property, police said. A cart taken from Boca Grande Cart Rentals and Sales suffered the most damage. Its drivers apparently ran into a water pipe and air conditioning unit while leaving the rental office on East Railroad Avenue, damaging both, police said.

A 39-year-old Port Charlotte man was charged with possession of marijuana, a misdemeanor, on Monday, Jan. 20 after he was pulled over for speeding on the

Boca Grande Causeway, according to police. The man was stopped by Cpl. Steve Gehle* at 11:20 a.m. Monday morning for travelling 16 miles over the speed limit and driving without a visible tag. According to police, Gehle smelled marijuana and asked the man to step out of his white Ford truck. When questioned, the man handed over a bag of approximately 10 grams - about one-third of an ounce - of marijuana. A pipe, rolling papers and marijuana "roach" were also found in his vehicle.

CLASSIFIEDS: The * section

TERMS

* Beacons are lights, signs or flashes set off in the distance for one of two purposes: to warn you of danger or guide you to safety.

* In her *A Book of Common Prayer*, Joan Didion names an imaginary nation Boca Grande, a fact that I find fitting. Some days, this island feels like its own country.

* That verb "suffered" in the bridge story? That's all me - no fault of the bridge. It's the kind of word that years later, under the eyes of more diligent editors, will inspire a public lecture, one of those "Sarah! Come over here," talking-tos that start at a high pitch heard clear across the newsroom and unfold in a cascade of commands that negate anthropomorphisms. "Bridges do not suffer," these later editors will thunder. "Humans suffer. Bridges just get stuck." But in Boca Grande I am still untrained, and that bridge did seem pained, stuck in its cycle, half open like that, incomplete.

CONFESSIONS

* One weekend Dan Quayle visits the island and I get drunk with his son Benjamin and ask him who to spell *potato*.

* One night at a party Cpl. Steve Gehle lets me take a Breathalyzer just for fun. I follow him to the back of his cop car and blow into the stick. He laughs and shows the other cops when I fail miserably.

* One night after another party I sleep with a guy who works at the famous lemon-yellow Gasparilla Inn. We go back to his dorm room for

something, I can't remember what, and I start kissing him. "I thought you were a lesbian," he says. "I am," I tell him, but don't stop because something about this place inverts life. Everyone here drinks and is on vacation, everyone here is white and either very rich or very poor and after I am done writing their stories for the paper each day I want a part of their landscape. I want to be them.

CONCRETS

* Here they call those jiggers we use to catch tarpon jiggers, a term more spat than spoken. Jiggers are outsiders. Jiggers are upstarts, newcomers, greedily, disrespectful. They come from Tampa or Texas or Tallahassee and don't understand Boca Grande.

HOUSING

* The last outpost of cheap housing complex here, a place called Tarpon Pass Estates belonged to a man named Homer Addison: short and trim with once-blond hair, a Florida native who, at the time, ran the Temptation, staffing it almost entirely with folks living in these apartments of his on the island's north end. Homer built the Estates soon after the bridge went up, because, "You had to have help. And they were running the colored people off the island." By the time I am living there, though, Tarpon Pass Estates is nothing but sand. I find Homer in a retirement cottage on a bayou to ask him why. "Why," I ask, staring at my tape recorder, "If you built those homes in 1959 did you bulldoze them in 1983 - what changed?" This question has been bothering me for some time now, the slow homogenization of

an island, and I think Homer might have an answer. But he just shrugs. He says he's too old, in truth, to remember details like that.

PETS

* Years later, after I move away from here, hundreds of the land-owning islanders will unite to form an iguana containment plan, complete with its own iguana tax, to control what Floridians are just now beginning to call an invasive species, myrddins defined as all recent arrivals with colonizing tendencies. Recent is not quantified, though colonizing is. It means killing what was there first.

Obituaries

Annie Conway, 62, dies several years after I leave Boca Grande and by then I couldn't even call her daughter Amy to tell her how sorry I am. After I move away, Amy starts getting high, then higher, then pregnant and finally arrested. Last I hear she is in a treatment center without a phone. I could call Brandy, Amy's cousin, but she finally left the island, met a man, moved to North Carolina and no longer returns messages. Instead, I read the obituary alone, call no one, and am annoyed that my replacement deemed three paragraphs sufficient for summarizing Annie's life, but even more so that in the third to last sentence he calls her "fun-loving."



Today's Horoscope: What the Stars say about You!

Aries (March 21 - April 20)
You will wake before all of us, as you always do, to bake our Danish rolls and croissants and lay crust for our pizza. And at sunrise, after waiting patiently, you will twist open your first Amstel Light and drink with gratitude.

Taurus (April 21 - May 20)
When you visit, you will surely think that this is where you belong and yet we know you will forget this place as we will forget you, one face among many.

Gemini (May 21 - June 21)
I see you on the street almost daily and at this point it's almost like we know each other, only we never smile or a wave. I imagine, though, if we were to meet somewhere else, somewhere far away from here, at the top of the Eiffel Tower maybe or on a dusty road in Honduras, we

would embrace immediately, asking almost in unison, "How have you been?"

Cancer (June 22 - July 22)
You have a boat and on weekends that is where you will be. The water is where you are and in this way you don't really even live here. You stay here so that you can be there, in a world that always underfoot and harvests fish in lieu of plants.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22)
None of us really know who you are.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)
Today, tomorrow, the next day - in this future, you will wait in a lighthouse for visitors, though more than likely you will be alone all day by the sea.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23)
You are too old to understand change.

Scorpio (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You are too new and will never listen to those who came before you.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)
Once, when it was especially hot here, you took off all your clothes and walked the line of surf. You are always the one here to do these things for us. We count on you for that.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)
I want to, but I cannot believe in any of this.

Aquarius (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
You open and close and open again and we wait because you are a fixture of this place.

Pisces (Feb. 20 - March 20)
I realize now that you were being something. That's why you tried so hard to push your definition of home on this place.