



# Longboat Key News

January 30, 2026

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## InsideLook



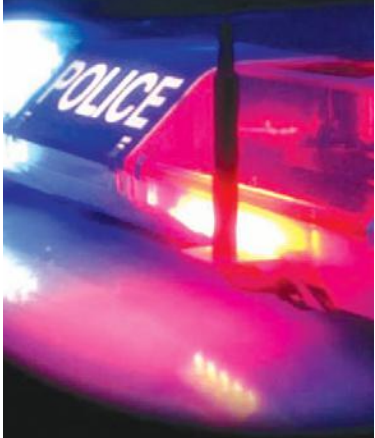
Don't slack on your swing  
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A \$2.7 million path to beach  
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Stay warm with spirited cocktails  
...page 11



Officer, I did indeed inhale  
...page 10

## Ending a Bloody Tug-of-War: Mote Scientists Prove Electric ‘Pulse’ Can Save Sharks

*“I’ve seen 15-foot sharks—hammerheads, bulls, and others—that’ll take a tarpon out of your hand.”*

**STEVE REID**  
Editor & Publisher  
sreid@lbknews.com

Ask any charter captain on the Gulf Coast about the “Tax Man,” and the response is rarely printable. “Man, I don’t know how you offshore charter boat captains deal with this shark problem every day,” one Bradenton-based captain recently vented on social media after a brutal day on the water. “I went offshore today and fished six spots... and got sharked on five of them. Probably



lost 20-plus fish.”

Another Jupiter-based captain, Ray Markham, described the visceral danger of the job: “I’ve seen 15-foot sharks—hammerheads,

bulls, and others—that’ll take a tarpon out of your hand when you’re trying to unhook and release the fish.”

See Sharks, page 3

## Concrete or Canopy? Longboat reconsiders development tax strategy

*For nearly half a century, the Town of Longboat Key has operated under a simple, ironclad promise to its residents: As we grow, so does our green space.*

**STEVE REID**  
Editor & Publisher  
sreid@lbknews.com

Since 1981, every time a developer poured concrete or a homeowner expanded a footprint, they paid a “Land Acquisition Fee.” The money had one purpose—to buy raw land. It was a policy designed to fight density with density’s own wallet, ensuring that for every new resident, there was a corresponding slice of the island’s lush, airy paradise preserved forever.

But that era may be ending.

In a move that signals a fundamental shift in the island’s philosophy, Town Manager Howard Tipton is recommending that the Town Commission abandon the Land Acquisition Fee. In a memo dated January 20, 2026, Tipton, backing a recommendation from Planning Director Allen Parsons, argues that the town has effectively “won” the battle for open space and

See Land Rules, page 4

## Harbour Square Demo Paves Way for Buccaneer Restaurant

*The final domino is about to fall, clearing the way for one of the most anticipated culinary revivals in the history of Longboat.*

The Harbour Square office building, a 1984 structure that has stood quietly at the edge of Sarasota Bay, has reached its expiration date. Its demolition, slated for 2026, marks the beginning of a new chapter for the 1905 Family of Restaurants—the empire behind the legendary Columbia Restaurant—and their ambitious plan to resurrect a local icon: The Buccaneer.

For nearly a decade, the project has been a subject of island speculation and anticipation. Now, with the final tenant vacated and permit paperwork in motion, the site is being prepped for a transformation that promises to blend the prestige of Florida’s oldest restaurant family with the swashbuckling nostalgia of Longboat’s past.

### Clearing the Deck

The Harbour Square building, a one-story elevated office complex, was purchased by an entity connected to the 1905 Family of Restaurants for \$4 million in 2017. While the group initially explored saving the structure to support their new venture, the reality of the aging building made that impossible.

Jeff Houck, Vice President of Marketing for the restaurant group, indicated that while they thoroughly invest-

See Demo, page 4

## Buchanan Retires from Congress Months After Shattering Island Real Estate Record

*Buchanan, the self-made tycoon turned political heavyweight, announced Tuesday he will not seek re-election in November.*

**STEVE REID**  
Editor & Publisher  
sreid@lbknews.com

For two decades, U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan has been a fixture of both Washington power corridors and Longboat Key’s quiet, manicured streets. But in a move that signals a definitive end to an era, the longtime Congressman is closing the book on his legislative career just months after closing the biggest real estate deal in the island’s history.

Buchanan, the self-made tycoon turned political heavyweight, announced Tuesday he will not seek re-election in November, capping a 20-year tenure that saw him rise to the Vice Chairmanship of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

See Vern, page 2



**Vern, from page 1**

The announcement comes on the heels of a transaction that had the island’s business-savvy residents buzzing last summer. In August 2025, Buchanan sold his palatial Gulf-front estate for a staggering \$30.3 million—shattering the record for the most expensive home sale in Longboat Key history.

**The Art of the Deal**

For a community that prides itself on business acumen, Buchanan’s exit from the local real estate market was a masterclass in timing.

The 9,900-square-foot Mediterranean estate, which Buchanan purchased in 2020 for \$16.5 million, sold in just 25 days for nearly double his initial investment. The all-cash deal eclipsed the previous island record—a \$21 million St. Regis penthouse sold in 2024—by nearly \$10 million.

It was a final, emphatic “win” for the man who built an automotive empire before ever stepping foot on the House floor. With a projected net worth nearing \$250 million, Buchanan has long been recognized as one of the wealthiest and most financially literate members of Congress. His ability to navigate complex tax codes in Washington was mirrored by his ability to navigate the high-stakes property market at home.

**A Legacy of “Smart” Policy**

While the sale made headlines for its price tag, Buchanan’s neighbors on Longboat Key likely value the policy receipts he leaves behind just as much.

Representing a district of affluent, educated retirees and coastal conservationists, Buchanan curated a legislative portfolio that was distinctly “Longboat.” He avoided the loudest fringes of partisan warfare, focusing instead on the specific, tangible threats facing a barrier island economy.

He was instrumental in securing federal funding to combat red tide, a direct threat to the property values and quality of life on the Key. He frequently crossed the aisle to co-sponsor bans on offshore oil drilling, protecting the pristine coastlines that drive the local tourism economy.

Perhaps most notably, he carved out a niche as Capitol Hill’s leading Republican voice for animal rights. He was the only member of the House to twice receive the Humane Society’s “Legislator of the Year” award, championing the PACT Act to make extreme animal cruelty

a federal felony—a stance that resonated deeply in a community of dog walkers and nature lovers.

**Passing the Torch**

“Serving the people of Southwest Florida has been the honor of my lifetime,” Buchanan said in his statement Tuesday. “I came to Congress to solve problems, to fight for working families, and to help ensure this country remains a place where opportunity is available to everyone willing to work for it.”

The decision to retire marks a transition not just for the 16th District, but for the Buchanan clan. Vern and his wife of more than 40 years, Sandy, have established themselves as pillars of local philanthropy through the Buchanan Family Foundation. With two grown sons, James and Matt, and a growing roster of ten grandchildren, the move signals a shift from public service to private stewardship.

His son, James Buchanan, currently serves in the Florida House of Representatives, suggesting the family name will remain a staple in local politics even as the patriarch steps back.

**The End of a Chapter**

Buchanan’s career began with a razor-thin margin—a controversial 369-vote victory in 2006 that survived a ferocious legal challenge. It ends with a landslide of a different sort: a legislative legacy of 51 bills signed into law by four different presidents, and a real estate benchmark that may stand for years.

For Longboat Key, a town that respects a bottom line, Vern Buchanan is leaving on a high note: his district secure, his legislative résumé full, and his house sold for a record profit.

As he prepares to “pass the torch,” the island watches to see who will pick it up—and who might be the next to break the \$30 million ceiling he just built.

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Sharks, from page 1

For the wealthy retirees and sportfishing enthusiasts of Longboat Key, this isn't just a fish story—it's an economic crisis. It's the heartbreak of a 10-year-old kid reeling in a snapper only to find a severed head at the end of the line. It's the "tax" paid in lost gear, lost trophies, and lost patience.

But that cycle of frustration and fatality may finally have a technological off-switch.

In a breakthrough study published this week in the Journal of Fish Biology, scientists at Mote Marine Laboratory have demonstrated that a small, electronic pulse device (EPD) can effectively "short-circuit" a shark's desire to strike, reducing the likelihood of bait consumption by more than 45 times.

It is a discovery that promises to revolutionize the uneasy truce between human commerce and marine conservation, turning a lose-lose struggle into a win-win solution.

The Science of "Short-Circuiting" the Strike

The study, titled "Electronic pulse device deters and delays shark feeding in a depredation context," moves beyond theoretical deterrents into proven behavioral modification.

The device tested, known as the 'Shark Guard' by FiskTek Marine, operates on a principle that exploits the shark's own evolutionary advantage. Sharks possess highly sensitive electroreceptors—the Ampullae of Lorenzini—which they use to detect the faint electrical fields of prey. The Shark Guard emits brief, targeted electrical pulses that harmlessly overstimulate these receptors.

Think of it as a camera flash in a dark room: it doesn't hurt, but it causes an immediate, instinctive recoil.

"We're seeing that a short, controlled burst of electricity can make a big difference in shark behavior," said Jack Morris, lead author and Senior Biologist in Mote's Sharks and Rays Conservation Research Program. "It gives fishers precious seconds to reel in their catch and helping reduce conflict with these protected species."

The data, gathered from 198 controlled trials at Mote's Marine Experimental Research Facility (MERF) in Sarasota, is stark. When bonnethead sharks encountered bait protected by an active EPD, they were 45 times less likely to bite. Even when they did persist, they displayed "rapid withdrawal"—a sharp, startled turn away from the bait—delivering the crucial delay a fisherman needs to land their catch intact.

Economics Meets Ecology

For the residents of Longboat Key, where real estate values are inextricably linked to the health of the surrounding waters, this is more than a fishing story. It is an economic one.

Shark depredation—the technical term for sharks stealing catch—is a massive drain on the commercial and recreational fishing industries. When guides lose fish, client satisfaction drops. When commercial fleets lose catch, they must fish longer and harder to meet quotas, putting extra pressure on fish stocks.

"Mitigating depredation will obviously benefit people who are fishing," notes Dr. Demian Chapman, Director of Mote's Sharks and Rays Conservation Research Program. "But it will also benefit sharks because it will ensure that the strong public support that we see for shark conservation doesn't erode over time."

As shark populations in the U.S. Atlantic begin a slow, cel-

ebrated recovery after the overfishing of the 1980s and 90s, encounters are increasing. Without non-lethal deterrents, the old animosity toward sharks risks returning. This device offers a way to maintain biodiversity without sacrificing the catch.

A Legacy of Innovation

This breakthrough is deeply rooted in Mote's DNA. As the only Congressionally designated National Center for Shark Research, Mote is building on nearly 70 years of inquiry that began with the legendary "Shark Lady" herself, Dr. Eugenie Clark.

In the 1970s, Clark stunned the scientific world by discovering that the Red Sea Moses sole released a natural chemical that repelled sharks. Later, former Lab Director Dr. Perry W. Gilbert developed the "Shark Chaser" deterrent for the U.S. Navy.


"Dr. Gilbert and Dr. Clark showed the world that sharks could be studied, understood, and even deterred safely," Morris said. "Our research continues that same spirit."

The Next Step


The success of the bonnethead trials is just the beginning. Mote researchers are now planning to expand testing to real-world settings, partnering with fishing guides and commercial crews to see how the technology holds up in the open Gulf.

If the results hold, the tackle box of the future may look very different. Instead of just hooks and sinkers, it might include a small electronic guardian—a device that ensures the fisherman keeps his dinner, the shark keeps its life, and the delicate balance of our blue backyard remains intact.

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**ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS**

The Town of Longboat Key is accepting applications for appointment to the following board and committee:

**Planning and Zoning Board**  
**Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizen Advisory Committee**

All applications must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk **by 12:00 p.m. on February 20, 2026**. 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 Planning and Zoning Board 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 for any questions. Completed applications may be submitted to:

Town of Longboat Key    Office of the Town Clerk  
501 Bay Isles Road  
Longboat Key, FL 34228

Stephanie Garcia, Deputy Town Clerk II  
Published: 01-30-2026, 02-06-2026

Land Rules, from page 1

should now pivot to monetizing development to pay for built amenities instead. The proposal, set for discussion on February 2, would replace the land-buying mandate with a new “Parks and Recreation Impact Fee.” If passed, it means the town would no longer require development to fund the expansion of the island’s footprint of nature. Instead, it would use developer dollars to build facilities—community centers, pickleball courts, and active recreation zones. It is a decision that could redefine what “paradise” means on Longboat Key: Is it the silence of a mangrove preserve, or the bustle of a world-class recreation center?

The Argument: We Have Enough Land

The administration’s rationale is rooted in data that paints Longboat Key as an island that has surpassed its own wildest expectations. According to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, the official goal is to maintain 12 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents. But after decades of aggressive acquisition, the current numbers are staggering: The town now boasts 35 acres of open space per 1,000 residents—nearly triple the requirement. “The Town has a substantial surplus of open space,” Parsons wrote in the report. The implication is stark: The town believes it has enough green space. The administration argues that continuing to hoard cash for land acquisition is a solution to a problem that no longer exists. They contend that the “open and airy” ambience that defines the island’s multi-million dollar real estate market is secure.

The Pivot: Concrete Over Canopy?

Critics, however, may see this as a dangerous pivot. The proposed “Parks and Recreation Impact Fee” is designed to capture revenue for capital improvements—the bricks and mortar of recreation—rather than the land itself. By Florida statute, these new impact fees cannot be used to maintain what the town already owns; they must be used to build new capacity to serve new residents. This creates a cycle where development funds more development (in the form of facilities), rather than balancing development with nature. The shift effectively closes the wallet on future land preservation funded by developers. While the town could technically impose fees for both land acquisition and facilities, increasing the pot for both conservation and recreation, the administration is recommending a swap: trading the land fee for the facility fee. This decision comes at a time when Longboat Key’s real estate is more exclusive than ever. The island’s 4.2 square miles are a “lush green” brand. Wealthy retirees flock here not just for the amenities, but for the absence of clutter—the breathing room that the 1981 policy was created to protect. By capping the acquisition strategy now, the town risks losing the ability to bank land for future generations, banking instead on asphalt courts and community halls.

The Financial Reality

The driving force behind this shift appears to be practical economics. The town needs a dedicated revenue stream to upgrade its recreational infrastructure without tapping into general tax revenue. A study by consulting firm Raftelis Financial Services concluded that an impact fee is the best way to make growth pay for itself. “By directly linking new development to the funding of expanded recreational amenities,” the memo states, the town ensures that new money builds new value. But for the residents who see the island’s “Old Florida” charm as its greatest asset, the trade-off is significant. The town is opting to stop growing its lungs to start building its muscles.

A Decision Looming

This policy shift is not yet a done deal. The ordinance (2026-05) will face its first hurdle at the Town Commission meeting on Monday, February 2. If approved, it will be transmitted to the state for review, marking the beginning of the end for the 45-year-old policy that helped sculpt the Longboat Key of today. The question facing

the Commission is whether 35 acres per 1,000 residents is truly enough for all time, or if abandoning the acquisition of open space is a gamble with the island’s future identity. For now, the recommendation is on the table: The land is bought. The checkbook for nature is closing. The builders are being asked to fund the playground, not the park.

Demo, from page 1

tigated renovating the existing office complex, the structural repairs required were simply too extensive to be feasible. Crews have already begun the initial work, clearing trees and shrubs from the site in recent weeks. Once the building is razed, it will be joined with the adjacent vacant lot at 4120 Gulf of Mexico Drive—the former home of Pattigeorge’s Restaurant, which was demolished in the summer of 2018. Together, these parcels will form the canvas for Richard Gonzmart’s vision. The demolition is not just about removing concrete; it is about creating space for what Gonzmart has described as a future architectural landmark. The property includes boat slips, a crucial asset that will likely serve as parking for future diners arriving by water, echoing the golden age of Longboat dining where the journey was half the fun.

A Pirate’s Tale Returns

For longtime residents, the name “Buccaneer” summons memories of a different era of Longboat Key—a time when dinner came with a side of adventure. The original Buccaneer Inn, opened by Herb Field in 1957, was more than a restaurant; it was a theater of the high seas. Located elsewhere on the island, it was famous for its elaborate pirate theme. Patrons were greeted by Ransom Webster, a peg-legged pirate cosplayer who became a local celebrity. Menus were priced in “doubloons,” and the atmosphere was thick with the romance of Old Florida privateers. It closed in 2001, leaving a void in the island’s character that has never quite been filled. For Richard Gonzmart, the fourth-generation caretaker of the 1905 Family of Restaurants, the Buccaneer was personal. He has previously shared that, aside from his own family’s Columbia, the Buccaneer Inn was his parents’ favorite restaurant. His memories of dining there as a child have fueled a passion to bring that spirit back to the island, not as a kitschy reproduction, but as a high-end homage to the hospitality and excitement that defined the original.

The Gonzmart Standard

The arrival of a Gonzmart concept is a significant economic and cultural event for Longboat Key. The 1905 Family of Restaurants is Florida royalty, best known for the Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City—the oldest restaurant in the state—as well as Ulele, Cha Cha Coconuts, and Casa Santo Stefano. Their brand is built on a fusion of deep historical respect and operational excellence. When the Gonzmarts build, they build for the next century. The new Buccaneer is expected to feature charcoal-grilled prime rib—a staple of the original Inn—and other classic dishes reimaged with the culinary precision that has earned the group national acclaim. By replacing the aging Harbour Square office and the empty Pattigeorge’s lot with a destination waterfront venue, the town stands to gain a new social anchor. It signals a shift from the functional (offices) to the experiential (dining), aligning with the island’s reputation as a haven for leisure and luxury.

What’s Next?

While the demolition is imminent, the timeline for the first course is still simmering. According to Houck, specific architectural blueprints for the site have not yet been finalized. He noted that the current priority is simply preparing the land so that it is ready for construction whenever the design phase is complete. For now, the removal of the Harbour Square office building is a definitive statement: The stage is being set. The pirates are coming back to Longboat Key, and this time, they’re bringing the best food in Florida with them.



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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](mailto: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.

## Meeting with lighthouse point association

To: Marie DeSantis  
We are trying to keep the pool from freezing over. I need to check with a few of the staff and find out their schedules prior to our discussion. How about if I call you later today before 5 o'clock? I trust Bob's closing went well yesterday, he was in my thoughts.  
Gary Coffin  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

## Meeting with lighthouse point association

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin  
I hope you are keeping warm. It was very nice meeting you the other day.  
Would you please tell me exactly what you would like to talk about with our board and I will convey that to them.  
Marie DeSantis  
Longboat Key

## RoadWatch Update for the Week of February 1-7, 2026

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission  
Sarasota  
S.R. 789 from Bird Key Drive to Sunset Drive: Construction project: This project includes the addition of dedicated bicycle and transit lanes on the bridge, drainage upgrades, and raising the seawall cap near Sunset Drive. Other project activities include resurfacing the roadway throughout the project corridor and the installation of new traffic signals at the intersections of Sunset Drive, Golden Gate Drive, and Bird Key Drive. The project also includes relocating palm trees and small shrubs from their current locations on the eastern area of the John Ringling Causeway to medians closer to St. Armands Circle.  
This week's work will consist of:  
• Mobilize construction equipment, including delivery of machinery and materials.  
• Install Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) signs and devices.  
• Install temporary pedestrian paths around the work zone. Please use designated paths and follow posted detour signs.  
• Clear within the right of way and install erosion-control devices.  
• Bike lanes are closed due to construction. Cyclists should follow the posted detour.  
Lane closures will be in place during various phases of the project. Construction will primarily take place during daytime hours, with occasional nighttime work. Expect nighttime noise from backup alarms, construction equipment, pumps and power tools during daytime and nighttime operations. Drivers are urged to use caution and watch for workers, construction vehicles, pickup trucks, and equipment entering or exiting the travel lanes.  
During construction, the speed limit on Gulfstream Avenue and John Ringling Causeway/ S.R. 789 will remain 35 mph. Speeding fines are doubled in the construction zone when workers are present. Motorists are urged to drive cautiously and watch for workers, construction

vehicles, pickup trucks, and other equipment entering or exiting travel lanes.  
Alice Ramos  
Community Outreach Manager  
Florida Department of Transportation

## E-bikes

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Steve Branham  
Thank you for sharing the article and we agree with your workshop comments about reviewing the trail and complete streets vision with the introduction of higher e-bike traffic (and speeds). Additionally, our Police Department will be working to gauge the e-bike speeds and issue warnings as appropriate this spring as part of our public education efforts.  
Howard N. Tipton  
Town Manager, Town of Longboat Key

## E-bikes

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton  
Howard, I'm sending along a recent article posted in the Herald Tribune regarding the growth in popularity of E bikes, and the need to regulate their use. The issues discussed should be of concern to the Town of Longboat Key and our residents.  
Also, as I mentioned at the Commission workshop last week, I think it might be prudent for the staff to review the current complete streets plan developed over three years ago to ensure that envisioned infrastructure capabilities/capacities can most safely handle recent and anticipated growth in popularity of E bikes.  
Steve Branham  
Commissioner, Town of Longboat Key

## Board Meeting

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin  
I hope you are keeping warm. It was very nice meeting you the other day. Would you please tell me exactly what you would like to talk about with our board and I will convey that to them.  
Marie DeSantis  
Longboat Key

## Board Meeting

To: Marie DeSantis  
We are trying to keep the pool from freezing over.... I need to check with a few of the staff  
**See Letters, page 6**

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# Editor Letters



**Letters, from page 5**

and find out their schedules prior to our discussion. How about if I call you later today before 5 o'clock? I trust Bob's closing went well yesterday he was in my thoughts.  
Gary Coffin  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

**Harbour Circle meeting**

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier  
Thanks for your time today. As always you were the hit of our meeting. Sorry that two of our big complainers at Harbour Circle got you into the gritty details of landscape design. It was inappropriate.  
Best of luck in keeping yourself busy after March. I am sure you will have no problem. Stay well and thanks for all you have done for LBK.  
Don Stitzenberg  
Longboat Key

**Junkyard**

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton  
I would like to know is being done about 501 General Harrison Ave. It is now vacant, the power has been shut off, the pool is full of dirty water and it looks like a junk yard. I spoke to Alan Parsons over a year ago. What can we do to get this cleaned up? The bank that had the reverse mortgage should have some liability on this.  
Belinda Bsuer  
Longboat Key

**MLK Day, Lido Beach Renourishment, Special Events**

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Steve Branham  
Savannah provided you Charlie's response to Col. Saputo. Charlie also provided to me this morning a short Google history of the sand at this location which is below. The best we can do is to continue to explore ways to get the program jumpstarted, however there is no instant solution.  
Howard N. Tipton  
Town Manager  
Town of Longboat Key

**MLK Day, Lido Beach Renourishment, Special Events**

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Just to share some knowledge on the history of that location. This image is Feb 1994, one house was constructed at that time. The Sand Bar is visible. This is April 2002 and Col. Saputo's house is under construction and the dock was not built. Sand bar and sand accretion is visible. This is interesting, April 2004 Dock is in and channel is shoaling, quickly after the 2003 dredge. Jan 2007 only 3 years after the 2003 project and massive shoaling. These are all Google Earth and shows this was a problem that has existed for a long time.  
Charles Mopps  
Public Works Director  
Town of Longboat Key

**MLK Day, Lido Beach Renourishment, Special Events**

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton  
Thank you for your email and dredging map , but Lighthouse Point homeowners are disappointed that none of the sand for Lido Beach renourishment will help our properties be able to get our boats off our lifts and to be able to access the waterways that we were all able to do when we bought our properties. I have sent numerous photos of the accretion of sand blocking the natural channels and our docks to no avail. We are all so disappointed that this 10 year problem is not within your power to address for 16 homes that pay millions in taxes for the homes and Island we love.  
Col. John W. Saputo  
Longboat Key

**MLK Day, Lido Beach Renourishment, Special Events**

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Steve Branham  
Good morning, Commissioner. Our Public Works Director Charlie Mopps is working on a response to the questions posed which should be out by the close of business today.  
Howard N. Tipton  
Town Manager  
Town of Longboat Key

**Lido Beach Renourishment, Special Events**

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps  
Thanks, John. I'm forwarding this along to the town manager for his awareness and to continue to build the record on this issue.  
Steve Branham  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 12

MEMBERSHIP: *Come Test the Waters.*

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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
6473 GULF OF MEXICO DR	2,804	\$2,895,000	3	2	1	30	\$2,700,000
360 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#332	2,949	\$1,749,000	3	3	1	3	\$1,700,000
3010 GRAND BAY BLVD Unit#434	2,550	\$1,595,000	3	3	1	10	\$1,595,000
711 RUSSELL ST	1,862	\$975,000	3	2	0	277	\$850,000



6473 GULF OF MEXICO DR



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Jeff@jeffrhineland.com



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941-893-7203

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247 Robin Drive  
New Construction • \$13,999,000



BIRD KEY • SARASOTA  
605 Wild Turkey Lane  
2,200 SF • \$1,795,000



L'AMBIANCE • LONGBOAT KEY  
435 L'Ambiance Dr #J703  
3BR/2BA/1HB • \$4,495.000



BIRD KEY • SARASOTA  
259 Robin Drive  
3BR/3FB/2HB • FULL BAYFRONT • \$8,900,000



GULF FRONT NEW CONSTRUCTION  
4005 Casey Key Road, Nokomis  
6BR/6.5BA • \$9,950,000



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George  
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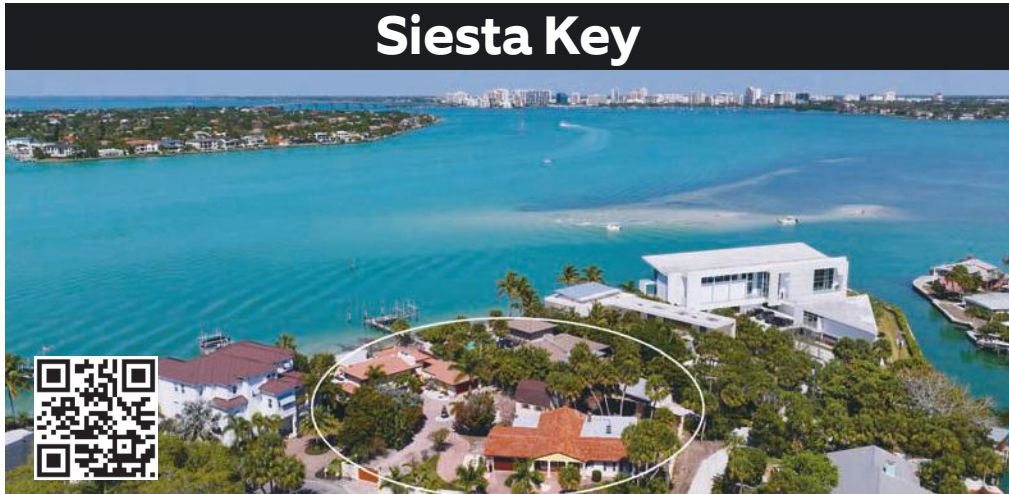
Judy  
Kepecz-Hays  
941-587-1700



Steven  
Kepecz  
941-376-6411



**Hideaway Bay**  
757 Hideaway Bay Drive  
\$7,488,000  
[757HideawayBay.com](http://757HideawayBay.com)



**Siesta Key**  
21 & 25 Lands End Lane | \$12,400,000  
21 Lands End Lane | \$9,900,000 - 25 Lands End Lane | \$2,500,000  
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1300 Benjamin Franklin Drive #709  
\$3,450,000  
[BeachResidences709.com](http://BeachResidences709.com)



**Key Tower South**  
1750 Benjamin Franklin Drive #10G  
\$1,200,000  
[KeyTower10G.com](http://KeyTower10G.com)



**Casa del Carnevale on St. Armands**  
139 S Washington Drive  
\$16,850,000  
[CasaDelCarnevale.com](http://CasaDelCarnevale.com)



**Islander Club**  
2301 Gulf of Mexico Drive #11N & #12N  
\$2,488,000  
[IslanderClub11N-12N.com](http://IslanderClub11N-12N.com)



**Sanctuary**  
545 Sanctuary Drive #B506  
\$1,948,000  
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435 L'Ambiance Drive #L807  
\$3,500,000 | Furnished  
[LAmbianceL807.com](http://LAmbianceL807.com)  
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\$2,500,000 | Furnished  
[LAmbianceB202.com](http://LAmbianceB202.com)



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[Promenade704.com](http://Promenade704.com)



**Longboat Key Towers**  
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[LBKTowers402N.com](http://LBKTowers402N.com)



**Tangerine Bay Club**  
350 Gulf of Mexico Drive #211  
\$938,500  
[Tangerine211.com](http://Tangerine211.com)



**Golden Gate Point**  
660 Golden Gate Point #32  
\$799,000  
[MarinaView32.com](http://MarinaView32.com)

# OnPatrol

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

## Jan. 23 Obstruction

7:54 a.m.  
Officer Miklos responded to Marbury Lane for a report of a dumpster causing a road obstruction. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos observed a blue construction dumpster sticking approximately two to three feet into the roadway. The dumpster had traffic cones surrounding it. The dumpster location still allowed for traffic flow. Officer Miklos called the dumpster company and requested them to move the dumpster further into the property. The operator advised he would have someone come and look into moving the dumpster. Case clear.

## Incident

12:30 p.m.  
Officer Martinson was dispatched to Bay Isles Parkway on a call of a suspicious incident. Upon arrival, Officer Martin was met by the shift manager in front of the business. The manager stated at approximately 12:30 p.m. a woman in her early 20s, long black straight hair and wearing a gray shirt with jeans attempted to pay for her groceries with a fake \$100 bill. The manager stated when the cashier then told the woman it was a fake bill and gave it back to the woman since it is store policy to not hold onto fake bills. The manager stated the woman immediately got on her cell phone and called someone and began yelling at them for giving her fake money. The manager stated the woman took back the fake bill and then paid for her groceries with a real \$100. The manager stated the woman then left the store and got into the front passenger seat of a black soft top mustang convertible. The manager stated the store did not suffer any monetary loss. Case clear.

## Jan. 24 Drugs

12:01 a.m.  
Sgt. Butler while on patrol conducted a traffic stop for a broken headlight at the 4300 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Upon approaching the vehicle, Sgt. Butler immediately detected a strong odor of marijuana emanating from the vehicle. While standing at the driver's side, he also observed visible smoke coming from the cup holder inside the vehicle. The driver voluntarily surrendered a marijuana cigarette to the officer and it was weighed and determined to be approximately .66 grams. The passenger stated that the marijuana belonged to him and said he did not possess a valid medical marijuana card. A presumptive field test was conducted on the green leafy substance using a department issued testing kit, which gave a positive result for marijuana. Based on the odor of marijuana, visible smoke, voluntary surrender of the marijuana cigarette, positive presumptive test and admission of ownership, Sgt. Butler determined there was probable cause to believe the passenger was in violation of the state statutes for cannabis. The marijuana cigarette was seized as evidence. Enforcement action was taken in accordance with state statute. Case clear.

## Boat

2:58 p.m.  
Sgt. Montfort while on marine patrol in the area of the New Pass Bridge, observed a 24-foot pontoon vessel disabled and drifting toward the bridge pilings. Sgt. Montfort pulled near the pontoon and advised the captain of the vessel to deploy his anchor to which he complied. The captain yelled that he was out of fuel and was attempting to travel to a gas station to refuel. Sgt. Montfort advised the captain he would not be able to tow him and he would have to contact commercial assistance for a tow. Sgt. Montfort was unable to obtain pedigree information as the vessel was in a tidal zone and he would have placed himself in a dangerous situation close to a bridge piling. Case clear.

## Jan. 25 Vehicle

10:35 a.m.



Officer Martinson was dispatched to Bay Isles Parkway on a call of a suspicious vehicle. Remarks in the call stated for the past 15 minutes there has been a man driving around the parking lot in a navy blue Honda van or SUV. The caller stated the driver was trying to interact with elderly subjects next to their vehicles. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson searched through the parking lot but was unable to locate the vehicle. Officer Martinson ran the license plate through Elvis and it came back clear of any wants or warrants. Case clear.

## Jan. 26 Assist

2:39 p.m.  
Officer Pescuma was dispatched to the 4200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a suspicious person. The caller who did not wish to meet stated that a man was sleeping on the bench near the tennis courts. Upon arrival, Officer Pescuma observed the man sitting on the bench with his head down with luggage nearby. Officer Pescuma made contact with the man who stated he was walking to Sarasota and was taking a break. Officer Pescuma asked him if he was homeless, he said that he was and trying to go to the Resurrection House. Officer Pescuma checked for wants and warrants with negative results. Officer Pescuma conducted a courtesy transport to the south end of Longboat Key. Case clear.

## Information report

3:41 p.m.  
Officer Zunz responded to the front desk of the Police Department for a request of a complainant that her son and his girlfriend are no longer welcome to live at her mother's home on St. Judes Drive. The woman stated that her mother has moved into a home in Bradenton and she no longer wants her son, being the grandson of her 96-year-old mother, to remain living at the home on St. Judes with his girlfriend. Officer Zunz asked if she had pursued legal action to have them removed, she said she had not. Officer Zunz advised there were legal steps to be taken in order to remove squatters, but she said she only wanted to file an information report for documentation. She said that the house will be boarded up at some point in the near future. Case clear.

## Jan. 27 Alarm

1:29 a.m.  
Officer Mathis was dispatched to Sabal Cove Place in reference to a residential alarm activation. Upon Officer Mathis' arrival, he spoke with the complainant via the ring doorbell who advised that the alarm was activated but everything appeared fine via camera and no one was observed. Officer Mathis advised her the high winds Longboat Key was experiencing and she again advised everything was fine. During Officer Mathis' time at the residence, it appeared secure. No signs of attempted entry or suspicious activity were observed. Case clear.

## Jan. 28 Vehicle

3:46 a.m.  
Sgt. Montfort while on patrol observed a Mercedes SUV with unsecured doors at Byron Lane. In fear of a possible vehicle burglary, Sgt. Montfort exited his vehicle and examined the car. Sgt. Montfort observed the rear tailgate was open and the third row seating was folded down. It appears the owner forgot to close up the vehicle. Sgt. Montfort attempted to make contact at the residence but the front gate was secured by padlock. The interior compartments were closed and no personal items seem out of place. Sgt. Montfort then secured the vehicle and returned to service without incident. Case clear.

## Incident

7:35 a.m.  
Officer Miklos was contacted by Officer Martinson in reference to a possible gas leak. Officer Martinson advised he was flagged down by a passerby who stated the area between New Pass Bridge and the traffic light at Longboat Club Road and Gulf of Mexico Drive smelled of gas. Upon arrival in the area, Officer Miklos conducted a check from the traffic light to Overlook Park and was unable to locate any gas leak or smell. Case clear.

## Jan. 29 Vehicle

10:06 p.m.  
Officer Nazareno while on patrol observed a white Cadillac pickup truck traveling northbound on the 6900 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive without tag lights and conducted a vehicle stop. Upon making contact with the driver, Officer Nazareno advised her for the reason of the stop. The driver stated she does not have a driver's license and presented a Mexican Consulate ID card. A court date was issued to her for violating a vehicle without a valid driver's license. A written warning was issued for no tag light. Arrangements were made for a licensed driver to remove the vehicle from the scene. Case clear.

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# WineTimes

## Spirited Cocktails with Garnishes and More

*The flagship Columbia Restaurant in the middle of the Circle has served its Mojito since it opened as an offshoot of the original Cuban-Spanish location in the Ybor City area of Tampa Florida.*

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

Craft cocktails combine a tasty blend of spirits with an artistic presentation. Classic mixed drinks contain generous pours of a base spirit. A dry Martini consists mainly of gin or vodka with a touch of dry vermouth, plus a long toothpick with an olive on the end and submerged in the drink. Bartenders may add multiple olives or a pickled onion between olives to the toothpick. A veteran Martini drinker contemplates the olive, holds the toothpick aside with the index finger when sipping the drink, and strips off olive and eats it to finish it.

Garnishes in classic cocktails serve a purpose. The orange peel twist in an Old Fashioned has rimmed the glass and needs to be added to the Bourbon or Rye whiskey and Angostura bitters. The wedge of lime on the rim of a gin and tonic glass adds a citrus edge when squeezed into the drink.

More elaborate presentations work best when garnishes or bar plates enhance the flavors of the cocktails. A few examples from St. Armand's Circle in Sarasota Florida illustrate the art of crafting cocktails. The Circle has rebuilt after the devastation of Hurricane Helene during the autumn of 2024. A revived bar scene is a major part of the recovery efforts.

The flagship Columbia Restaurant in the middle of the Circle has served its Mojito since it opened as an offshoot of the original Cuban-Spanish location in the Ybor City area of Tampa Florida. A generous pour of light rum in fresh lime juice with mint simple syrup and seltzer water fill a tall glass. The interesting garnish has fresh mint leaves muddled in the bottom of the glass. A stirrer cut from the pulp of a sugarcane stalk serves as muddler inside the glass and, when chewed on one end, adds a few drops of raw sugarcane syrup to mint-infused lime. This simple, signature cocktail rivals form fits function design of Daiquiris from the venerable Phone Bar in the Hotel Geneva in Mexico City; two servings of the golden rum Daiquiris arrive at the table in a shaker filled with ice. The guests may then linger over Daiquiris that will stay cold for an hour or more.

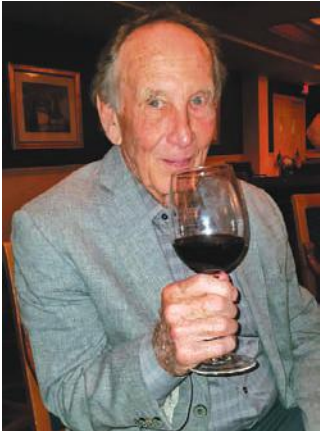
Across the street and a short walk in the direction of Lido Beach, the Daiquiri Deck's Bloody Mary has two options in sizes: the smaller will last from beginning to end of a typical college football game; the larger comes with a "Don't Drive Home" warning. For those who are running short of their minimum daily requirements of fruits and vegetables, Jamie loads the drink with spices and herbs in the glass, plus thin jalapeño slices, a bright orange straw, and a skewer bisecting a celery stick, a dill pickle, two green olives, a steamed shrimp in the shell, and a lemon wedge.

Heading back toward the Longboat Key Bridge at the end of the commercial strip, Speaks Clam Bar has a Happy Hour (M-F until 6PM) that features a spicy Fresno Margarita (\$7), three plump Oysters Rockefeller (\$8) made with the correct ingredients (spinach sauteed in garlic butter and dusted with parmesan cheese), and three Shrimp Arancini (\$7). This cocktail and small plate special with start a visit to the Circle on a cloudy day or lead into sunset on beautiful Lido Beach.

We remember hangovers from a "floater" of 120 proof Rum bartenders offer to pour on the top of a drink. Lynch's Pub and Grub, a few doors up from Speaks, Audrey behind the bar floats miniature rubber duckies of Sesame Street fame on a "What the Duck" drink (Raspberry Vodka, lemonade, and Blue Curacao). The Rubber Duckie as a scientific tool adds a backstory to the drink: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/how-the-rubber-duckie-became-a-symbol-of-happinessand-climate-research/>

Lynch's also offers an Angry Gator drink with a little green gator floating on top (Spicy Margarita with cucumber and jalapeño). Despite its lack of cultural or scientific merit, the little gator does look cute and may appeal to University of Florida fans.

*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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# Editor Letters



## Letters, from page 6

## MLK Day, Lido Beach Renourishment, Special Events

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Steve Branham  
Commissioner/Admiral B--concerning Lido Beach renourishment...I saw the equipment staged for the renourishment in New Pass...Can you check to see if they will use accreted sand from the area in front of mine and neighbors docks and I hope they plan on taking accreted sand from the island that forms at every low tide between our houses in Lighthouse Point and the Longboat Bridge...?? The neighborhood has begged for this opportunity for 20 years with no action..Now is the time to dredge so we can get our boats off of our lifts at mean and low tides...

Col. John and Denise Saputo and all my neighbors...  
We are so glad you can make it. The meeting is at the home of Pete and Carla Rowan 601 Broadway. We will have temporary parking permits available!  
Jill Nemeth  
Longboat Key

## MLK Day, Lido Beach Renourishment, Special Events

To: Jill Nemeth  
Happy to attend. Where?  
Ken Schneier  
Mayor  
Town of Longboat Key

## LBVA February Meeting

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schreier

As the end of your remarkable time in office approaches, the Longbeach Village Association would be honored if you would be our guest at our next meeting on Wednesday, February 4 at 5:30pm. We would love to have the opportunity to thank you for all your support of the Village over the years, salute you for your service to our special town and hear what you feel were your greatest accomplishments. Please let me know if you are available,

Jill Nemeth  
LBVA Secretary

## Economic Development Council

To: EDC Board Members

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Happy Saturday! As I wrap up my first full week in the Interim CEO role, I wanted to take a moment to share my sincere gratitude. I have been overwhelmed, in the best way, by the outpouring of support, encouragement, and offers of time and expertise. Many of you have already stepped forward with your skill sets and insights, and I fully intend to lean into the brainpower that makes up this Board. Thank you for that generosity.

Below is a “brief” snapshot of this week’s activity. During this interim period, I’m intentionally over-communicating as we build rhythm and alignment. (I’m sorry for the long e-mail)

County Contract

On Friday, we submitted a draft of the County contract, including our redlines and questions. An informal working meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 29, to walk through those items and continue the dialogue. In addition, an agenda item has been added to the Tuesday, January 27 Board of County Commissioners meeting to allow staff to continue formal dialogue with the EDC. Chris and I will attend and anticipate being asked to briefly speak.

City Contract

We met with Mayor Gene Brown and City Administrator Rob Perry to discuss the City contract. The conversation was productive and honest, and we have a clear and positive path forward. More on that as we work through some details.

**CEO Search**  
Last week, the Transition Committee finalized a proposed list of Search Committee members, and outreach will begin shortly. We also held our initial call with Winner Partners, our executive search firm. They have provided a draft timeline, job description, and application process. Once finalized, those materials will be shared, and we will review the full process together at the next Board meeting.

Investor Relations

Several investor and partner meetings are already underway or scheduled, including Gather 242, IMG Academy, and Michael Saunders & Company, many of which were initiated through outreach to us. Additional meetings are scheduled with City Council members and County Commissioners. Next week, as Ellen identifies at-risk and top-tier investors, Carole will help me begin proactive outreach to schedule conversations and ensure we are listening closely.

On Friday, the EDC team joined Pilatus in celebrating their groundbreaking. The event highlighted the meaningful work of the organization, and both Pilatus and SRQ Airport expressed strong appreciation for the partnership that supported their \$200 million investment in our community.

**Operations & Administration**  
From an operational standpoint, 2026 investor invoices are now in distribution. Internally, the team has implemented a weekly operating cadence that includes brief daily morning huddles and a standing Friday team meeting focused on priorities, issues, and accountability. This structure is helping ensure alignment and reduce siloed work.

Please save the date for the OSSIO Grand Opening on Monday, February 2, from 3–5 p.m., located at 1810 E. 51st Street, Suite 109, Palmetto, within Benderson's International Trade Port. Elizabeth will be sending a formal save-the-date shortly, and Board attendance is encouraged.

Thank you again for your trust, your engagement, and your partnership. I'm incredibly grateful for this team and energized by the work ahead. Teamwork truly does make the dream work, and I'm looking forward to all we'll accomplish together.

Amanda Parrish  
Interim CEO  
Economic Development Council

**To: Longboat Key Police Chief Russ Mager**

Again, we are all very fortunate to have a qualified and competent staff protecting us daily on our island.  
Gary Coffin  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

## Granddaughter home

To: Longboat Key Assistant to the Town Manager Savannah Cobb

What a nice letter and I appreciate you sharing it with me. It was indeed a team effort both internally as well as a collaboration with outside agencies. It was obviously a huge concern for us having a 14-year-old runaway and having little or no information to act upon made this matter even more daunting regarding her whereabouts and well-being. Once we were notified of the incident, our detective and various officers were actively searching. We pushed out a missing persons bulletin through various law enforcement channels – (local agencies and throughout the state, all out of state agencies, FDLE and the FBI). Detective Ramsaier, Captain Bourque and those mentioned in the letter worked tirelessly and were able to locate a witness in Bradenton who assisted in our recovery efforts.

A great team effort by all with a rewarding ending. I especially appreciated the Schinbeckler's comments about our officer's professionalism, compassion, and communication during this difficult process. Thanks again and it is our pleasure to serve you and our community.

Russ Mager  
Police Chief  
Longboat Key Police Department

## Granddaughter home

To: Longboat Key Police Chief Russ Mager

We wanted to share a thank you note from the Schinbecklers expressing their gratitude for the police department's efforts in locating and safely returning their granddaughter home after she was reported missing. Their message speaks to the care, professionalism, and dedication

**See Letters, page 13**

**Send us your best thoughts...  
letters@lbknews.com**

# Editor Letters



**Letters, from page 12**

shown by our Police Department and we thought it was important to pass along their appreciation.

Savannah Cobb  
Assistant to Town Manager  
Town of Longboat Key

**Sarasota Bay Estuary Program update**

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission

Given recent and potential large-scale changes to habitats in southeastern Tampa Bay, I thought it important to communicate the interconnectivity of our estuarine system and how changes in one region can impact the Sarasota Bay estuary. Tomorrow we will be posting this Director’s note. Habitat changes outside of the Sarasota Bay estuary matter, and here’s why.

Events that occur just over the horizon can significantly impact our estuary. The degradation of remaining coastal habitats, many of which are mangrove forests, directly affects the marine life that depends on them for survival. For this reason, we should be aware of and concerned about the loss and degradation of coastal habitats throughout our region from Tampa Bay, throughout Sarasota, and down to Charlotte Harbor. When we focus on preserving and improving the regional habitat and water quality, we see the resilience of nature bounce back. In the 1970’s through early 2000’s, Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay were recovering from the historical nutrient problems and eutrophication that impacted the region. This recovery resulted in seagrass and water quality improvements that benefited people and marine life in both regions. Locally, the recent nutrient reductions from municipal sources and restoration projects like the 100-acre F.I.S.H preserve in Cortez are positive improvements that bolster our natural habitats.

Many of us take pride in the health of our immediate environments, yet it’s easy to overlook their connection to the neighboring ecosystems that help sustain them. If estuaries were neighborhoods, Sarasota Bay would be compact and densely developed, surrounded by much larger communities with more open green space. Our bay is supported by a relatively small, 150-square-mile watershed that is over 85% urbanized. More than 80% of our coastline is hardened, including over 100 miles of seawalls. As a result, only a fraction of the wetlands, mangrove forests, oyster bars, and winding creeks that once defined this system remain. Despite this, Sarasota Bay has adapted and continues to thrive in many ways, but the health of our estuary also depends on supporting the natural environments beyond our watershed. Much of our marine life now depends on more intact coastal habitats beyond our borders in Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor, whose ecological productivity “spills over” to support our region.

Water serves as the highway connecting the Sarasota Bay Estuary to neighboring systems. We share not only water with our sister estuaries to the north and south, but we also share life. Given the historic and extensive loss of wetland habitats within Sarasota Bay, much of our marine life now depends on habitats outside our artificial boundaries for a portion of their life history. Wetland and seagrass losses just outside the Sarasota Bay Estuary’s boundary with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, in areas such as Anna Maria Sound, the Manatee River, the Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve, and along the southeastern Tampa Bay coastline, affect numerous marine species, including fish, shrimp, crabs, birds, manatees, and dolphins that migrate between the regions. Nature shows us that the local estuary does not operate in isolation and we must pay attention to the condition and fate of our neighboring estuaries.

A compelling example is the iconic snook and its dependence on intact spawning and nursery grounds in southeastern Tampa Bay. In late spring through summer, large numbers of snook depend on the waters in the Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve around Rattlesnake Key in southeastern Tampa Bay as a primary spawning and nursery area. Prior to spawning, they migrate from winter refuges in the Manatee River and stage near the river mouth to feed and rebuild energy reserves. The importance of this area was documented by a generation of local scientists from the 1970’s through the early 2000’s, whose lifelong research guided snook recovery and conservation throughout Florida.

Those studies documented the importance of the region as a spawning ground and nursery area. “Snook spawn inside Tampa Bay near the mouth of Terra Ceia and Miguel bays and around the Port Manatee. Schools of reproductively active snook may contain as many as four or five hundred individuals return to the same location each year to spawn (FWC-FWRI).” Snook eggs and larvae from this spawning activity enter the mangrove forests along the southeastern coast of Tampa Bay and Anna Maria Sound. These mangrove nurseries are essential for producing healthy and robust snook populations for the region. As juvenile snook mature, they disperse throughout the region, including into Sarasota Bay.

Because of this connectivity, any habitat degradation and loss along the southeastern Tampa Bay coast can significantly affect snook populations and other mangrove-dependent species, such as shrimp, crabs, oysters, snapper, grouper, and birds, that ultimately end up making the Sarasota Bay estuary their home. Our marine life and fisheries are intertwined, relying on habitat continuity and quality across the region, not just within a single bay or segment of the estuary.

It is important to remember that we steward our local environments not only for our own benefit, but for the benefit of wildlife and other communities across our region. While urbanization has permanently altered the Sarasota Bay ecosystem, opportunities to care for, enhance, and protect what remains are essential, and efforts to protect and champion neighboring environments matter just as much. It’s a small world after all.

Ryan Gandy  
Executive Director  
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

**Sunshine State Insights January 21, 2026**

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Susan Smith

Yes. It’s on mine.

Howard N. Tipton

Town Manager

Town of Longboat Key

**Sunshine State Insights January 21, 2026**

To: Longboat Key Finance Director Susan Smith

Bj and Debra should probably put this one on their “hell no” list.

Ken Schneier  
Mayor  
Town of Longboat Key

**Sunshine State Insights January 21, 2026**

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

Wow! I was just reading through this and they are asking for a lot of transparency here. These are some big changes including the advertising of title blocks for budget amendments. DEI costs are forbidden. Our digital Budget budget book can produce several of the requirements, but will not be able provide list of employees and their salaries in a searchable format and travel expenses for all employees. That would have to be a separate document perhaps. There is also a 10 percent Budget cutting exercise requirement. Thanks for sharing.

Sue Smith  
Finance Director  
Town of Longboat Key

**Gulf Gate Library**

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop

Thank you! Yes, the Gulf Gate Library at Curtis Ave. Can you email me a picture and bio so I can add it to the CONA Newsletter. Will you be making a presentation? I will have a computer and ask the library staff for thAs we get closer, I may call you to go over the agenda.

Lourdes Ramirez  
President CONA  
Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations

**Gulf Gate Library**

To: Lourdes Ramirez

Would be happy to do this. Gulf Gate Library at Curtiss Avenue? If you need to chat about this further. Obviously we are very concerned about property taxes and the continuing battle over home rule for our municipalities.

BJ Bishop  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

**Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations**

To: Longboat Key Commission

Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations is having a meeting focused on the various state bills that are preempting our local rules. We have one speaker on the topic of the local UTC bill and wondered if you are available and willing to speak about the other bills. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 10 from 6-7:30 p.m. at Gulf Gate Library Room A. Please let us know if you are able to speak about this important topic to our neighborhood leaders. We anticipate about 20-25 attendees. Thank You.

Lourdes Ramirez  
President CONA  
Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations

See Letters, page 15

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## Two Simple Tennis Tips That Go Hand in Hand

*One of the most common mistakes I see players make is waiting too long to prepare their swing.*

**IVAN YATZUK**  
Guest Writer  
news@lbknews.com

Today, I want to share two fundamental tennis tips that go hand in hand and can immediately improve your timing, control, and power.

One of the most common mistakes I see players make is waiting too long to prepare their swing. Many players stay locked in the ready position, watching the ball, and only take the racket back once the ball has already bounced on their side of the court. By that point, everything feels rushed.

Instead, preparation should begin as soon as you recognize where the ball is going. That’s the moment to turn your shoulders, set your feet, and get into position. When you prepare early, the forward swing becomes simple and natural. In fact, it shouldn’t feel like you are “taking the racket back” at all — it’s more about turning your shoulders and letting the racket come with your body. Clean tennis strokes are compact and efficient, with as little unnecessary movement as possible.

This leads directly into the second key point: making contact with the ball in front of your body.

When players prepare late, they almost always make contact late as well, often with the ball too far behind them. When this happens, you feel jammed — there’s no freedom, no power, and very little control. Proper spacing is everything in tennis. When you contact the ball out in front, your racket is in front of your body, your swing can flow freely, and control comes naturally. You strike the ball, release through it, and then allow your body to move forward with momentum.

It’s impossible to generate true forward momentum if you’re hitting the ball behind you. That’s a topic for another day, but it all starts with early preparation.

So remember: turn your shoulders early as soon as you read the ball, stay active with your



footwork, and aim to contact the ball in front of your body. Do that consistently, and you’ll unlock better timing, more power, and far greater control in your game.

*Ivan Yatsuk is a tennis professional at Bird Key Yacht Club and the co-founder of Recruited, a company that helps aspiring high school tennis players from around the world earn opportunities to play college tennis in the United States.*

### Letters, from page 13 Construction Project

To: Longboat Key Commission  
S.R. 789 from Bird Key Drive to Sunset Drive: Construction project: This project includes the addition of dedicated bicycle and transit lanes on the bridge, drainage upgrades, and raising the seawall cap near Sunset Drive. Other project activities include resurfacing the roadway throughout the project corridor and the installation of new traffic signals at the intersections of Sunset Drive, Golden Gate Drive, and Bird Key Drive. The project also includes relocating palm trees and small shrubs from their current locations on the eastern area of the John Ringling Causeway to medians closer to St. Armands Circle.

This week’s work will consist of:

- Mobilize construction equipment, including delivery of machinery and materials.
- Install Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) signs and devices.
- Install temporary pedestrian paths around the work zone.

Please use designated paths and follow posted detour signs.

- Clear within the right of way and install erosion-control devices.

Lane closures will be in place during various phases of the project. Construction will primarily take place during daytime hours, with occasional nighttime work. Expect nighttime noise from backup alarms, construction equipment, pumps and power tools during daytime and nighttime operations. Drivers are urged to use caution and watch for workers, construction vehicles, pickup trucks, and equipment entering or exiting the travel lanes.

During construction, the speed limit on Gulfstream Avenue and John Ringling Causeway/S.R. 789 will be reduced to 35 mph. Speeding fines are doubled in the construction zone when workers are present. Motorists are urged to drive cautiously and watch for workers, construction vehicles, pickup trucks, and other equipment entering or exiting travel lanes.

Alice Ramos  
Community Outreach Manager  
Florida Department of Transportation

### HJR 213

To: Delegate Will Robinson  
HJR 213 will be before your State Affairs Committee Thursday morning. The conversations I am having with our citizens as the State Legislature is contemplating reducing or eliminating property taxes is , “how will we have ambulance service and fire service on Longboat Key and while we see they are protecting police from revenue reduction, where will the money come from to pay them”? I have shared with you that 71 percent of our revenue comes from property taxes. Our Town Commission receives zero compensation for the jobs we do and we have had no outcry at our budget sessions in the five years I have served on Commission about property taxes. HJR 213 while well intentioned, has far-reaching fiscal

and operational consequences for not only Longboat Key, but towns and cities across Florida and the residents they serve (especially our senior population here).

This may play well in sound bites, but the economic pitfalls are dire for every citizen and visitor to our state.

BJ Bishop  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

### Longbeach Village Association Meeting

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon  
Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our district and the Town of Longboat Key as a whole. Would you be available to speak at the next meeting of the Longbeach Village Association on Wednesday February 4, around 6 p.m.?  
We all had the opportunity to meet with you briefly as you were assuming your new role and you very kindly squeezed us into your busy schedule. We would welcome the opportunity to have you come and speak to our members in more detail about what you see as the current concerns for our district and the island. Please let me know if this would be possible. Have a great evening.

Jill Nemeth  
LBVA Secretary

### City Manager Search - Interview Recordings

To: Sarasota City Clerk Shayla Griggs  
I’m having difficulty with the recordings today. I can get the audio, but the video doesn’t move from the initial screen shot of the candidate. Yesterday I was able to view the video of Joe Gaa without any problems. Today it presents the same problems as the others. I am clicking through the link in your email  
Debbie Trice  
Mayor  
City of Sarasota

### City Manager Search - Interview Recordings

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice  
Yes, Mayor that is correct.  
Shayla Griggs  
City Auditor and Clerk  
City of Sarasota

### City Manager Search - Interview Recordings

To: Sarasota City Clerk Shayla Griggs  
So, we have about 2/3 of them, after deducting the ones who withdrew.  
Debbie Trice  
Mayor  
City of Sarasota

### City Manager Search - Interview Recordings

To: Sarasota City Commission  
I am sending this email notification to inform you that additional interviews have been uploaded. The interviews have been posted to the OneDrive folder there are a total of 26 videos. Please let me know if you have any questions.  
Shayla Griggs  
City Auditor and Clerk  
City of Sarasota

### City Manager Search - Interview Recordings

To: Sarasota City Commission  
The City Manager search consulting firm, Sumpter Consulting, has begun uploading the interview recordings. Per the Commission’s request, recordings are being uploaded on a rolling basis as they are received. I will send email notifications as additional interviews are uploaded. The interviews have been posted to the OneDrive folder linked below. Please let me know if you have any questions.  
Shayla Griggs  
City Auditor and Clerk  
City of Sarasota

Longboat Key News

Sarasota City News

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Steve Reid, Editor & Publisher

sreid@lbknews.com

Associate Publisher

Melissa Reid

Sales

Lillian Sands

Steve Reid

ads@lbknews.com

Graphic Production

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Letters to the Editor

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