

JOYFUL LIVING: LONGTIME RESIDENT CAN DRAW UP SOME MAGIC

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Henry Rosenthal. CONTRIBUTED

A mentalist uses intuition, observation skills and psychology to perform magic. Not the performing of magic tricks, but the art of using perception to entertain an audience. Henry Rosenthal has entertained as a mentalist for 30 years in 22 foreign countries at Carnival Cruise Lines destinations and was the first “westerner” to perform in East Berlin after the wall came down in 1989.

Rosenthal’s mentalist ability began as a bartender in various restaurants and bars, many of which he owned. It grew over time as he performed, interacted with other mentalists and studied his art form. He developed great skill at reading people and situations, and at problem solving. These he brought home with him to Islamorada and used them to grow his business, the village, and the people surrounding him.

For 30 years, Rosenthal was the largest private employer in Monroe County as owner and operator of the Green Turtle Restaurant and Cannery, Marker 88, Whale Harbor Inn and other establishments. “I got a lot of personal satisfaction as a businessman and now that I am retired, public service allows me the satisfaction of helping others,” Rosenthal said.

Rosenthal has served on many boards throughout the county including Islamorada Chamber of Commerce, Florida Keys Children’s Shelter, Leadership Monroe County and Islamorada Village Council, where he is currently vice mayor. His goal is to provide the citizens of Islamorada the opportunity to make Islamorada shine brightly in Monroe County.

The Just Older Youth Inc. campaign for a community center recently came to Rosenthal's attention. He said, "My interest goes back to group activities when I was a teen and went to teen centers. The JOY Center is a teen center for people over 50 and I am all for that."

"There are groups who meet periodically at churches in the afternoon to play cards, etc., but that is not enough," he said. "I believe I can help J.O.Y. Inc. establish a community center. I called Roman Gastesi when the old courthouse became available and I met with Denise Downing and Emily Steele to better understand what J.O.Y. Inc. is proposing to the county commissioners. If I had property available I would give it to them. It is important that the senior citizens have a place where they can continue to grow and learn."

Walt Disney, a role model for Rosenthal, had three different rooms called "Dreamer," "Realist" and "Critic". Room 1 is dedicated to dreaming and brainstorming, Room 2 is for coming up with realistic ways to make those dreams happen. Room 3 is for troubleshooting and determining any problems with the plans for implementation.

The idea of a community center has advanced to Room 3. Rosenthal is a strong supporter of Monroe County commissioners providing funding for an Upper Keys Community Center that has a permanent location, five days of lifelong learning for seniors, teens and all Upper Keys citizens. Rosenthal is adamant that he will use his expertise of observation, intuition and problem-solving to help make the Upper Keys Community Center a reality.