On to district play
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Cause for alarm?

ACCUSATIONS that Key Largo's fire chief threatened firefighters and an officer downloaded pornography and used his department phone to promote a side business were aired publicly at a Fire EMS District board meeting last week. The allegations, which are contained in a recent audit, has captured the attention of the State Attorney's Office. See story on page 2.

PLANTATION KEY — A Key Largo man charged with the attempted murders of his estranged wife and her boyfriend last June will have to remain in jail until the case is resolved.

William Thomas Skinner, 54, had hoped to await trial under house arrest at his sister's residence in Kendall.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 6

QUICK READ

Eviction postponed for 45 days

PLANTATION KEY — A judge gave Key Largo Ocean Resort residents a 45-day eviction reprieve last Tuesday after an attorney for the manager's company convinced him the community has made substantial progress toward eliminating numerous fire hazards.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3

No release for accused shooter

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FULL STORY ON PAGE 6
Keys rally to provide relief to Haiti

BY ROBERT SILK
Free Press Staff

UPPER KEYS — Gasline Marcelin was in the midst of explaining the unknown fate of his parents and nine siblings, all of whom live in Port-au-Prince, when his phone rang last Friday. It was his wife and they spoke only for a few seconds. But when the longtime head chef of Snooks Bayside Restaurant in Key Largo put down the phone, three days of crushing anxiety had come to an end.

"One of my brothers called. He said everybody is OK," Marcelin reported.

The soft spoken 43-year-old sat quietly while friends celebrated around him, as if he needed a moment to let the news sink in. Then tears welled in Marcelin's eyes.

"I'm so happy," he said with a smile.

The good fortune for Marcelin and his family was a welcome moment in the Upper Keys last week, where Haitians, while few in residence, make up a sizable portion of local service workers. After the Jan. 12 earthquake, many local employers quickly

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Robert Silk/Free Press
Snooks Bayside chef Gasline Marcelin learned Friday evening that his family in Haiti had survived the Jan. 12 earthquake.
Haiti
Continued from page 16

jumped in with fundraising efforts. First State Bank of the Florida Keys was among the first, setting up a Haiti relief fund and accepting cash as well as donations of supplies at its 11 Monroe County branches.
At the Holiday Inn Key Largo, where General Manager Doug Dale says some 35 to 40 employees are Haitian, donations came in faster than the hotel knew how to handle. Clothing, water bottles, diapers, medicine and rubbing alcohol were all among the supplies the hotel planned to deliver to the social service agency Haitian Women of Miami on Tuesday.
"It will take, I'm sure, a couple trips by the largest U-Haul we can get to take all the stuff up there," Dale said on Monday.
Meanwhile, the Ocean Reef Club, where I last an employee
are also numerous, the affiliate
ated Ocean Reef Foundation
announced it would match
up to $20,000 in donations. By
Monday the foundation had
raised $80,000, plus the $10,000
match, said Administrator Yuri
Mikloway. Plus, the Ocean Reef
Club itself was working on an
even bigger plan to send people
into Haiti.
Donation centers prolif-
erated elsewhere across the
Upper Keys last week, includ-
ing Islamorada's Bernard
Russell Fire Station on Upper
Matecumbe Key, where Fire
Chief William Wagner III said
drop-offs began even before
an announcement was made
that they would be accepted.
With the situation still des-
perate in the western hemi-
sphere's poorest country, many
Upper Keys drop-off points
remain open this week. The
Holiday Inn has wrapped up
its effort, but Stone Lodge
Paradise Inn in Key Largo is
accepting clothing and canned
foods, First State branches in
Islamorada and Key Largo are
still accepting cash and goods.
Donations can also be taken
to Islamorada's Helen Wadley
Branch Library in addition to the
Russell Fire Station.
Back at Snooks, owner
Jennifer Hammer was there
when Marcelin received the
news that his family is safe.
But inspired by her affection
for her chef of a dozen years,
as well as three other Haitian
employees, she has put togeth-
er a Haiti relief fundraiser in
old-fashioned Florida Keys
style. It will be held Thursday,
Jan. 21 beginning at 6 p.m.
The event, called Conch
Republic Idol, will feature a
talent show judged by local
celebrities including Capt. Skip
Bradstreet, as well as a pig roast.
The $25 entry fee is also good
for two hours of domestic beer
and house wine. Entrance into
the idol competition costs an
additional $20. All proceeds
will be given to the American
Red Cross care of First State.
"Every dollar helps,"
Hammer said.
rslilke@keysnews.com

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Lazy Days in Marathon is now open!
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SOLDIERING ON

Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride bikers depart VFW Post 10211 in Key Largo Friday morning on their way to Key West. The national program is a rehabilitative sports event for the soldiers and also helps them return to an active lifestyle. This year's group included 31 soldiers from military hospitals around the country.

Dr. Edward (Ted) Collins is currently providing
complete sports medicine and orthopedic surgical services to the Upper Keys.

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Dr. Collins is located at
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