



Longboat Key News

March 14, 2025

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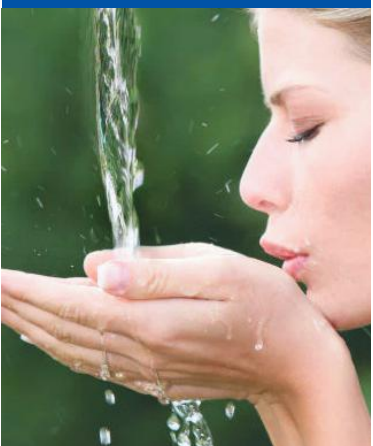
InsideLook



*Savannah assists
LBK manager
...page 2*



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leads the sales
...page 11*



*Longboat water
quality in detail
...page 12*



*I have parked
here for years!
...page 10*

Country Club Shores turn-lane project begins bumpy on LBK

Some residents said they are upset with the project and that if there are going to be curbed medians they did not want the project. The Town is going to try and cajole FDOT into "field adjustments."

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

The turn-lane construction project on the south end of Longboat Key has spurred numerous questions and concerns from residents.

Most of the questions started when actual construction began over the past two weeks as drivers traversing one-mile of the roadway at the Islandside Golf Course noticed that the entire Key Club property and golf course had a one-foot high short construction fence that reclaimed a 15-foot right-of-way that had been used for about 50 years and has been covered with Oleander bushes and several Banyan trees.

All of the construction will occur on the west side of Gulf of Mexico Drive and will include a widening of the bike path, a three-foot deep drainage culvert and the addition of 11 individual turn lanes, five of which will have raised, curbed medians.

This is different than what the Town originally thought it was getting and what exists on the rest of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The original idea was to add one long center turn lane where motorists could sit



and turn into their community, or wait while exiting the community to find an opening in traffic.

But the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) told the Town it will not approve such a design and what is being built will prevent motorists from using a center turn lane as a passing lane where unfettered acceleration could occur.

This has led to many Country Club Shores residents complaining that these medians will not fix the

problem and in many ways will make stacking cars waiting to enter Gulf of Mexico Drive very difficult or impossible. The problem is each curbed median only allows one car to position itself at a time.

At a recent meeting in Town Hall, Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman said the Town is going to try to work with FDOT to reduce the curb on the center medians by 20 to 25 feet to allow

an additional car to stack.

Brownman told the Commission that at a meeting with Country Club Shores residents, some said they are very upset with the project and that if there are going to be curbed medians they did not want the project.

Other residents have objected to adding 15 feet of additional pavement and width to Gulf of Mexico Drive and taking back what was essentially green space that bloomed with Oleanders and buffered the golf course for decades.

Some of the residents said they were going to reach out to Tallahassee to tell FDOT their thoughts, but Brownman warned them that if the FDOT is told the citizens do not want the project, it could cause a problem with approving future projects.

That's when Mayor Ken Schneier said, "This whole project was for Country Club Shores!"

Commissioner Penny Gold asked why the contract would not allow the construction at night and only between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Brownman said that requiring working at night would likely cost **See Turn Lanes, page 15**

Longboat business thrilled to have gone full circle following storm's devastation

The entire office and operation resembled a sand dune more than an insurance agency. Now, things are looking sunnier than ever.

Sandra Smith who runs Longboat Key's Secur-All Insurance Agency has traveled full circle and couldn't be happier.

Sandra's business on the Key began at the Colony Beach & Tennis Resort more than two decades ago, where she helped organize tennis matches and worked in the Pro Shop. That soon turned into a position at the Longboat Key Public Tennis Center where she worked day in and day out alongside its founders, Bob Mrachek and Dick Schlorff. And for anyone who knows Sandra Smith, she is a relationship-maker and networker extraordinaire.

It was these connections along with her family's insurance company that her father Robert Smith started in 1961 that led to the idea of opening Secur-All Insurance on Longboat Key. Sandra and her family decided to have a go at it, and in 2009 they opened the first full-service insurance agency on Longboat Key - Secur-All.

The business was a boom. It was a combination of Sandra's connections and diligence and the for-



A Family business. Brother and sister Adam and Sandra Smith with the company founder and their father, Robert Smith.

tunate location of their office across from Town Hall at 510 Bay Isles Road, which is now the

Truist Bank Building.

Back in 2009, SunTrust was the bank in operation and Sandra banked there and would almost daily walk by Realtor Andrew Vac's office, which was adjacent to the SunTrust Bank. She became friends with Vac, who is also a person who knows just about everyone on Longboat Key, and when she learned that his office was available to lease she pounced and it became the headquarters of Secur-All for the next decade.

An unfortunate clause

The location was perfect says Smith. And the reason is in many ways most residents and visitors to Longboat Key must travel in front of the Truist Building on any given day. If you go to Town Hall, Publix, the post office or the public tennis center, Secur-All's sign and building stood prominent. But the good times became difficult.

When Truist replaced SunTrust in 2019 and bought the building, Secur-All discovered the abrupt news that their lease would not be renewed because the ownership entity had its own insurance company interest and would not lease to another insurance company.

Sandra moved her business to 6350 Gulf of Mexico Drive, a commercial building just **See a Good Move, page 2**

Longboat Deputy Clerk moves closer to the action in Town Hall

Longboat Key Deputy Town Clerk Savannah Cobb will start as the Executive Assistant to Town Manager Howard Tipton starting March 31. She is extremely enthused with the way her career has unfolded since she started as an Intern Temp eight years ago at 21 years of age.

Savannah worked diligently in the Town Clerk's Office and soon the internship turned full-time and in 2018 was named Deputy Town Clerk by her boss, Town Clerk Trish Shinkle.

But Savannah Cobb is rooted to Longboat Key in the most fundamental way: she was born and raised on the island.

And her exposure to all issues that one could imagine arising on the island came directly from her father, Steve Schield, who served as Town Planner for Longboat Key and retired after 30 years of employment. Her mother, Doreen Schield also worked for the Town.

"I have a deep connection to this area. I grew up here, my parents live out here, and I love everything about it," said Cobb.

Cobb is replacing current Town Manager Assistant Susan Phillips who will officially retire on March 28 after nearly 30 years of employment on Longboat Key. The main responsibilities include supporting the workload of the Town Manager and interacting and helping the Manager interface with the Town Commission.

Cobb lives with her husband, Aaron, and one-year-old daughter Charlotte. She graduated from the University of Florida.

One significant difference between her position and that of Phillips is that Cobb will be classified as a General Employee and will be in the General Employee's Benefit Program. Phillips was classified as a Department Head and received benefits and pension obligations on par with the Town's Department Heads.



A Good Move Shorts, from page 1

south of Christ Church on the north end of the island.

Disaster strikes

As the entire world knows and Longboat Key residents know intimately, much of the island was devastated by the hurricanes last fall. This included Sandra's entire office and operation, which resembled a sand dune more than an insurance agency following Hurricane Milton.

Adding to the drama is the fact that Sandra and her team had to not only deal with their own lives, but immediately work with the myriad of customer claims and questions that followed in the wake of the storms. Also, the team had to immediately relocate since their office building was no longer functional. That move led them to the Centre Shoppes where they have occupied a small office next to the Chamber of Commerce as Sandra slowly hatched an idea.

Homecoming dream

Five years had past since Sandra had to move out of her beloved office next to Truist and she wondered if there might be an opening to lease the space once again. The office was vacant and she asked Andrew Vac to help her in the process.

"I believed I had a one percent chance of this working, but it happened – they agreed to a 10-year lease."

The reason has to do with a change in the hierarchy of ownership entities and a relaxing of the clause forbidding an insurance agency. This left Sandra ecstatic.

"This is the best news I have had in such a long time. If it wasn't for the hurricanes, I would never had cause to make this push. Also, I recently moved into Bay Isles and my home is literally walking distance to my office," said Smith.

If anyone has walked past or into the Secur-All Agency, they will see an eight-foot-tall Buddha statue that adorns the entry. Sandra tells the story of the Buddha, that she bought it years ago at a consignment shop after it was found face down in a building flooded by a hurricane and ravaged by fire. Then the Buddha moved around with Secur-All and was again half buried with sand and a survivor of the Longboat hurricanes.

Sandra jokes that the happy Buddha has found its way back to its favorite home.

Sandra and her team will officially move into the 510 Bay Isles Road location and be open for business on April 1.



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Contact: Patrick DiPinto 941-323-0033



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5 Beds 7 Baths 5,328 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Patrick DiPinto 941-323-0033



5444 GULF OF MEXICO DR | LONGBOAT KEY
\$5,750,000 - Bayfront 1.06 Acres
5 Beds, 5 Baths, 6,000 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Tracey Stetler 941-266-9001



3927 SOMERSET DRIVE | SIESTA KEY
\$2,100,000
3 Beds 3 Baths 2,758 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Jules Mackie 773-704-1438



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\$6,695,000 - Immediate Occupancy
5 Beds 6 Baths 4,750 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Patrick DiPinto 941-323-0033



549 SLOOP LANE | LONGBOAT KEY
\$3,900,000- Country Club Shores
4 Beds 5 Baths 4,127 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Tracey Stetler 941-266-9001



PENDING

109 GARFIELD DRIVE UNIT 201 | LIDO BEACH
\$1,999,999 - Walk to Lido Beach
3 Beds 2 Baths 1,993 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



3408 FAIR OAKS LANE | LONGBOAT KEY
\$2,999,999 - Bay Isles
5 Beds 5 Baths 4,510 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



585 CUTTER LANE | LONGBOAT KEY
\$3,499,999 - Country Club Shores
4 Beds 2 Baths 3,602 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



3131 BAYOU SOUND | LONGBOAT KEY
\$2,150,000
3 Beds 3 Baths 3,023 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



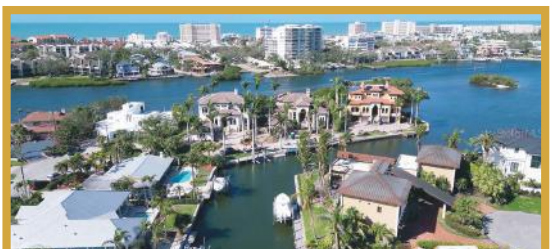
3318 BAYOU SOUND | LONGBOAT KEY
\$1,599,999
Bay Isles 3 Beds 2 Baths 2,675 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



1050 LONGBOAT CLUB RD #704 | LONGBOAT KEY
\$999,999 - Privateer
2 Beds 2 Baths 1,400 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



3060 GRAND BAY BLVD UNIT 154 | LONGBOAT KEY
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Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



1633 RIDGEWOOD LANE | SARASOTA
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Contact: Jules Mackie 773-704-1438

941-388-2021

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EditorLetters

Longboat Key News and Sarasota City News encourages Letters to the Editor on timely issues. Please email to: letters@lbknews.com or mail to PO Box 8001, Longboat Key, FL 34228. We also print letters sent to Town Hall that address Longboat Key issues. We reserve the right to edit.

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Jack Brill

The concept we gave to the FDOT Design Engineer and Traffic Operations Manager had the curbed median end at the CCS Phase IV entrance moved further south by 60-ft. to 75-ft (roughly 3 car lengths with space in between each car). Because it is a longer median and a larger neighborhood entrance, we asked for more distance and gave two examples. For all of the other, smaller curbed medians, we asked for 50-ft. (roughly 2 car lengths with space in between each car). If we asked for any more on the smaller medians, there would not be much median left and risk not getting anywhere with those medians. Because we did not get a specific direction on a certain length for the Phase IV entrance, we are going to approach the design revision with the longer 75-ft. to provide more room.

The District Design Engineer indicated that while the design change is not ideal from their perspective, they understand the concern and were agreeable to the Town proceeding down the path of a design revision. And as on all state roads, they also noted that FDOT reserves the right to alter the medians if an operational or safety issue manifests as a result in the future. This is typical on any state road after a road is constructed if an operational or safety issue arises. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Isaac, Good morning. In the feedback, what is the footage to move the concrete mediums back on the field adjustment to open up turning left headed south? Thanks.

Jack Brill
Longboat Key

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Thanks for your follow up. Those distances for all of the entrances would be acceptable and

would be considerably better than the original plans. Let's make sure that it works. If there is any pushback, please let me know. Have a good day.

Jack Brill
Longboat Key

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Jack Brill

Yes, agree and will do. Thank you Jack!

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Steve Baril

Thank you for reaching out. As discussed with you briefly last week, the Town is working with our Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") contacts on a solution to move the curb ends further south to allow more room for vehicles to stack. We are making positive progress. As I explained, a meeting with CCS would be one of need and, more importantly, timing. If the Town and FDOT begin making progress towards a solution, a meeting with the neighborhood and the contractor or the neighborhood and FDOT could be counter-productive, particularly with the rhetoric of cancelling the project as some in the neighborhood are

See Letters, page 6



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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 4

stating. That was new to me as of the February 20, 2025 CCS Phase IV Annual Association meeting. I would not facilitate a Town-supported CCS meeting with either the contractor nor the FDOT if the prevailing neighborhood position became one of canceling the project -- that was not my agreement nor do I support that position as that would effectively shut down our ability to negotiate a design solution with FDOT. As an FYI, the contractor himself cannot make changes without FDOT approval, and FDOT is reviewing our request and has advised on next steps with a good initial response.

The Town planned to make the first strides in those conversations from an engineering standpoint. If that was not clear, I apologize, however, I believe I made that very clear at the CCS Phase IV association meeting on February 20, 2025. As mentioned, the FDOT is currently working with the Town on our preliminary design amendment, and they have asked us to begin developing full design plan revisions and running it through their "Local Agency Program". I would be happy to discuss this with you further. I should be available all of tomorrow afternoon.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Thank you for your prompt and fulsome response. We are pleased to learn that the Town and FDOT are working on a preliminary design amendment. We also have a recommended design amendment and would be happy to discuss our respective proposals at your convenience.

To be clear here, CCSIV is solely motivated by safety concerns for the residents of and visitors to LBK who will travel GMD. In our view, the current design is unsafe and would present serious safety hazards as designed. We assume this is the sole concern of all interested parties. I look forward to hearing from you at your convenience.

Steve Baril
Longboat Key

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Steve Baril

Thank you, and I agree. I would be happy to go over our respective design concepts. Would you like to come by this afternoon, and we can share respective information? My thought was that if FDOT did not believe any changes would be warranted, a neighborhood meeting would be prudent at that point so that FDOT could hear the concerns directly. However, and pleasantly, yesterday we received positive feedback and were asked to develop the concept out into an engineering revision.

I would be happy to go over it as we will be having our engineer revise our construction plans. I have a meeting a meeting at 4 pm, otherwise, I am available anytime between 1 pm and 4 pm. Just let me know so that I can block the time.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Public Records Request/Renewed Request for on-Site Meeting with Contractor about turn lane project

To: Jack Brill

Following up on the foregoing request for records, I am writing on behalf of the Homeowners Association ("HOA") of Country Club Shores IV ("CCSIV"), to renew our request for an onsite meeting with the contractor regarding the planned improvements to Gulf of Mexico Drive.

By way of background, the President of the HOA and I met with Isaac Brownman and Charlie Mopps on November 12, 2024, to discuss CCSIV's concerns about the impending

See Letters, page 12



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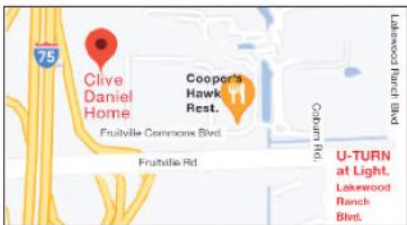


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The Art of Selling what you Love

Sig Hermansen
Associate Writer

Judy Kepez-Hays is nothing short of a legend when it comes to real estate success in Sarasota and its luxury islands.

Judy and her team, which consists of herself, her son, Steven Kepez, REALTOR® and Leah George, REALTOR® have accomplished this success by remaining loyal year after year and decade after decade to both the area as well as generations of customers. The Judy Kepez-Hays team has sold over \$173 million in the last 2-1/2 years and Career Sales to date total over \$3.4 Billion. This translates into thousands of sold homes over more than four decades in the region's most competitive market.

What leads to success?
Is it talent? Honed skills? Perseverance? Inspiration? Knowledge?
Perhaps it is an indefinable combination,

but there is little mistaking that Longboat Key REALTOR® Judy Kepez-Hays has spent a lifetime striving and achieving goals in the face of repeatedly difficult circumstances. She has consistently been ranked nationally in the top .5% of Coldwell Banker Agents. Judy credits both her mother and father for her success. Her father, Louis Buky, was a professor in Budapest, Hungary and spoke nine languages. Kepez-Hays says it was his uncanny ability to relate to so many cultures that she has inherited and employs daily in her work. A large percentage of her clientele are European and Kepez-Hays credits these relationships for this year's strong performance despite a sanguine market. And what does Kepez-Hays employ from her mother, Rosalie? She credits her for her entrepreneurial spirit. Her mother started her own business in Budapest and had the first Swiss knitting machine in the community in 1955. Kepez-Hays moved to Chicago at six years old. Her mother died when she was 16 years old. She is proud that her father, who taught languages and math, raised her and her siblings, with the help of her Aunt Gabriella. One trait she attributes to her success is her tenacious ability to keep deals together. Once a contract is signed, obviously there are a myriad of contingencies and contractual exegesis that can undermine the buyer's and seller's original intent. You can find Kepez-Hays on one hand counseling a buyer and, on another hand, organizing inspections.

Early lessons learned
There is something in the intrinsic value of owning land and property that Kepez-Hays became aware of early on in her life in America. In the early 1960s, Kepez-Hays first became exposed to the significance of property ownership. Her father and mother at that time worked and saved and bought two lots in Barrington, Illinois. They later sold them for a profit. Watching the success of this transaction while growing up left an indelible mark on Kepez-Hays.

Kepez-Hays bought her first home in California in 1974 in Redondo Beach. She says the house quadrupled in value within four years. But her formal move to a real estate career happened after she came to Florida in 1978 following a series of unfortunately events where she almost lost her son, Steven, in a boating accident. In 1978, she obtained her real estate license. She started at Realty World-Howard Lamb on Longboat Key near Pattigee's Restaurant. Within three weeks, she was on floor duty and got a listing at Katie's Bait & Tackle Shop. Kepez-Hays remembers she enjoyed driving her Triumph TR6 to work. The day she worked on floor duty, she had to take a client, Mr. Mason in her car. She only had a two-seater, and his son followed. "You never forget your first deal," Kepez-Hays says. The father bought the bait and tackle shop while looking for a business for his son. "He loved it," she said, but he wanted more land on the beach – the only contingency. Unfortunately, the land was not for sale.

Undeterred, Kepez-Hays spoke to the property owner, worked out a sale price and ended up selling Mr. Mason the bait and tackle shop for \$135,000 and the land for an additional \$20,000. Judy's husband, retired attorney Dr. John Hays, says that example shows one of her intrinsic talents. "Judy is driven – she gets up every morning before sun-up; she is focused."

In a short time, Kepez-Hays was the top producer in the office and won a four-day trip to the Bahamas. She soon joined Armada Realty on St. Armands Circle hoping to capitalize on the walk in traffic. She says Manly Tate and Barbara Ahearn were mentors who helped develop her dedication and professionalism. Kepez-Hays says she had an actual dream at the time in which she was at a large boardroom table negotiating a multimillion-dollar transaction with Nigerians. She says the dream ominously came true.

Four months later she was invited to work at Arvida, the developer of the Longboat Key Club and the region's most prestigious real estate company. She soon found herself at a boardroom table closing a \$3 million parcel in Harbour Links to a team of Nigerian investors. It was a large sale considering the year was 1986.

Stay on top
Later, Arvida was bought by Coldwell Banker where she has remained and grown her clientele and annual sales. Her success, in her own words is, "I don't let anything drop. Every day is a new day in

the life of sellers and buyers, and you never know what will happen."

One thing her husband says is that "Judy does not push to sell but does not let anything slip away or fall apart."

Those sentiments were echoed by a former Broker, Bob Stanley, who was extremely familiar with her work said, "One of the things that distinguishes Judy is she really is persistent and is creative in that persistence. She can present innovative ways to make transactions work for all parties."

I once asked her husband, John, what it is like to be married to a fast-paced driven REALTOR®. He said, "Although Judy is a driven person, she is remarkably easy person to get along with. We both like to ski. We've designed and decorated 11 houses in 11 years. I enjoy the closeness of her family."

Judy enjoyed for decades that her brother, Gabe Buky, lived close by and developed a real estate business with his son, Charles.

admires most is his remarkable versatility and adaptability, as he has skillfully navigated changing market conditions over the years with ease and expertise. Steven is the epitome of a professional in the real estate world, offering a unique combination of local expertise, unwavering dedication, and a passion for creating a place where clients can make lasting memories

Leah George, originally from Transylvania and a Florida resident for over thirty years, adds a background in architecture and civil engineering, two fields in which she earned advance degrees and training. Over 25 years in real estate, have not only provided Leah with far reaching networks, but also with crucial opportunities to work with an array of people from various cultural and business backgrounds.

Let's finish today, today...
Despite her years of success, Kepez-Hays has no intention of slowing down. Her husband joked that Judy borrowed his dog to accompany her while delivering a contract close to midnight. He says Judy's attitude is, "There is no tomorrow. Tomorrow will bring its excitement. What needs to be finished today is for today."

As of today, The Kepez Hays team has over \$30 million in pending transactions year-to- date. With integrity, commitment, excellence, communication, and knowledge, the team is shooting for the stars. There will be no slowing down for the Kepez-Hays team; we are always going 100 miles an hour.

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OnPatrol



The following are actual police reports as written by Longboat Key Police Officers. They are edited for length, punctuation and to protect privacy.

March 8 Vehicle

10:39 a.m.

Officer Ericsson while on patrol received a license plate camera alert for a vehicle traveling northbound from the Publix camera. Officer Ericsson conducted an NCIC/FCIC check and confirmed the vehicle's registration was expired on Dec. 31, 2024. Officer Ericsson observed the vehicle and initiated a traffic stop via overhead emergency lights at 4700 Gulf of Mexico Drive and met with the driver. Officer Ericsson made contact with the driver who advised she was aware that she did not have a valid license and that she was told by her supervisor to deliver the van to a coworker on Longboat Key. Additionally, the driver advised that she never had a driver's license. Officer Ericsson returned to his vehicle and issued a criminal citation for Manatee County Court and a second citation for an expired registration under 6 months. At this time, Officer Ericsson explained the criminal citation and non-criminal citation to the driver and she gave her signature and thumb print. Additionally, she was advised not to drive and said her boss was on their way to pick up the vehicle. She said her boss was on their way to pick up the vehicle. Case clear.



Police Department. The warning was issued on March 10, 2025 for Driving With License Suspended With Knowledge. The offender further adds that she knew her Driver's License was suspended and later recanted stating her lawyer (for prior DUI) never told her. She said that the previous officer never advised her of the suspension and that she could proceed to her destination. Based on the facts, Officer Butler was issued a criminal citation for Driving With License Suspended with knowledge, warned about not producing the Driver's License or proof of insurance. Case clear.

Found property

3:01 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to the Police Station for a report of found property. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson was met by the caller and her husband in the front lobby of the Police Station. The caller said that on the morning of March 7, she and her husband left their condominium for several hours. The woman said when they returned they noticed a key chain with a single key and key fob in the key bowl near the entry door. The caller stated the key chain and keys did not belong to them and they have no clue how the key got inside their condominium. The caller stated when they left for the day, they locked the door and when they returned home the door was locked. The woman said there were no signs of forced entry into the condominium and nothing appears to be missing or out of place. The woman stated she contacted the condominium staff and were told the keys do not belong to any of the employees or residents in other units. The woman said they have been staying in the condo since January and haven't had any hired workers inside. The woman completed a property receipt form and Officer Martinson inventoried the key and fob for safekeeping. Officer Martinson sent an email to the key fob business in hope that any of the numbers on the key would identify the owner. Case clear.

March 11

Nap

10:30 a.m.

Officer Ramsaier was dispatched to the 5400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a walk in complaint regarding a suspicious incident. Officer Ramsaier was met by a woman who said that at approximately 10:30 a.m., she observed an unknown man asleep on her lanai. The woman said that she asked what he was doing and the unknown man said that he works for a lawn care company and he took a nap. The woman said that the unknown man apologized and left without incident on his lawn mower. The woman said she does not wish to pursue any charges but wanted to make a report. The woman stated that she is not living at the residence because of the damage suffered from the recent hurricanes. Case clear.

Noise

11:40 p.m.

Officer Mathis was dispatched to Chatham Drive in reference to a noise disturbance. The caller contacted dispatch in reference to loud music and yelling coming from the location. Upon Officer Mathis's arrival, he could hear music from the parking lot. Officer Mathis made his way upstairs to the second floor and determined that the man was correct in that the music and yelling was coming from one of the units. Officer Mathis knocked on the door and the music stopped. A short time later the unit owner came to the door. Officer Mathis introduced himself and the reason for the visit. The owner explained that they were in town for spring break and didn't realize that the music was that loud and that it was so late. He apologized for the disturbance and advised they would keep the music turned down. The owner was issued a warning for the noise violation. Case clear.

March 12

Driver's license

12:26 p.m.

Officer Martinson was monitoring traffic at the intersection of Gulf of Mexico Drive and Bay Isles Parkway. Officer Martinson observed a white Ford truck traveling northbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive approach the traffic light at Bay Isles Parkway while having a solid red light. The truck then proceeded through the red light making a right hand turn onto Bay Isles Parkway without coming to a stop. Officer Martinson conducted a traffic stop in the parking lot of Publix. Officer Martinson made contact with the driver and explained to him why he had been pulled over. Officer Martinson asked the man for his driver's license, registration and proof of insurance. The driver stated he did not have a driver's license and provided Officer Martinson with his United States of America Employment Authorization Card as identification. Officer Martinson ran his information through ELVIS and he came back clear of any wants or warrants via NCIC/FCIC. Also, no record was found for the man having a driver's license. The driver was issued a criminal citation with a court date for No Driver's License. The man was issued a criminal citation with a court date for No Driver's License and a moving citation for failure to stop at a steady red signal before making a right turn. Case clear.

March 13

Alarm

11:33 a.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to Yardarm Lane on a call of a Burglary Alarm due to glass break. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson observed a roofing crew working on the roof of the residence. Officer Martinson was then met by the homeowner who stated she believed the roofers must have set off the alarm. Officer Martinson walked around the entire exterior of the residence with the homeowner and none of the windows appeared to be broken. Case clear.

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3427 WINDING OAKS DR Unit#14	2,555	\$1,195,000	3	3	0	25	\$1,195,000
4825 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#302	1,393	\$1,250,000	2	2	0	94	\$1,170,000
1065 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#104	1,503	\$775,000	2	2	0	88	\$762,500
5055 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#424	1,484	\$700,000	2	2	0	38	\$670,000
2215 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#304	1,906	\$699,000	3	2	0	40	\$625,000
225 SANDS POINT RD Unit#6103	642	\$625,000	1	1	0	123	\$560,000
806 BAYPORT WAY Unit#806	1,260	\$549,000	2	2	0	95	\$470,000
2600 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#L-10	mooring	\$475,000				66	\$425,000



603 LONGBOAT CLUB RD Unit #903N



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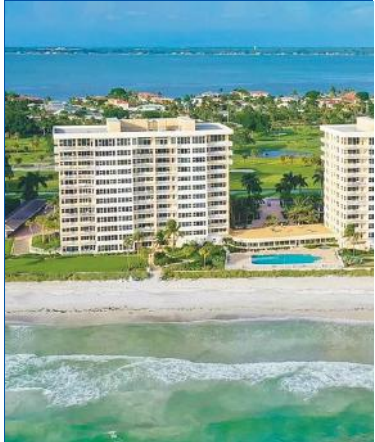


Sarasota City News

March 14, 2025 *Serving Siesta Key, Downtown Sarasota, Bird Key & St. Armands Circle* FREE



*Savannah assists
LBK manager
...page 2*



*South Longboat
leads the sales
...page 11*



*Longboat water
quality in detail
...page 12*



*I have parked
here for years!
...page 10*

Country Club Shores turn-lane project begins bumpy on LBK

Some residents said they are upset with the project and that if there are going to be curbed medians they did not want the project. The Town is going to try and cajole FDOT into “field adjustments.”

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

The turn-lane construction project on the south end of Longboat Key has spurred numerous questions and concerns from residents. Most of the questions started when actual construction began over the past two weeks as drivers traversing one-mile of the roadway at the Islandside Golf Course noticed that the entire Key Club property and golf course had a one-foot high short construction fence that reclaimed a 15-foot right-of-way that had been used for about 50 years and has been covered with Oleander bushes and several Banyan trees.

All of the construction will occur on the west side of Gulf of Mexico Drive and will include a widening of the bike path, a three-foot deep drainage culvert and the addition of 11 individual turn lanes, five of which will have raised, curbed medians.

This is different than what the Town originally thought it was getting and what exists on the rest of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The original idea was to add one long center turn lane where motorists could sit



and turn into their community, or wait while exiting the community to find an opening in traffic.

But the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) told the Town it will not approve such a design and what is being built will prevent motorists from using a center turn lane as a passing lane where unfettered acceleration could occur.

This has led to many Country Club Shores residents complaining that these medians will not fix the

problem and in many ways will make stacking cars waiting to enter Gulf of Mexico Drive very difficult or impossible. The problem is each curbed median only allows one car to position itself at a time.

At a recent meeting in Town Hall, Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman said the Town is going to try to work with FDOT to reduce the curb on the center medians by 20 to 25 feet to allow

an additional car to stack. Brownman told the Commission that at a meeting with Country Club Shores residents, some said they are very upset with the project and that if there are going to be curbed medians they did not want the project.

Other residents have objected to adding 15 feet of additional pavement and width to Gulf of Mexico Drive and taking back what was essentially green space that bloomed with Oleanders and buffered the golf course for decades.

Some of the residents said they were going to reach out to Tallahassee to tell FDOT their thoughts, but Brownman warned them that if the FDOT is told the citizens do not want the project, it could cause a problem with approving future projects.

That's when Mayor Ken Schneier said, "This whole project was for Country Club Shores!"

Commissioner Penny Gold asked why the contract would not allow the construction at night and only between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Brownman said that requiring working at night would likely cost **See Turn Lanes, page 15**

Longboat business thrilled to have gone full circle following storm's devastation

The entire office and operation resembled a sand dune more than an insurance agency. Now, things are looking sunnier than ever.

Sandra Smith who runs Longboat Key's Secur-All Insurance Agency has traveled full circle and couldn't be happier.

Sandra's business on the Key began at the Colony Beach & Tennis Resort more than two decades ago, where she helped organize tennis matches and worked in the Pro Shop. That soon turned into a position at the Longboat Key Public Tennis Center where she worked day in and day out alongside its founders, Bob Mrachek and Dick Schlorff. And for anyone who knows Sandra Smith, she is a relationship-maker and networker extraordinaire.

It was these connections along with her family's insurance company that her father Robert Smith started in 1961 that led to the idea of opening Secur-All Insurance on Longboat Key. Sandra and her family decided to have a go at it, and in 2009 they opened the first full-service insurance agency on Longboat Key - Secur-All.

The business was a boom. It was a combination of Sandra's connections and diligence and the for-



A Family business. Brother and sister Adam and Sandra Smith with the company founder and their father, Robert Smith.

tunate location of their office across from Town Hall at 510 Bay Isles Road, which is now the

Truist Bank Building. Back in 2009, SunTrust was the bank in operation and Sandra banked there and would almost daily walk by Realtor Andrew Vac's office, which was adjacent to the SunTrust Bank. She became friends with Vac, who is also a person who knows just about everyone on Longboat Key, and when she learned that his office was available to lease she pounced and it became the headquarters of Secur-All for the next decade.

An unfortunate clause
The location was perfect says Smith. And the reason is in many ways most residents and visitors to Longboat Key must travel in front of the Truist Building on any given day. If you go to Town Hall, Publix, the post office or the public tennis center, Secur-All's sign and building stood prominent. But the good times became difficult.

When Truist replaced SunTrust in 2019 and bought the building, Secur-All discovered the abrupt news that their lease would not be renewed because the ownership entity had its own insurance company interest and would not lease to another insurance company.

Sandra moved her business to 6350 Gulf of Mexico Drive, a commercial building just **See a Good Move, page 2**

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MARINA BAY • \$1,999,000
2550 HARBOURSIDE DR., #322
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
3BR/2.5BA • 2,830 • Updated



LONGBOAT KEY TOWERS • \$1,595,000
603 LONGBOAT CLUB RD., #1102N
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
2BR/2BA • 1,458 SF • Gulf & Bay views



GRAND BAY • \$1,595,000
3060 GRAND BAY BLVD. #113
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
3BR/3.5BA • 2,550 SF • Fully Furnished



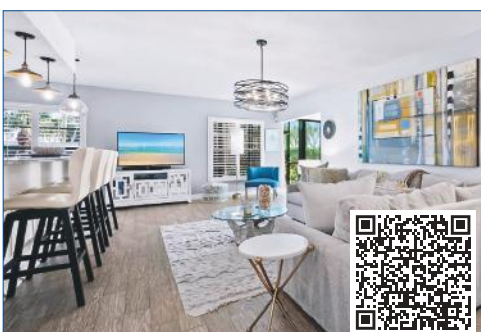
FAIRWAY BAY • \$649,000
1932 HARBOURSIDE DR., #242
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
2BR/2.5BA • 1,192 SF • Bay views



COREY'S LANDING • \$2,800,000
3444 MISTLETOE LANE
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
4BR/3.5BA • 2,836 SF • Upgraded



ISLANDER CLUB • \$799,000
2301 GULF OF MEXICO DR., #85N
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
2BR/2BA • 1,235 SF



LBK YACHT & TENNIS CLUB - \$869,900
4215 GULF OF MEXICO DR., #103
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
2BR/2BA • 1,497 • Furnished



THE MARK • \$1,350,000
111 S. PINEAPPLE AVE., #1004
SARASOTA, FL
2BR/2.5BA • 1,513 SF • City views



NOW PENDING



REGENT PLACE • \$4,495,000
675 LONGBOAT CLUB RD., #22A
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
3BR+DEN/4BA • 3,654 SF • Beachfront



NOW PENDING



GRAND BAY • \$1,525,000
3060 GRAND BAY BLVD., #124
LONGBOAT KEY, FL
2BR/2.5BA • 2,550 SF • Updated

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595 BAY ISLES ROAD, SUITE 250 • LONGBOAT KEY, FL 34228