

Chapter II is a job. Is that surprising? Most people, obviously, work for the benefit of income, not adventure. I was prepared for the low pay scale when we relocated to Key West in 1988. After establishing our lovely waterfront home, I read the classifieds. With positive enthusiasm, extensive office managerial experience, and a most obvious regional dialect of a native Bostonian, I answered an interesting ad. After a second interview, I was hired as an office support person by the coordinator of three Key West street festivals. For six dollars hourly, I began a five year experience that makes for fascinating conversation and it's my Chapter II.

If permission is required to use names and places, I didn't ask. I share only a facet of my own life. Festivals in Key West are a division of tourist development. This idea was established as a means of increasing tourism during off-peak months. In my first year, I assisted with office support functions in April, July and October. Being somewhat strong in opinion, I found April rather boring and October totally outrageous but oh how I loved July. The average person may not consider traveling to Key West, a brutally, hot, tropical Island, in July. Yet this one festival filled every hotel and had the streets alive and jumping with diversified activities. For five years, I held the title of office manager of the Hemingway Days Festival and it is the second highlight of my life. With responsibilities as basic as opening thousands of pieces of daily mail, or lugging T-shirts all across the city, I loved my job. One full year was required to solicit sponsor support, advertise and co-ordinate the schedule of events included in just one week, always celebrated in July to coincide with Hemingway's birthday. Imagine the varied levels of planning to include a

writer's workshop and conference, a story telling competition, a short story writer's competition, a five K run, a fishing tournament, a sailing regatta, a day-long street fair, a concert and buffet supper on the grounds of the Hemingway Home & Museum, an arm wrestling competition, a golf tournament, a radio trivia contest and, my special favorite, the Papa Hemingway Look-Alike Competition at Sloppy Joe's Bar. I wrote the guidelines for this event. It encouraged the older, heavier set, bearded contestant to dress in "Hemingway" style. They came and they did; bulky turtleneck sweaters, Key West in July, worn in a non air-conditioned bar. So crowded, you cannot move across the floor. So hot, you're sure you'll pass out and I loved every minute, from the initial planning of the individual events, to the closing ceremony, just one full week later.

I was privileged to work with a dedicated support staff and an outstanding director. Michael Whalton is a soft spoken, native Floridian who is gifted in encouraging the exchange of ideas. A meeting of event coordinators included careful planning of each activity yet the humor and goodwill was contagious. Outrageous ideas often led to an exciting new approach of a regularly scheduled event and when Michael began making notes in his daily planner, we all knew something wonderfully creative would emerge. I met and worked with stimulating, good people. Their interests and backgrounds varied as drastically as the individual events. Active participants and guests included members of the Hemingway family and award winning published authors of international fame. Goodwill was abound and we met in harmony and shared one incredible week on a tropical island in July. I would win at a name dropping game and I

love the reaction when sharing on-the-job moments. Chapter II rates as the most exciting period of my working years. I'm just an ordinary person who types a nice letter and takes pride in running a well organized, tidy office yet no other job, no other people, will match the cherished memories of Hemingway Days, Key West.