



Hello My Friends,

You may remember that I ran for *Queen of the Conch Republic* last year in honor of little "Mattie." He was a foster child in My Sister Sheila's home. Mattie Was a 5-year old who hoarded food because he was afraid there would be none the next day. He hid French toast and peanut butter bread in his dresser drawer and an apple under his pillow, "cause I can hold it."

My incredible sister and brother-in-law cared for him, and then for Jenny, age 3, who was routinely locked out of the house for long periods of time if she wet her pants. Christy came later and was a victim of abject poverty. She needed a loving home for a year or so until her parents could get back on their feet.

We in Monroe County, from Key Largo to Key West are fortunate to have loving foster parents who care for our Matties, Jennys and Christys.

You probably know that the 10 day Conch Republic Celebration that Peter Anderson puts on elects a royal family every year and arranges a fundraising party at the Green Parrot Bar (best music in Key West!) To be elected Queen I must raise the most money for the Conch Republic Foster Children's fund. This Fund has in the past purchased prom dresses, football uniforms, swimming lessons, little guitars and baseball mitts. Things that these children need to feel as if they "fit in." Clearly life has already been tough enough.

The fund is close to being empty as of course Wilma dictated that it be used for clothing and beds for the children. Many of the children were hit particularly hard as they had already lost one home. **This is a Piggy Bank we must refill.**

The Parrot generously donates their place for this party with a purpose. Will you stop that night and vote for me? The fundraiser/party is on Saturday, April 22nd at 8pm.

A vote costs only \$1. In the finest of keys tradition we not only allow, but encourage cheating when voting (**please cheat for me!**). You are welcome to vote for me as many times as you like. You can also vote early. Checks to: Wesley House Family services, and in the memo box:CRFCF. Thanks to Wesley House **not one cent of this money goes for administrative costs.** They distribute this to those children most in need and they charge no fee. Every dollar goes to a child. To mail "votes": Ellen M. Varela; c/o Historic Tours of America; 201 Front St., Suite 212; Key West Fl.33040. (remember checks to: Wesley House.) You can also email me at evarela@historictours.com or call me at (305)304-1317. I will also be happy (Ok, ecstatic!) to come by at pick anything up.

Any help would be terrific. Maybe your business could donate \$1 from every boat ticket you sell one day or maybe your restaurant could have a special dessert one night with the proceeds going to the fund. Prizes to raffle would also be appreciated.

You may even want to come "fool around with us" on April fools day. The Double tree Grand Key resort is throwing a huge party for Ellen for queen. April, 1st 6pm to 10 pm. Great food and entertainment.

Warmest Regards,

Ellen M. Varela

P.S. Ever thought of being a foster Parent? Call Wesley House at 292-2186 today.

P.P.S. I would love some competition so run against me for Queen or run for Royal Court Jester or Royal Pain in the.....(well you know) Make up something fun and run for the kids!

