

Short Tails...



The Mullet Toss

Seems like only yesterday the 5 am breakfast crowd at Lob Lolly and Mulletville were just mullet fisherman, shrimpers or a stray college professor. You couldn't tell one from the other. Hair pulled back into pirate ponytails, baggy pants and their white rubber boots, they called their Matlacha Reeboks. They joked about each others boats, girlfriends or wives and yesterdays hauled catch. They wore the happy, clear eyes of men who loved to be out on the water all day. Matlacha was a true fishing village. Sometimes there were disagreements. Voices grew loud with their displeasure until one man challenged the other and threw a mullet fish onto the roof of their competitor's eating spot. Each group had a favorite place, only a small parking lot away from each other and there were only two places in town. There was the Lob Lolly or Mulletville,

Long Memories

both along the small canal bordered by mangroves and the park. Jocular animosity evolved into a game of sport until it became a yearly event that featured grade school fingerlings to battle hardened professionals able to hurl a frozen "Mugil Cephalus" over 160 plus feet. (Mugil is latin for mullets). The Matlacha Mullet Toss has endured to this day and once a year all villagers get together to compete in the event. So, if you happen to notice a quiet, silver haired man with strong forearms and a beer on the counter, with that faraway look, it's not the drink. It's his dream of the sea and his homecoming through the mangroves. Still the same as ever.

If you have an island memory you would like to share please send it to info@pineislandfl.com. If selected, your memory will be published anonymously. Looking forward to reminiscing!

28th Annual Mullet Toss
Saturday, March 16
Matlacha Community Park,
4577 Pine Island Rd NW
in Matlacha.



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PineIslandFL.com

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Photo courtesy of John Vuncannon



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