



Return to Paradise

2014

In Memory of Admiral Fred Skomp

The 2014 annual gathering of the Key West British Car Club was held April 21-25, 2014 in Key West. We were saddened this year by the passing of our founding and only Admiral, Fred Skomp. Fred's leadership has kept the club strong for the last 10 years and laid the foundation for the future of the Key West British Car Club.

On **Monday** the gathering was opened with a Reception at the Blue Marlin, our host hotel. Hors d'oeuvres and all the beer and wine you wanted was provided around the pool as our members greeted old friends and met new ones. After the reception everyone went out for dinner on there own. One group was found on Louie's Backyard.



The first event on **Tuesday** was the traditional Bocce Ball tournament held at Higgs Beach. After a long hard fought tournament the team of Sue O'Neill, Suzie Ulery, Tom Fant, and Tim Gaffney claimed the trophy.

Following Bocce Ball everyone drove to Stock Island for an outstanding lunch at the Hogfish Grill. Love their signature Hogfish sandwich.



Tuesday evening there was a Haunted Key West tour through the back streets of Old Key West. We heard many stories and saw the sites of strange and scary things that went on in Key West. There was a guy that kept his dead girlfriend with him for many years. He preserved the body and repaired it as it decayed. He shared a bed with her for over 8 years. We saw the Key West Hanging Tree which now has a bar built around it. The tree now serves as a spot to hang bras when you enter the bar. We didn't know that so many strange and scary things happened in Key West.



Wednesday morning there was a drive up US 1 to Sugarloaf Key and the famous and enduring Perky's Bat Tower for a picture of the MGs



We next went to the nearby waterfront Tiki Hut Bar at the Sugarloaf Lodge to cool off, before driving to an Iguana Beach on the south side of Sugarloaf Key. Lunch was at Boondockes Grill and Drafhouse. Afterward we toured Vice Admiral Brian Hoffman's beautiful estate on Cuejoe Key.



Wednesday evening was scheduled for the awards ceremony and annual meeting of the club. The club elected officers and took care of other business before awarding the trophies for Bocce Ball, Distance, and best Car. Tom Fant did it again taking Bocce, distance and best car awards. He may be disqualified from multiple awards next year.

After the meeting the Key West British Car club held a Wake honoring Fred Skomp at Finnegan's Wake in Key West. It was attended by not only the Key West British Car Club but Fred's family, friends, employees and others who knew and loved Fred. There were many statements of memories of Fred and his support of Key West and our club. .



Fred's legacy will include the rescue and restoration of the 100,000th MGA, now stored at the Moss Motors museum in Richmond, VA. Fred was very proud of his car, shown here with the Conch Republic flag at the Key West Yacht Club .



Thursday was a free day to spend on our own. We all enjoyed the sights and activities of Key West from Museums to Pool Sitting. Of course part of the afternoon was spent decorating the cars for the Parade on Thursday night. It is the longest parade in the world stretching from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico. The decorating time at the Motel is highlighted by the official group picture before heading to the staging site.



As always it is a long wait before the sun sets and the Parade begins. Of course there are lots of people to watch. The necked man was not present this year.





And then finally it got dark and we were on our way tossing beads watching people. Tommie and Cindy were leading the way with the club 2014 banner.



Friday was farewell day for those that have to head home, but several others stayed for the Great Naval Battle to defend the Conch Republic aboard the Appledor II.



With all the wine and beer you could drink, two water cannons and soggy bread to throw we put up a good fight and repelled the US Coast Guard. They of course returned fire and everyone got a dousing.



After the Battle it was time to watch the famous Key West Sunset from the deck of the Appledor. Later was time to celebrate the victory with a few more drinks and a good Dinner.



This was the end of another memorable Key West British Car Club annual gathering. Everyone packed up Saturday morning and headed home. Plans for the 2015 gathering were set in motion with member contribution of daily events. We all look forward to returning to Paradise next year with our British Cars and lots of fun.

The Key West British Car Club commits itself to the recognition and memory of:

Admiral Fred Skomp



Who can forget that smile that always greeted everyone.
We will miss you, Fred.