

ISLAMORADA COUPLE FINDS LOVE AT 'DEAD ANIMAL BAR'

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By Emily Steele

Dawn Cale came to live in the Keys at the age of 19. Her first place of employment was the Safari Lounge, locally known as the "Dead Animal Bar" near Caloosa Cove Marina.

She was a long haired, blonde beauty who worked in the bar restaurant. It was there she met "Barefoot Eddie" born Edward Cale. Their meeting was the beginning of a Keys love story.

Eddie's grandfather, Charles Cale, came to the Keys in the early 1900s to manage the Windley Key Quarry, now known as the Windley Key Fossil Reef Geological State Park. Like the limestone in the quarry that preserves ancient marine life records of Florida's geological history, the Cale family has embedded in it a rich history of the human experience in the Keys. An experience that includes managing a quarry that furnished fill for Flagler's railroad, commercial fishing, guided fishing adventures, hurricanes, heat, humidity and mosquitos. Dawn, who blew in from California, didn't know what she was getting into.

"They saw me as fresh blood, everyone knew each other, I was the new kid in town. " Dawn laughingly explained.

At first she wasn't interested in "Barefoot Eddie," because he never wore shoes. He kept coming into the Dead Animal Bar restaurant. "I thought he was coming in to see the other waitresses, but he told me later he was coming in to see me. We were wed there among the zebra skins, animal heads and elephant feet," Dawn giggles.

The Cales have been married 32 years and raised their child, Cheyenne on East Ridge in Islamorada where they have lived for 26 years. Like many long-time locals, they are beginning to question if they can continue to live here because of rising insurance rates, the lure of increased property value and rising cost of living. But there is one thing they are sure of, the importance of having a place to gather and meet others who are experiencing aging in the Keys.

Dawn, who is a board member of Just Older Youth, Inc. firmly believes that the JOY Center is a valuable resource for older citizens to socialize, learn new things and find resources they need to stay healthy, fiscally fit and supported. She was recruited for the board because of her accounting background and is responsible for their accounting and interpreting financial reports. She is a volunteer at the JOY Center and a committee member of the Total Teen Joy Drumming after school program at Plantation Key School.



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When I asked the Cales what they would like to see in an Upper Keys Community Center, Dawn suggested a lecture series to continue learning. She also thought that Ed, a veteran and member of American Legion Post No. 145, could share his skill and love of photography. Both are looking at enriching their future and that of others. An Upper Keys Community Center will provide a place to do that.

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