



Longboat Key News

February 28, 2025

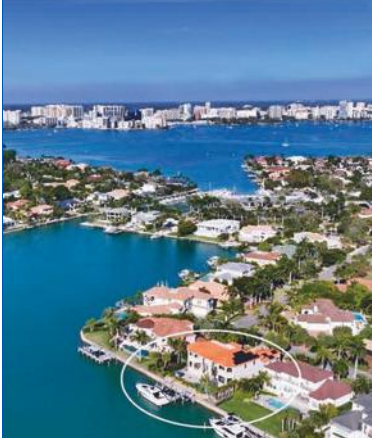
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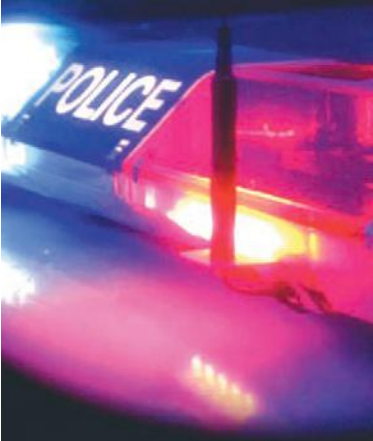
When wine meets its match
...page 15



Bird Key soars past \$7 million
...page 11



High-wire act coming to close
...page 12



Raccoon seeks penthouse view
...page 10

Midnight Pass: What's the latest?

While Milton caused the deaths of literally dozens of Floridians, and tens of billions of dollars of damage to our state, it did have one redeeming feature – it reestablished the previously lost historical tidal connection between Little Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. But now, some four and a half months later, how is that pass doing?

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Executive Director Dave Tomasko gives the latest update:

On Oct. 9 of last year, Hurricane Milton made landfall on Siesta Key. Milton was determined to be responsible for the deaths of over 30 Floridians, with damage estimates of between \$20 billion (CoreLogic) to as high as \$80 bil-

lion (Moody's Analytics).

Estimates from the National Centers for Environmental Information in January of this year determined that the total damage was more likely to be around \$30 billion.

Milton was the fifth most intense hurricane on record in the North Atlantic Basin - Hurricane Milton - NOAA Climate.gov, with wind

speeds that topped out at 180 mph when it was about a day from landfall.

Consistent with climate change predictions, Milton intensified in a very rapid manner, and 2024 was only the sixth year out of the past 74 when there was more than one Category 5 hurricane in the North Atlantic Basin.

Due in part to our warming water and warming air, a very powerful and deadly hurricane hit our region last fall. Unfortunately, storm seasons like 2024 are more likely to

See Pass, page 13

Condo Inventory Shifts to Buyers' Market

Price drops were not as sharp in the single-family home market, at least in Sarasota.

The region's housing inventory grew in January, as did the average time for sales, according to the Realtor Association of Sarasota and Manatee. That follows a trend over months as the market becomes more friendly to buyers.

The townhouse and condominium market in Sarasota County saw the median sales price drop 17.4%, to \$347,000, while the median sales price in Manatee County slid 6% to \$335,000. Meanwhile, both counties saw inventory grow significantly, to an 8-month supply in Manatee and an 8.5-month supply in Sarasota. Those supplies put the condo market arguably in the posture of a buyers' market.

Price drops were not as sharp in the single-family home market, at least in Sarasota where the median sales price on homes dropped 1% to \$529,750 compared to the prior January. But in Manatee, the median home price sunk 8.6% to \$480,000. The market appears closer to balance in single-family homes, which is generally considered a 6-month inventory. Manatee still has a 4.6-month supply of home listings, while Sarasota's supply should last about 6.4 months at current sales rates.

Across the Bradenton-Sarasota-North Port metropolitan area, the median time to contract for home sales grew to 47 days to contract and 90 days to sale, both increases since last year. For condos, median time to contract grew to 58 days while time to sale grew to 96 days.

Edge of Beauty



The tip of City Island looking toward the Ringling Bridge. Photo by Steve Reid

Red tide dissipates leaving beaches beckoning

Beaches on the Florida Gulf coast have seen a clean break from red tide in recent weeks, and rainfall last week helped usher in a clearing front.

Popular local beaches including on Siesta Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key and Anna Maria Island, have seen a noticeable number of tourists throughout February — although some beach trips were soured by a spotty red tide that appeared at times during the month.

Red tide's impacts on local beaches peaked during Presidents Day weekend, but have largely subsided, with the latest conditions reported in the area on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission site ranging from not present/background level to very low and low.

Now that rainfall from last week has cleared up, conditions are favorable for the beach in Sarasota and Manatee.

Red tide has been off the Gulf coast since hurricanes Helene and Milton last fall. The bloom lingered near the Lee and Collier County shores for much of this year until it drifted northward, carried by ocean currents, toward the Sarasota and Manatee county area in the week leading up to Valentine's Day.

However the bloom lost strength as it reached local waters, became patchy, and largely remained offshore from local beaches even though dead fish and some respiratory irritation was noticeable.

Satellite imagery published by the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, and water sample results published by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, largely indicate that red tide is not currently affecting most Gulf coast beaches, including those in Sarasota and Manatee.

Cloud cover from recent rains has hampered satellite imagery since Feb. 23, when imagery indicated some red tide could still remain a distance offshore but not near local beaches. Water samples collected between Feb. 24 and Feb. 26 found low levels of *Karenia Brevis*, the organism that causes red tide, in Tampa Bay. Very low levels offshore, but no impacts near local beaches themselves, were also confirmed.

Longboat Key holding Community Open House

Saturday, March 8 from 10:30am – 1:30pm
Free event at the Town Center Park (600 Bay Isles Road) Live music on stage, food trucks, local restaurants, civic organizations, non-profit organizations, businesses, houses of worship and more. Want to participate? E-mail your name, organization, e-mail & cell # to reserve space – you’ll need to provide your own display, table, and/or tent. sphillips@longboatkey.org

Early voting for the Town-wide General Election

will take place from March 3 to March 8, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at Town Hall (501 Bay Isles Road). This early voting period offers registered voters the opportunity to cast their ballots ahead of the official election day on March 11, 2025. On election day (March 11, 2025), voters must visit their designated precinct to vote. Questions? Contact the Town Clerk’s Office at 941-316-1999.

The Gulf of Mexico Drive, Country Club Shores Turn Lane Project has begun

Survey work was completed the week of February 24. Erosion control measures started February 27 and will continue until March 3. The FDOT contractor, Madrid, is requesting approval for night work starting March 10 and going for a few days to install concrete barriers and to remove the conflicting striping. Mid-March, Superior Asphalt, Inc., the construction contractor, should have the necessary permits to proceed. Soil disturbing activities are scheduled to begin in April.

Utilities Undergoing Project

All known electrical service conversions for the project are complete. Wilco Electrical is working to ensure that no additional connections need to be converted. The focus now is converting the remaining feeder lines and riser drops within Phases 3 & 4 and beginning clean up for the entire project. Once this is done, Wilco will repair all damaged streetlights and poles, complete remaining Phase 4 neighborhood streetlight installs, and begin installing new backlit street name signs and new light poles along the multi-use trail on the east side of Gulf of Mexico Drive. FPL is working on wreck-out of all existing electrical poles as utility equipment is removed.

Upcoming Public Meeting & Events

- March 3, 2025 1:00 pm Town Commission Regular Meeting
- March 11, 2025 7am-7pm Town-wide General Election
- March 24, 2025 9:00 am Statutory Meeting
- March 24, 2025 following Town Commission Special Meeting
- March 24, 2025 following Town Commission Regular Workshop



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Contact: Patrick DiPinto 941-323-0033



120' OPEN BAY FRONT | BIRD KEY
\$10,995,000 - Under Construction
4 Beds 5 Baths 5,292 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Patrick DiPinto 941-323-0033



3480 BAYOU SOUND | LONGBOAT KEY
\$4,499,999 - Newly Built Construction
5 Beds 4 Baths 4,000 Sq. Ft., Deeded Beach Rights
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



STEPS TO SANDY BEACH | LIDO SHORES
\$6,695,000 - Immediate Occupancy
5 Beds 6 Baths 4,750 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Patrick DiPinto 941-323-0033



3060 GRAND BAY BLVD UNIT 154 | LONGBOAT KEY
\$1,999,999 - Exceptional Views
3 Beds 4 Baths 2,369 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



WEST OF TRAIL BAYFRONT | SARAOSTA
\$9,750,000 - Under Construction
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



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



3927 SOMERSET DRIVE | SIESTA KEY
\$2,325,000
3 Beds 3 Baths 2,758 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Jules Mackie 773-704-14383



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



3318 BAYOU SOUND | LONGBOAT KEY
\$1,699,999
Bay Isles 3 Beds 2 Baths 2,675 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



3131 BAYOU SOUND | LONGBOAT KEY
\$2,299,999
3 Beds 3 Baths 3,023 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



PENDING
551 SOUTH POLK DRIVE | LIDO BEACH
\$3,749,000 - Canal Access & Boat Lift
Walk to St. Armands and Lido Beach
3 Beds 3 Baths 2,565 Sq. Ft.
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



PENDING
4844 BRYWILL CIRCLE | SAPPHIRE SHORES
\$1,699,000
3 Beds 3 Baths 2,672 Sq. Ft. with Casita
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.

Please vote Yes on pipeline loan referendum

To: Editor
On the March 11 General Election Ballot, you will be asked to approve up to a \$33,000,000 low interest State Revolving Loan to finance the replacement of the subaqueous wastewater line running across Sarasota Bay. The current pipeline is over 50 years old and in 2020 it developed a leak, releasing 14 million gallons of LBK’s sewage. This pipeline is the only

means of transporting our raw sewage to the treatment facility in Bradenton. It must be replaced and quickly. Doing nothing is not an option.
The pipeline replacement project will proceed in early 2026. The only question is how it will be financed. The proposed State loan is the lowest cost option and would save the Town anywhere from \$8 to \$21 million in interest payments compared to a traditional bond issue. However, the Town charter requires that voters approve the State loan.
Therefore, I would urge you to vote Yes on March 11 to approve the State Revolving Loan. Please also encourage your friends and neighbors to vote Yes.
Jim Haft
Longboat Key

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Longboat Key traffic

Don't get it, Jim
Very unlike Tal prior to being elected
Paul Hylbert
Longboat Key

Longboat Key traffic

To: LBK North Maureen Merrigan
Sorry to have missed this, Maureen. I will mention to the Manatee commissioners and discuss with John Chappie as well, to see if a joint message from our two communities can be crafted.
Sarah Karon
Commissioner,
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 6

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Letters, from page 4
Longboat Key traffic

To: Longboat Key Commissioners Sarah Karon, Debra Williams
I know you both serve on various Manatee County Committees, so wanted to bring to your attention L BK North Board’s communication with our Manatee County Commissioner, Tal Saddique (District 3), regarding traffic delays exacerbated by the parking lot designs at Coquina and Cortez Beach.
If we do not have a response from Commissioner Saddique or his staff within the next week, I would like ask each of you to follow-up with a call to his office. Thank you for (on behalf of L BK residents, visitors and workers),
Maureen Merrigan
L BK North

Longboat Key traffic
To: Manatee County Commissioner Tal Saddique
We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these traffic challenges and potential solutions to allow a more equitable egress off L BK for commuters/workers. Thank you in advance.
Maureen Merrigan, Paul Hylbert , Jim Haft, Jeff Driver
L BK North

Longboat Key North Learning Center
To: Deborah Dicarlo
Thank you for keeping the spotlight on our very important North End community space project. Tip and I will be meeting with Manatee Commissioners Kruse and Siddique on Feb 7, and I will report back to the NEST work group with a report on those discussions. All of us on the Town Commission are severely disappointed with the latest turn of events and dedicated to pursuing a solution to this long-unmet community need. Community comments like yours keep the momentum going strong in our direction.
Sarah Karon
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Longboat Key North Learning Center
To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
Thank you for your response, Ken. The NEST group remains committed as well. Let’s see what we can create together!
Deborah Dicarlo
Longboat Key

Longboat Key North Learning Center
To: Deborah Dicarlo
We on the Town Commission share your disappointment over the apparent shelving of Manatee County’s plan for the Whitney Plaza space. This was a joint effort among the Town, the County, the North End community and the landlord for years. Unfortunately, difficulties surrounding project costs became insurmountable after the 2024 storms further damaged the

property.
Rest assured that we remain committed to working with Manatee County and its agencies to find a home for the project we have all worked so hard to achieve. We continue to appreciate the leading effort by members of the North End community and will rely on your continued involvement.
Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Longboat Key North Learning Center
To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
I am a member of the North End Space Team (NEST) from Sleepy Lagoon, as you know, NEST, a dedicated team of individuals from north end neighborhoods has worked diligently to gather and organize community input and plan the layout of a much needed adult education, exercise, art and meeting place. Enthusiasm for this project exists throughout the population of north end neighborhoods who have many diverse needs for a community center of this kind.
I’m writing to let you know how disappointed I am in the decision made by Tal Siddique and Manatee County to abandon the current effort to create a community space on the north end of the Longboat Key. The step taken recently to end the lease at Whitney Plaza was a huge setback and the people I’ve spoken to in the Sleepy Lagoon neighborhood are deeply discouraged by this action. Furthermore, we were shocked to read it in the paper, rather than get this sad news ahead of time.
I’m concerned that there is so much focus on other projects on the island that this setback may completely derail this project. I respectfully request information about the kind of commitment the town has to continue this effort. When will the town meet with Commissioner Siddique to establish a partnership and a plan to create forward momentum on this initiative?
Deborah A. Di Carlo
North End Space Team

Longboat Key North Learning Center
To: Matthew Pifer
Dave Bishop tells me that you are the new President of the Buttonwood Harbor HOA. I have copied Susan Phillips at Town Hall with this email so she will put you on the HOA President’s list. The Town circulates information to its citizens thru the Presidents as it is not possible for us to send important info to each person individually. You are asked to share it with your HOA List. I will be forwarding an email to you from a separate mailing that the Town sent out earlier today. Please share this info with your community.
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Longboat Key

GMD Wires
To: Longboat Key Commission
Mayor Schneier had inquired about status/progress regarding the Bay Isles Parkway at GMD traffic signal. Below is the response Charlie Mopps received from our FDOT project contact:
See Letters, page 12

PLEASE VOTE YES ON PIPELINE LOAN REFERENDUM

On the March 11 General Election Ballot, you will be asked to approve up to a \$33,000,000 low interest State Revolving Loan to finance the replacement of the subaqueous wastewater line running across Sarasota Bay. The current pipeline is over 50 years old and in 2020 it developed a leak, releasing 14 million gallons of Longboat Key’s sewage. This pipeline is the ONLY means of transporting our raw sewage to the treatment facility in Bradenton. It must be replaced and quickly. Doing nothing is not an option.

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Therefore, I would urge you to vote YES on March 11 to approve the State Revolving Loan. Please also encourage your friends and neighbors to vote YES.

Jim Haft
761 Lands End Drive





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Spring and Soul, has Sprung at The Longboat Key Education Center

As the Civil Rights movement unfolded, black music, evolved from the controlled Motown performances to fiery cross rhythms sound—a little gospel, a lot of soul.

SUSAN GOLDFARB
Contributing Writer
goldfarb@lbknews.com

Private piano lessons, bridge, yoga, birding, nature walks, technology, Hollywood Icons Film Festival, meditation, watercolor, Jerome Robbins & Jule Styne, Bollywood Film Festival, Ted Talks, Joie De Vivre: Henri Matisse, Wisdom For Widows, The Dark Side Of The White House, Keeping Up With Technology, Bollywood Film Festival, What Kind of Communicator Are You? and many more!



GOLDFARB

The annual Lecture Series on Tuesdays from 3:00-4:30 pm, will continue with **BALANCING THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**(March 4) with Jon Thaxton, former three-term Sarasota County commissioner and conservation activist; **THE ENCHANTING AURORA**—How The Sun Influences the Night Sky (March 11) with astronomy lecturer Chap Percival; **A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT**—In Health and Disease (March 18) with gastroenterologist Dr. Isaac Kalvaria; and concluding with **THE ARTISTRY OF DANCE AND THEATRE PHOTOGRPHY** (March 25) presented by professional photographer Sorcha Augustine.

Sunday Performing Arts programs include the amazing **WESTCOAST BLACK THEATRE TROUPE** performing **MEN OF SOUL** Nate Jacobs, WBTT founder and artistic director, has created a rousing evening of hits celebrating the exciting music of the late 1960s.

As the Civil Rights movement unfolded, black music, evolved from the controlled Motown performances to fiery cross rhythms sound—a little gospel, a lot of soul. The passionate soloists, such as James Brown, Otis Redding, Jackie Wilson, and Sam Cooke, added energetic movements and unique vocalizations that inspired many future performers. The performance is generously sponsored by Sy Goldblatt, Longboat resident. Enjoy their legacies brought to life on



Men of Soul.

Sunday, March 9 from 7:30-8:30 followed by a champagne reception.

KALEIDOSCOPE—Chamber Music for Clarinet and Piano, performed by Jessé Martins, piano and Sergey Gutorov, clarinet, on Sunday, March 30 from 7:30-8:30 pm. These prominent musicians will take you on a musical journey around the world with stops in France with the music of Francis Poulenc, Germany with Carl Maria von Weber,

Italy with Giuseppe Verdi, Hungary with Béla Kovács, and Argentina with Astor Piazzolla. The program also includes the piece “Sholem-Alekhem, rov Feldman!” which is written in the Klezmer style. A champagne reception to meet the artists will follow.

The Education Center at Temple Beth Israel is located at 567 Bay Isles Road, Longboat Key. For further inquiries or to register, visit online at www.tbieducationcenter.org, email Admin@tbieducationcenter.org or call 941-383-8222.

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521WedgeLn.com

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LAmbianceL807.com

415 L'Ambiance Drive #A401
\$5,694,000 | Furnished
LAmbianceA401.com

415 L'Ambiance Drive #A801
\$7,500,000
LAmbianceA801.com

Regency House



435 S. Gulfstream Ave #1004 - \$1,128,000
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RegencyHouse1004.com

Tangerine Bay Club



350 Gulf of Mexico Drive #211 - \$1,078,000
3 Beds | 2.5 Baths | 2,394 sq. ft.
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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.

Feb. 1 Alarm

2:22 a.m.
Sgt. Montfort responded to Bayou Road for a residential burglar alarm. The homeowner stated an audible alarm could be heard with a basement motion activation. Sgt. Montfort arrived at the residence and made contact with the house sitter who said that he was “spooked” and requested law enforcement check his basement. Sgt. Montfort proceeded into the residence and checked the basement with negative findings. All windows and doors appeared secure which was relayed to the homeowner.

Suspicious activity

10:33 p.m.
Officer Maple and Officer Nazareno were dispatched to the 2400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a report of a suspicious person. Upon arrival, Officer Maple met with the person described by the complainant who was in the process of loading equipment onto his trailer. The person was a worker for a roofing company and was gathering his own supplies for another job in the morning. No crime was detected or was any criminal activity noted. Case clear.

Feb. 2 Alarm

7:29 a.m.
Officer Miklos was dispatched to 5900 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a burglary alarm. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with a man in a Dodge van in the driveway. He advised he was at the residence to repair drywall and said he had the gate and garage codes but did not know the interior alarm was set. Officer Miklos observed the drywall construction material in the garage as well as the truck. The man provided his phone and Officer Miklos spoke to the project manager. The project manager was able to verify the name and contact information of the owner. The man was provided the correct alarm code and was allowed to continue to work. Case clear.

Racoon

10:18 p.m.
Officer Tillman responded to the 4600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a reported animal problem. According to dispatch records a racoon had been on the fourth floor of the condominium for several hours. Officers called Manatee Animal Services who said that they would only respond to emergencies. Officers arrived on scene and located the racoon on the fourth floor. Officers were able to remove the racoon from the area using a 5-foot animal snare. The animal was returned back to the wild with only minor injuries. Case clear.

Feb. 3 Grouper

8:35 a.m.
Officer Ericsson was dispatched to Broadway on a dead Manatee washed up on the beach. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission was contacted and Officer Ericsson



responded to the area and located a large Goliath Grouper on the beach off North Shore Road. FWC Agent Hinds contacted Officer Ericsson and advised him of his findings.

Feb. 4 Civil dispute

2:20 p.m.
Officer Van Dyke responded to the 5400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a civil dispute. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke spoke with the complainant who advised the officer that her residence at Gunwale Lane was destroyed during hurricanes Milton and Helene, therefore she was put in contact with a man representing a resort. According to the complainant, the subject was recommended by a neighbor. The complainant stated she paid the man a \$7,000 check per a verbal contract to provide lodging at the resort. Ultimately, lodging was never provide and the man became uncooperative with the complainant when she asked for a refund of her \$7,000. The complainant was unable to address the matter until recently as she relocated to Michigan in the meantime. Officer Van Dyke advised the complainant that the matter is a civil one, therefore she must first contact the civil court to address the matter. Case clear.

Feb. 5 Alarm

4:25 p.m.
Officer Van Dyke responded to Schooner Lane in reference to a burglar alarm. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Van Dyke along with Officer Pescuma found the rear-sliding glass door to be unlocked. Officer Pescuma and Officer Van Dyke found the rear sliding glass door to be unlocked. They searched the interior/exterior of the home and did not find anyone at the residence nor observe any signs of criminal activity or unlawful entry. Case clear.

Feb. 6 Property

9:45 a.m.
Officer Ericsson was dispatched to Harbourside Drive on a reported property damage involving an access gate arm being struck by a vehicle. Upon arrival, Officer Ericsson contacted an employee at Bay Isles. The man said that at 9:45 a.m. the guard at the north gate was contacted by a man who advised the guard that his vehicle struck the gate at Harbourside Drive. The man told the guard that the shadows prevented him from seeing the gate clearly and he subsequently struck the gate arm, knocking it off the stand. The man added that the arm was the southbound lane, right arm and it was knocked off the stand and the wires were ripped from the housing. The man voluntarily gave the security guard his personal and vehicle information and the man went on his way. Case clear.

Feb. 7 Citizen assist

5:59 p.m.
Officer Nazareno was dispatched to the 5200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a citizen assist call regarding a group of fishermen using the beach chairs from a home next door to the caller’s property. Upon arrival, the fishermen advised that they were staying at the place next door and were told that they are authorized to use the beach chairs. Officer Nazareno advised them of the complaint and they returned the beach chairs to the property without incident.

Alarm

6:14 p.m.
Officer Maple was dispatched to the 2400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a fire alarm. Prior to arrival, Longboat Key Fire Department arrived on scene. The Fire Department personnel determined fire alarm to be a result of smoke from cooking and no emergency was present. No police assistance required. Case clear.

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4241 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#201	1,660	\$1,675,000	3	2	1	51	\$1,550,000
5655 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#D205	1,274	\$999,000	2	2	0	67	\$875,000
4440 EXETER DR Unit#301	1,168	\$669,000	2	2	0	94	\$657,500
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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 8

Our contractor, TCD, is still awaiting equipment procurement on several items. I can attest that lead times on signal equipment are extremely long. The ship date for the bulk of the material needed to complete work was pushed back by the vendor from 2/10-3/5/25. We are working on a plan to have TCD utilize equipment that FDOT, or other local agencies have on hand, while they await material delivery to get work done faster. Best case scenario would be that they will add crews and address major repairs within the next 2 weeks. Worst case would be they do not ramp up until late March when they have procured all the needed equipment. TO (Traffic Operations) put this all in perspective, District 1 issued Task for TCD to perform repairs on 378 intersections within the district. To date they have made 40% of the repairs. Majority of the repairs were for ineligible intersections, those with less than \$5000 worth of damage because those do not need federal approval before work begins.

The locations in Longboat Key both fall into the eligible repairs or over \$5000 worth of damage, which they have not made much progress on. After our conversation today, I emphasized a need to address Manatee County and Longboat Key intersections. They are to report early next week with a plan. I will forward to you once I have it.

Charlie will follow up once he receives FDOT’s plan of action noted just above. Charlie will also forward to FDOT information about an injury accident that occurred on the Parkway recently.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

GMD Wires

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman
As I told Tip on Monday, a neighbor of mine was injured last week (broken ribs) in an accident caused by a truck trying to navigate through the long west-bound line up on Bay Isles

Pkwy to enter the CVS lot. Please let FDOT know their delay is not without consequences. Thanks.

Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

GMD Wires

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
Sir, below is the email exchange that I had with FDOT about the signals. The bottom line is they are pressing the contractor to get this done sooner then later. I relayed our appreciation on keeping this a priority.

Charlie Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

GMD Wires

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
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Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key Public Works

GMD Wires

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
Great to see wires coming down today on GMD along the northern golf course. Thanks. Btw, any news from FDOT on fixing the traffic light GMD/Bay Isles Pkwy? Still have long lines backing up from GMD to Publix.

Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

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Midnight Pass, from page 1

occur over the next 30 years than was the case over the past 30 years. That doesn't mean 2025 will bring us a busy hurricane season. We might not have another year like 2024 for several years, or even several decades. But the likelihood of a hurricane season as busy as what we experienced in 2024 will be higher in the future than was the case in our recent past.

While Milton caused the deaths of literally dozens of Floridians, and tens of billions of dollars of damage to our state, it did have one redeeming feature – it reestablished the previously lost historical tidal connection between Little Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. But now, some four and a half months later, how is that pass doing?

Thankfully, Sarasota County has been monitoring the pass, and the SBEP has assisted by taking the data from those efforts and analyzing them for any underlying trends.

Every week, Sarasota County provides stakeholders with detailed information on the depth, cross sectional area and location of the pass. Their results are transmitted via a graph similar to the one shown below.

SBEP then takes these data and looks at the results to see if there is any evidence of a trend over time in any of the pass characteristics.

As of this week, there is no monotonic (or “simplistic”) trend in the depth of the inlet. The red line represents the mathematical equation that best explains the underlying data. Initially, there was a trend towards a shallower inlet, but that trend has reversed the last two months, and the pass is now trending to become deeper.

Over the same period, there is no evidence of a change in the cross-sectional area of the pass. It is highly variable, but the latest values show a pass that is now (as of this week) that is now the fifth largest value of out a total of 17 sampling efforts over the past four and a half months.

If you know the history of this pass, you know that the ultimate reason why it closed was because migrated north and started to erode the property of two residents. The SBEP takes the data from the County's surveys and plots out the location of the deepest location of the channel along a north-south axis. In this plot, lower numbers on the y-axis represent a northward migration -

Over the first two and a half months, this pass did indeed seem to be migrating northward, but that trend has somewhat reversed over the past two months.

As we pointed out in September of last year, inlets that are created by storms such as Hurricane Milton can stay open for years without human intervention, such as is the case with “Irma Pass” in Pinellas County - Director's Note: Midnight Pass - re-established, but for how long?. This does not mean that the reestablished Midnight Pass will also last multiple years, but it does mean that it is possible for that to occur.

At this point, Sarasota County has communicated to FDEP that they intend to maintain the newly established tidal connection between Little Sarasota Bay and the Gulf, and that they are moving forward with plans that would allow the tidal connection to persist over time. This would likely require some sort of “threshold-driven” maintenance dredging program. What the results – so far – suggest is that maintenance dredging might not be needed any time soon.

For those who want to see the pass from an aerial view, you can see a recent video from Sarasota County – available on a link via YouTube - Midnight Pass - YouTube.

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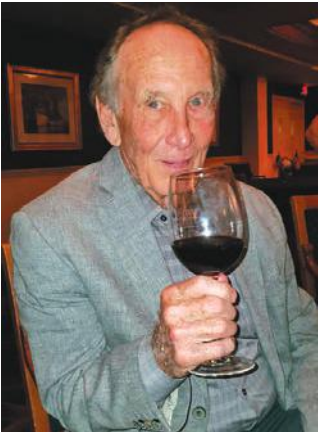
WineTimes

Wine Grape Transitions

As much as we revere the classic wine and food pairings, we have to recognize that clones of wine grapes have travelled worldwide and have taken root in countries lacking the food and wine traditions of their origins.

S.W. and Rich Hermansen
Guest Writers
wine@lbknews.com

Classic food-wine pairings have originated in areas that produce the ingredients for their own traditional cuisine, including grains, vegetables, fruits, cheeses, and beverages. Over hundreds of years, the pairings have evolved and improved. By no accident, Italians serve pasta with tomato sauce paired with Chianti or other light red wines made from the Sangiovese grape. The same goes for white wine from the Chablis region in Burgundy (Chardonnay) paired with escargot in a garlic butter sauce or Brie and Camembert cheeses, A Bordeaux Blanc (Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon) from Southwestern France with oysters, a Bordeaux red blend or a robust Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon paired with a strip sirloin steak, or a rack of lamb paired with a red blend of Syrah and Grenache in a Côtes du Rhône from the South of France or a Shiraz from Southeastern Australia. The



food and wine in these pairings have evolved over generations of chefs and winemakers and endured the test of time.

As much as we revere the classic wine and food pairings, we have to recognize that clones of wine grapes have travelled worldwide and have taken root in countries lacking the food and wine traditions of their origins. New food and wine pairings have evolved along with changes in winemaking practices.

The transition of Malbec, from its origins in Cahors in France, where it has the role as a varietal (primary grape) in local wine, and in neighboring Bordeaux, where it has a minor role as a blending grape in the more famous red Bordeaux, to the vast vineyards of Argentina, has promoted Malbec as a popular international competitor to red Bordeaux. The robust and hot (higher alcohol) version of Malbec coming out of Argentina pairs well with the grilled beef produced in the Pampas. The 2017 Salentein Finca La Pampa Single Vineyard Malbec (\$38) from the Uco Valley. Compare with 2015 Château de Mercuès Cuvée 6666 (\$65) from Cahors.

The Syrah grape from the Rhône region in Southern France transitioned to Southeastern Australia where it thrived and took on the name “Shiraz”. The bold red wine produced from these grapes pair well with the locally produced lamb chops and ribs: for example, the 2018 Château Tanunda Grand Barossa Shiraz (\$13), a great value.

The Sauvignon Blanc made a similarly successful transition to New Zealand from its native Bordeaux and Loire Valley in France. The grape quickly moved New Zealand from a minimal wine exporter to sixth place by value among all nations. The high acidity and tropical flavors of Sauvignon Blanc pair neatly with the Pacific seafood abundant in New Zealand.

The Chenin Blanc grape moved from the Loire region of France to South Africa in the 1600’s, where known by the name “Steen” it became the most planted grape variety.



Recently it has gained an international reputation for its quality and leads South African wine exports. Chenin Blanc has good acidity and a clean aroma that complements a wide variety of foods.

California Zinfandel originally from Croatia, Australian Tawny originally Port from Portugal, and New York and Canadian Ice Wines from Germany offer us other good examples of successful transplants from abroad. In some instances, grapes from Europe have crossed with domestic varieties to produce new varieties. The French Hybrids thrived on the east coast during the early days of the USA and later in the Midwest. The interesting wine variety Torrontés comes from the crossing of the Muscat of Alexandria and Mission grapes within Argentina. This wine has a floral nose, good acidity, and tropical fruit tastes similar to Sauvignon Blanc. It pairs well with light fin and shellfish, and with chicken dishes.

Wine grapes have proven to be highly adaptable to new environments. Many successful wine grape varieties have taken hold far away from their origins and have enriched their adopted countries.

S. W. Hermansen has used his expertise in econometrics, data science and epidemiology to help develop research databases for the Pentagon, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Agriculture, and Health Resources and Services. He has visited premier vineyards and taste wines from major appellations in California, Oregon, New York State, and internationally from Tuscany and the Piedmont in Italy, the Ribera del Duero in Spain, the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale in Australia, and the Otago Valley in New Zealand. Currently he splits time between residences in Chevy Chase, Maryland and St. Armand’s Circle in Florida.

Rich Hermansen selected his first wine list for a restaurant shortly after graduating from college with a degree in Mathematics. He has extensive service and management experience in the food and wine industry. Family and friends rate him as their favorite chef, bartender, and wine steward. He lives in Severna Park, Maryland.



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