

# Ahoy Quilters!

Monthly Meetings!

FUN!

FUN!

Friday Sit & Sew!



Set Your Sails With the Florida Keys Quilters...

Anchor

## Come Join Us!

Anchor

- Monthly meetings in person and Zoom at 10 am
  - o 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month
  - o Key Largo Library Community Room (Tradewinds Plaza, 101485 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, Florida)
- On Fridays, come to “Sit and Sew” in the Key Largo Library
  - o 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
  - o For projects, to learn new techniques, ask questions, and get help with your work.

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# NUM THAI RESTAURANT & SUSHI BAR



Mon. - Fri.

Lunch 11:30 - 3:00

Dinner 5:00 - 10:00

Sat. - Sun.

5:00 - 10:00

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# Critters in our Midst

Carol Ellis



Introducing a stunning new book about wildlife in the Upper Keys with stories as told by and photographed by Carol Ellis

AVAILABLE at Wynns Supermarket - Ocean Reef  
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## Bottle Trees: a story told in glass and light

Driving through certain neighborhoods, particularly in the American South, you might spot a mesmerizing sight: a tree, often bare-limbed, shimmering with dozens of glass bottles in cobalt blue, emerald green, and sun-bleached clear. This is a bottle tree, a striking piece of folk art that is much more than an unusual garden ornament. It is a living artifact, a vibrant symbol of protection and cultural memory that has traveled across oceans and centuries to stand in modern yards.

The story of the bottle tree begins in Central Africa nearly a thousand years ago. Enslaved Africans, forcibly brought to the Americas, carried the seeds of this tradition with them. In their new and brutal landscape, the practice took root and adapted, blending deep spiritual beliefs with the available materials of the American South. It became a quiet act of cultural preservation, a way to maintain a connection to ancestral wisdom and spiritual practices in the face of immense hardship and loss.

The core belief behind the bottle tree is as beautiful as it is haunting. Folk-

lore tells us that malevolent spirits, drawn like moths to the bright, reflective colors of the glass, enter the bottles. Once inside, they become trapped, unable to find their way back out. The morning sun is said to seal them within. Then, when the wind blows across the bottle necks, it creates an eerie, whistling song—interpreted as the mournful cries of the captured spirits. This ingenious system served as a spiritual security system, guarding homes and hearths from unseen harm.



Janet Reynolds of Key Largo with one of her bottle trees.



While bottle trees have been adopted by many for their sheer visual appeal, their deepest significance remains for the communities that nurtured the tradition. They stand today not just as charming curiosities, but as

powerful testaments to resilience. They are a story told in glass and light, a declaration that beauty and belief can grow from the hardest ground, and that the whispers of the past still have the power to guard the present.