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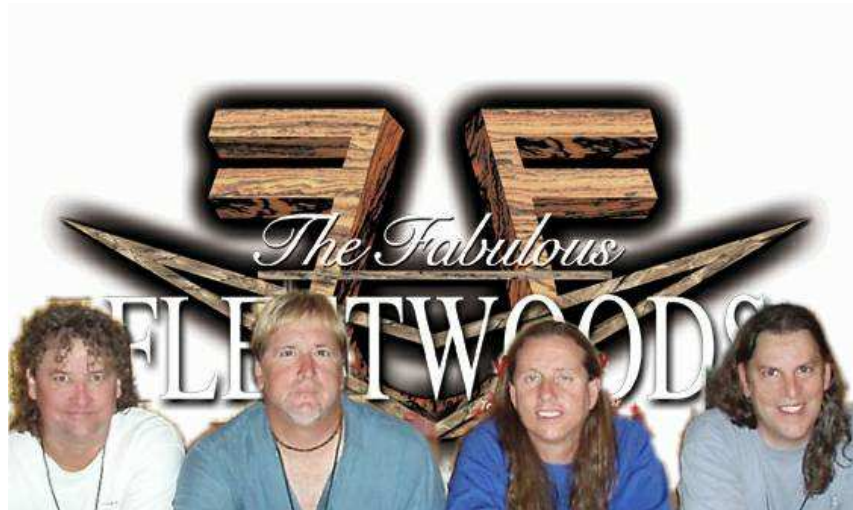
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## Fleetwoods in town

By Dick Conklin L'Attitudes Contributor  
Posted-Friday, May 11, 2007 10:01 AM EDT

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### Band plays gig tonight at the Hurricane Grille

Once upon a time we lived in the quiet beachside town of Delray Beach, where a great rock band named the Fabulous Fleetwoods played weekly at the popular City Limits nightclub (which after a short nine years was bulldozed to make way for more condos).

Fortunately, Keys music lovers can hear the Fleetwoods at the Hurricane in Marathon at least once a year. If you were there on Friday night, you know exactly what I'm talking about. If you are reading this on Saturday, relax - you can catch them tonight before they head back north.

The Fabulous Fleetwoods have been part of the South Florida live music scene since 1982, mixing crowd-pleasing cover songs with their own rocked-up and inspired original blues numbers, as well as some rockin' boogie, roots funk, Tex-Mex, and other sounds perfect for dancing and partying.

Front man and harpist John Harris belts out some classic blues licks, sharing the spotlight with very talented guitar man Richie Schmidt. They are supported by hard-charging drummer Don Hamzik and super bass man, "Reverend" Jim ("Don't Drink the Kool-Aid") Jones. On occasion, the four guys are accompanied by Richie's vivacious wife Theresa on the keyboards. The combination makes for one of the best rock and blues bands you'll hear anywhere.

John is originally from Springfield, Ill., and Rich and Theresa are from Long Island. Don and Jim are Floridians. John is a landscape architect, Jim is a design engineer, and Don works with cameras in the movie business. Rich is the only full-time musician. According to the good Reverend, "We all have great and understanding families who allow us to do the things we do."

In their early days, the Fabulous Fleetwoods quickly became a regional favorite, performing music made popular by



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#### Entertainment Calendar

MUSIC

#### Keys Galleries

Galleries listing courtesy of Florida Keys Council of the Arts

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the Fabulous Thunderbirds, George Thorogood, and the Nighthawks. It wasn't long before the group was opening for performers like Johnny Winter, John Mayall, James Cotton, Jimmy Thackery, Little Feat, Eddie Money, Three Dog Night, and Allman Brothers' great, Dickey Betts. They became regulars at music festivals like Sunfest, Riverwalk Blues, Hollywood Blues, Pompano Seafood Festival, Delray Beach's Jazz on the Avenue, and the annual Garlic Fest. They also played at the 2006 Bridge Bash concert at the Marathon amphitheatre.

"We've been working on new songs for our next CD," Richie said, "and will likely be performing some of them this weekend, along with some crowd favorites and new covers. We are always grateful to be so well received at the Hurricane by the owners, staff, and the local fans."

Sounding like a Chamber of Commerce director, Richie says that the band not only enjoys their trips to the Keys, and but they often bring some of their mainland groupies with them.

He says their Hurricane gigs are a welcome break from their regular routine in Palm Beach and Broward counties. Many of their friends and fans make the trip down and make a weekend out of it. Arriving on Friday, the band usually sets up and has dinner at the Hurricane. After an evening's gig, the band often unwinds at the at the Blackfin Resort's bayside peninsula. Mornings usually begin at the Stuffed Pig.

Band members enjoy fishing, snorkeling and aquatics, but have found such activities to be a bit exhausting when doing a show the same night. They say their favorite way to prepare for the evening's show is with a cocktail, poolside at Banana Bay.

"Both Banana Bay and the Blackfin are next door to the Hurricane," Richie said, "so we only have to put on our shorts and sandals and walk to work. Our van usually stays parked for the entire weekend. If we ever do take a drive anywhere, it's usually down to Key West, enjoying the view from the Seven Mile Bridge. Sometimes we stop at Big Pine or No Name Key. But more often than not we are happy to stay right in Marathon for it's quieter 'old style' Keys experience."

The band's trips to the Keys have been the inspiration for at least one original song, "End Of The Road" penned by Jim, found on their second CD, "Live Wood."

"We'll surely be playing it this weekend," Richie promised. "It always seems like Keys people are open to different kinds of music. And of course it's always a great time at the Hurricane!"

If you find yourself with some time to kill before the Saturday night show at the 'Cane, check out their music at [www.fabulousfleetwoods.com](http://www.fabulousfleetwoods.com).

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