

# The COCONUT TELEGRAPH

MARGARITAVILLE MARCH 1988

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## NOTES FROM THE ROAD

By Christian Cochran

I worked most of last summer for my part time boss Jimmy Buffett. I'd had a lot of interesting experiences, but mostly ones no one would believe. It was no use discussing it with normal people, not even Key Westers. Who would care? Then it hit me, this could have Parrot Head appeal. Indeed it would require the broad perspectives of a Buffett fan.

Before I go plunging into another Buffett odyssey, perhaps a bit of background would help the reader. I work at Jimmys' studio, Shrimp Boat Sound, here in Key West. Our associations are impeccable; Steve Winwood, Jimmy, Michael Utey and the rest of the Reefers, session drummer Russ Kunkel, ex-Doobie Brother Willie Weeks, and sound wizard Ross Ritto. (CT Nov. '87)

The story begins innocently enough, sitting in a Cuban sandwich shop with Jimmy, all-around good guy Kino (Christian Bachellier), and the above mentioned Ross discussing a new song. Between bites JB says to me, "I want you to take my car to New York in a couple of weeks." This is good news. Last time this happened, Kino found himself heading north in a Porsche 928. But no such luck; these days the boss is out of street legal race cars and into off-road range rovers. Three weeks later Cindy from Margaritaville calls, "You must leave for New York soon, come by and pick up some money." Deliverance. I praise Cindy, my twen-

tieth century Moses.

The next three days are ... a golden retriever puppy who, oddly enough, answers to Cheeseburger, hotel rooms, drunken Elks, and burger joints. Events stored in long-term memory include smuggling the dog into a Holiday Inn lacking the sensitivity to allow pets, brandishing the registration to Jimmys' Land

(including 5, count 'em 5 bicycles) in "Miss" Jane's house and deliver them to Martha's Vineyard, MA, where JB plans to spend a couple of weeks during the '87 tour break. But first, I must go by Jones Beach Theater, conveniently located on the opposite end of the island, to get more equipment. Hours later heading west on I-27, the idea

Allen, guitar tuner extraordinaire idly casts a tarpon fly reel into the adjoining inlet, while Ed Bradley (CBS news correspondent, who would eventually end up on stage that night) is praising the ribs at some place in The Hamptons.

Wrapped in the security of a thick pullover swiped from Jimmys' luggage and my recently issued staff pass (much better than a mere backstage pass), I slowly negotiate my way toward Ross and the soundboard. "I didn't think you survived the path to Jones Beach!" It's Jimmy Buffett, one of the few calm people in the theater that evening. "Welcome to the road." Jimmy then strolls past me and nonchalantly confronts 10,000 screaming fans as if he's looking for the newspaper in his front yard.

Jones Beach is now behind me. It's almost midnight. I have no idea where I am, or for that matter, where I've been for the last 2 hours. I'm beginning to think I should rely less on the roadie's directions and more on dead reckoning. Where the hell is Martha's Vineyard? The next exit appears to lead to a major highway. I take it, end up in an abandoned factory parking lot, and turn to face the blinding blue flash of police lights. Rescue! While I try to explain my predicament to the police officer, he suspiciously eyes the 5 bicycles strapped to the Land Rover. I see now that his concern lies not with me, but with the bicycles. Out comes my driver's license, passport, Buffett staff pass, and the car registration that did so well with the "Po Folks" waitress. In what could

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PHOTO BY T.N. RINGER

Rover in the face of a skeptical "Po Folks" waitress, and a 50 mph skid on a wet highway narrowly avoiding a 4 car collision.

Jane Buffetts' balcony offers a spectacular view of the Hudson River. I find myself there; a little twisted from life in a suitcase, but now in the land of the living, 45 minutes from Manhattan. My mission now is to collect most of the portable objects

that this is an island seems absurd by Florida Keys standards.

Jones Beach Theater — out front the crowd slowly builds itself to a frenzy, while backstage activity remains relatively calm; stage hands try to identify the catered food, a half dozen kids kick a soccer ball against the arena wall obstructing crewmen hauling cables and flightcases, Charlie



## A light-colored baseball cap with a large, upright shark fin on top. The cap is positioned in front of a sign that reads "S T U". The cap has a curved brim and a small, dark logo on the side that says "finsup" with a small triangle below it. The background is a light-colored wall with a dark horizontal line and a sign with the letters "S T U" in large, bold, sans-serif font.



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# D O L P H I N

only be described as innate investigative ability, the officer flatly states, "Ain't that the guy that does that cheeseburger song." I was saved!

Ah, . . . another flashback. The lost adventure is history, by four days now, but it feels longer. Of course I got lost again on my first day here, but one of Martha's Vineyard's finest knew the actors' estate that Jimmy rented

so I was returned after another 6 hours on alien forest roads.

Considering my recent forays into northeastern civilization, I am quite content to remain here chasing rabbits with Cheeseburger, wandering the estates' dozen acres of land, or helping Jimmy put up a T.V. antenna so he can pick up ESPN.



## DOLPHIN RESEARCH CENTER UPDATE

Dolphin and whale strandings are a tragic phenomena which seem to be increasing despite man's best effort to stop them. Many theories exist, but it is still unknown why groups of dolphins or whales will "beach" themselves, resulting in a slow death. Only 1 out of 54 whales survived in 2 documented whale strandings near Key West in 1986. In November, 1987, 29 pilot whales beached themselves near the same area; the only 3 survivors were rescued and moved to The Dolphin Research Center. The

whales have remained at the research center on Grassy Key where they receive daily nutritional and medical care. The costs for maintaining the whales is very expensive. Unfortunately, the center can not afford to keep the whales until they are well enough to return to the wild, and thus are placed in the rather uncomfortable position of asking for help. Anyone wishing to contribute or participate in the "WHALE FRIEND" program, please contact The Dolphin Research Center, P.O. Box 2875, Marathon Shores, FL 33052. The Dolphin Research Center is a non-profit institution.

