



Longboat Key News

December 5, 2025

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Key lifesavers honored by Town ...page 3



Who really has the best serve? ...page 15



Bird Key soars on top with sale ...page 7



That dog cannot walk the beach! ...page 10

FAILURE TO ACT: St. Armands Flooding Crisis Threatens Regional Economy and Evacuation

The city's system repeatedly fails, leaving St. Armands streets impassable even after storms pass.

The critical failure of aging stormwater infrastructure on St. Armands Key is posing a devastating, region-wide threat to emergency preparedness and the economic health of Sarasota County.

The immediate solution hinges on securing a \$24.5 million federal grant for the St. Armands Resiliency & Flood Mitigation initiative, which the Sarasota County Commission will consider on

December 16th.

The city's system repeatedly fails, leaving St. Armands streets impassable even after storms pass. The St. Armands Residents Association
See Flood Money, page 2

Once Upon a Gala: Dreamers Academy Shines Brightly at the Westin Sarasota



Pam Bevilacqua, Deanna Rollyson, Briana Francois, Michelle Harkins, Jennifer Allen and Elizabeth McDonnell

The ballroom of the Westin Downtown Sarasota was transformed into a landscape of literary magic last night for the Dreamers Academy's "Once Upon a Gala." The annual event, a vital fundraiser for the Sarasota-based Spanish Immersion Charter School, brought together community leaders, educators, and supporters for an unforgettable evening dedicated to transforming students' lives through intensive literacy intervention.

The Passionate Leadership of Brianna François

The gala's resounding success was driven in large part by the energy and dedication of event Co-Chair Brianna François. While locally known at the Longboat Key Club Tennis Gardens for her energetic and passionate leadership of the tennis program, last night showcased her deep commitment to education.

Ms. François could be seen dart-

ing across every corner of the room, ensuring every detail was perfect, adding to the excitement, bringing friends together for photograph opportunities, and helping to run the spirited auction. Her efforts, combined with strong ticket sales, ensured the evening was a complete success.

In a touching display of community support, numerous Longboat Key residents who know Ms. François from the Tennis Gardens showed up dressed as literary characters, enjoying the gourmet food and celebrating one of Sarasota's most dedicated schools.

Specialized Intervention: An Educational Transformation

The funds raised directly support a remarkable educational mission. Dreamers Academy specializes in intensive literacy intervention, focusing on the approximately 600 students—many of whom enter the school below grade level in reading,

and the majority of whom speak English as a second language.

The school's innovative approach to language and education has been life-changing. Instead of students being labeled as special education candidates due to their reading difficulties, Dreamers Academy quickly moves the bar. In short order, the majority of these students not only reach grade level but, in many cases, gain skill levels that exceed the averages found in other elementary school programs across Florida.

Highlights and Community Investment

Head of Dreamers Academy, Dr. Cathy Rodriguez, and Founder Geri Chaffee addressed the attendees, underscoring the vital need for resources that support this successful model.

The gala's ambitious goal was to raise \$375,000 to support quality literacy interventions. These funds

See Dreamers, page 6

Sound Ordinance: Sarasota Adopts New Standards Amid Downtown Conflict

The Sarasota City Commission unanimously approved a key revision to the city's Sound Ordinance on December 1st, but only after a lengthy debate that highlighted the growing conflict between downtown's vibrant restaurant and music scene and the quality of life for its residents.

Speakers from both sides—including downtown condo residents complaining of noise reaching 90-decibel levels and business owners stressing the need for a "lively downtown Sarasota"—underscored the difficulty of balancing urban vitality with residential living. Ultimately, the Commission focused on an easily enforceable legal solution to mediate this ongoing

See Sound, page 2

The Longboat Loop: 81 and Back in the Driver's Seat

The familiar, guttural rumble of Detroit-engineered RPMs vibrated through the cockpit as Suzette Jones pulled the 1965 Corvette Stingray south onto Gulf of Mexico Drive and floored the engine.

Though Jones is 81 now, the sensation was instantly transporting. Fifty years ago, she had regularly raced a '64 Stingray, a relentless pursuit that earned her a fifth-place ranking on Michigan's state racing circuit.

"The fun part was shifting down and feeling the engine," Jones remarked, her eyes bright with the memory of speed.

Jones grew up on a farm in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Perhaps it was the legendary "Michigan grit," or the tough independence com-

See Corvette Joy, page 3

Flood Money, from page 1

recurring failure impacts far more than just island residents, arguing the crisis is a county-wide concern:

- Why This Investment is a Regional Necessity
- SARA President Chris Goglia is urging an unprecedented show of public support, stating that community leaders and residents must “scream from the mountaintops” to dispel the myth that this is a localized project. Key arguments supporting the full funding request include:
- **Federal, Not Local, Money:** The project is not subsidized by taxpayers in Venice, North Port, or unincorporated Sarasota County. The funds are federal dollars (CDBG-DR) intended “to repair, replace and enhance public infrastructure to mitigate future disaster risks.”
 - **County Responsibility:** Sarasota County is bound by an interlocal agreement to maintain the city’s stormwater system, yet SARA stresses the system “repeatedly fails to remove flood-water from our streets.”
 - **The Evacuation Route Crisis:** St. Armands is the only direct link (SR 789) between the mainland and Longboat Key, serving as the official hurricane evacuation route. Last year, flooded St. Armands streets rendered the route useless, forcing Longboat Key residents to evacuate via Manatee County—a critical failure of regional infrastructure.
 - **Economic Engine at Risk:** The barrier islands are a major economic engine for the entire county. People from all over Sarasota County rely on the islands for work (service providers, contractors, delivery drivers) and recreation (Lido Beach, dining, arts, and tourism).
 - **Resiliency Over Recovery:** SARA is not asking the county to stop hurricanes, but to invest in RESILIENCY so the community can “bounce back faster.” They warn that until these issues are addressed, home buyers and businesses will be hesitant to invest across the entire barrier island chain.

Critical Funding Hangs in the Balance

The \$24.5 million project—designed to provide 100 years of flood protection and safeguard the 140 businesses in St. Armands Circle—is considered all-or-nothing. Goglia warns that “partial funding is unlikely to solve our resiliency problem.”

The Sarasota County Commission is scheduled to consider the grant applications at its meeting on December 16th at 9 a.m. All regional stakeholders are being urged to attend to ensure this vital project, which impacts county-wide safety and commerce, is fully funded.

Sound, from page 1

- ing tension.
- The Commission’s Main Decisions
- After multiple failed attempts to reconcile competing interests (such as whether to keep the 11 p.m. or midnight cutoff for louder weekend noise), the Commission passed a motion centered on legal enforceability:
1. **Adoption of “Plainly Audible” Standard:** The basis for enforcing nighttime sound will now be a “plainly audible standard.” This means sound can be cited if a law enforcement officer can clearly hear it at a specified distance (100 feet from the source was discussed).
 2. **Legal Justification:** This standard mirrors a City of Miami Beach ordinance previously upheld by a federal appellate court, making Sarasota’s new regulation more likely to withstand the legal challenges that have plagued past ordinances.
 3. **Nighttime Hours:** Nighttime enforcement hours will begin at 11 p.m. on weekdays and midnight on Friday and Saturday nights.
 4. **Hiring a Sound Consultant:** The Commission also voted unanimously to hire an acoustical engineer/sound consultant to study the maximum decibel levels and potential solutions, including creating different noise zones across the city.

What Happens Next?

The revised ordinance passed on first reading and now requires a second reading, which is expected to take place in 2026. This next step will finalize the rules, while the consultant’s future work will provide the data needed to potentially adjust the rules down the line to better balance the needs of downtown residents and businesses.

The “Plainly Audible Standard” Explained

The “plainly audible standard” is a criterion used in sound ordinances that shifts the focus of enforcement away from complex, precise decibel readings and toward a simple, subjective determination: can the noise be clearly heard by a law enforcement officer from a specified distance?

Instead of relying solely on technical measurement equipment, this standard uses the officer’s own sense of hearing as the primary evidence. An officer stands at a defined distance from the noise source (in Sarasota’s discussion, this was often cited as 100 feet) and determines if the sound—including low-frequency bass sounds—is “plainly audible” or clearly discernible.



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Heroes on Court: Longboat Key Club Employees Honored for Saving a Life

A dramatic life-saving effort at the Longboat Key Club Tennis Gardens was celebrated last week at Town Hall, transforming what could have been a tragedy into a success story for the entire community.

Fire Chief Paul Dezzi formally honored four quick-acting employees—Alli Cruz, Kaci Melton, Katelinn Wurm, and Prakash Maraj—for their exemplary response to a severe cardiac event suffered by a Longboat Key resident while playing pickleball on May 15th.

The incident showcased not only the importance of accessible life-saving technology but also the swift judgment and preparedness of the resort staff.

The Critical Minutes

When the resident collapsed, the Tennis Gardens employees mobilized immediately. Their fast action centered on the prompt



deployment of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). An AED is a portable device that can analyze the heart’s rhythm and deliver an electrical shock to reestablish an

effective rhythm during cardiac arrest. The staff’s decisive action, initiating the AED sequence, was the critical first step. This was coupled with the extraordinary speed of

the Longboat Key Fire Department, which was able to arrive on the scene in under four minutes. The combination of immediate AED use and rapid professional medical intervention was crucial in preserving the individual’s life.

During the ceremony, Fire Chief Paul Dezzi presented the commendations, praising the employees for their calm under pressure.

Dezzi’s commendation states:

“In recognition of your exemplary actions and life-saving response. On May 15th, you immediately initiated an activated the tennis center’s automated external defibrillator when a guest experienced a medical emergency. Your swift judgment, calm professionalism, and commitment to the safety and well-being of others played a critical role in preserving life. Your actions exemplify outstanding preparedness, courage, and dedication to service. On behalf of Longboat Key Fire Rescue, we extend our deepest appreciation for your heroic efforts and commend you for your exceptional performance. You have brought great credit to yourself, your coworkers, and the resort at Longboat Key.”

Corvette Joy, from page 1



mon among that generation of farm families, but Suzette is, as her daughter Dawn Willoughby puts it, “extremely competitive.”

Dawn recounts a moment from her childhood when she and her brother were belted into the back seat, only to find their race car driver mom being challenged to an impromptu drag race on a two-lane highway.

“The kids yelled out ‘do it, Mom!’ and she did,” Dawn recalled. Jones’s own recollection is crisp: “I smoked them, and he turned early, and we never saw him again.”

The competitive spirit didn’t stop with four wheels. Jones also spent countless hours on her 350 Yamaha dirt bike and became the top women’s racquetball player in Grand Haven, Michigan, regularly besting the men in the region.

The Happenstance of Speed

Jones’s intoxicating drive down the sunny Florida highway was the result of a happy accident. Longboat Key resident Paul Karon, the owner of the ‘65 Stingray—a near-perfect match for Jones’s old ‘64, save for the added louvers—was watching a tennis tournament at the Cedars club last weekend. He was there to see his friend, Steve Willoughby (Suzette’s son-in-law and one of the island’s top players).

While chatting with Steve’s wife, Dawn, and her visiting mother, Paul realized he was talking to a genuine racing legend. When Suzette gazed longingly at the sleek vehicle, Karon didn’t hesitate. “Hey, take it for a spin,” he offered.

Off she went, from Cedars to Publix and back, shedding decades with every push of the accelerator.

The Roar of Memory

The drive was exhilarating. As Jones opened up the engine, all of time and life seemed to evaporate. She was instantly back in the driver’s seat of her youth, revving the engine, ignoring the speed limit, and aggressively shifting up and then down just to hear that magnificent roar.

Ironically, Dawn and Steve have since retired to this sunshine paradise. When asked if she considers joining them, Jones laughed, recognizing the obvious temptation.

“If I retired here,” she mused, the thought lingering like exhaust fumes, “it would open up the opportunity to roar up and down Gulf of Mexico Drive. I might just have to get my own

‘64 or ‘65 Corvette.”

It seems that for Suzette Jones, the fastest way to travel is not forward, but 50 years into the past—and it only takes a legendary car and an open stretch of Longboat Key pavement to get there

Her daughter Dawn added that you have to understand her mother. “Her advice in life is if someone asks if you want to drive her Corvette or park a shark you say ‘yes.’”

And that advice has stuck with Dawn. Dawn retired as COO of Clorox company, no small accomplishment and certainly must have taken a different kind of drive to get there.

Suzette heads back to the freezing cold and nightmarish ice of Michigan this week but her deja vu drive in Paul Karon’s Corvette has planted both a seed and brought back memories.

Now, when she comes down to visit her daughter, it may not just be passively watching tennis and eating out, it likely will include lead-footed mayhem in a very controlled and precise and professional way on Gulf of Corvette Drive.

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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.

Country Club Shores Turn Lane Project

To: Editor
 I'm wondering when Polymarket or one of the other prediction/betting websites will post an over/under date on the first vehicle to launch into one of the newly established flower beds or worse, veer off GMD all together after contact. There are already tire marks on some of the fresh curbs. Given the primary demographic of the Key, I cannot understand why they didn't simply establish a middle lane with lined guidance to aid turning. Like all residents, I have been looking forward to the town reestablishing the historic cutoffs for the 35mph to 45mph transition going north. When that does occur, I'm sure it will be short lived. After the first incident I'm sure it will be reduced to back to 35mph or even lower. Hopefully there are no serious injuries when the first incident occurs.
 Mike Donnelly
 Longboat Key

Responsibility

To: Editor
 Readers may remember that President Jimmy Carter appeared on nationwide TV to take full responsibility for a failed attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran on in April 6,1980. Carter did this because, as a former Naval Officer, he understood that leaders can delegate authority but not responsibility and that he, as President of the United States, therefore bore full responsibility for the catastrophic disaster in the Iranian desert the previous night.
 Now, however, we have a president who refuses to accept responsibility for the fact that our military forces shot and killed Venezuelan drug runners in the Gulf of Mexico when they were in the water and posed no further threat to anyone after a previous American missile strike blew up their boat. Although Trump and Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, had authorized a

Navy admiral to make the attack, the President and the Secretary are responsible for violating international law because responsibility cannot be delegated.
 Allan Gehring
 Bradenton

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: Scott Seabaugh
 Thanks so much for the update and I'll check it out tomorrow.
 Scott Tonnesen
 Longboat Key

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: Scott Tonnesen
 I wanted to provide you with a follow-up regarding the tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound. Our mangrove and waterway maintenance provider has advised that their crew was on site yesterday and trimmed the tree back into alignment with the surrounding mangroves, reducing it by approximately ten feet. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any remaining concerns or observe any further issues in this area.
 Scott Seabaugh
 General Manager Bay Isles Association, Inc.
 Longboat Key

See Letters, page 5

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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 4

there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Scott Seabaugh
General Manager Bay Isles Association, Inc.
Longboat Key

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop, Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
I think we can work through these disconnects. I'd like to correct one statement though: the Perimeter Channel and the Private Waterways are the domain of Bay Isles Master Association with the exception of the Key Club owned sections as denoted on the Property Appraisers map. This is clearly documented in the governing documents of Bayou and Bay Isles but had been ignored until five years ago. Since that time, Bay Isles has been trimming the mangroves on both sides of the waterways. Bay Isles is also responsible for the shoreline up to the property line of the Bayou homeowner. One exception: Bayou owners who construct docks in the channel must maintain the areas of their docks.

To correct the fallen tree issue in the waterway, I will ask Scott Seabaugh of Bay Isles to have the tree removed. This is allowed under the Florida Tree Law. Compensation for removing the tree is another issue and I trust whoever caused the tree to fall will provide reimbursement.
David E. Novak
Longboat Key

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
Thank you Charlie
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: David Novak
The Commissioner is correct. You may want to get Neil involved, he has the backstory. We had meeting to discuss the maintenance of that area in July of 2024. I attached an email from back then to help with this understanding. The area highlighted in blue is part of Bay Isles responsibility to maintain.
Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: David Novak
Bayou Sound owns the property on the Buttonwood side of the canal. They have not maintained (Bayou) property in decades. Next to Bayou property is Town property. No homes are under construction on Longview at this time. If there is a tree in Bayou Canal the canal is the Bayou's. There is no management company for Buttonwood.
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
Charlie, I do not have firsthand information on the situation below, and I would normally contact the management company for Buttonwood. But apparently management has changed. Can you assist in determining the danger to Mr. Tonnesen's property and how the situation can be best relieved?

I have copied Scott Seabaugh, manager for the Bay Isles Association, who maintains the perimeter channel.
David E. Novak
Longboat Key

Tree in the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound

To: David Novak
I've been meaning to let you know that there's a tree hanging down into the canal between 3131 and 3121 Bayou Sound coming from the other side of the canal probably from

the workers working on houses in Buttonwood. My concern is this could cause a boat accident. We've already had 2 boats hit into our boat lift so they could avoid hitting the tree. Can you please have the town remove that tree before anyone gets hurt.
Scott Tonnesen
Longboat Key

Happy December

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission
Today I'm reaching out with recent tourism data to share. Below you'll find October information along with data for FY25.
October tourism metrics in Sarasota County reflect lingering distortions from Hurricanes Helene and Milton in 2024 where recovery workers and displaced residents created unusual patterns in occupancy and spend. We are seeing and hearing optimism from our industry for the season ahead.
October numbers comparing 2025 to 2024:
Visitors were 93,600 compared to 86,600 in 2024
Visitor direct expenditures were \$93,760,000 compared to \$81,713,200 in 2024
Lodging occupancy was 46.6% compared to 49.2% in 2024

Lodging average room rate was \$245.15 compared to \$182.65 in 2024
There were 191,200 room nights sold compared to 197,100 in 2024
And hot off the presses – FY25 annual numbers.
A few notes about the FY:
Visitation metrics for FY 2025 were influenced by hurricanes and hurricane recovery. October-December visitors included recovery workers, displaced residents, and those who came to check on properties. These visitors may stay longer and have different spending behaviors than a more typical mix of leisure and business travelers.
The number of visitors decreased from FY 2024, resulting in a decrease in direct spending and a decrease in economic impact.
Room rates increased from FY 2024, but occupancy decreased resulting in a tempered increase in RevPAR. Though RevPAR increased, TDT collections decreased from FY 2024 due to a decrease in the average number of available units.
Though total visitation was down compared to FY 2024, the number of visitors from the Central Europe and Other

See Letters, page 11

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Dreamers, from page 1

are essential for providing:

- Curated Books: Purchasing over 120 books for each student’s daily at-home reading.
- Specialized Instruction: Funding the intensive, evidence-based literacy programs that fuel their students’ rapid progress.

The “Once Upon a Gala” was more than a fundraiser; it was a powerful celebration of a school that is rewriting the story for hundreds of Sarasota children, proving that with dedicated support and innovative methods, every child can be a successful reader.



Kimberley Pelyk and Briana Francois



Anthony Bevilacqua , Pam Bevilacqua and Jennifer Allen



Xander Francois (first gifted student at Dreamers who is in the 4th grade), Katelinn Wurm(Dreamers Gala Committee Member) Isabella Francois (8th grade student SSAS, volunteered with Dreamers Academy 4 years) Selling bracelets for the Lipstick Lexie Live Painting, proceeds went to Literacy Program.

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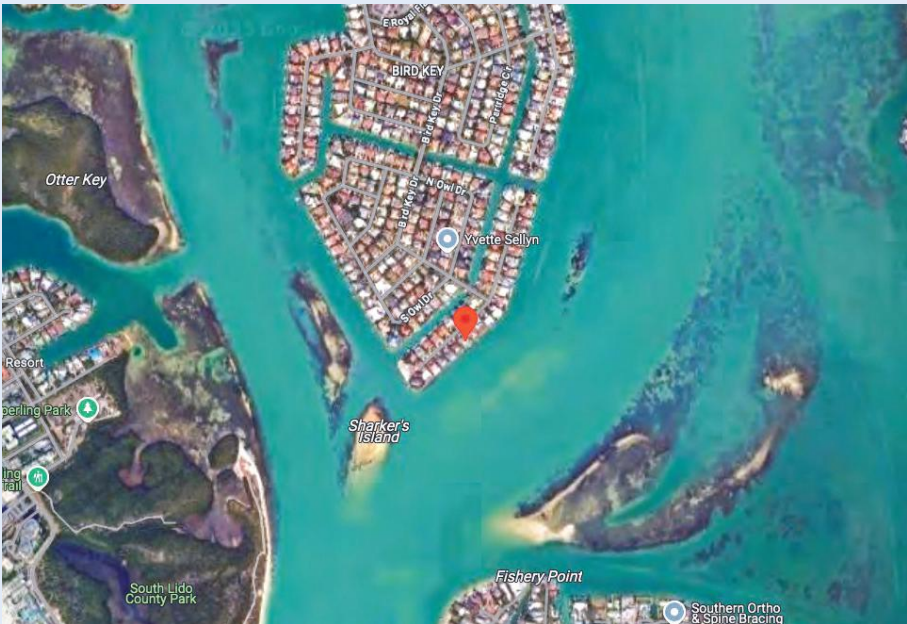


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Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath			Days On Market	Sale Price
1211 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#309	1,827	\$1,799,000	2	2	0	224	\$1,770,000
1211 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#408	1,827	\$1,495,000	2	2	0	16	\$1,450,000
3115 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#304	1,433	\$1,500,000	3	2	0	6	\$1,400,000
4545 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#408	1,398	\$1,125,000	2	2	0	8	\$900,000
1211 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#105	1,598	\$899,000	2	2	0	296	\$800,000
4900 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#204	1,312	\$700,000	2	2	0	0	\$700,000
531 EDLEE LN	1,391	\$595,000	3	2	0	220	\$545,000
661 MOURNING DOVE DR	4,618	\$7,900,000	4	4	1	18	\$6,800,000
2050 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR Unit#A1001	3,242	\$2,999,900	3	3	1	32	\$2,350,000
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BIRD KEY • SARASOTA
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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.

Nov. 28
Citizen Assist

11:09 a.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to Fair Oaks Lane and met with the complainant who informed about a suspicious vehicle in the yard. Upon arrival, Officer Maple met with the neighbor who said that the black Chevy Silverado belonged to workers cleaning her boat into the backyard. She requested to cancel the call. After confirming the situation with the complainant, Officer Maple determined that no law enforcement action was needed and departed the area at approximately 11:20 a.m. Case clear.



Nov. 29
Property

11:00 p.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to a vehicle crash with injuries call that was updated to a property damage incident at the 200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Upon arrival, Officer Maple observed a white Honda Civic on the roadside with a gray car behind it. Both occupants were outside the vehicles. Officer Maple spoke with the driver of the white vehicle who provided his Florida Driver's License and confirmed his identity. He said that as a newer driver, he lost control of his car when his right front tire slipped off the road and bumped the right rear corner of his car into a palm tree causing minor fender damage and a tire to lose air pressure. The damage to both the vehicle and the tree was minor. There was no debris left on the roadway, and no further law enforcement action was required. Officer Maple allowed the man to use his air compressor to inflate the tire, and he departed the area without incident. Case clear.

Nov. 30
Noise

10:49 a.m.

Officer Nazareno was dispatched to Linley Street for a noise ordinance violation regarding construction noise on Sunday. Upon arrival, Officer Nazareno was able to hear power tools being used by a building company as he stood in the driveway. Officer Nazareno made contact with the business owner and advised him that he was in violation of the sound ordinance. The business owner immediately stopped work and was issued a written warning. The caller didn't wish to be seen or contacted. Case clear.

Animal

3:30 p.m.

Officer Martinson while on patrol on Greer Island Beach when he observed a man walking a small white dog on the beach. Officer Martinson advised the man that dogs weren't allowed on the beach. The man apologized and stated he would put the dog back on his boat. Case clear.

Fishing

7:25 p.m.

Officer Miklos was dispatched to 7000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a juvenile disturbance due to a group of men climbing down the bridge to fish. Sarasota Sheriff's Office dispatch advised the caller was a passer by who did not wish to meet with police. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with two separate groups of fishermen who advised that there was a group of fishermen who climbed down the bridge. Officer Miklos made contact with the bridge tender who advised she was unaware of the situation. The bridge tender and Officer Miklos conducted a check and located three male fishermen. The bridge tender advised them that they couldn't be under the bridge and showed them the correct location where they could fish. The bridge tender did not wish to have the group removed from the bridge or any further police action. Case clear.

Dec. 1
Civil

1:28 p.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to the police department on a report of a walk in complaint regarding a neighbor dispute. The complainant requested a walk in meeting with his neighbor whom he identified to Officer Troyer. The man said he was having an issue with the neighbor whom was the HOA Vice President. The man reported he recently purchased a unit at the condominiums located at the 1700 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The man said his condominium was under construction and his neighbor happened to be the Vice President of the HOA. The man was having

issues where the neighbor was harassing the man's construction employees, and going into the man's apartment uninvited, which the neighbor said he was trespassing, but one of the construction workers did. The man said he wasn't sure how to proceed but he was looking to have a police report because he wanted to address the HOA on the man's behavior and needed some sort of backing to support his claim. Officer Troyer provided the man with information pertaining to Florida State Statute in regards to trespassing laws and advised him to speak with the man about his behavior. Officer Troyer provided the man with a case report number. Case clear.

Animal

4:29 p.m.

Officer Ericsson was dispatched to the 5600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on a report of an injured pelican. Upon arrival, Officer Ericsson was met by the caller who advised an injured pelican hanging from its leg on a dock behind the 5600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Officer Ericsson responded to the 5600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive and located a pelican hanging upside down from a boardwalk. The pelican was hanging from its leg which was entangled in fishing line. A closer look revealed fishing line wrapped around its body and leg. Officer Ericsson was then able to cut all the fishing line from the pelican's body and leg, but it appeared to be unable to fly. Officer Ericsson was then able to cut all of the fishing line from the pelican's body and leg, but it appeared to be unable to fly. Officer Ericsson wrapped it up in a blanket and transported it to Save Our Seabirds. Case clear.

Dec. 2

Found property

2:51 p.m.

Sgt. Montfort was dispatched to the parking lot of Bay Isles Parkway for a found property call for service. The caller stated she had located a wallet in the parking lot of Publix and was not sure how to handle contacted the owner of the wallet. Sgt. Montfort arrived on scene and was greeted by the woman who turned over the wallet to Sgt. Montfort. The wallet contained an Illinois Driver's License, Mastercard, Visa, \$540 in U.S. currency and two blank checks. Sgt. Montfort conducted a search which yielded negative results. Sgt. Montfort observed a business card for a cleaning service and made contact with a woman who stated she does clean the man's residence but due to a language barrier, she was unable to provide the address. The woman did provide the officer with the phone number which he called and left a voicemail. He then proceeded to conduct a Sarasota Tax map search which revealed the man owned as residence with the address. Sgt. Montfort proceeded to the address he located and made contact with the man who was unaware he had lost his wallet. The man located and made contact with the man who was unaware he had lost his wallet. The man completed and signed a property receipt. Sgt. Montfort then returned to service without incident. Case clear.

Animal

4:49 p.m.

Officer Ericsson was dispatched to the 5500 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on an animal problem involving two pit bull dogs loose in the area. Upon arrival, Officer Ericsson contacted three local Longboat Key Public Works employees who were with two pit pull dogs. The workers stated they attempted to return the dogs to the owner but there was nobody home. Officer Ericsson was able to locate the owner's phone number from a previous report. Officer Ericsson contacted the man by phone. The man stated he was 45 minutes from his house, but asked if they would tether the dogs in the yard to leashes that were in place. With the help of public works employees, the two dogs were returned home and secured into the yard. Case clear.

Dec. 3

Citizen assist

6:28 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to the 5100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on a call of a suspicious vehicle. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson called the woman who was not on scene. The woman stated she owned a unit in the condominium complex and her cleaning lady contacted her saying there was a strange vehicle parked in the parking lot. The woman said she knew another owner was going to be arriving later this evening and she didn't want her neighbor arriving into a potentially dangerous situation. Officer Martinson was then approached by a man in the parking lot. The man stated the white Dodge Caravan was his vehicle and he had been on the property all day doing work. Officer Martinson observed numerous tools and other construction equipment in the back of the van and the man's clothes and hands were visibly dirty as if he had been working. The man stated he was hired by a condominium board treasurer to fix the shut off valves to the pool showers. The man showed Officer Martinson he had emails and text messages from the treasurer about the work that needed to be done around the complex. The woman also knew the code to get into the back building. Case clear.

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 5

International regions increased.

New York City remains the top market for out-of-state visitors, and Orlando remains the top market for in-state visitors staying paid accommodations.

The share of visitors who used of personal social media to plan their trips increased from FY 2024.

More visitors who recalled advertising report being influenced by the messaging they saw. The percentage of those that saw promotions on personal social media increased compared to FY 2024.

More visitors flew into Sarasota County this year than in FY 2024. As always – if you have thoughts or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. Also, if there are data points we are not currently sharing that you'd like to see – please let me know and we'll do our best to accommodate.

Erin Duggan
President/CEO
Visit Sarasota

Property tax reform information

To: Longboat Key Commission

As a follow up to the property tax exemption discussions and scenarios analyses we had on Nov. 10, 2025, our Finance group produced additional information based on independent inquiries from a couple of commissioners. The information is good and relevant to all regarding the overall topic. As such, please see below and attached as we continue to monitor, evaluate, and plan over the course of the 2026 state legislative session.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Property tax reform information

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon

It was nice speaking with you this afternoon and we appreciate all your efforts.

I updated a few slides from the November Workshop (PowerPoint presentation attached). Slides 7 and 8 show the revenue losses for both a \$500,000 super exemption and a \$100,000 exemption.

There are also the slides that show the impact if we had to cut budgets 20%,40%, 60% and even 80%.

I also checked these numbers for you:

The FY26 Police/Fire and Emergency Expenditure Budgets are \$14.1 million total. This divided by \$24.1 million adopted budget = 58% Public Safety

75.46% of the General Fund Budget is funded by Property Tax.

The second attachment is an analysis of a \$500,000 super exemption (Blue columns) while keeping public safety intact. So when we keep public safety whole, all other budgets must be reduced \$2.2 million which is approximately a 21% cut to each department. For a \$100,000 exemption (beige columns), also keeping public safety intact, we have to cut \$272,834 and that is about 2% cuts to each department, the latter being much more tolerable.

But we also need to keep in mind, that in next year's budget, Fire and Police have contractual wage increases, state dictated FRS adjustments (usually increases), and defined benefit pension contributions that must be met. So that can only mean that the other budgets will suffer by larger cuts. There are other fixed costs that must be met like property and liability insurances which are on the rise.

While somewhat unrelated, I want to mention another potential big liability that must be funded due to recent legislative changes.

The Heart and Lung Act is going to cost government, amounts we can't even conceive, under the workers compensation laws. It basically presumes that certain health conditions are work related. Any hypertension claim is deemed as a result of a workplace injury and must be covered under workers compensation for the life of the employee. We must pay all their medical bills and expenses incurred due to the injury, which will further increase the overall cost of workers compensation. If there are any related illness (such as diabetes) that have a correlation to the injury we could be paying for that employees healthcare for life under workers comp instead of a normal Medicare claim. And people are living a lot longer. We will also need experienced attorneys who specialize in workers' compensation law.

Property tax reform is not a one size fits all. We are very fiscally responsible as shown in the comparison mill rate slide. And we even put a taxation limit on ourselves with a Charter requirement of 5 mill limitation vs the State's 10 mill limit. There is a lot here. Let me know if you need anything else.

Susan Smith
Finance Director
Town of Longboat Key

\$25 Million Stormwater Project

To: St. Armands Residents Association President Chris Goglia

I will try to make the 12/16 meeting. What can you say about the likelihood of the \$25mm project solving the problem? That may be a part of the key.

Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

\$25 Million Stormwater Project

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

See Letters, page 12

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 12

removal) further shows road areas. The LBK jurisdiction is further evidenced by the new pavement limits and to me it represents the LBK understanding of maintenance limits.

The neighbor’s access is simply a private driveway only. Maybe the neighbor had it staked?
Larry A. Lackey, Jr.
President, L&T Engineering Group, Inc.
North Port

Right of way Issue 755 Saint Judes Dr N

To: Larry Lackey
Sir, I am including the Town Manager, the Assistant Town Manager, the Town Clerk and the Director of the Planning, Zoning and Building Department.
As for the sign, that was placed upon request of your neighbor to the west, who was not getting any of the packages from Amazon or other like vendors. According to the below, it was placed in the Right of Way and not on your property. The warranty deed and the Manatee County Property Appraisers’ web site confirm this. I researched and also asked the Town Clerk to look into if any portion of the Right of Way was vacated to your property, extending the ownership to the Edge of Pavement. I have asked Mark to remove the sign and relocate it to the Corner of St. Judes and the unpaved section to continue to ensure your neighbor gets his packages.
As for the Temporary Easement stakes, Public Works is not involvement in their placement. I have checked with my entire team. This is why I have included Allen, the Director of Planning, Zoning and Building, he may know the reasoning behind their placement. I also attached the second email for everyone’s shared knowledge. I hope this helps clear up the situation.
Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

Right of way Issue 755 Saint Judes Dr N

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
Hi Charlie, We have tried with no success to communicate with your team regarding your department’s placement of a sign in our yard area. My initial talk with Mark Richardson yielded that he was “going to get with his boss”. In short, his team
Hi Charlie,
We have tried with no success to communicate with your team regarding your department’s placement of a sign in our yard area. My initial talk with Mark Richardson yielded that he was “going to get with his boss”. In short, his team placed an address sign outside of the maintained roadway at our home. We have now discovered that there are survey markers noting a “proposed 20’ easement” placed on our yard. I have made several follow-up calls to Mark and also highlighted the need to discuss this issue with Julie at your office, as well as have left Mark messages, with no response. This has gone on for several weeks. I noted also to Mark that we have architectural house plans in place to rebuild while at the same time trying to salvage the existing house as an option “Plan B”.
None of this sign placement work was discussed with us, at least as a courtesy which would be expected. I trust you will contact me and perhaps arrange a site meeting to have an understanding of the LBK position, as well as to have involvement in any intentions. We lost our home from the hurricanes last year at this address, and we are fervently endeavoring to get back home (we are renting off-island). The stress of this loss alone as you may understand causes emotional hardship on our family; (as I’m sure you understand, along with others in our community.) I highlight that we don’t consider ourselves unique or special. Note this is our primary and permanent residence. I trust you can understand that the passive approach and lack of communication from LBK to us certainly adds to our emotional overload. I also trust you will contact me to schedule a meeting with me and my wife, along with the Town Manager.
Larry A. Lackey, Jr.
President, L&T Engineering Group, Inc.
North Port

Right of way Issue 755 Saint Judes Dr N

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
I went to my house again today. You guys set permanent markers with rebar set for the proposed 20 ft easement. Typically a proposed easement would be set by temporary placement

markers like a hub and tech. You guys set permanent rebar! I do not want this to be litigious but you guys are really pushing this.
Larry A. Lackey, Jr., PE
President, L&T Engineering Group, Inc.
North Port

Affordable Housing

To: Sarasota City Manager Dave Bullock
Thanks!
Debbie Trice
Mayor
City of Sarasota

Affordable Housing

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice
We’ll meet with him.
Dave Bullock
City Manager
City of Sarasota

Affordable Housing

To: Sarasota City Manager David Bullock
Just in case this hasn’t already been forwarded to you.
Debbie Trice
Mayor
City of Sarasota

Affordable Housing

To: Sarasota City Commission
My name is Paul Dibert, I’m a member of troop 23 and currently I’m working on my citizenship in community merit badge. I have to interview someone from our local Sarasota government about the issue of affordable housing. Who could I contact about this and could you send me their contact information?
Paul Dibert
Sarasota



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BreakPoints

The Unreturnable Ace: Who Has the Best Serve in Professional Tennis and Why?

The serve is arguably the single most important shot in professional tennis. It's the only stroke a player has complete control over, acting as the ultimate weapon that dictates the flow of the point.

While many players rely on a rock-solid serve, a few have elevated it into an art form—or, more accurately, a physics problem for their opponent.

So, who owns the title for the best serve in professional tennis right now? The answer depends on whether you value pure speed, strategic placement, or consistent execution.

Speed Limit: Unofficial vs. Official Records

When we talk about raw power, we're talking about pure velocity. The fastest recorded serve of all time belongs to Sam Groth, who blasted a terrifying serve clocked at 263.4 km/h (163.7 mph) during a Challenger event in Busan, South Korea in 2012. However, because the technology used at lower-tier Challenger events is not standardized, the ATP Tour does not officially recognize this speed.

The official record, recorded at a top-level ATP or Davis Cup event, belongs to the towering American, John Isner, who hit 253.0 km/h (157.2 mph) during a 2016 Davis Cup tie.

The Pure Speed Kings: The Gentle Giants

Regardless of the official record, the giants of the game dominate the conversation. Isner, who leads the all-time Ace count with over 14,000, and his spiritual successor, Hubert Hurkacz, leverage their immense height (both 6'10" or taller) and power. Hurkacz blends massive speed with unexpected kick and slice angles, ensuring his consistent, high-ranking ace count. This height advantage means the ball clears the net at a shallower angle than shorter players, giving the opponent significantly less time to react and translating a physical gift into an unreturnable weapon.

The All-Time Master of Precision: The Swiss Maestro

While no longer competing, no discussion of the best serve is complete without mentioning Roger Federer. His serve wasn't the fastest, but it was arguably the most efficient, versatile, and deceptive serve in history. The gold standard of his serve was its perfect disguise: Federer's motion was so identical for slices, kicks, and flat serves that opponents could not predict the direction or spin until the ball was already in

flight. He rarely hit the exact same spot twice, constantly targeting the "T" and wide angles, making him unpredictable. Crucially, it was his ultimate safety valve, consistently showing up when he needed it most, allowing him to win easy points and conserve energy.

The Current Best Overall: The Strategic Edge

If the title goes to the player whose serve is the most balanced, consistently gets them out of trouble, and is virtually unbreakable on the biggest points, the crown belongs to Novak Djokovic or perhaps the next generation's standout, Jannik Sinner.

Novak Djokovic: The Unbreakable Foundation

Djokovic isn't known for blazing 140 mph serves, but his ability to hold serve is unmatched. His greatness lies in the mental and technical aspects: he almost always hits his targets, keeping his first serve percentage incredibly high. Crucially, his second serve is fast, placed aggressively, and protects him from break points better than almost anyone.

It's a rock-solid foundation for his defensive dominance.

Jannik Sinner: The Rising Power

Sinner represents the evolution of the modern serve: a blend of immense power with intelligent tactics. He uses his flat serve to generate exceptional pace, and his ability to hit both the "T" and the wide slice with authority makes him unpredictable. His serve is currently one of the most difficult to read and return effectively on tour.

The Verdict: Power Meets Precision

While players like Isner and Hurkacz own the fastest and most punishing serves, the title of the best serve must go to the player who can win free points while simultaneously setting up the next shot, minimizing errors, and excelling under pressure.

The most impactful and strategically superior serve in today's game belongs to Novak Djokovic (for sheer consistency and pressure-handling) and, rapidly climbing that list, Jannik Sinner (for balanced power and pin-point accuracy).

The serve is not just about power; it's about owning the rhythm of the match—and these champions demonstrate that week after week.

KeyCrossword

Echoes

Edited by Linda and Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 La Scala locale
- 6 Tizzy
- 10 Maugham's "Cakes and _____"
- 13 _____ of Pigs
- 16 Isaac of sci-fi
- 18 Wit
- 20 TN ball player
- 21 Kim's ex-spouse
- 23 Japanese mother?
- 25 Type of Asian rug
- 27 Unique person
- 28 Colombian city
- 29 Parsley cousin
- 31 A Polynesian people
- 32 Boa constrictor
- 35 Bell town taboo?
- 37 Peter Martins's milieu
- 40 Weasel relatives
- 42 "The Plague" setting
- 43 Dutch conductor de Waart
- 44 Sugarloaf Mountain city, briefly
- 46 _____ buco
- 47 "Have you _____ wool?"
- 48 Surgeon's org.
- 51 Texas dullard?
- 55 Old hat
- 57 Actress Claire and a Polynesian deity
- 58 "Lord's Prayer" close
- 59 Galaxies
- 61 Diane Sawyer specialty
- 63 German songs
- 65 Probe
- 67 General meaning
- 68 English actor Noël
- 71 WY county seat
- 73 Beach house
- 74 In reserve
- 75 Cheesecake
- 76 Shrew
- 78 Play times
- 80 Jud Fry portrayer
- 82 PDQ, politely
- 86 Biblical verb ends
- 87 Large sharks
- 89 South Sea Islands monkey?
- 91 "_____ Hear a Waltz?"
- 92 Evergreen
- 93 Ideal of Hindu womanhood
- 95 Reg. east of the Yukon
- 96 Ignited
- 97 Pinball infraction

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12		13	14	15			
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