

TWENTY-TWO FEET TO GLORY

Key Colony Beach holds annual 7 Meter Bridge Run

Move over, Seven Mile Bridge Run.

March 21 was a day for "Seven Meters of Grueling Running" as Key Colony Beach residents and visitors braved a daunting three-foot (we think) incline in the Key Colony Beach Community Association's 7 Meter Bridge Run. What the annual jaunt over the Sadowski Causeway bridge lacked in length, it certainly made up for with the colorful costumes of all who "ran" – from butterflies and Parrotheads to tie-dye shirts, snorkel vests, baby bows and canes. Before the run, the field of "racers" gladly deferred to several elite athletes who completed the course on their own as guests of honor – including 100-year-old Marathon resident Dorothy Bitzer as the first to break the tape.

1. Susie, left, Kim and Sharon are ready to soak race finishers at the 'water station.'

2. The lovely ladies of 'The Wind Beneath Their Wings' get ready to take flight.

3-4. Only in the 7 Meter Bridge Run can you win, or even finish, a race in flip flops and snorkel gear.

5. Jim Preston, right, leads the Parrotheads of Casa Clara to the bridge.

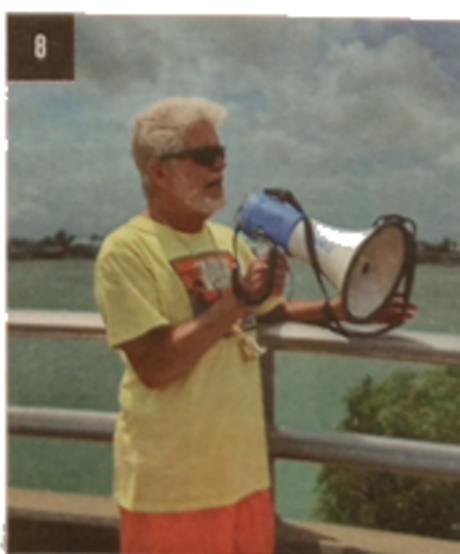
6. Key Colony Beach Mayor Joey Raspe, left, greets 100-year-old Dorothy Bitzer.

7. Not many races can be run in a sundress, but Martha Cowan is taking full advantage.

8. Joe Turgeon preps racers for the starting 'gun.'

9. 100-year-old Dorothy Bitzer, center, gets ready for the world's shortest race with daughter Cindy Casey, left, and son-in-law Thomas Casey.

Photos by ALEX RICKERT/Keys Weekly



QUESTIONS WITH THE CHAMP

Before the race, the Keys Weekly was fortunate enough to sit down with 100-year-old Dorothy Bitzer to learn more about her life, what led her to the 'Seven Meters of Grueling Running,' and the key to hitting triple digits.

When did you move to Marathon? 11 years ago.

What made you decide to do the run? I've done just about everything in my life, but I've never done one of these. It was a good time to start.

In 100 years, what's the coolest thing you've ever done? That would be hard to point out, but I've been in a submarine down to 850 feet, I've gone parasailing, and I've walked on the bottom of the ocean in a helmet feeding fish in Bora Bora.

What's the secret to living to 100? I don't have anything to complain about, so I just don't complain. I've had a wonderful life. My family takes care of me. And I stayed working at a real estate office until I was 79.