

## SHELL SHOCKED

### Keep the Beer Cans off the Beach

By Art Stevens

One morning an empty beer can was discovered on the beaches of Sanibel. An early riser shell collector had been Sanibel shuffling on the beach in search of rare sea shells. The dawn light was minutes away and the shell collector stumbled on what at first appeared to be a giant shell.

I'm in luck she thought. I think I've found a rare contubian sea shell derived from a crustean imovac, the almost extinct fish species famous for its gefilte fish. She quickly went into her Sanibel stoop and scooped the presumed sea shell up with her net. She couldn't quite make it out in the dark but was pleased with the feel of it. It felt smooth to the touch much like the contubian sea shell.

She could see the beginnings of dawn. She held her breath while the early morning light began to cover the beach. She looked down at her sea shell and squinted. She saw the words "Bud Light" on its smooth surface and immediately the sound of brain wave oscillation was barely audible. Her powers of human logic prevailed.

"Hey, this isn't a sea shell," she said aloud. "It's an empty beer can." Her mood quick shifted from deep disappointment to rage and anger. "What sort of low life would throw an empty beer can onto the beaches of Sanibel? Sanibel is the epicenter of world environmental protection. Everyone knows that. Our beaches must remain pristine and pure. If this crime goes unpunished the next thing you know people will be leaving coq au vin on the beach."

The Sanibel City Council meeting was scheduled for the next day. The public was invited. The Council members went through their usual agenda: alligator survival, wild parties at Sun Dial, the cure for blackened fish and the new application for a Playboy Club.

And when all the scheduled business on the agenda had been fully discussed, the microphone was turned over to comments from among the residents attending. The shell collector who had discovered the Bud Light can on the beach made her way forward. She said: "As a longtime resident of Sanibel who is fully committed to our guarantee of environmental protection, I deeply regret having to report on a violation of our core principles. I hold in my hand the work of a crazed individual who undoubtedly seeks to undermine Sanibel values and principles. This individual dared to break the law and thumb his nose at us. Today it's a beer can. Tomorrow it could be a Ford Edsel. Who knows?"

She held up the beer can. "I found this on the beach yesterday. This is the first and only time during all my years in Sanibel that our beach has been so violated. I demand that

the individual responsible be found as soon as possible and taught that you don't mess with Sanibel." The beer can was handed to a Sanibel police officer.

The Mayor of Sanibel gazed at the contraband being displayed and said to the shell collector: "Madame, I can assure you that the City Council and its enforcement agencies are aghast to learn about such a horrible crime in Sanibel and will do everything in our power to apprehend the perpetrator. We will not tolerate such wanton criminality in Sanibel."

The beer can was sent to the Sanibel police department where they attempted to retrieve finger prints. The lab people were unsuccessful. They sent the evidence to the local FBI office which didn't have the manpower to focus on the beer can. The FBI sent the beer can to the CIA with the recommendation that the matter should be pursued because of a potential threat to national security.

The CIA put its best people on it. Despite the latest in advanced technology, the CIA was unable to find finger prints and had to rely on water boarding a terrorist suspect in Yemen. The suspect finally admitted that the plot to drop an empty beer can on the beaches of Sanibel was hatched at a terrorist military gathering deep in the jungles of Paris.

The suspect blubbered: "It was either an empty beer can on Sanibel's shores or a Bronx sour pickle planted in a Beirut restaurant. We voted on it and the beer can won. The intent was to put to rest that the West was in favor of environmental protection. Our plan was to start out with one beer can and then plant various forms of rubbish on the beach until visitors stopped coming to Sanibel.

"We never thought that the residents of Sanibel would be so outraged that they put all their might into hunting us down. I knew we should have stuck to fixing the Super Bowl."

Sanibel had learned its lesson. From that point on a massive effort was put in place to punish environmental offenders. Dogs were trained to sniff the difference between legitimate sea shells and rubbish. Photos of well-known environmental terrorists were placed on the walls of the Sanibel post office. Free weekends at Sun Dial were offered to anyone providing valuable information on plans to plant rubbish on the beach. Never again would an empty beer can appear on the beaches of Sanibel.

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