



## ***An island tour describes a sign of the times***

*A recent visit to Marco Island, Florida, gives a glimpse of insecurity and serenity*

*Bill Pappou Drew*

A friend of mine hosted my visit to his winter retreat at Marco Island, Florida. The island, the largest of Florida's Ten Thousand Islands, is located on the Gulf of Mexico in southwest Florida and described in one brochure as "Magical, Mystical and Alluring".



*Marco Island, Florida (Courtesy of Google Earth)*

It was originally an island of mangrove growth. See a brief description and history [here](#). Since the mid 20th century most of the raw vegetation has been removed and the entire island now consists of canals and waterfront residential lots, high-rise condominiums, along with more residential and commercial areas to serve the inhabitants. In 1962, the population of this 4-mile wide by 6-mile long island was 550 residents. Today, the permanent population is 15,000 and swells to 35,000 residents during the winter months.



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*A view from my friend's deck shows typical high-rise buildings, a single home, a canal, boat traffic and mangrove swamp vegetation.*

car tour one morning, we drove through many of the residential areas so I could obtain a taste of the island.

In the middle part there are many small to medium-sized homes, a large number of which are situated on the numerous canals.



Being permanently located in southern Florida, one must contend with a "bug season" during the middle part of the year. The homes of year-round residents can usually be determined by observing large screened in areas near the center of their outside activity.





The southern end of the island hosts extremely large and beautifully maintained estates and mansions.

FOR SALE ... FOR SALE ... FOR SALE

In driving through this area of extremely large homes, we see a preponderance of signs, FOR SALE signs, in the front of about every third home. Up to that



point, viewing the lesser value homes, we had seen very few.

With this observation I guess we are all re-evaluating our assets in these turbulent days of the financial world. Perhaps a conclusion reached is that the biggest spenders seem to be the ones most concerned in selling assets to maintain a life style, as compared to those of us who are a bit more cautious and secure in our own surroundings.

With that thought, I relax and ponder my own situation. Before me, my friend's solution, as you can see by the huge catch, is to obtain sustenance to feed us, as well as feed the inhabitants of the natural environment.

For me, the difficult task of grasping a stick and a string and waving it around produces little results. Perhaps I need to put something on the hook at the end





of



the

string? I put aside this tiring activity and weigh solutions to the immense problems of living and surviving in the world around us.

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*The sum total of the day's catch*



*ZZZZzzzzzzzz*

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