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THE KEYS

Proposed high-rise tower reenergizes opposition

BY LISA FUSS

SUGARLOAF KEY — A controversial 970-foot communications tower that would be constructed within Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge on Cudjoe Key is back on the table, and its opponents aren't taking the news lying down.

A vocal contingent of Lower Keys residents is expected to protest the proposed radio transmitting tower at tonight's 6 p.m. town hall meeting, which will be held before the Monroe County Commission at Sugarloaf Key.

The tower drew an emotional response from Cudjoe and Sugarloaf key residents.

The proposed structure — 13 feet wide, 970 feet tall and topped with a large hockey-puck-shaped dome to house transmitters — would be just 60 feet shorter than the Empire State Building and visible for miles from its location on property near the Fat Albert Vespene base on the north side of Cudjoe Key.

PLAN WITHDRAWN

Frustrated by what they deemed a "lack of public understanding," Industrial Communications officials withdrew their tower application last March with plans to renege the situation. Three months ago, the company reapplied for approval of the project, tower opponents aren't surprised.

CLOSE NEIGHBOR

"We want to let them know this is an issue important to this community, which is exactly the purpose of a town hall meeting," said Cudjoe Key resident Dennis Hinzler, who lives less than half a mile from the proposed tower site.

The tower "is totally incompatible with our community character, and that's not even considering the environmental issues at hand. Towers kill birds, and big towers kill lots of them."

While proponents of the tower have touted five cable television and improved emergency radio communications in the Florida Keys as benefits, claims that have been disputed by some in law enforcement and the TV industry, others still consider the alleged perks not worth the cost to the environment.

RECORD HEIGHT

Not only would the tower pose a danger to wildlife in the Lower Keys, critics say, but its height is unprecedented in the state. The tallest structure currently in the Keys is Clear Channel's communications tower on Cudjoe Key, which stands at 651 feet.

and is less than a mile from the proposed tower.

County Commissioner Nora Williams says she has concerns about the proposed tower but contends the issue may be limited in its scope.

"I've better believe if people make enough noise, it'll get back to the planning commission," Williams said. "Personally, a 970-foot tower stands the test of 10 years to make some of that noise."

MAKING WAY FOR ROSS



Ross Dress for Less, a discount clothing and home accessory store, will open a new shop at the Overseas Market in July. The storefront was left empty last summer by J.C. Penney because of declining sales. The department store, which laid off 50 employees, had been one of the few department stores in the Keys.

Canes beat Belen, St. Brendan with exciting efforts

BY CHRIS LEONE

Special to The Herald

The Coral Shores Hurricanes boys' basketball team returned from its Christmas break by defeating the Belen Wolves in thrilling fashion, 62-45.

It was Coach Dan Smith's hope that his club would ride the emotional high into their next game against the defending district champ, the Gulf View Prep Raiders, on Wednesday night.

KEYS SPORTS

Unfortunately, the Canes came playing hotly and were outplayed from beginning to end, losing to the Raiders, 59-36. "The intensity was not there and our kids have to understand this order to be successful they have to play with a high level of intensity every game."

Ryan Smith led the Canes, with eight points.

On Friday, Coral Shores battled the St. Brendan Sabres and again they came out slow and lacked emotion, resulting in a 22-12 halftime deficit.

Fourth-quarter run puts away Sabres.

The Canes made up a little ground in the third quarter by outscoring the Sabres, 12-7 and trailed 34-24 entering the game's final quarter.

In the fourth, the Canes found themselves down 38-31 with four minutes remaining — and that's when everything turned around.

The Canes got points from all their players on the court, including six from Darryl Woods (25 total points) and five out of Eric Orr (11 points) on their way to ending the game on a 14-0 run.

"We were a totally different team in the fourth quarter," Smith said. "It was a complete team effort down the stretch, resulting in a very important win for us."

Owen Dixon led the Canes with 21 rebounds and also scored eight. This week's schedule has the Canes hosting Rumson today and La Progressiva Thursday.

Tip-offs are scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

Chris Leone writes a sports column weekly. If you have sports news please contact him at greataction@aol.com, or call 305-453-5299.

KEYS CALENDAR		KEYS BRIEFS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bible Course by Matt, non-denominational, nonsectarian. Eight lessons free. Write: Free Home Bible Course, 3 Burlington St., Key Largo 33057 or call 305-458-0194. Biops, 7 p.m. Tuesdays at St. Justin Martyr Catholic Church, mile marker 103.5. Proceeds support the Keys Academy at St. Jantick's, the new pre-kindergarten through eighth grade elementary school. Call 305-451-6425. Bridge Club meets members, Key Largo Civic Club, Call Thelma Page at 305-452-9321 or Gladys Roberts at 305-458-0385. Busy Fingers, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesdays. Lions Club behind TTB bank in Key Largo. Call Dorothy at 305-453-4161. Caring Friends for Seniors is seeking volunteers to visit senior citizens at their homes or in the meeting home for a couple hours a week. Call Barbara Pike at 305-453-3661. Divorced or Separated Women, free support group/workshop at 630 p.m. Tuesdays at Coral Isles Church. The group will meet for three months. Kathleen Baur, a psychologist, will facilitate the group. To register, call 305-452-9325. Eastern Star, 8 p.m. second and fourth Thursdays, Masonic Lodge (behind Scotty's in Tavernier). Call 305-452-9325. Florida Keys Council for People with Disabilities meeting, 10 a.m. Thursday, Conference room, Marathon High School. Call 305-490-4200. Florida Keys Masonic Lodge 236, 8 p.m. second and fourth Tuesdays, Masonic Temple behind Scotty's, Tavernier. Call 305-452-9325. Friendship Bible Coffees are informal weekly sessions of the homes of participants. Sponsored by the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestead Christian Women's Club. Call Gail at 305-247-2623 or Nancy at 305-247-4575. Girl Scout Council of Tropical Florida needs adult volunteers to be role models and work with girls between the ages of 9-17. Girl Scout training and offers organized programs and events customized to different age levels. Call Pauline Bassett at 305-253-4843, Ext. 228. Great-writing Workshop will be held at 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 6 at the University of Florida, Donabrener Hotel Conference Center, 1714 SW 34th St., Gainesville. The fee is \$10 and includes refreshments and lunch. Call 6893 798-9779 or fax 6893798-956. Head Dancers, 7 p.m. Tuesdays. Beginners welcome. Call Betty at 305-453-6301 or Peggy at 305-452-5038. Key Largo Flea Market, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, mile marker 103.5 byway. Key Largo Hammock Nature Walks, 10 a.m. Thursdays and Sundays meet at gate of former Fort Ben Garrison. Contact, County Road 905, Garrison, Key Largo, mile marker 99, near Key Largo. Call 305-453-3320. Key Largo Lions Club, 11:30 a.m. first Wednesday of the month, Perry's of Key Largo restaurant, mile marker 102.5 byway. Cost: \$2.00. Also, 6 p.m. third Wednesday of the month, Lions Den, Clubhouse, mile marker 100, behind TTB bank. Call 305-452-9273. Keys Community Concert Band practices Monday at 7 p.m., Key Largo School Band Room. New musicians welcome. Contact Donna Hester at 305-453-7294. Kiwaniis Club meets at 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Last Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m. membership night. Contact, Key Largo, mile marker 100, Call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Bricker at 852-9259 or Donna Casey at 305-450-4414. Latitude 25 Writers meet at 7 p.m. Jan. 31, Key Largo Library community room, to read and discuss members' original works. Call Steve at 305-453-8169. Marathon Shrine Club meets at noon Fridays, Chop Restaurant, mile marker 54, Marathon. Call Jim Swartzman at 305-743-6760. Senior Group, ages 4 to 90+, Key Largo Library, 10 a.m. Mondays, mild exercise, followed by programs featuring speakers and games. Seniors who wish to volunteer, call 305-453-5783. Swing and Country Dance Lessons, 7-9 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 48 ages, beginner to intermediate levels at Gilbert's Paradise Island, 85 per person. Tropical Fruit and Vegetable Society of the Richard, 7:30 p.m. last Wednesday, Fruit and Spice Park, 2400 SW 307th Ave., Homestead. Call 6893-247-9277. Talent Tal Cal Society has regular classes at Joyce Bennett School of Performing Arts, mile marker 99, ocean side. Call 305-453-4566. Upper Keys Jaycees, 7 p.m. third Wednesday, Coconut, mile marker 100, social meetings, 5:30 p.m. last Friday, Snuggly. Call 305-453-0504. Zonta Clubs, an international service organization that specializes in service to women, children and the community. Key West, 6 p.m. third Tuesday, Tumbo Palms, P.O. Naval Base. Call Gieschen Williams at 305-294-9225. Marathon, 6 p.m. third Tuesday, Southern Country Club. Upper Keys, 6:30 p.m. second Thursday, Denny's, mile marker 100. 	<p>rent burglary Friday, Phillips told police that he and the accomplice broke into the building and stole a large amount of cash.</p> <p>The 16-year-old already faces seven counts of burglary for his alleged participation in a string of business burglaries in Marathon.</p>
<p>ISLAMORADA MAN CHARGED WITH RAPE</p> <p>An Islamorada man was arrested Saturday on charges of holding a woman in his apartment and raping her.</p> <p>According to police, the victim was walking her bike on a path near mile marker 42 last Thursday when 44-year-old Charles Everett Strong jumped out of the bushes, grabbed her around the neck and held a knife to her throat.</p> <p>Strong reportedly pulled the woman into the bushes and raped her.</p> <p>After the attack, the victim said Strong tied her hands together and forced her to walk to a wooded area near mile marker 44.5 where he again raped her.</p> <p>A short time later, Strong's wife reportedly arrived at the scene and confronted both of them. During the confrontation, the victim was able to escape, police said.</p> <p>The woman reported the crime to authorities Friday.</p> <p>Police found Strong on Saturday inside his van in an Islamorada parking lot. During questioning, Strong told investigators that he had sexual relations with the victim but said it was consensual. Strong was arrested and charged with kidnapping and armed sexual battery.</p>			

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