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**CONTENTS**

Free My Assterisk; Luke Sommer Glenn Blog	3
Critters: Ruby-throated Hummingbird by Carol Ellis	4-5
Tibetan Monks Return to the Upper Keys!	7
Bird Talk Tours - Food for Birds on Migration Highway	9
Bloody Waters... New Novel from John Gordon	11
Getting from Here to There - Keys Map Page	12-13
Daily OM: Missing Our Old Habits	14
Monroe County Parks Welcomes JOY Center	15
Key Largo Locator Map Page	16
Key Largo Library Programs for this Month	17
Business in the Keys	18-19
Coco-Nut Funnies	20-21
Adopt a Key Largo Animal Shelter Pet	22
Conch Characters/Around Town	23

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**Free My Assterisk — A blog by Luke Sommer Glenn**

The wife killed another phone. Everyone has their tormentors on planet Earth and for my wife, it's technology (though I do get her panties twisted up once in a while.) It's my job as chief cunnilingus expert and ASET (associate in science in electronics technology/ occupational, 40 years ago) to procure a new phone for her.

I just happen to notice an email from the Giant Telecommunications Bully pointing out the

number associated with the wife's phone is overdue for a FREE upgrade. Trade in the old phone, in any condition, and get this latest, greatest, smartest assed, artificially inseminated, pocket spy, absolutely FREE! I know better but hopefully it'll save a little money anyway.

The wife doesn't care about anything except making phone calls, texting and taking pictures. She tries to use fakebook but it's not easy for her. In her defense, as the one who has to get everything working to her satisfaction, or hear about it incessantly until I do, they don't make it easy. I'm almost positive that they make this crap way more difficult than it needs to be, on purpose. Oh, and the color, she likes to pick the color.

We go with the latest version of her old device in pink, well I'll be damned. What a colorful age we live in. It's no longer a phone once I'm in the online, computer assisted, virtual reality store-

it's one of three devices on my account, all qualified for FREE upgrades. I choose the device associated with the wife's number.

Device added to your cart, it says on the screen...The next prompt asks if we would like one of the additional tiers of insurance they offer as protection against screen cracks, toilet fumbles...all the way up to accidental death and dismemberment. "FREE replacement," it says with a tiny asterisk, alluding to some



microscopic print that explains that it's not exactly, 100% FREE.

I used to be able to read that BS without visual prosthetics but now I can't even see it with my prescription glasses and a magnifier, so I have no idea what I'm signing... ever... and it always bites me right in the assterisk, but if you don't sign, you can't play, so we're all kind of f\$%#ed in that regard. At any rate...

If this were 10 years ago and the wife was still tossing her phone into the canal every time it pissed her off for being a stupid smart phone, I might be tempted to pay an extra \$500 a year. Lucky for me, even our lovely sisters with anger issues eventually mellow... (she's been a lot nicer since she quit taking benzos.) The passing of time seems to have a calming effect on a body also.

I decline the insurance and the next prompt takes us to the colorful accessories

page. Everyone needs crap for their new phone, don't they? It's referred to as a phone again now that there is ornamentation involved... with headphones and matching bluetooth this and that and don't forget a new, overpriced case to protect your new investment (even though one of the selling points of the new phone is that it's made with indestructible, super titanium, waterproof to 10 feet with the toughest screen ever)...While a case can indeed help arthritic hands hold on to the phone and improve overall appearance, it can be found on eBay for a 1/4 of the price.

We decline the accessories and the next prompt asks, "Are you sure you don't want insurance for your new phone? The click options are, "Select Insurance" or "No, I'll take my chances." I click the "No..." button and the next prompt asks "Are you sure you don't want to save when you bundle new headphones, bluetooth speaker and a case for your new phone? Again I decline. It comes back with a 5% off offer on any bundle, again with an asterisk, I have to decline one more time before it finally takes me to the cart where the phone is again referred to as a device associated with the wife's line.

The cart includes a \$35 activation fee, sales tax based on the MSRP of the device, disposal fee, telecommunication fees, federal taxes, local taxes, satellite usage costs, to the tune of \$80, due today. The grand total is nearly \$1000 pending the successful completion of the trade-in deal.

Meanwhile, they're also going to put a credit hold for

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the amount on my card, just in case I forget to send in the trade-in. And just for good measure they are raising my bill by only five dollars a month instead of the \$10 a month that they were originally going to start charging on the next billing cycle anyway. Get excited! Your new device(s) is on the way. "BIG deal," I say as I close the browser. At my age it takes a lot more than a new phone to get me excited.

When we receive the phone two days later (instead of the next day as promised,) I expected it to be activated as I had already paid a \$35 activation fee. I give my lovely wife the phone foolishly assuming it was going to work. "What a Glorious Day" my wife exclaims in a tone that bemoans failure.

Unfortunately, that \$35 activation fee only made it possible for the phone to hook up via wi-fi with limited operation. It was going to require an extra charge and an hour on the phone with a customer service person whom I can barely hear, and doesn't understand toothless, old, hick... despite my best efforts to speak clearly and distinctly.

Complicating everything is the fact that the wife has two IDs associated with her account which requires the next level technician to navigate. I had to listen to some of the most god-awful sounds to ever emanate out of a cell phone while I waited for the

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