



Longboat Key News

September 1, 2023

Serving Longboat Key, St. Armands, Downtown Sarasota & Anna Maria Island

FREE

InsideLook



Five million reasons to buy ...page 8



Statins and the new numbers ...page 12



Mechanical vs. hand harvesting ...page 13



The scent of solicitation ...page 10

Longboat spared wrath of storm

Residents along the vulnerable Sarasota coastline watched Hurricane Idalia intensify as it approached last Monday.

And as the storm grew to 120 mph winds and a storm surge coupled with a King tide ratcheted the danger, emotions intensified as



many wondered if the storm might make a hard right turn and hit Sarasota and the region directly. Fortunately, within 24 hours, it became clear that the predictive models were correct and the storm moved almost directly north off-shore at more than 10 mph sparing Sarasota and Longboat Key serious damage.

North Longboat hit hardest

Longboat Key was cut off on both ends of the island for several hours in the early hours of Aug. 30. It took until 4 p.m. for the town to announce that the island was still not accessible due to flooding at St. Armands Circle but that residents and business owners would be allowed to access on the north end over the Longboat Pass Bridge via Anna Maria Island.

Longboat Key allowed residents, business owners and their employees back on the island at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday. A drive north would show flooded side streets littered with debris and fallen foliage.

Town Hall said about 70 homes had experienced water intrusion but there were no reported injuries due to the storm.

St. Armands Circle

St. Armands Circle, which historically has severe drainage issues, spent Thursday drying out flooring and furniture, clearing and cleaning sidewalks and preparing to open by

See Storm, page 2



The glow of evening and taillights just after the City of Sarasota opened the Ringling Bridge to allow residents to St. Armands and Longboat Key after the storm.



Numerous boats crashed into the seawall along the City shoreline under the Ringling Bridge.

Storm, from page 1

Sept. 1.
In general, government officials said the damage was less than predicted, with relief that the brunt of the storm went far to the north where it made landfall just under a Category 4 hurricane.

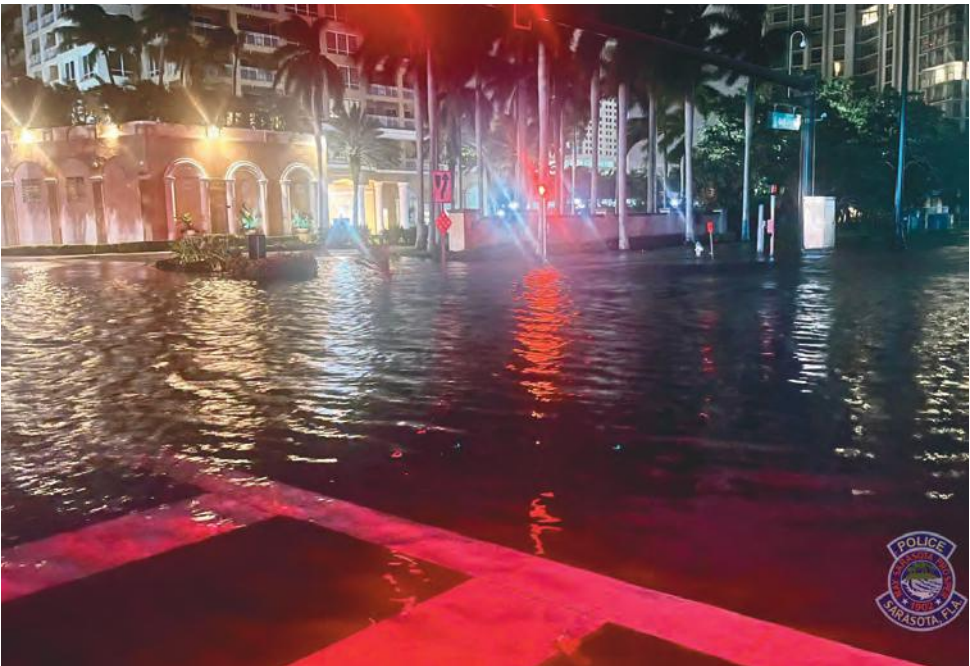
Sarasota County

The fastest wind gust recorded in Sarasota County came in at 70 mph at Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport. Area rainfall came in at the lower end of the projected three to four inches in the region.

The City of Sarasota closed north Siesta Drive Bridge to Siesta Key on the morning of Aug. 30 and the County did not allow passage on Stickney Point Bridge later in the day either.

Later in the day at 4:45 p.m. the City opened the Siesta Bridge. But it was not until 6:30 a.m. on Aug. 31 that the City allowed the general public to travel to St. Armands Circle.

By Thursday, schools and government agencies had reopened and garbage collection slowly resumed. The return to normalcy for the region took less than two days. A commonly heard sentiment following Idalia is that Sarasota and Longboat Key had dodged yet another Category 4 bullet.



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Downtown flooding (Top pic) Longboat damage (bottom pic)

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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.

“Investments” vs. Increased Operating Costs

To: Editor

We, like most Longboat residents, have been involved in running or owning businesses. Having just received our property tax Trim Notice and reading the newspaper article reporting on the proposed Town budget we are compelled to comment.

First the obvious, given the eye popping increase in property values this last year, most properties without a Homestead Exemption, logic would dictate the tax millage could and would be reduced given the incremental revenue generated by the increased assessment values. Apparently not in this case and Commissioners are saying how good it is that they are able to keep the millage the same as this year, no increase. We don't get it.

Your report on the proposed budget quotes Mr. Tipton using the term new “investments in fire, police and in people,” to explain the majority of the projected increase in operating expenses. The term “investing” in government is used now by all bureaucracies to soften the term “spending increases of tax dollars.” We are supposed to feel good about “investments,” bad about “spending increases.”

Of course it is completely justifiable for budget increases due to inflation impact, employee health insurance benefit costs, reasonable market driven salary increases but most business operators would draw the line at increasing the full time staff count which includes not only salary but substantial benefit costs and is basically a permanent, ongoing business expense.

This begs the question what exactly is the cost - benefit analysis, (ROI) of these individual new “investments?” Well, probably hard to say, maybe increased efficiency, productivity, better run Town Manager's office with a new Asst Town Manager?

One other point, we have been criticized by some in the Town hierarchy for not attending the budget planning workshops so we would better understand the budget issues. Wrong answer.

As “shareholders” of this “not for profit Town business” we expect our competent Town Department Heads guided by our “CEO” Town Manager to prepare a detailed budget minimizing costs to be presented to our excellent Commissioners, our “Board of Directors”, to maximize Shareholder value and minimize cost increases i.e. continue to cost effectively provide the excellent services (“returns”) we have enjoyed over the years.

We all know 2024 is going to be a questionable year economically with many economists projecting a recession due to escalating interest rates. Real estate activity has waned and property values could easily begin to deflate in a normal economic cycle. Inflation, while a concern, has decreased significantly as this year has progressed due to increasing interest rates. Double digit inflation, across the board, should not be projected into the proposed budget.

That aside, this is not a wise time to take on more payroll and benefit costs.

We also want to acknowledge the great job our Town Staff, Fire, Police and Commissioners do in managing our very special “not for profit” Town of Longboat Key. We are all blessed to live and / or work here.

Bob and Shannon Gault
Longboat Key

Flood models

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission


Our staff spent today out along the bay's shorelines trying to find wrack lines that could help local governments determine the accuracy of flood models. Basically, two of the main components of a flooding susceptibility model are the water level information that is input, and the land elevation that the water interacts with. If for example, you are off on the water level predictions, you may over or under-report susceptibility to flooding. Or if your water level modeling is accurate, but your land elevations are off, then you still won't have accurate estimates of flood concerns.

We did not go out during the storm (okay, I did, but just to my boat) but you can tell how high the water got in many locations by looking for the wrack line. You've all seen these on the beach – the evidence of the highest extent of recent tides. I've attached two examples here, one from the Palma Sola Causeway (Manatee Avenue) and the other from Cortez Village. Both of these are very solid, and for the Cortez one, local residents assured me that that was as high as the water got.

So what do we know, based on this? Well, it appears that the Palma Sola Causeway came


See Letters, page 6

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Town of Longboat Key

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ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

All applications must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk **by 12:00 p.m. on September 20, 2023**. All applicants must be registered voters of the Town of Longboat Key. Late applications will be held for one year for any future board/committee vacancies that may arise.

All members of the Consolidated Retirement System Board of Trustees are required to file a financial disclosure form within 30 days after appointment and annually thereafter for the duration of the appointment as required by Florida Statutes Chapter 112.

The Town Commission may schedule a Meet and Greet with applicants at a later date. Please call the Office of the Town Clerk at 941-316-1999 for an application or if you have any questions. Applications are also available online at: www.longboatkey.org. Completed applications may be submitted to:

Town of Longboat Key – Office of the Town Clerk

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Stephanie Janney, Administrative Assistant
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EditorLetters

Letters, from page 4

close to being submerged, but was not actually underwater. It also appears that pretty much the entire extent of Cortez Village was “underwater”. That’s a loaded term – farther north along Cortez Road, the water was a few inches deep, while closer to the bay, it was likely a few feet deep. Roads were submerged, but houses on stilts did not have a problem. In fact, houses with just a few feet of elevation were “okay.”

Of course, Longboat Key Village’s roads were flooded, as were some of the more modest one-story houses in that low-lying area. Along Linley Street, the water reached all the way up to Poinsetta Avenue, about 500’ from the bay. The biggest finding was up in Holmes Beach, where the wrack line was all the way up to North Shore Drive, which is only one block east of Gulf Drive. Marina Drive by the fire station was underwater, likely by more than a foot or so, as the wrack line was well up the slope leading up the fire station itself (which is appropriately elevated above the rest of the neighborhood).

Everyone I talked to told me that the flooding came from the bayside, not the Gulf side. That likely means that the ground elevation is higher along the dunes bordering the Gulf than a few blocks in from the bay. There were a few areas on AMI where it looked like the water almost went completely across the island. Close, but not quite.

So, why does this matter? Because much of the grass clippings and dog poop and yard debris on our landscape got

dragged back out into the bay as the water receded. Which means, expect some issues in the bay associated with bacteria and potentially algal blooms and potential oxygen sags – which could give us fish kills. The folks from Suncoast Water Keepers collect water samples from about a dozen spots in our bay every week, and they are going out early next week. We have a great data set from fixed stations that could tell us whether or not we are seeing a spike from Idalia. A big shout out to that long-running and incredibly helpful data set.

Each storm gives us different impacts, depending on its size, and pathway. Irma was like Ian, in that it gave us lots of rain, but no storm surge, and not much wind. That’s because they passed to our east, and we were on the weak side. With Idalia, even though it was about 100 miles offshore, we were on its strong side, and thus we got the storm surge, even though we mostly experienced just tropical storm level winds. By the way, the 2024 hurricane name for the letter “I” is Isaac, so maybe we should practice spelling it, if our recent trend of “I” storms keeps up.

A few final things – this storm surge came a few hours before the peak of the full moon high tides. In fact, water levels were retreating even as the tide was coming up, because the surge was due to wind and waves from a storm that moving away from us as the tide was coming in. So, the dreaded “high tide on top of a storm surge” did not happen. That is lucky, because that could have added another foot or two. Still, water levels were about 3’ higher than they would have been otherwise. Another thing – we have continued street

flooding in Longboat Key Village and Bradenton’s Riverfront Drive today – not because of Idalia, but because it’s the blue-sky flooding that will become even more of a problem in the future than it is now.

Think sea level rise isn’t happening? Come on down to Riverview Boulevard at 21st Street or Longboat Key Village by the boat ramp on a high tide during a full or new moon. You think people would have built those houses in those locations a couple of decades ago if that type of flooding was happening back then? Hardly. Folks I talk to in those areas tell me that their streets are flooding twice a month now, regardless of whether there’s a storm out in the Gulf or not.

Which is why preparing for anticipated rates of sea level rise is not just good for the environment, it’s good for our economy as well.

David Tomasko
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Storm communication

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

I really appreciated the personal, commissioner and public communication during the storm. Your and Susan’s updates were thorough and timely. I wish the 2 counties were more consistent in their communication but I appreciate the clarifications you and your team sent out.

Mike Haycock
Commissioner
Longboat Key

Storm communication

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Mike Haycock

Thanks very much Mike. We appreciate the positive feedback!

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Clearing St. Armands Circle

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Two questions I’ve been asked: 1. What is being done to clear St. Armand’s, by whom and (best guess) by when? I assume they know we can’t get through. Are pump repairs ongoing or do we wait for natural drainage? 2. Will there be any debris collection provided after the storm? Should residents rake to the streets as in Ian? Thanks much.

Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Clearing St. Armands Circle

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

I don’t know the answer to the St. Armands question but assume it is City of Sarasota responding. They are completely aware of the challenges the flooding poses. Even if the pumps aren’t working, the tide will go out this evening and that area should see a receding water level as long as the outfalls aren’t blocked.

I’ll defer to Isaac or Paul on the debris question. The good news is that there’s not that much more than a bad thunderstorm might bring.

See Letters, page 7

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EditorLetters

Letters, from page 6

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Clearing St. Armands Circle

To: Longboat Key Town Commission
As for the question regarding Saint Armand’s, this lies with the City of Sarasota. They are aware of the issues and have and continue to work on the issue. I was informed there was an issue with the pumps within the circle. The City has approved the use of side roads for residents, businesses, and town employees.
The City has made it clear they do not want anyone driving around the St. Armand’s Circle rather use the side roads. They will be placing barricades up preventing entering St. Armand’s Circle.
As for the debris, the Town has not activated the debris removal contract. My understanding is the debris is minor and does not require the need for a debris removal vendor. I hope I was able to satisfy the questions raised.
Paul B. Dezzi
Fire Chief
Town of Longboat Key

Underground Project Update

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Good afternoon Tip, sorry I did not get back to you earlier today. Here is the latest update below:
Phase 2 – North End from Longboat Pass Bridge to Dream Island Road
The six (6) remaining Phase 2 transformers were received and are being installed. Three (3) were installed this week, and the remaining three (3) are targeted for the week of September 4th (more were planned this week, but FPL had to pull back the authorization and re-schedule). These transformer installs require de-energizing / shutting down areas and that is coordinated between FPL and Wilco. With the current three (3) now installed, Wilco is going to push FPL to allow them to continue conversions in those three areas. Once the remaining three (3) are installed and FPL authorizes, Wilco can then finish the Phase 2 conversions through September.

FPL has continued to agree to begin wreck-out (demo) of areas where they can pull out large groups of poles at a time before Phase 2 is fully complete. That is also being coordinated between Wilco and FPL (Wilco is providing FPL with portions of areas that can be removed; it is complex because they have to isolate where circuit removals will not affect other areas that are not ready).
Phase 3 – Country Club Shores to Bayfront Park / County line area
Transformers still under manufacturing delay. FPL still estimating 1st quarter of 2024, and Town and Wilco continue to push for much sooner than that.
Phase 3 sequencing being reconfigured between FPL and Wilco to allow energizing of feeders along GMD. Target for energizing Ph. 3 feeders is the end of next week, pending weather.
Phase 4 –Bayfront Park / County line area to Dream Island Road
Transformers still under manufacturing delay. FPL still estimating 1st quarter of 2024, and Town and Wilco continue to push for much sooner than that.
Eight (8) Gulf of Mexico Drive Highway Street Light Poles that have been on back-order for some time were finally received. Still waiting on fixtures and hardware.
We can keep you posted on the above.
Isaac Brownman
Director Public Works
Town of Longboat Key

Sound ordinance

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

See Letters, page 11

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560 PUTTER LN	4,304	\$5,250,000	4	4	1	3	\$5,250,000
545 SANCTUARY DR Unit#B805	2,580	\$3,695,000	3	3	0	52	\$3,400,000
6533 BAYOU HAMMOCK RD	862	\$3,400,000	2	2	0	66	\$3,000,000
562 RANGER LN	3,149	\$2,950,000	4	3	0	262	\$2,500,000
451 N SHORE RD	2,041	\$1,695,000	3	3	0	112	\$1,575,000
3210 BAYOU SOUND	2,091	\$1,295,000	3	2	0	35	\$1,310,000
1085 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#501	1,172	\$985,000	2	2	0	10	\$975,000
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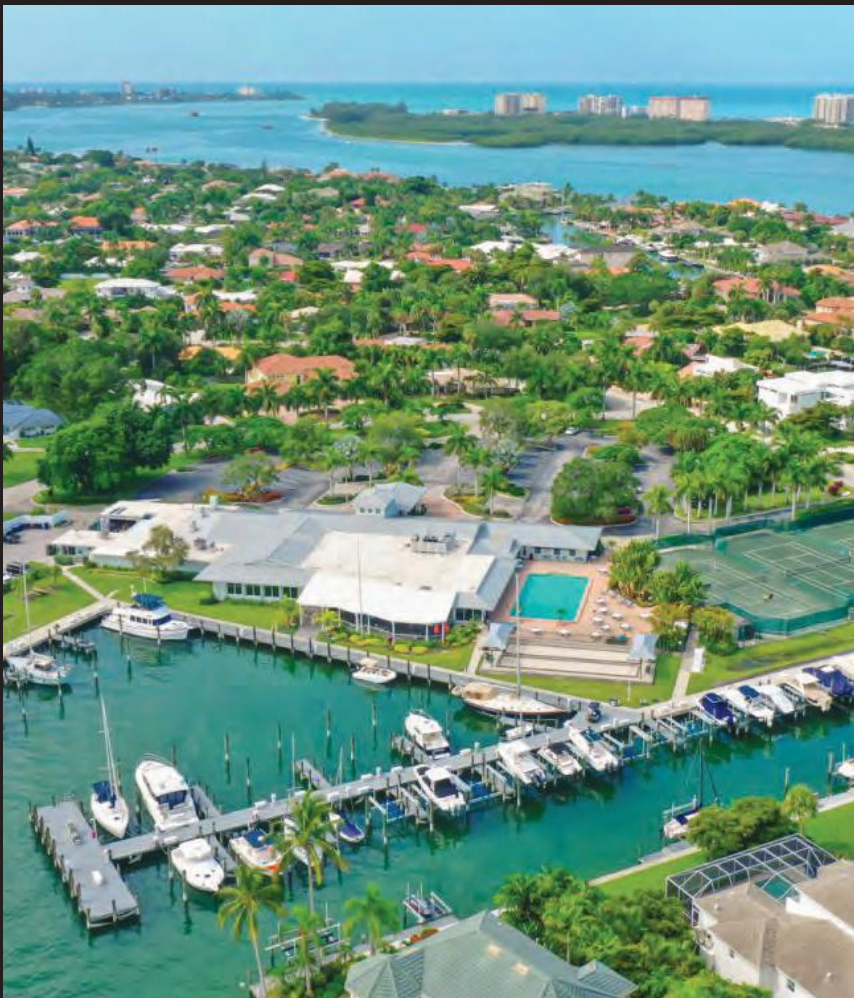
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OnPatrol

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

Aug. 26 Noise

1:01 p.m.
Officer Miklos responded to the 6700 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a noise complaint on the beach. While en route to the area, Officer Miklos could see four boats near the beach line and could hear loud music. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with one of the people who were playing loud music. Officer Miklos advised her to turn the music down and she said she would. The woman was cooperative and understanding. The woman turned down the music and left without further incident. Case clear.

Juveniles

2:30 p.m.
Officer Puccio responded to the 2200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive and was contacted by a passer by driving a late model BMW who said that while he was turning south from Bay Isles Parkway onto Gulf of Mexico Drive, two male juveniles driving their bicycles and also traveling south, appeared to throw a water bottle or glass bottle up in the air which came down on the road and broke open. The man said he yelled some obscenities at the juveniles as it scared him and drove away south when he saw the patrol car. Officer Puccio advised the driver he would head to the area and make an attempt to locate the individuals involved. Upon arrival, Officer Puccio did observe a plastic water bottle in the roadway. A check of the area south to the town line was made by Officer Puccio and Officer Miklos, however the juveniles were gone on arrival. Case clear.

Suspicious person

7:32 p.m.
Officer Connors was dispatched to the 1000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in the area of the beach for a report of an Hispanic man in his 20s, soliciting cologne from a backpack. The complainant advised that the man continue south on the beach and left the area. A check of the area. A check of the area was negative and appeared in order. Case clear.

Citizen dispute

7:55 p.m.
Officer Connors was dispatched to the 1000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in the area of the beach for a report of a disturbance between two women regarding a services dog. She said that she got in a verbal argument with another woman because she was questioned about her dog being on the beach. The other woman then got angry and into a verbal argument because she was questioned about her dog being on the beach and that it did not look like a typical service dog. Officer Connors advised the other woman to contact the police the next time rather than attempting to take matters in her own hands to prevent an issue like this. Case clear.

Aug. 27 Citizen assist

8:33 a.m.
Officer Martinson was dispatched to Norton Street on a call of a broken watermain. Public Works was notified and he said they were already aware of the problem and someone was in route. The complainant was then notified. Case clear.

Welfare check

9:22 p.m.
Officer Nazareno was dispatched to the 3500 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a welfare check. The caller was out of state and advised that the was unable to contact his 95-year-old mother. Upon arrival, there was no answer at the door and within two minutes, the caller's mother emerged from the elevator area. The mother was in good health and was unavailable to answer her phone because she was walking her dog outside. Case clear.



Aug. 29 Citizen assist

1:25 p.m.
Officer Ramsaier responded to St. Judes Drive North for a call of a citizen assist. Upon arrival, Officer Ramsaier was met by the complainant who said that she was concerned that a barge was docked on the waterway across from her home. The complainant stated that the company is doing work on her neighbor's dock. The barge was not blocking any navigable waterway and was secured tightly to dock across the waterway. Case clear.

Suspicious incident

6:39 p.m.
Sgt. Smith was dispatched to the 2100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a report of a suspicious person using the private beach access. Sgt. Smith arrived and made contact with the resident that was authorized to be on the property. Sgt. Smith informed him that the police department was contacted by a member of the homeowner association and that they had put out a letter stating the property was closed due to the storm. Sgt. Smith informed the resident that they were not able to enforce homeowner association rules and regulations. The subject left without incident. Sgt. Smith made contact with the caller and informed him of his findings. Case clear.

Aug. 30 Citizen assist

8:30 a.m.
Officer Connors and Officer Miklos were dispatched to Marbuy Lane in reference to a boat that fell off a boat lift. The complainant advised his neighbor's boat was in danger of drifting out into the bay. Upon arrival, Officers were unable to drive to the address due to the high water on the street. Officers called the complainant and advised him that the call was being forwarded to the Sarasota Emergency Operations Center due to the Police being unable to respond. The complainant asked if he should try to tie the boat to the dock and advised him he could not tell him to tie or not try to tie the boat down. Case clear.

Unsecure premises

8:44 a.m.
Officer Connors while on Hurricane Idalia patrol, observed an open door front at Bay Isles Parkway. The door appeared to have been blown open from the hurricane. A check of the pharmacy appeared to be all in order and the officer was able to resecure the front door with the sandbags. Case clear.

Agency assistance

6:51 p.m.
Officer Nazareno responded to St. Armands Circle to assist Sarasota Police Department for a disturbance involving a semi-truck trailer. The call stated that the tractor trailer almost hit contractors on the flooded road. Prior to arrival, Officer Nazareno observed the tractor trailer traveling northbound at the 1900 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The tractor trailer stopped at the side of the road and flagged them down. The driver stated that an unidentified man tried to stop him and stepped in the middle of the flooded road but he was unable to stop suddenly. He then spoke with the unidentified man who kept screaming at him. No collision or contact was made with the unidentified man. Officer Rizzo took the driver and vehicle information and gave it to the Sarasota Police.

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 7

I am reaching out to you in order to find out how to get involved in the discussion of the City revising the noise ordinance and which communities that are currently in the works on making recommendations. I have spoken on the phone with both Alexya, whom hasn't gotten back to me since Friday, and Christina just now whom insists that I need to set an appointment with you to discuss the issues in person, after referencing this email.

I do not want to waste your time, as we have already discussed the issues face-to-face, however, I just need to know whom to contact or where to go to get involved in the discussion for the City's noise ordinance.

Thank you again for all of your time and help! Stay safe with the upcoming storm!

Steven Martinucci
Sarasota

Sound ordinance

To: Steven Martinucci

I just wanted to follow up on the noise issue. I forwarded the police reports and the noise meter reading information. Apparently, the chillers are within the allowable decibel levels permitted under the City's noise ordinance.

Apologies, as I am confident this is not the result you expected.

At this point I would recommend working with the high school directly as much as possible to mitigate the impact.

Also, I would look into getting involved in the discussion of the City revising the noise ordinance (currently happening). There are a number of neighborhood groups working on making recommendations for amendments to the City's noise ordinance.

Feel free to get in touch with Alexya and/or Christina to schedule a meeting to go over this more thoroughly.

Jen Ahearn-Koch
City Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Sound ordinance

To: Steven Martinucci

Thanks for the follow-up email and your interest and willingness to be involved in the sound ordinance conversation.

I could be wrong, but I don't believe we discussed the sound ordinance when we met.

Since it is slightly complicated, I thought it might be more productive and a better use of our time if I could give you the necessary background, go over the history of the sound ordinance with you, the challenges, and the multiple potential options going forward along with also giving you the contact info of the folks involved with this discussion.

I do want to be clear that Alexya and Christina were doing their job in relaying my request to you for the in-person meeting, the insistence was at my direction. They are both profoundly professional and dedicated to the City and this community.

It is not a problem for me to meet with you about this in-person but your time is valuable and I am happy to just send you the contact info of those involved. Either way is fine with me.

Jen Ahearn-Koch
City Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Why is City street sweeper operating?

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

We all wish we'd been able to learn of the City and County hurricane Idalia closure decisions in a less chaotic, more coordinated way.

In Hudson Bayou, we made sure we had our yard waste at the curb this morning-- along w/ trash and recyclables. By 10 a.m., when nothing had been picked up, I resorted to the City's Facebook page-- to find info posted only today-- not yesterday. Many of us had larger amounts of yard waste out last night-- in anticipation of the storm. Too much to practically move back off the street.

So imagine 15 min ago, just before 11 a.m., my surprise seeing a City sweeper vehicle operating on my Irving St. block btw Osprey and Pomelo Avenues.

This is an all-too-rare event on a short stretch of Irving St that is a frequent cut-thru for construction vehicles apt to leave a trail of grit as they go to and from the projects on Orange and Alta Vista.

Why today- of all days-- again, with no notice? It's comical but an embarrassing and unfortunate application of City resources.

Holly Chase
Sarasota

Why is City street sweeper operating?

To: Holly Chase

I apologize for the inconvenience. Because of the location and the timing of this storm and unlike Atlantic hurricanes/storms that give us more time, decisions had to be made more quickly. We did post garbage collection suspension 20 hours ago on all our media feeds, on our website and our alerts. That was around 3:30 p.m. yesterday. I am sorry that you did not see it until today. The City is also dependent on the operations of the County's landfill which is closed today. We would not have access to transport the collected materials to the landfill.

Street sweeping ahead of storms is normal operating procedures to ensure all debris is off the streets to avoid clogged drains leading to unnecessary flooding. Again I apologize for this situation and disruption but I hope you understand why we made these decisions leading up

See Letters, page 14

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SARASOTA, FLORIDA

StayingAlive

Statins and the new numbers

For the last few decades, purveyors of cholesterol as the core of heart disease have created a medical industrial complex that has been hard to suppress.

MATTHEW EDLUND
Guest Columnist
Edlundr@lbknews.com

One way to keep a population unhealthy is to endlessly worry them about getting sick. For the last few decades, purveyors of cholesterol as the core of heart disease have created a medical industrial complex that has been hard to suppress. Now that complex is changing its spots again with new guidelines on statins from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology.

What’s Changed with Statins?

If you’re at high risk of heart disease – you’re diabetic, had angina or a heart attack, you’ll still be told to take them. Others who by dint of age or factors like hypertension who score goes above a “risk threshold” will also be recommended to stay on the drug. But looking with religious zeals at successive lipid levels will stop. The idea is to take the drug and stop looking at the numbers.



MATTHEW EDLUND

Why The Change?

The committee looked at the evidence and could find “nothing solid” about following up LDL and other cholesterol levels. As cardiologist Steve Nissen put it, these previous guidelines seemed to have been derived “out of thin air.” There’s lot of thin air out there.

Will This Change How Doctors Act?

Probably not. People like numbers. Doctors love numbers. Evidence based medicine is supposed to be what doctors are supposed to do – this week anyway. And “evidence” generally means numbers – rather than listening to people or looking at how they live. An LDL cholesterol level of 70 “must be better” than 80 or 90 – regardless of whether hard endpoints like heart attack and survival are affected. Habit is hard to break, but it’s especially hard when one’s livelihood comes along, attached. Urologists have not yet come to terms with the fact that for every person with a high PSA score where treatment “saved” them from death, 30 to 100 were therapized unnecessarily. Instead of longer life many got impotence and urinary incompetence. Try using a bag for the rest of your life. In European trials, 50-100 people were treated for every “cure.” Nonetheless, though the American Urological Association recommends most men over 70 never get a PSA, many older men are still getting the tests, prostate biopsies – and the same “effective” treatments.

How Did This State of Affairs Come About?

There are many reasons. One was that the FDA became convinced that improving “end-points” like “risk factors” were good enough to approve drugs. So instead of looking at life and death, hospitalization and morbidity rates, they looked at lowering cholesterol levels and decreased triglyceride numbers. The end result was a field day for drug companies and laboratories, though not the public. Doctors and patients competed for having the lowest cholesterol. Companies created a panopoly of me-too statins. Labs tested and tested and tested, while patients worried and worried. And much of the useful effect of statins turned out to be not be about cholesterol lowering, but decreasing inflammation. Yet drug companies bought into their own advertising. They spent billions creating and trying out drugs that increased HDL levels – the “good” cholesterol – until they found the drugs produced higher death rates.



Quantitate, Quantitate, Quantitate

In today’s world, policy is created by statistical models. In many companies, the “data” provide the answers – even if the most important, critical factors are never considered or quantitated. Doctors have learned their lessons over the decades. A typical visit with a physician of today will include a few questions about symptoms, and then a detailed discussion of one’s “numbers.” That doctors know little of statistics or the overall usefulness of epidemiologic modeling gets little reporting. You can’t deny the numbers – especially in court. There are hundreds of known risk factors for heart disease. Few are looked at. Even less attention is paid to the characteristics that dramatically effect whether heart disease occurs and kills.

Health Versus Health Care

That our health care debates are ass backwards – about health care rather than health – also rarely gets much media attention. Statins are great for many heart patients. They also make tens of billions of dollars. Real prevention – now that’s a different story. That green space around your neighborhood knocks down disease rates by 30% receives little or no policy or public attention. Instead people have been taught that if they want to eat junk all day, all they need do is down a statin pill every night.

Indeed the American health model is simple – more health care. If kids’ Tylenol is filled with high fructose corn syrup, and children have seen thousands of sugared cereal ads before they can read or even speak, what’s the answer? Drugs for obesity; fat camps; and new pediatric dental suites to surgically remove crops of caries laden teeth. We could do useful quantitation – what walking does for populations. What parks do for a city, it’s sense of place, and the survival and happiness of its inhabitants. And study what worries about “high risk factors” do to the health of its sufferers. We might then pay doctors to encourage people to walk and quit smoking rather than to push drugs and endless lab tests. We could get schools to create gardens, and have students tend some of the food they eat, learning about the environment and agriculture. We could get parents to push their kids out of the house and into the yard, away from video games and cell phones. We could even work on real endpoints – survival, economic productivity and community satisfaction. But how can that compare with seeing your cholesterol “score” get lower through taking drugs that can destroy kidneys, rot bones, and make people depressed? Already the new statin guidelines are under attack. Many researchers say they will double the number of people taking the drugs – while improving their overall health not at all. Some researchers claim the new guideline will have tens of million on statins for no discernible benefit. It’s time for health – not health care – to come first.

A typical visit with a physician of today will include a few questions about symptoms, and then a detailed discussion of one’s “numbers.”

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Sherry ‘Nef’ Price is a USPTR certified professional. She played at IMG and Division 1 College.
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Toiling in the Vineyard

Arguments for and against machine harvesting of wine grapes will continue during the coming years. Better working conditions and higher wages have intertwined with corporate farming to alter permanently the operations of wine grape growers.

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

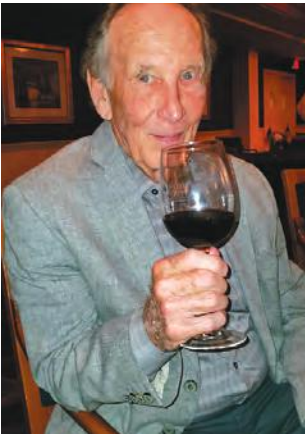
Labor Day reminds us of the extent to which fair labor laws have helped migrant farm workers overcome the worst of working conditions. On March 31st Cesar Chavez day celebrates his contributions to the struggle for protection of farm workers. Our Labor Day tribute to farm workers looks at farm workers' roles in harvesting crops, especially in wine grape growing and the impact of increasing use of machines for wine grape harvesting.

The timing of harvesting seasons in the USA varies with geography and climate. Thousands of migrant laborers move from one area to another harvesting not only grapes but also other produce as well. Children in households travelled with their parents and participated in the workforce. Most children of school age skipped school while working in the fields.

During the 1950's and 1960's, the wartime demand for agricultural products had receded and put a squeeze on small farmers who depended on migrant laborers. Most farmers scraped out small incomes by keeping labor costs at a minimum. Migrant laborers from above and below the border with Mexico arrived with their families in trucks during the harvest season, lived in squalid conditions, and worked long hours in searing heat. Small farmers and migrant laborers were both living on the edge of a highly competitive market. Farmers did not complain about immigrants at the time; they depended on them. They paid per pound or piece and not one cent more than needed to keep the migrants from packing up their trucks and leaving.

The parable of workers toiling in the vineyard didn't go over well in a small community of farmers and ranchers. When the pastor reached the part about the landowner paying workers who began working during the last hour the same as those who began working at the start of the day, from the back rows one could see heads of men, deeply weathered faces below and pale skin above the brim levels of hats that they wear in the fields but have taken off in church, shaking in disapproval of the message of the sermon.

It took labor unions and legislation to break through the impasse facing farm workers. In 1962, Chavez formed the National Farm Workers Association, and in 1968 he led a decade-long national boycott of California grapes. Boycotts and negotiations set the stage for farm



workers' lobbying state legislatures and the US Congress on behalf of farm workers. In 1975, the State of California passed the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. This law established the right to collective bargaining for farmworkers. That same year the US Congress began enacting fair labor practices legislation. The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act took effect in the State of Texas in 1983. It enacted protections in transportation, housing, pay, and working conditions. Later legislation regulated the use of pesticides in areas where people worked or lived.

State and federal legislation have improved working conditions and wages of seasonal and migrant laborers. The increasing presence of large corporations as wine grape growers has changed the nature of the labor market in the wine industry. Farmworkers have joined the ranks of skilled workers and managers in corporate farming operations. Field workers continue to toil in vineyards during the harvest seasons, but machines now harvest as much as 90% of grapes in California and about the same percentage in Bordeaux France. Harvesting by machine has become more and more effective in recent years as most vineyards have widened the space between trellises to accommodate harvesting machines and standardized trellises. Seasonal workers continue to perform tasks such as de-stemming and cleaning grape clusters after machines extract them from vines.

Some vineyards have fields on slopes too steep for machine harvesting, or bush or vertical vines that have to be harvested by hand. A few others have resisted machine harvesting, contending that harvesting by hand provides a greater yield and higher quality grapes for their wines. The superiority of hand harvesting also has to do with the grape variety being harvested. Thick-skinned Cabernet Sauvignon grapes in California Cab and Bordeaux wines tolerate machine harvesting better than thin-skinned Pinot Noir grapes. Smaller vineyards will more likely have harvested grapes by hand, although not always; some hire companies that use their machines to assist in harvesting wine grapes.

With costs of hand harvesting estimated at 2-3 times that of machine harvesting, chances are good that wines not advertised as hand harvested are harvested all or part by machines. As one would expect given differences in harvesting costs, wines advertised as harvested by hand tend to have higher prices. Champagne by the rules of the appellation must be harvested by hand.

The 2022 Acquiesce Jolie (\$34) blend of Grenache Blanc and Viognier has won high ratings and awards for its hand picked, hand sorted, and whole grape cluster pressed wine. The Rhone Valley grapes in this wine from Lodi California lend more complex and aromatic flavors to this wine than found in most other white wines.

Arguments for and against machine harvesting of wine grapes will continue during the coming years. Better working conditions and higher wages have intertwined with corporate farming to alter permanently the operations of wine grape growers. On this Labor Day we are seeing a similar evolution of intellectual work during the emergence of artificial intelligence. It seems inevitable that machine intelligence will have a role in future workplaces.

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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Letters, from page 11

to the storm. Thank you and please be safe.
Marlon Brown
City Manager, City of Sarasota

Fastway Towing & Recovery

To: Sarasota City Commission
in a couple of months tourists will be back in our beautiful Sarasota and I would like them to make and share great memories of the time spent here.
I don't wish for them what it happened to me and my family the past January.
On Friday January 6th we were having a very nice dinner at 1592 on Main Street when my husband realized they were towing his car.
We went to the place we parked to see that also my car parked close to his one was prepared to be towed.
The tow truck driver pointed to the signs (we parked when it was dark and signs weren't hanging in front of the parking space, easy to miss them).
It was our mistake to park behind Brazilian Jiu Jitzu, at 1599 Main Street; but we were "warned" by the person who was towing the car to go to 4430 Ashton Rd - Fastway Towing and Recovery without "creating any problem".
What problems I thought...
In the meantime we paid \$62.50 cash for my car.
When we got to Fastway Towing, we were in the dark, their lot was tucked away on an off street and our car was behind a metal fence. My husband tried to take pictures of it but the owners/ employees sent him away in a very rude and unprofessional way.
The office was dirty, smelled of dogs who haven't seen a bath in years (like their owners by the way) and were also growling at us.
I felt really unsafe. I was very surprised that the City of Sarasota issued a license to a business like that! We paid \$259.57.
I was very, very uncomfortable the whole time.
On our way back I thought: let's be honest, the business here is tricking people to park in places where in 5' they tow your car to make \$259.57.
This fact is very well known by the towing company, the owner of the lot, the City of Sarasota, and, at this point by many disappointed residents and tourists.
Tourists who are important for local businesses and might remember and talk about this towing experience more than about our beautiful beaches and fancy restaurants.
I am sure that in your capacity you will be able to address this matter. Thank you very much for your attention.
Luisella Rossi
Sarasota

KeyCrossword

- ACROSS**
1 "Still open," on a sched.
4 Poppa
7 Some swords
12 Nero's great-grandfather
19 Wasn't too rushed to do something
21 Dance with people in a line
22 One-dollar Canadian coins
23 Of morals
24 In the vicinity
25 One of Capt. Kirk's officers
26 Start of a riddle
29 Like much folk medicine
30 Lubricates
31 Italian "a"
32 Winter hours in Minn.
35 Ancient recital halls
36 Riddle, part 2
41 Boxer Oscar — Hoya
44 — -mo replay
45 Kiev's country
46 Riddle, part 3
52 X Games broadcaster
54 Playwright Chekhov
- 55 Cartoon canary
56 Burn with no flame
58 — Little (mouse of kiddie lit)
59 Biden's party: Abbr.
60 Los Angeles district
62 Part of OTOH
64 Riddle, part 4
71 Dress in fine duds
72 Pedro's shawl
73 Caged bird, often
75 "Blue Ribbon" beers
78 Barely makes, as a living
81 Andes beasts
84 Nudge rudely
85 "Meh" grades
86 Riddle, part 5
88 1960s art movement
90 — chi
92 Peak in the "Odyssey"
93 End of the riddle
98 Letters after upsilons
102 Sci-fi visitors
103 Prefix with plunk
104 Presque Isle's lake
- 105 Celebrity chef Mario
107 Riddle's answer
112 Not forsaking
115 Elliptical
116 Fragrant Chinese flower
117 Word-of-mouth precepts
118 Dig deep
119 Grappler, rural-style
120 Gloucester's peninsula
121 Birch-family tree
122 Ordinal number suffix
123 — Plaines
- DOWN**
1 "I Can See for Miles" band
2 Scrubbed in a tub
3 Get stuck (to)
4 Formal rulings
5 "— and the Night Visitors"
6 "Take this out" mark
7 Custard-filled pastry
8 Dog named Fifi, maybe
9 Forms a bladderlike sac around
10 "My stars!"
11 Bargain event
12 Just for laughs
13 Gradually lost light
14 Libertine guy
15 Very pixel-dense, as a TV picture
16 More, to musicians
17 — capita
18 Simile center
20 Old-style sheriff's emblem
27 Lav in a pub
28 Pool hall stick
32 Tony winner Rivera
33 Sir of Seville
34 Former senator Lott
36 Roadwork goop
37 "— 3 Lives" (1952 memoir)
38 Ascended
39 Declaimed
40 Organic fertilizer
42 Prefix for "outer"
43 Fill a nest, in a way
46 Inc., to a Brit financially
47 Was behind
48 Pixar's lost clown fish
49 Con at large
50 Kuwaiti VIP
51 Actor Moss who co-starred on "The Bold and the Beautiful" for 25 years
53 In proportion
57 Wind-deposited loam
58 Armor pieces
61 Sch. in Manhattan
63 With 101-Down, rubber-soled canvas shoes
65 "How curious"
66 Words after "Make love"
67 Cat call
68 Dude, slangily
69 Engine speed stats
70 "You betcha!"
74 Mao — -tung
75 British coins
76 Forewarn
77 Hip-hop devotees, in old slang
79 Etta of old comics
80 Morales of "La Linea"
82 Fleur-de-
83 Power cord attachments
85 Declined in status
87 Lap dog
89 Bismarck or Pierre native
91 Freezing
94 Wall St. manipulator
95 Show up
96 German art songs
97 Actor Ayres
99 "Over the Rainbow" composer Arlen
100 "Maybe ... ask me later"
101 See 63-Down
105 Sheep call
106 Flooded (in)
107 Windy blast
108 Cantina pot
109 Jedi guru
110 Daredevil Knievel
111 French "to be"
112 Tone — ("Wild Thing" rapper)
113 Man-mouse linkup
114 Bark sharply

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