

Bee Population in Decline in the Upper Keys

José Sosa is a Key Largo bee-keeper who has noticed a drastic decline in his honey bee population over the years. He says the Mosquito Control drivers that spray the pesticides are aware of his bees and they stay as far away from them as they can, but when the airplanes fly over and spray he loses thousands of bees each time."



José Sosa, Beekeeper.

Bee colonies are dwindling across the world. The EPA said in a report that in the USA alone the number of colonies has more than halved since 1947. Scientists believe the loss is likely caused by poor bee nutrition, loss of forage lands, parasites, and exposure to pesticides. Our food supply depends on these pollinators. If honey bees become extinct, so will we humans.

Dr. Geoff Bailey, a Key Largo veterinarian who is running for Mosquito Control believes that genetically modified mosquitos could help the bee population and result in less frequent pesticide spraying. He says... "Genetically modified mosquitos are males of the

species (which do not bite or spread disease) that have been altered so that they are unable to produce viable offspring. With their continued release into the environment, the natural mosquito population will steadily decline, thus reducing the need for pesticide spraying.

"Additionally, reducing the mosquito population will aid in preventing the spread of certain diseases that are currently threatening the Keys. Dengue Fever has already established a foothold in Key West, and Chikungunya virus will likely soon be here as well, having already invaded the Florida mosquito population just to our north. Any good medical

professional will tell you that prevention is much more desirable than treatment.

"Monroe County is at a crossroads with the way we handle our mosquito control and. We need to start implementing some newer technologies as they become available. Doing so will enable us to attack our mosquito problem more cost effectively, more environmentally friendly, and with a greater degree of success."



Thousands of dead honey bees.

Art Box Artist of the Month: Craig Beattie



This month's featured artist of the month is Craig Beattie, a young man born and raised in the Florida Keys. Craig is only 14 years old and is already making his mark as a sought-after local artist.

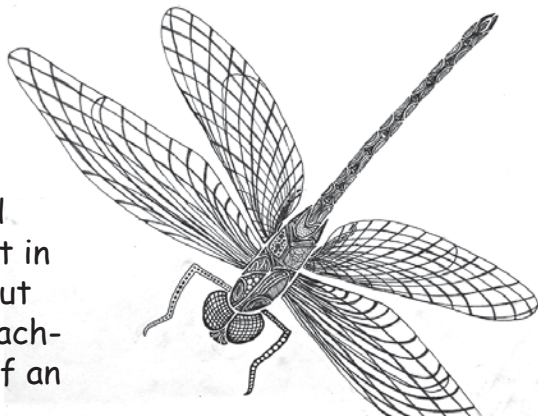
Craig describes his art as intricate little shapes and patterns that come together to form a larger image. Craig's creations are a variety of animals predominately tropical or Caribbean, surrounded by flora and fauna. Craig takes these highly-detailed, pen-and-ink drawings and fashions wonderful gift cards for locals and tourists.

Young Mr. Beattie has worked hard to professionalize his work, and he is already building a list of businesses that carry his product including Florida Bay Outfitters, Philly Keys, and Keys Divers.

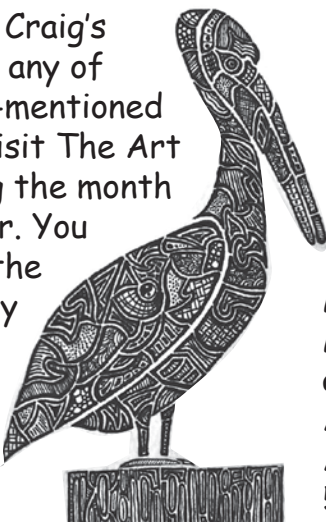
Craig Beattie with his own design on a tee-shirt.

When asked where he gets his inspiration, Craig says that in second grade he took an interest in outlining animal shapes but years later one of his teachers showed an example of an art form known as Zentangles. From that point, Craig claims, inspiration began and hasn't stopped. He plans to continue his art and grow in the size of his formatting from cards to large canvas or wall murals. We recommend keeping an eye on this young artist.

To see Craig's work, visit any of the above-mentioned shops or visit The Art Box during the month of October. You also have the opportunity to meet Craig at October's third



Thursday Art Walk at the Morada Way Art District at MM82. For more questions about Craig's work or the Art Walk please stop in The Art Box or call 305-451-5461.



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