Tropical Times

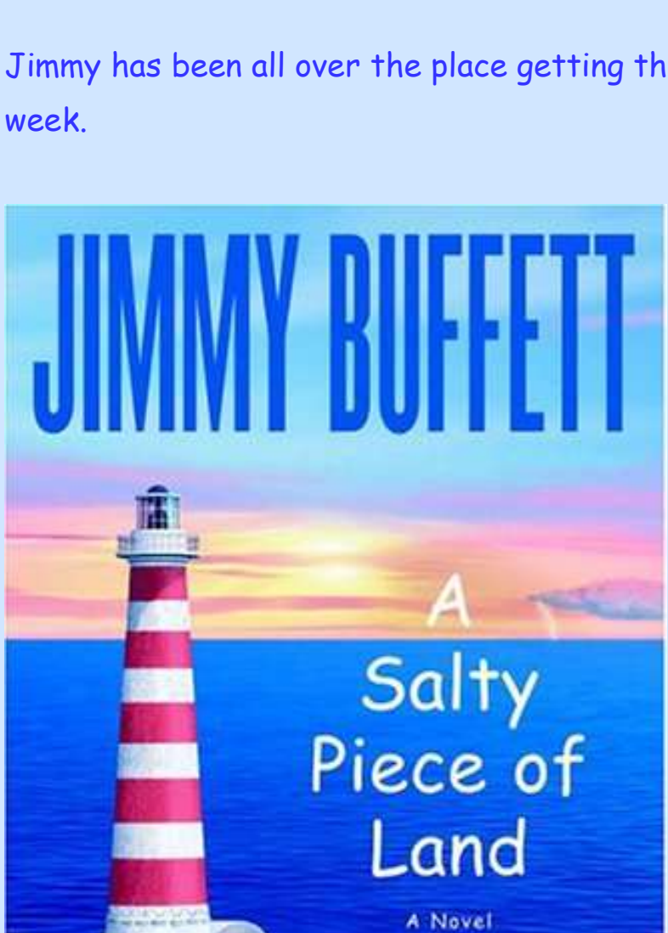
Key NorthWest Parrot Head Newsletter

December 2004

Hey There Parrot Heads!

Here's what's happening!

Jimmy has been all over the place getting the word about his new book "A Salty Piece of Land" that was just released this week.



Here's an excerpt, from an article on MSNBC:

Jimmy Buffett's mystery is set — where else? — in the Caribbean

The hero of 'Tales from Margaritaville' returns to solve the case of the missing lighthouse lens.

It all simply comes down to good guys and bad guys. As a kid, I wanted to be like Roy Rogers, the good-guy cowboy of all time. Roy and his horse, Trigger, would go riding through the movies, helping those in peril while never seeming to sweat, get a scratch, or wrinkle a pair of perfectly creased blue jeans. When the day was over, they would join the Sons of Pioneers by the campfire and sing the sun to sleep. Now that is what I called the perfect job.

One day, long ago in another place and another time, I was playing out my fantasy of being Roy with my childhood pals in the rolling hills above Heartache, Wyoming, where I was raised. We were racing our horses, bat-out-of-hell style, through the aspen grove that led to our little ranch. Like a true daredevil, I passed my friends in a wild sprint to the finish line, and once I had the lead, I turned around to admire my move as the leader of the pack. The next thing I remembered was waking up on the ground, my head covered with blood, my left arm pointing in the wrong direction, and pain — lots of pain — shooting through my young body. That's when I knew that life wasn't a movie.

During my mending process, I discovered a new role model in Butch Cassidy, who took me through my teenage years. He wasn't perfect. He made mistakes, and that seemed more in tune with the way my life was working out in the real world. He thumbed his nose at authority. To put it in today's terms, Butch Cassidy didn't work for The Man. He was his own man. He ran away to Patagonia.

The West was changing, and so was I. Now, looking back, I have to thank old Roy for teaching me that when you fall from your horse, you climb back in the saddle and plow ahead. From Butch, I figured out that what I wanted to be was my own man — just a good guy with a few bad habits. This is Tully Mars reporting in.

When I left Wyoming some years ago and made a not-so-difficult choice between becoming a poodle-ranch foreman or a tropical expatriate, I tossed a massage table through the giant plate-glass window of the ranch house owned by my former boss and modern-day witch Thelma Barston. That day, heading off to freedom, I made myself a promise. As I fled across America, I swore I would never again work for anybody but me. I pretty much kept that promise until I met Cleopatra Highbourne.

Cleopatra Highbourne is my present boss and the woman who brought me here to this salty piece of land in the southern Bahamas. She hired me to restore a 150-year-old lighthouse on Cayo Loco, which she owns, having swapped for it with the Bahamian government for some property on Bay Street in Nassau. To begin with, Cleopatra is 101 years old, but she doesn't look a day over 80. She is the captain of her beautiful schooner, the *Lucretia,* which was a present from her father on her 18th birthday.

Cleopatra has simply defied the aging process. Her eyes are a piercing green, and her speech is lilted with an island accent that is somewhere between Jamaican and Cuban. There isn't a romance language or Caribbean patois she doesn't speak like a native, and there isn't an island she hasn't set foot on between Bimini and Bonaire. Her skeleton is erect, which she attributes to being a practitioner of yoga for 80 years, having been taught the craft by Gandhi himself. She wears no hearing aids or glasses. Her skin is void of the weathered, leatherlike appearance caused by age, ocean, and ultraviolet exposure. She never smoked cigarettes, but she has her daily ration of rum and occasionally will puff a little opium if she is feeling ill. She also has a taste for Cuban cigars.

She dines on fish, rice, and tropical fruits, and a collection of potions, teas, and elixirs keep her biorhythms, brain, and sense of humor humming. She cusses like the sailor that she is, and she is rabidly addicted to Cuban baseball.

Though she says she has a few good years left in her, Cleopatra is on a most urgent mission, and that is where I come in. I am here to rebuild the lighthouse as her final resting place while she continues her search for an original Fresnel lens, which was the light source for this and many other old lighthouses.

So how does a cowboy wind up as a lighthouse keeper? Well, I didn't fill out any job application. How I went from the saddle to the deck of a schooner to the tower of this lighthouse still baffles me. But I believe in the aboriginal line of thinking that life's adventures are the verses and choruses of your unique song, and when it is over, you are dead. So far, I am still singing, but I would point out that adventures don't come calling like unexpected cousins visiting from out of town. You have to go looking for them, and that is exactly how I wound up on Cayo Loco.

I saw Cayo Loco for the first time from the deck of the *Lucretia.* All I knew about lighthouses up until that point was that they were warning lights, and they marked some kind of trouble. I'd heard a few stories, and I'd met a guy who had some theories about them, but that was it. I sat in a dinghy next to Cleopatra as the crew pulled for the shore, and the lighthouse loomed so huge that I had to lean my entire head back just to see the top. "This is it," Cleopatra said to me as we made our way toward the beach. "I traded those bumbling bureaucrats in Nassau a building they needed for a Junkanoo museum on Bay Street for her. I think we both came out okay. All we have to do is fix her up and get the light back in shape."

"No problem," I said, shrugging. After what I had recently been through, fixing up an old lighthouse sounded like a piece of cake.

As the bottom of the dinghy brushed against the shallow sand, Cleopatra sprang to the beach like a teenager. I had to laugh. Three months earlier, my life was rolling by at a snail's pace, and I was sitting on the beach in Mexico, wondering if the day would ever end. Then, all of a sudden, a ship carries me to a completely foreign place that would now become my home.

Solomon, Cleopatra's first mate, buried the anchor in the sand. All you had to do was look at his huge body, his kind eyes, and his weathered hands to know that he was the kind of person you wanted running your crew and your ship. "I'll stay with da boat, Cap'n," he said.

"Then I'll be the tour guide," Cleopatra said. She nodded at a narrow path up through the dunes. "Welcome to Cayo Loco, Tully Mars."

The well-worn path from the beach snaked up through the small dunes and then disappeared up the hill into a cluster of sea oats. We stopped at the top of the hill and looked down on the wreckage of time. With the exception of the light tower itself, the place looked as if someone had dropped a bomb on it. The concrete walls of what had been the compound of the lighthouse keeper came into view. The windows had been blown out, and the roof had been partially burned off.

We made our way through the overgrown paths, pushing back thorny bougainvillea bushes, sea grapes, and hibiscus blooms that camouflaged more destruction.

"This is the old cistern," Cleopatra said as we walked across a large rectangle. "This place was one of the first spots on earth where they made freshwater out of salt water. Those damn limeys have a strange fascination for remote and desolate places, but you got to hand it to them — they knew how to bring creature comforts to the boondocks. When Solomon's father was the light keeper here, this place was a little piece of paradise. There was a vegetable garden, flowered paths, and even a manicured green lawn."

At close range, even the tower showed the ravages of salt and sea. I stared up at the peeling paint and the cracks in the outer wall.

"Good morning, St. Peter," Cleopatra said as she stopped before a large, thick spiderweb strung across our path. Its weaver, a nasty-looking purple-and-yellow spider the size of my hand, hung suspended across the path. He seemed ready to defend his territory. There was no doubt that this was a web you could not just brush away without consequences.

"You know this spider?" I asked Cleopatra.

"He's perfectly harmless, if you don't piss him off," she replied. We detoured around St. Peter and walked in the brush between two small buildings. A raccoon exploded out of the underbrush and scurried off toward the beach.

"I thought you said this island was uninhabited," I said. Cleopatra didn't answer.

While I stood in the rubble looking around, I began to have serious doubts. Then a banging noise caught my attention, and I turned around to see Cleopatra hammering away at a padlock with the butt end of her machete. It was chained to a large iron door at the base of the lighthouse. Walking over, I waded through a toxic dump of decaying lead acid batteries that encircled the light tower. The people who'd been in charge of maintaining the automated light had simply tossed the dead batteries from the tower when they replaced them, adding to the bombed-out look of the cottages and grounds of the keeper's residence.

I looked from the rubble up to the lines of the giant lighthouse and the blue sky above it. On the voyage over to the Bahamas, Cleopatra had told me the story of where the lighthouse came from and how it had gotten here. Even though the lighthouse had seen better days, the sheer strength of it was still very much apparent. I just stood there and stared up, wondering how in the hell they'd built it.

"This goddamn salt air will eat anything. I just put this lock on here last month."

I went over to lend a hand. After a few more direct hits with a big rock, the padlock sprang, and I pried the iron door open. It creaked and squeaked and let out a thud as it banged against the wall.

Inside, it was dark and hot and smelled like shit. "Here," Cleopatra said, handing me a flashlight. I followed her with the beam of my flashlight, trying to keep pace as she bounced ahead of me like Becky Thatcher while I cautiously navigated the winding staircase. Our movements echoed off the iron cylindrical walls as we climbed through musty, humid air that had been trapped inside the lighthouse for God knows how long. Several furry little fruit bats scanned us with their radar as they fluttered around my head.

"Don't worry," Cleopatra called out. "I know a way to get the bats out of here when you move in."

Up and up we circled, until small beams of light appeared at the top. Cleopatra stopped on the stairs below the source of the light — a rusty hatch cover just above us. "I always like this part," she said. "It reminds me of the time I met Thomas Edison — the night he threw the switch that lit up the Brooklyn Bridge at the 300th celebration of the founding of the city of New York."

"You knew Thomas Edison?" I asked. "No, my father did. We were in New York on our way to France and boarding school, and we just happened to be at the right place at the right time."

I followed the beam of Cleopatra's flashlight as we inched up slowly.

"Electricity ain't a bad contribution to the betterment of mankind in general, but it sure as hell wreaked havoc on the lighthouse keepers of the world. The record player would have to go on the top of my list of Edison inventions, way ahead of movies and lightbulbs."

Cleopatra took a marlinespike out of the case on her belt and jabbed away at the hinges of the hatch. The hatch gave way with a creak.

"Ready?" Cleopatra asked. Sunlight flooded down around us. We lifted ourselves through the hole in the sky, and I stood there bathed in the morning light of the glass room. Below us, the *Lucretia* looked like a toy boat sitting at anchor on the smooth surface of crystal clear water that seemed to be only inches deep. But in fact it was in nearly 30 feet of water.

I could see several members of the crew diving up conch from the bottom. The view from the light tower encompassed the whole island, against a backdrop of turquoise shallows and the deep blue ocean beyond. Cleopatra pointed out the landmarks of Whale Cut, Boo Hoo Hill, and Osprey Point that I would come to know as well as my horse.

"Unbelievable" was all I could muster.

"And well worth saving, don't you think?"

"I get the picture."

"Except for that," she added, pointing to the bizarre tangle of frayed wires, makeshift junction boxes, and a strobe light resting atop a long, skinny shaft. "That has to go. The original lens that came with this light was not only a piece of engineering genius but a work of art. The lenses, circular prisms, and source that created the beam of light is called the bull's-eye because it looks like a clear glass target. A French physicist named Augustin Fresnel designed it in the early 1800s."

"How did it work?" I asked her.

"The prisms concentrated the burner's light into a piercing beam that shot out to the horizon. The crystal lenses were held together by brass plates, and the whole thing weighed about four tons and floated in a circular tub containing about 1200 pounds of quicksilver. That allowed it to spin in a near frictionless environment. It was rotated by a clockwork assembly of ropes and weights that hung down the shaft of the lighthouse, and it had to be wound every two hours by the lighthouse keeper on duty. The sword of light it stabbed out into the darkness could be seen for 20 miles." Cleopatra paused as if remembering specific images. "Seen from the deck of a ship, it radiates its presence like nothing else on earth. Sailors call it the soul of the light."

"I guess all that beauty and precision seemed way too complicated for the 20th century," I said.

"You would have thought that such a thing of beauty would wind up in a museum, but not here. They severed the base with a blowtorch, shoved it out the window, and just let gravity finish the job. Thus, the soul of the light was ripped out, smashed on the rocks, and the brass frame that once held the intricate Fresnel-lens system in place was sold for scrap." Cleopatra let out a big sigh. "That is what replaced it," she said, pointing at the present light source. "In a modern world, there is just no time for hand pumping kerosene or winding a clock. In the name of progress, they turned the Cayo Loco Light into a giant toaster."

As we wound our way down the steps and finally out of the dark interior of the lighthouse, Cleopatra also wound me around her finger. Her mission was to find a bull's-eye lens before she died.

"You can't just order one up from the True Value hardware man," she told me. "It's a needle-in-a-haystack thing, but I'll find one. In the meantime, we have to rebuild this place and make it look like it did in its heyday, and that is where you come in." Back out in the fresh breeze at the base of the tower, Cleopatra reached into the pocket of her pants and pulled out a key. "Tully, I've been around long enough to know that the bullshit people heap on one another is more toxic than all the oil refineries in Texas, so I will come straight to the point. I know it all must sound wacko, coming from a bat-shit crazy old woman like me who you met on the beach in Mexico, but I think fate has somehow thrown us together. It seems that I bailed your ass out of trouble back there, so the way the karma thing works, I think you owe me one."

"I couldn't agree more."

"Well, it occurred to me that maybe you could hang around here and fix the place up while I go find us a light," she continued.

"I have no problem with that," I told her. A hideaway in the middle of nowhere was something I could use at the time.

"This job ain't gonna be no little fixer-upper, you know, but I just somehow know that you can do it."

"Well, I think I can." With that, Cleopatra gave me a big, long hug, which was witnessed by St. Peter, hanging down from the branch of a sea grape. "I just want to show you one more thing before we go, and then we will go."

We walked past a battered radio antenna and then around the back of the light tower. Cleopatra started to laugh. "You know, when I was a lot younger, I had me a cowboy once. They weren't much on huggin', but they got the job done," she said. "There," she added and pointed at a corroded, half-moon-shaped object near the base of the tower. The sea grape branches had snaked their way through what looked like bolt-holes, and the piece of iron had become a part of the tree.

"What is that?" I asked.

"That is the old collar of the bull's-eye that they threw out of the light tower." Cleopatra gazed up at the tower and the indigo sky above. "At first, I wanted to cut it down and hang it on the door as a reminder of what I needed to accomplish, but then I decided it meant more where it was."

"I like that approach, boss," I said. "I'll clean up this mess. You go and find us a bull's-eye lens. We are going to rekindle the soul of the light."

She didn't say anything but stood there with tears in her big green eyes. St. Peter suddenly appeared on one of the branches of the sea grape as if he were bearing witness to a historic event. Then she handed me the key to the lighthouse door.

That was the day I became the keeper of the Cayo Loco Light.

Jimmy was on the Today show this Tuesday and performed "A Salty Piece of Land" and "Christmas In The Caribbean" with Ralph MacDonald, Robert Greenidge, Michael Utley, and Mac McAnally. The song "A Salty Piece of Land" is included on a CD in the new book. If you missed the Today show you can click on this link http://msnbc.msn.com/id/3032633/?ta=y and then on the link under Jimmy's photo to see the video of the interview by Matt Lauer and then the whole song Salty Piece of Land. Then under the second photo, you can launch the video of Christmas in the Caribbean.

Jimmy was also on Regis and Kelly on Thursday and talked about the new book and foam parties, among other things.

Here are some reviews of the book, FYI:

November 28, 2004 - New York Times

'A Salty Piece of Land': Wise Old Jimmy Buffett

By KINKY FRIEDMAN

A SALTY PIECE OF LAND
By Jimmy Buffett.
462 pp. Little, Brown & Company.
$27.95.

THERE is a fine line between fiction and nonfiction, and I believe Jimmy Buffett and I snorted it in 1976. The two of us are among the few musicians in the Western world who make a regular habit of writing prose, which may also explain why this newspaper decided upon me to review this book rather than, say, Philip Roth. Maybe it was God who selected me to review Buffett's book. Whoever sent it to me, however, has created a happy circumstance because I think ''A Salty Piece of Land'' is very possibly Buffett's best work to date.

In many ways this novel is pleasantly evocative of another maritime adventure story originally serialized in 1881 under the title ''The Sea-Cook.'' Two years later, of course, the title was changed to ''Treasure Island.'' Though Robert Louis Stevenson, who was a big crowd-pleaser in his day, has assuredly weathered the test of time, it is a little too early perhaps to make a judgment on Jimmy Buffett. What the two writers share, however, other than a deep and abiding love of the sea, is an unabashed and unequivocal desire to create and to view each of their works first and foremost as an entertainment. In any literary era, in any latitude, this attitude must be considered as refreshing as it is rare.

''A Salty Piece of Land'' is a tangy tale, at times turbulent and unpredictable as the ocean, at times as wistful as the whitecaps on the waves. Every book, I suppose, can be said to be a voyage of words, but in this novel the reader will encounter a colorful crew indeed: cowboys and Indians, sailors and pilots of seaplanes, treasure hunters, ghosts, and, of course, those ubiquitous pirates. Yet the book revolves around an old abandoned lighthouse on the mythical island of Cayo Loco, a lighthouse that, in true Stevensonian fashion, becomes something of a spiritual beacon in a world remarkable for its unwillingness to be led to the light.

Perhaps it is because Buffett has long been a writer of lyrics that his prose style now seems to flow in a fresh, fanciful, finely imagined fashion. Tully Mars, for instance, is a troubled cowboy from Heartache, Wyo. who takes his pony to the shore, where he sees a 142-foot schooner emerging from the mist, with a 101-year-old female sea captain named Cleopatra Highbourne at the helm.

Buffett knows better than most that life is all about how we mix our metaphors. And yet the nonfictional aspects of the book appear to be as grounded and well constructed as, for want of a better image, a lighthouse at sea. Buffett has clearly researched his subject. But I suspect the true research for this novel has already been done on land and air and sea in all the years the author has spent as a highly active participant-observer of life. What makes the incredible so credible to the reader, what makes the old lighthouse shine again, is the spiritual savvy Buffett has gleaned from the beach of life as he's wandered in the raw poetry of time.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that, just as Jimmy Buffett was indubitably influenced by the seagoing adventures of Robert Louis Stevenson, R.L.S. himself was inspired by the work of another great writer, Herman Melville, whose ''Moby-Dick'' was published in 1851. For the remaining 40 years of his life, he watched it languish in the whaling sections of libraries and bookstores. ''The important books,'' said Melville, ''are the books that fail.'' Yet even Melville couldn't have predicted that his character Starbuck would lend his name to a giant corporate necklace that would one day seek to strangle America. All the more reason to follow Jimmy Buffett's footprints in the sand and look for that light on ''A Salty Piece of Land.''

From the Rocky Mountain News:

Escape to Buffett's 'Salty' land

By Eric J. Blommel, Special to the News
November 24, 2004

Jimmy Buffett, the singer-songwriter probably most famous for his 1970s hit song *Margaritaville,* delights and amuses with his new novel *A Salty Piece of Land.*

In it he continues the tropical adventures of Wyoming cowboy Tully Mars, which he began in *Tales From Margaritaville*. The mood is joyful and lighthearted. Both the plot and the characters are replete with goofy, good-natured humor.

Rather than the short-story format of *Tales*, *A Salty Piece of Land* is a full-length novel that recounts a series of happy accidents and the quest for a light bulb. Well, not a light bulb exactly, but a very specific kind of kerosene-powered light source for lighthouses known as a Fresnel lens. The quest doesn't actually begin until a third of the way into the book.

The story first centers on Tully's run from the law. His legal troubles are the result of a less-than-graceful means of quitting his job in Wyoming. His maniacal ex-boss and poodle rancher Thelma Barston not only trumps up charges against him but sends bounty hunters after him. So, Tully makes his way to the Yucatán Peninsula with his horse Mr. Twain.

The two of them catch a ride from Alabama on a converted shrimp boat known as the Caribbean Soul, which is owned and operated by one Capt. Kirk. On the way, Tully is surprised to encounter his country-music hero Willie Singer, who pulls up in another boat looking for some fresh shrimp.

Almost upon arriving at Punta Margarita, Tully lands a job as a fly-fishing guide, helping tourists fish the flats near the Lost Boys resort. He makes the acquaintance of his co-guide and Mayan shaman Ix-Nay, who becomes a constant companion.

After Tully's former girlfriend Donna Kay mysteriously arrives, delivers a shocking message and then leaves, Tully takes a break to ponder his love life on the beaches of Cancún. It's there he meets the Caribbean version of a fairy godmother in the guise of 103-year-old sailboat captain Cleopatra Highbourne (who doesn't look a day over 80).

And on it goes, with a host of eccentric characters and adventures that will eventually take readers back to the quest for the kerosene-powered light source. Buffett's writing style has been described as "tropical escapism." In the case of this meandering plot, that phrase is perfectly apt. The overall tone of good-natured fun probably makes these digressions not only forgivable but desirable for most Buffett readers.

With his wit, humor and knack for telling a good yarn, Buffett manages to deliver another salty piece of life in the tropics to his fans.

The Oregonian reviewer appeared to be having a bad day. Maybe he needs a vacation!

Wasting away in lousy novel-ville

Jimmy Buffett's "A Salty Piece of Land" is for Parrot Heads only

Sunday, November 28, 2004
JOE KURMASKIE

"A Salty Piece of Land" is storytelling perfectly tuned to the pitch of its creator, Jimmy Buffett, an aging singer-songwriter of bright and boisterous tales from the tropics. Anyone looking for more (exceptional prose, layered themes, intricate plotting -- all that literary stuff) will be left on the hook.

Buffett is one of only six writers to hit No. 1 on both sides of The New York Times best-seller list -- for his very readable memoir "A Pirate Looks at Fifty" and his novel "Where Is Joe Merchant?" -- but this had more to do with his massive fan base of Parrot Heads than with anything resembling razor-sharp wit and subtle language aerobics.

It comes down to numbers. If Buffett wanted to run for president, his legion of colorful, tequila-sipping devotees (I count myself as one) could flood Pennsylvania Avenue and have the White House turned into a tiki bar before beer-thirty . . . and there would be nothing George W. Bush, Hillary Rodham Clinton or anyone else could do about it.

All the more reason why "A Salty Piece of Land" is such a breezy disappointment. With a readership so massive and almost a decade between novels featuring the exploits of Tully Mars, Buffett couldn't come up with anything more inspired than a rambling cruise through the Caribbean? The drama is more blunted than a head full of hashish, and each serviceable paragraph feels obvious, like sharing a towel with a semiconscious surfer recounting episodes that are more atmosphere than anecdote.

The story line meanders from Wyoming to Belize to sandy beaches in between, where Mars -- a middle-aged escapee from a home-on-the-range lifestyle -- gets into jams that are nothing more than excuses to meet and philosophize with colorful characters. These portraits of waitresses, sailors, treasure hunters and rock stars are Buffett at his best, but his choice of names is unfortunate. Buffett's idea of cleverness includes calling a sailor Captain Kirk, a horse Mr. Twain, a resort Lost Boys Fishing Lodge and a beach Cayo Loco. A lighthouse repair subplot -- complete with 101-year-old, far-too feisty Cleopatra Highbourne, Tully's tutor and platitude dispenser -- should also test reader's patience.

The best writing in the 462 pages of "A Salty Piece of Land" is found in the author's note and afterword. What that proves is Buffett doesn't need the cloak of fiction to tell what are real-life adventures. He's much more interesting than Tully Mars could ever hope to be, and his next memoir will certainly be a must-read.

Don't be surprised if by the time Tully sails into the sunset you have the urge to do something industrious with your life. Margaritaville, it turns out, is best as a weekend retreat, not recommended for extended stays.

And here's a review of the Orlando hurricane relief concert last week:

Orlando Sentinel

CONCERT REVIEW

Buffett assembly line still delivers the fun

Jim Abbott
Sentinel Pop Music Critic

November 24, 2004

After 35 years on the road, Jimmy Buffett says he never really knows what's going to happen on any given night.

At least that's what he told the sold-out crowd at Tuesday's hurricane-relief benefit concert at the TD Waterhouse Centre. At the time, he was watching crew members wrangle a giant shark dirigible from the arena rafters, an extravagant prop for the concert staple "Fins" that the singer boasted was designed by Parrot Heads at NASA.

While there's always a lot of rowdy fun at a Buffett concert, the notion of spontaneity is just part of the act now. More than anything, the shows have become a highly efficient assembly line that churns out mirth, music and memories.

Buffett is the head of a mammoth corporation now, reflected in the fact that the Orlando concert was being beamed live to his Margaritaville Cafes in the U.S. and Jamaica. The video montage in the intermission that came midway in the two hour and 30 minute show looked more like a TV ad for an investment firm, where the man who handles his career wisely can spend leisure time piloting his sea plane, snorkeling, rock climbing, globe-trotting or just mugging for the cameras.

Not that there's anything wrong with that. Buffett's mission in Orlando, to raise a few million dollars by having fun, confirms the size of his heart and the influence of his image. And the thing about assembly lines is that the product is usually quite reliable.

This concert blended the same ingredients as always: a lot of old favorites, a lot of folks in grass skirts and goofy hats, a few jokes, a giant inflatable shark. Add beer and mix well.

As always, Buffett was ready with a few timely observations. He drew wild applause in his opening solo version of "Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes'' when he proclaimed that "hurricane season is over!'' Later, he joked about media coverage of the Ron Artest NBA brawl, pointing out that his own highly publicized courtside profanity in 2001 now didn't seem that bad.

He pledged to keep playing, "no matter how much beer you throw at me,'' quickly adding that Parrot Heads are too smart to squander such a resource: "You drink your beer!''

Buffett did a nice job of hitting the high spots in his long career: "Volcano,'' Cheeseburger in Paradise,'' "One Particular Harbour'' and "Fins'' were delivered flawlessly by a 12-piece band anchored by longtime keyboardist Michael Utley, guitarist Mac McAnally and percussionist Ralph MacDonald. Sultry tropical dancers and back-up singers augmented the musicians.

For all the flamboyant goofiness, it's often the ballads that shine most brightly: Flavored by pedal steel guitar, "Come Monday'' was a beautiful, lonesome love song. "A Pirate Looks at 40'' continues to age well with Buffett in his late 50s.

Without the benefit of nostalgia, newer songs such as "Boats to Build'' showcased Buffett's philosophy in a less engaging way. There was no such problem with his big country hit, "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere,'' in which McAnally subbed for duet partner Alan Jackson.

Buffett also indulged his country side with "Hey Good Lookin','' his CMA nominated collaboration Jackson, Kenny Chesney, Clint Black, Toby Keith and George Strait. Without those stars on hand, McAnally traded verses.

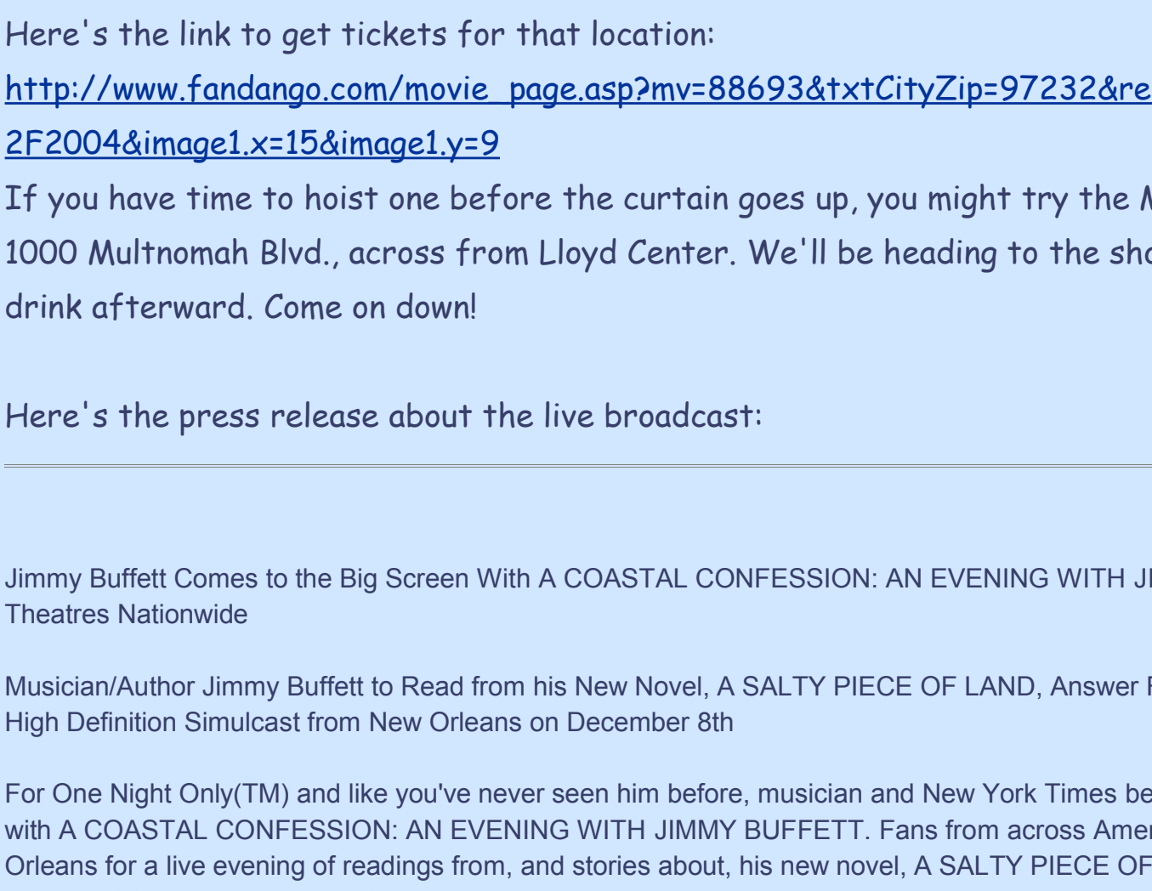
That song joined the usual list of concert covers, which included "Brown-Eyed Girl'' and "Southern Cross.'' The oddest new wrinkle was his combination of Prince's "Purple Rain'' with the get-lucky anthem "Why Don't We Get Drunk.''

After the "Fins'' encore, Buffett returned alone with his guitar to do "Distantly in Love,'' an obscure song off 1983's One Particular Harbour.

"This is my favorite song,'' Buffett said, "but it never makes anybody else's list.''

It was a sweet reminder of the old guitar-picker still inside the businessman.

Next week, Jimmy will be doing a performance in New Orleans that will be broadcast live to over 50 theaters across the country, including lovely Key NorthWest. You can get tickets for the live remote broadcasts here: http://www.bigscreenconcerts.com/subpage/index.asp?eventID=509



One Night Only™
Wednesday, December 8th
9:00pm ET / 6:00pm PT

JIMMY BUFFETT LIVE on the Big Screen!

Jimmy returns to his writing roots in New Orleans for an evening of readings from, and stories about, his new book, A Salty Piece of Land; he will also answer the questions that bother us so, and perform with his beach band.

Includes personal insights from his new book!

In Portland we'll be going to the Regal Lloyd Center 10 Cinemas located at 1510 NE Multnomah St., Portland, OR 97232. Here's the link to get tickets for that location:
http://www.fandango.com/movie_page.asp?mv=88693&txtCityZip=97232&refreshdate=12%2F08%2F2004&image1.x=15&image1.y=9
If you have time to hoist one before the curtain goes up, you might try the Margarita Grille in the Doubletree Lloyd Center at 1000 Multnomah Blvd., across from Lloyd Center. We'll be heading to the show to be in line by 5:30 pm and then have a team drink afterward. Come on down!

Here's the press release about the live broadcast:

Jimmy Buffett Comes to the Big Screen With A COASTAL CONFESSION: AN EVENING WITH JIMMY BUFFETT Live in 53 Regal Entertainment Group Movie Theatres Nationwide

Musician/Author Jimmy Buffett to Read from his New Novel, A SALTY PIECE OF LAND, Answer Fans' Questions and Perform with his Beach Band in a Live High Definition Simulcast from New Orleans on December 8th

For One Night Only(TM) and like you've never seen him before, musician and New York Times best-selling author Jimmy Buffett will make his big screen debut with A COASTAL CONFESSION: AN EVENING WITH JIMMY BUFFETT. Fans from across America can join Jimmy as he returns to his writing roots in New Orleans for a live evening of readings from, and stories about, his new novel, A SALTY PIECE OF LAND. Jimmy will answer the questions that bother us so during a Q&A session, and perform with his beach band.

This first of its kind live Big Screen Concerts(SM) event will be simulcast to 53 Regal Entertainment Group (NYSE: RGC) movie theatres across the country in high definition and 5.1 Dolby surround sound from the Mahalia Jackson Theatre in New Orleans on Wednesday, December 8th at 9:00pm ET / 6:00pm PT.

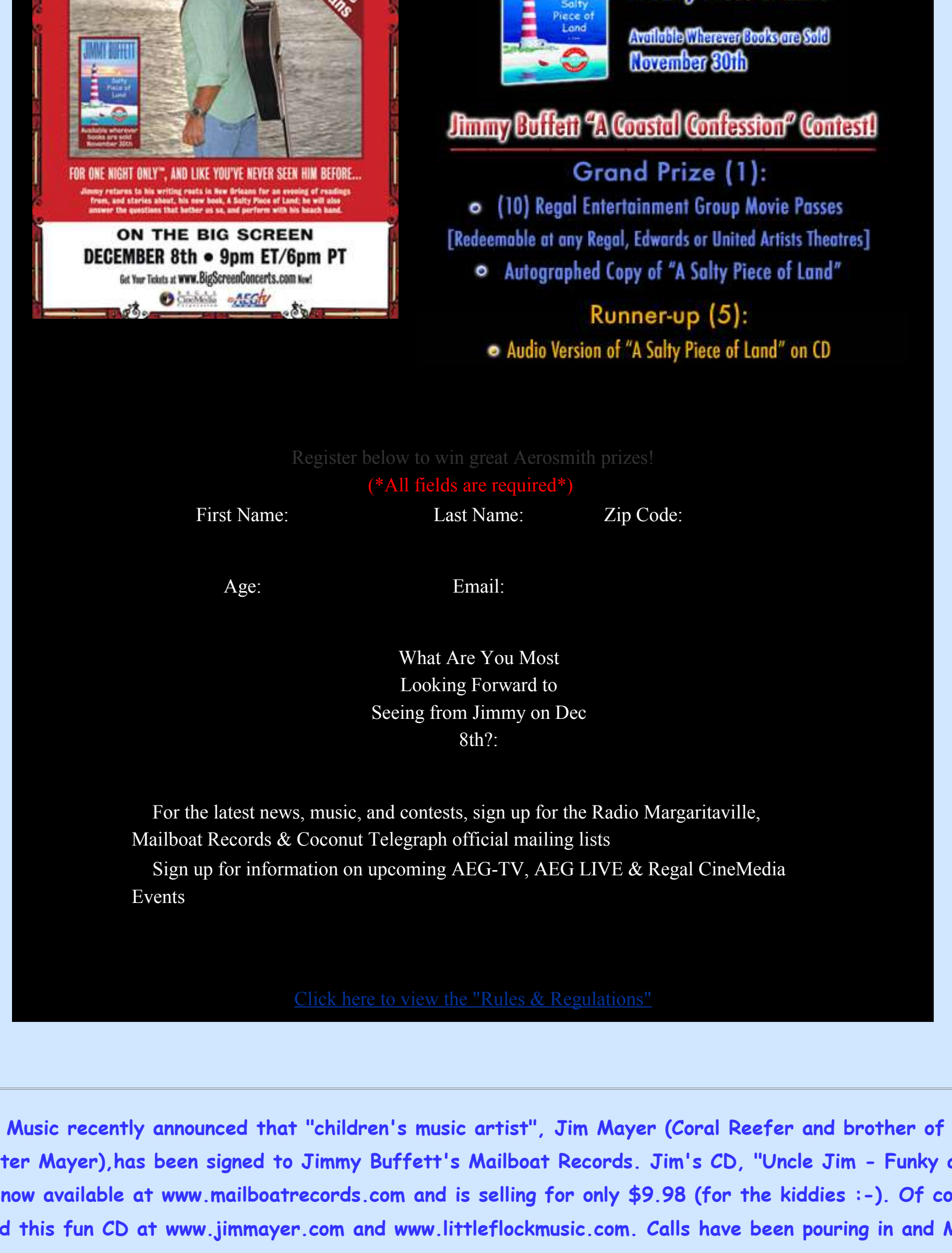
A COASTAL CONFESSION: AN EVENING WITH JIMMY BUFFETT is produced by AEG-TV and is presented by Regal CineMedia(SM) entertainment services and AEG-Live. Advance tickets will be available beginning November 17th at select Regal, United Artists and Edwards* movie theatre box offices nationwide and online at www.BigScreenConcerts.com for $15.00. Event day tickets will also be available at box offices or online for $18.00. Movie theatre seating is limited and the tickets for Mahalia Jackson Theatre in New Orleans sold out in three minutes, so advance purchase is recommended for this event.

Jimmy Buffett's books and albums have long been renowned for the magical spell they cast on his fans, transporting them to a place where the sun shines, the cocktails are cold, and anything is possible. A SALTY PIECE OF LAND continues this tradition for the writer whom Time magazine describes as having a "bottomless well of stories to tell." The New York Times bestselling author takes cowboy Tully Mars and his trusted pony, Mr. Twain, on an amazing adventure in which he encounters a variety of characters, including bounty hunters, a country-music superstar, a shaman, and a 101-year-old sea captain who takes him to an abandoned lighthouse that will change his life forever. The initial printing of A SALTY PIECE OF LAND (Little, Brown and Company; November 30, 2004; $27.95), includes a free CD of an eponymous new, original song inspired by Tully's travels.

After more than two decades of recording and performing music, popular singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett splashed down into the world of books in 1988, when he co-wrote THE JOLLY MON, a children's book, with his daughter Savannah Jane Buffett, who was then six. In 1989, he published his first stories for adults in TALES FROM MARGARITAVILLE: FICTIONAL FACTS AND FACTUAL FICTIONS, which was the longest-running New York Times and Publishers Weekly bestseller of that entire year. His next book, the novel WHERE IS JOE MERCHANT?, immediately hit #1 on the New York Times bestseller list, and in 1998, when his autobiographical book A PIRATE LOOKS AT FIFTY was published, he became one of only six writers to have held the #1 position in the categories of both fiction and nonfiction on the New York Times bestseller list.

Jimmy Buffett was born in Mississippi and raised in Mobile, Alabama. He is a fourth-generation sailor, a rabid fisherman, a pilot, a surfer, and a frequent traveler to the remote and exotic places of the world, having become addicted to National Geographic magazine as a child. Among his many professional accomplishments, he has recorded nearly 40 albums, most of which have been certified gold, platinum, or multiplatinum. On July 13, 2004, Jimmy's LICENSE TO CHILL album was released and immediately entered the Billboard Top 200 and Top Country charts at #1. It is his first #1 album. He and his wife, Jane, and their three children live in Florida.

There is also a contest going on about the show and here are the details:


BIG SCREEN CONCERTS
An Evening with
JIMMY BUFFETT
A Coastal Confession
LIVE via Satellite from New Orleans
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY™, AND LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE...
ON THE BIG SCREEN
DECEMBER 8th • 9pm ET/6pm PT
Get Your Tickets at www.BigScreenConcerts.com Now!

BIG SCREEN CONCERTS

Jimmy Buffett - "A Coastal Confession"
LIVE from New Orleans
Wednesday, December 8th @ 9pm ET / 6pm PT
Only in Regal Cinemas, United Artists Theatres & Edwards Theatres

Jimmy Buffett's New Book,
A Salty Piece of Land
Available Wherever Books are Sold
November 30th

Jimmy Buffett "A Coastal Confession" Contest!

Grand Prize (1):

- (10) Regal Entertainment Group Movie Passes
[Redeemable at any Regal, Edwards or United Artists Theatres]
- Autographed Copy of "A Salty Piece of Land"

Runner-up (5):

- Audio Version of "A Salty Piece of Land" on CD

Register below to win great Aerosmith prizes!
(*All fields are required*)

First Name: Last Name: Zip Code:

Age: Email:

What Are You Most Looking Forward to Seeing from Jimmy on Dec 8th?:

For the latest news, music, and contests, sign up for the Radio Margaritaville, Mailboat Records & Coconut Telegraph official mailing lists

Sign up for information on upcoming AEG-TV, AEG LIVE & Regal CineMedia Events

Click here to view the "Rules & Regulations"

Little Flock Music recently announced that "children's music artist", Jim Mayer (Coral Reefer and brother of lead guitarist Peter Mayer),has been signed to Jimmy Buffett's Mailboat Records. Jim's CD, "Uncle Jim - Funky as a Diaper," is now available at www.mailboatrecords.com and is selling for only $9.98 (for the kiddies :-). Of course, you can still find this fun CD at www.jimmayer.com and www.littleflockmusic.com. Calls have been pouring in and Mailboat Records is shipping "Funky" to retail outlets nationwide.

Phinally, Jimmy "Buffet" is up for a "People's Choice Award" for Favorite Country Male Singer (!?!). You can vote here: http://www.pcavote.com/voting/music/m03.shtml.

We hope that you are enjoying the holidays and having phun. We hope to see you around the island during "Party Time"!

There are lots of things coming up on the calendar on the Key NorthWest Parrot Head web page at http://www.keynorthwest.org, including some cruises, regional phlockings and trips to Puerto Vallarta and other stuph. Check it out! As always, if you have any questions, comments, ideas, thoughts or announcements, send us a note (in a bottle!) to mailboat@keynorthwest.org!

Phins up and Happy/Merry ChristmaKwanzaakah, you'all!!

Chris and Andrea Sloan
Key NorthWest Parrot Heads

Club Email: mailboat@keynorthwest.org
Club Web Page: http://www.keynorthwest.org