



Longboat Key News

December 29, 2023 Serving Longboat Key, St. Armands, Downtown Sarasota & Anna Maria Island FREE

InsideLook



Make sure you follow trends ...page 13



LBK beachfront for \$1.75 million ...page 9



Read about the state of the Bay ...page 12



Raccoon taken into possession ...page 10

Saving our Coral Legacy

A team of expert coral restoration researchers at Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium are fighting back after last summer's unprecedented thermal stress event.

Global, regional, and local stressors have contributed to the decline of coral reef ecosystems, most notably in Florida and the Wider Caribbean Region. Living coral cover on Florida's Coral Reef



is currently between one and five percent, dramatically less than 40 years ago when it was more than 40 percent. See Legacy, page 2

KeyOpinion Leaders need to step-it-up in 2024

Perhaps national and global leaders should make their own resolutions for the common good. Let's explore a wish list for leaders to adopt in the New Year.

GREGORY RUSOVICH
Guest Writer
rusovich@lbknews.com

As we enter 2024, it's a good time for hope and resolutions. While it's customary to have our own individual New Year's aspirations, perhaps national and global leaders should make their own resolutions for the common good. Let's explore a wish list for leaders to adopt in the New Year.



RUSOVICH

May we all hope and pray for peace in the Middle East. The barbaric assault by Hamas on innocent Israeli men, women and children has reminded us that evil still lurks in the 21st century. Many innocent Palestinian civilians are subsequently being killed while Israel justifiably takes out thousands of Hamas fighters. Resolving that Hamas ceases to exist, and that moderate Arab nations and Israel find peace in 2024, would provide greater harmony and stability in the Middle East, and thus the entire world.

And while making resolutions for global conflicts, may we also hope for an end to Vladimir Putin's unprovoked assault on Ukraine. This unjust war has killed tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians. On the other side of the world, China's warmongering Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party have become yet another threat to global peace. May 2024 bring an end to the Putin and Xi regimes, and may both iconic nations see more peaceful leaders emerge.

Back home, may we hope that President Biden resolves to protect See Opinion, page 12

Art Lands in Sarasota



Fuchsia Frisson by Stephanie Linden

The Sarasota Fine Art Show by Hot Works takes place on January 6 & 7, 2024 at Phillippi Estate Park, off U-41/ Tamiami Trail south of Downtown Sarasota and Siesta Key. This is a juried fine art & craft show where all work is original and personally handmade by the artist in the show. All disciplines of art are for sale by the artist who is present at the show. Also, a Budding Artist Competition is integrated into the art show. This program encourages all students in grades 6-12 or ages 9-19 to submit his/her original and personally handmade art that is publicly displayed within the art show duration of the event. On Sunday, January 7 at 3 p.m., there are \$250 cash awards presented as students begin to learn the rules and are exposed to the entrepreneurship opportunity of doing art shows for a living. Admission is free, however, \$5 parking supports arts and education and is good for in-and-out access for the duration of the art show.



Legacy, from page 1

30 percent. Many factors make a natural recovery of Florida’s Coral Reef unlikely and nearly impossible on a timescale relevant to humans. The recovery of function on Florida’s Coral Reef is likely now entirely dependent upon adaptive management and proactive science-based restoration.

Stress Event of 2023

Florida’s Coral Reef experienced record-breaking heat waves starting in July, with temperatures in adjacent backreef areas reaching temperatures above 100°F. When waters stay too hot (>87 degrees F) for too long, many corals become stressed and can expel the symbiotic algae, called zooxanthellae, living inside their tissues. These algae give coral its beautiful color and provide the coral with food. Without it, corals appear white and can die if the stress persists. The heat, coupled with high salinity and low oxygen, presented an unprecedented stress event that took its toll on coral reefs and coral fragments in offshore nurseries.

With the help of more than 70 staff members, six Mote research vessels, and immense support from the Keys community, Mote was able to quickly and carefully transport thousands of stressed and dying corals from its offshore nurseries in Sand Key, Looe Key, Islamorada, and Key Largo, in a matter of days to its three land-based coral nurseries on Summerland Key, Key Largo, and Islamorada, as well as to its 200-acre Sarasota-based Mote Aquaculture Research Park.

By late August, Mote had taken in thousands of pieces of coral. Among those were several endangered species, including staghorn and elkhorn coral and other major reef-building boulder, brain, and star corals. However, Mote strategically left a small subset of genotypes from several species in its offshore nurseries to put them to the test.

“While we lost coral in this event, we also witnessed coral that, despite the intense stress event, survived, thrived, and some that never even bleached. We want to pay particular attention to these corals as we look to the future of science-based coral reef restoration,” said Mote’s Coral Reef Restoration Research Program Manager, Dr. Jason Spadaro.

What’s Next...

Expert staff worked diligently to aid in the recovery of the evacuated stressed and dying corals, and Mote scientists have begun to slowly return the thousands of surviving evacuated coral

back into its offshore nurseries.

“Mote has invested in science-based coral reef restoration and research for over 30 years in the Florida Keys and around the world,” said Dr. Michael P. Crosby, Mote president and chief executive officer. As a result, we were equipped with the land-based infrastructure and highly experienced science staff to provide tens of thousands of corals a safe place to grow until conditions improved on the reef.”

Mote follows strict protocols outlined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as the corals are returned to Mote’s offshore nurseries. These protocols include a veterinarian health certification of all evacuated corals before they can be returned to offshore nurseries. Once cleared and reintroduced to the offshore nurseries, the corals undergo a 30-day observation period before being reassessed by Mote staff and cleared for restoration purposes such as microfragmentation and eventual outplanting onto Florida’s Coral Reef.

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Editor
Letters

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.

Underground Project update: December 2023

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Below is the end of December 2023 update for the Underground Project. Work continues in Phases 2, 3, and 4, and the next update is planned for late January 2024. We are close in Phase 2, but not quite there. Additional information is below:

Phase 2

All existing and new transformers in Phase 2 have been installed and are set. Wilco is still awaiting the final 10 switch authorizations from FPL to complete the load transfer of the final residential/commercial conversions in Phase 2. These are primarily on Ed Lee Lane and one on Cedar Street. Once the switch orders are authorized, those 10 conversions will be completed. Once that happens and the load is completely transferred, Wilco will be finishing the transition of the existing high-voltage cable to interface with the new underground upon FPL approval. These also involve a step-wise process. Once the high voltage underground cables are off the poles is when the overhead lines will be de-energized. At this time, FPL is targeting mid-January to begin Phase 2 pole removals within neighborhoods areas while the high-voltage cable transitions are completed.

Phase 3

All Phase 3 Gulf of Mexico Drive feeders have been energized; this is from Ace Hardware down to the Phase 1 project boundary at Country Club Shores. All of Longboat Key Estates has been converted. About 80% of Buttonwood is now converted. Transformers have and will continue to be energized throughout Phase 3 while working around the eleven (11) existing

transformers that need to be replaced and activated. Final switch orders and conversions will occur for those remaining 11 and their respective areas once they are received and installed. Estimates continue to be first quarter of 2024.

Phase 4 (similar to Sept. 26 update)

All Phase 4 undergrounding infrastructure work remains complete. All new Phase 4 transformers have been terminated and installed, with the exception of a transformer on backorder for 5155 GMD (Outrigger). All vista switches have been installed, terminated and are ready for energizing. Wilco, through FPL, is awaiting manufacture, programming and delivery to replace 13 existing transformers to properly integrate with new equipment. FPL is working to acquire the additional transformers, and their estimates continue to be the first quarter of calendar year 2024 for receipt. Then installation and conversion proceeds. Wilco has indicated that Phase 4 switching has to wait until Phase 2 is complete, per the FPL load switching control center. This is due to the complexities of switching and load management on the feeders. The challenge is that Phase 4 is wedged between Phase 2 and 3.

Comcast & Frontier

Comcast Phase 2 work is complete. Phase 3 and 4 work is in progress. According to Frontier, Frontier work in the final part of Phase 2, which for them is Bayou Hammock, is complete, and wreck out (demo) from those poles is planned to happen as soon as possible. Frontier is also working through Phase 3 mobile home parks to ensure all homes are connected for the entire park so that the aerial facilities can be removed. For Phase 4, Frontier requires one final install on Companion Way, pending mangrove permitting, and then removals from FPL poles can begin.

Town Fiberoptic Network

Tennis Center, Bayfront Park, Public Works and South Fire Station (No. 92) are all now on the active Town fiberoptic network. We anticipate the remainder of the Town facilities to be fully activated on the Town network within January 2024.

Town Conduit and Streetlight Infrastructure for Lease
AT&T is submitting their site license exhibits for the eight (8) Town streetlight locations they would like to attach to. We are negotiating with them on lease of Town conduit.

Hotwire Communications has agreed in principle to leasing Town waterway conduits under Longboat Pass and New Pass. Draft conduit lease agreements have been developed by the Town Attorney's office.

Backlit Street Name Signs

Final sign proofs and names have been confirmed with Wilco. Poles are on order. Pending
See Letters, page 6



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\$2,100,000

370 GULF OF MEXICO DR., #432 | LONGBOAT KEY

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511 SPINNAKER LANE | LONGBOAT KEY - SOLD AT LIST PRICE

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648 BAYVIEW DRIVE | LONGBOAT KEY

Boater's dream property on oversized (19,994 sf) rarely available cul-de-sac end lot with a 320-foot seawall located in Sleepy Lagoon, on the north end of Longboat Key. This location offers fantastic panoramic views of Bishops Bayou and the ICW. Situated on nearly a half-acre lot is a 3-bedroom, 4,157-SF home, which could be renovated or removed creating a build site for an incredible custom home.

EditorLetters



Letters, from page 4

receipt, Wilco anticipates being able to start installations in approximately 2 - 3 months.

Street Lighting

Phase 2 has eight (8) lights in the neighborhoods where an overhead electric line is in the way, and Phase 3 has six (6) lights in the neighborhoods where an overhead electric line is in the way. Once de-energized and wires removed by FPL, these can be installed. Also, a Purchase Order has been issued for additional Gulf of Mexico Drive (SR 789) highway lights. Locations to be determined and then design and permitting can commence.

Hurricane Idalia

FPL will be providing a response to the Town after the 1st of the year.

Isaac Brownman

Director Public Works

Town of Longboat Key

Underground Project update: December 2023

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Thanks for this report. It is encouraging that FPL expects to begin Phase 2 pole removals in mid-January, but it makes me nervous when there are still three intervening steps that need to be accomplished first (switch authorizations, conversion completions, and transition of high-voltage cables to interface with underground). In fact, any use of the worry “interface” makes me worry. I would also begin to ask for delivery dates for the transformers need for Phases 3 and 4, as they should be nearly manufactured by now. Good luck, and we look forward to wires/poles down.

Ken Schneier

Mayor

Town of Longboat Key

Underground Project update: December 2023

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schaefer



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Thank you Mr. Mayor, we appreciate the feedback. The beginning of FPL pole removals projected for mid-January are going to be in areas that are already fully completed in Phase 2, such that they are not affected by the remaining three elements of the 10 conversions, the overhead to underground transitions, and the switch orders for same. As far as the Phase 3 and 4 transformers, yes, we have been and will continue to ask for more concrete delivery dates now that we will be in to 2024. Thank you!

Howard Tipton

Town Manager

Town of Longboat Key

Storm Damage

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Do we have any damage evaluation from last weekend's storm yet? I understand a number of insurance claims have already been made by homeowners with water in their homes, some of whom had just completed repairs from Idalia. Thanks.

Ken Schneier

Mayor

Town of Longboat Key

Storm Damage

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

Beyond Chief Dezzi's summary right after the storm cleared, Charlie is reviewing the beaches today and we'll fly a drone to get shots that will compare our coast today to what it was before Idalia and the recent winter storm. There were no dune wash overs that we're aware of and any cleanup (relatively small) was handled by Town staff. Due to the power outages during the storm, Utilities utilized generators for several of the lift stations. No other damage to Town infrastructure to report.

We have heard from several homeowners about water damage, all in the usual low lying areas that we have come to expect. Chief Dezzi did provide pictures of some of the areas that saw flooding and we'll utilize those along with our Idalia pictures as part of the stormwater and resiliency grant applications.

See Letters, page 8

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 6

The storm was not a declared event at any level (federal, state, or local). Manatee did activate to a limited level two and we had several conversations with them (which was good practice).

As soon as Charlie’s beach summary is available, we’ll forward to the Commission.

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Storm Damage

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Thanks, Tip. Hopefully, we will have a break in the action for a few months now. Have a great holiday.

Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Storm Damage

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Town of Longboat Key

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Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Storm Damage

To: Longboat Key Commission
I was speaking with a resident on Gulfbay Road (bordering Durante Park) this morning who had two feet of water in her house last weekend, after completing repairs after Idalia. Others on her street had the same problem and, she said, many in the Village were also flooded again. There is a movement among some to contact mymanatee.org/report damage etc. in an effort to get last weekend’s storm to be named in which case FEMA may make repair money available, and possibly money for structure elevation. Are we aware of this program and, if it’s real, can we help facilitate residents’ access to it and its funding?

Ken Schneier
Mayor

Town of Longboat Key

New law in 2024

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Deborah Murphy
I work for WWSB ABC 7 in Sarasota. I recently saw where you said you were resigning your position on the Longboat Key Commission due to the new law that goes into effect in 2024.

I know other towns across the state are having similar situations with commissioners leaving due to the new law. Would you be available to speak with us about this change and why this new law will be discouraging a lot of potential people from wanting to run for a position such as yours?

See Letters, page 11



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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.

Dec. 22 Fire on the beach

6:11 p.m.
Officer Swinford was dispatched to an illegal fire on the beach near the 5200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Longboat Key Fire Department was on scene prior to Officer Swinford's arrival. The Fire Department advised that the person was using a permitted grill on the beach and there were no issues found. The complainant was advised that no violation of a city ordinance was taking place. Case clear.



regarding the payment. Prior to leaving the property, both parties came back within minutes of each other. The man was interviewed by Sgt. Smith and Officer Nazareno interviewed the cleaner who advised that she had cleaned the unit twice within the last month and was written a check by the man and that it did not clear when she attempted to deposit the check into her bank. She then returned to the unit to ask for a different type of payment.

Dec. 27 Raccoon

9:59 p.m.
Officer Swinford was dispatched to Hornblower Lane in reference to an animal problem. Animal control arrived on scene prior to Officer Swinford's arrival and took possession of the raccoon. Case clear.

Dec. 28 Noise

11:39 p.m.
Officer Ramsaier responded to the 4700 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a noise complaint. The complainant stated that approximately six people were swimming on the pool after hours causing a noise disturbance. Upon arrival, Officer Ramsaier checked the pool area and parties were gone on arrival. Officer Ramsaier did observe noise stemming from one of the units, knocked on the door and advised the resident of the noise ordinance. He said he will close the window and keep it down. Case clear.

Dec. 23 Injured pelican

12:02 p.m.
Officer Mathis was dispatched to Harbourside Drive in reference to an injured pelican. Upon his arrival, Officer Mathis located the injured pelican and directed staff from Save Our Seabirds to its location. No further police services needed for the incident. Case clear.

Dec. 24 Jet skis adrift

12:33 p.m.
Officer Pescuma while on patrol in the area of Bayou Sound and saw two jet skis that were adrift. One jet ski was found at Fair Oaks Way and the second jet ski was found at Bayou Circle. Both jet skis were secured to the pier at each residence. A preliminary investigation was conducted to locate the homeport of the jet skis and the owner. Officer Pescuma identified a boat lift that appeared to be built for two jet skis and a vessel at Bayou Circle. After running the vessel registration, Officer Pescuma found the owner who lived on Bayou Circle. Officer Pescuma inquired with the neighbor at Bayou Circle to see if they had contact information for the owner. The neighbors gave Officer Pescuma a cell phone number for the owner and he was able to make contact with the owner via cell phone and he confirmed that he is the owner and will be in tomorrow to retrieve the jet skis. Case clear.

Dec. 25 Locked car

7:11 p.m.
Officer Miklos received a message from Sarasota Sheriff's Office dispatch advising that a Ford had the keys locked inside at the 2800 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive at the beach access. Officer Miklos spoke to the driver who advised the car was a rental and he was waiting for the rental car and was unsure of when they would arrive. Officer Miklos advised Officer Martinson of the vehicle. Case clear.

Dec. 26 Civil disturbance

3:15 p.m.
Officer Nazareno was dispatched to Sands Point Road for a civil disturbance call. Upon arrival, Officer Nazareno made contact with the complainant, the property manager who advised that he received multiple complaints from residents about a man and woman yelling at each other from one of the units. He also advised that both parties left the location prior to Officer Nazareno's arrival. Officer Nazareno then made contact with one of the homeowners of the unit, the woman, who advised that her son was arguing with the lady they hired to clean

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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 8

Scott Draper
Assignment Desk
WWSB ABC 7

Parking at Bayfront Park

To: Longboat Key Commission
Everything but the Frontier space is completed. We are getting the signage for the Frontier parking and putting in parking stops in that space. That should be finished in the next couple of weeks. This individual sent the same note to many of us and I responded as did Isaac.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Parking at Bayfront Park

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Have the new parking spaces been added at Bayfront Park yet?
Debra Williams
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Parking at Bayfront Park

To: Longboat Key Town Clerk Trish Shinkle
I rent a space for my kayak at Bayfront Park for over \$300/year. Given the number of kayak slots, it seems like the Town of Longboat Key is getting significant income from the kayakers. However, in season, there are times when the kayakers cannot find a parking space. Is it possible to add more parking or reserve a couple spaces for kayak users? Thank you.
Beth Gotthel
Longboat Key

Save Our Seabirds

To: Sarasota City Attorney Robert Fournier
Please see below for a response. Thank you.
Marlon Brown
City Manager
City of Sarasota

Downtown Parking

To: Sarasota City Commission
While recognizing that Commissioner Arroyo’s concern was “predatory towing,” I wonder if we should be more focused on regulation of commercial parking lots, rather than limit ourselves to regulation of the towing companies. I believe what we consider to be “predatory” towing originates when parking lot management authorizes towing that vehicle owners don’t expect.
Do we regulate the circumstances under which towing from a commercial parking lot may occur? For example, how soon after a legally parked vehicle’s time expires may it be towed? Is the Commercial Parking Lot required to prominently post that information?
Would you please provide a copy of the current ordinance covering Commercial Parking Lots that addresses this issue. I suspect we will want to consider modifications to ensure that vehicle owners are afforded a “reasonable” grace period and adequate notification of the towing policy.
Debbie Trice
Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Noise Disturbance Again

To: Sarasota City Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch
Hope you and your loved ones are enjoying the holidays. While we have not been subjected to any further drumming from 1569 7th St since the meeting held between some of the residents, Chris and Sgt. Luciano, the noisy late night parties have continued. The attached recording was made on Saturday, December 23, 2023. The festivities lasted until a little past 4 a.m.
There have been 3 other parties prior to this one since the meeting, although not quite as loud (they were still enough to disturb the peace).
Since we were threatened with a harassment suit by Chris if we called the police on him again, the residents here are too afraid to lodge a complaint. I would have called, but I was just too exhausted to do so, as I would have had to meet with the officer and it was already so very late.
Since this person moved into 1569 7th St, about 18 months ago, he has made our lives miserable. We understand that we live in a city and that ambient noise is to be expected, but this isn’t normal. It is disruptive. It is aberrant. This is a residential

section of the Rosemary District and as such we should be protected from these types of disturbances, but we are not. I’m asking again that something be done to curtail this blatant disregard for the health and wellbeing of long-standing city residents. Thank you and a Happy New Year to you all.
Tina Steele
Sarasota

Communications Report

To: Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown
Please see the attached Communications report for November 2023. November highlights include a successful outreach campaign for the Boulevard of the Arts and 10th Street complete streets survey and tremendous media and public response to announcing the Bobby Jones Golf Club and Nature Park grand reopening celebration in December. Happy Holidays!
Jan Thornburg
Communications General Manager
City of Sarasota

Look at 2023; what to expect in 2024

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission
I figured I’d take a few minutes to highlight some of the events and activities that the SBEP has been a part of during 2023, and then to briefly introduce a few tasks we’ll be carrying out in 2024. These highlights don’t include the day-to-day tasks of preparing and hosting TAC, CAC, Management

and Policy Board meetings, meeting with the public and media outlets, nor the work involved to get projects up and running, or the various and regular reporting we do for EPA and others, but instead to highlight larger accomplishments that occurred these last 12 months.
2023
First ever sunset cruise with CAC! In appreciation of them volunteering their time and expertise, SBEP staff coordinated a sunset cruise on the bay with the CAC – a huge hit!
Presentation to Sarasota County Commissioners on the science behind the potential benefits (and caveats) associated with reestablishing the historical tidal connection between Little Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico
Successful completion of Program Evaluation by EPA. This included the production of a 60+ page report to highlight adherence with EPA guidance for NEPs, a site visit by EPA staff from both Atlanta and Washington, DC, and the formal presentation of findings to our Policy Board. Our PE report has been passed on to NEP directors with NY/NJ Estuary Program and Santa Monica Bay NEP as an example of a successful effort – using the new EPA methods and format.
Successfully developing contracts with local stakeholders to disburse nearly \$100,000 in financial support for the Bay Partners Grant Program
Through a combination of support from the Bay Guardians Program and the Bay Partners Grant Program, SBEP and its partners created opportunities that allowed over 500 children

See Letters, page 12

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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 11

from Title 1 schools to visit the bay and increase their understanding of the bay's ecology

Once again successfully passing our external programmatic audit

Participation in the State of Florida's Blue-Green Aglae Task Force meeting in Orlando, as well as participating in the State's Red Tide Task Force

Publication of a paper on Piney Point's impacts on Sarasota Bay in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Florida Scientist*

Participation in EPA National Estuary Program meeting in Washington, DC. Received guidance on properly providing Infrastructure Law documents and met with congressional staff for US Congressmen Byron Donalds and Greg Steube, as well as US Senator Rick Scott.

Successful completion and approval (by Policy Board and EPA) of the SBEP's Equity Plan for Infrastructure Bill funds – which allows SBEP to pursue the remaining \$2.7 million in projects without requiring cash matches from local partners

Hosted FDEP on site visit to Sarasota Bay. While here, FDEP informed SBEP staff that four of our waterbodies that were previously determined to be on the “impaired waters list” for nutrients had improved sufficiently that they are now of FDEP’s draft “de-list list”

Site survey of Sarasota Bay with SWFWMD staff involved with creating 2024 seagrass maps – documented substantial increases in seagrass are likely to be found when the next maps come out (likely in late 2024 or early 2025)

Successful completion and approval (by Policy Board and EPA) of BIL Workplan for FY24 to FY26 – laying out the restoration projects to be completed over the next few years using Infrastructure Law funds.

Ribbon cutting event for FISH Preserve Phase 4 – which included Policy Board members from Manatee County, City of Bradenton and City of Sarasota, along with the EPA Region 4 Administrator and dozens of others

2024

Building on the progress made in 2023, we intend to continue to press forward on implementing projects that will continue the recent successes we've seen here. To that end, we are looking to use BIL funds to complete some follow-up efforts on FISH Preserve, to complete the second part of the GT Bray Park project, and to deploy 24 artificial reef modules in Sarasota Bay. We also hope to initiate the final design and permitting phases of the shoreline restoration and enhanced access project for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, and to restore the boardwalk and public access to the SBEP's > 20-year-old habitat restoration projects on City Island and Quick Point.

We will continue to increase the size of our CAC, most likely, and will continue to play a high-profile role on matters related to the bay's health. We are also expecting to move forward with some sort of Reasonable Assurance Plan / Water Quality Protection Plan for Sarasota Bay, so that the hard-fought improvements in water quality we're starting to see don't disappear again in the future.

There is an awful lot that we can do, locally, to create a healthy environment in Sarasota Bay. And there is certainly high levels of support from both the public and our local elected officials to implement the projects that are responsible for our recovering water quality. However... Sarasota Bay's water quality is strongly influenced by factors outside of our control, particularly in the case of red tide. As an example, freshwater runoff from our watershed, and wastewater influences as well, come into our bay at a salinity of 0 parts per thousand (ppt). In contrast, the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico average around 35 ppt. So if a salinity value of 17.5 ppt is measured in a part of the bay, it means that half of that water came from runoff from our watershed (and rainfall) and half came from the Gulf. Much of our bay has much higher

salinity values, however. For example, at a salinity of 30 ppt, that would suggest that about 85% of the water would be from the Gulf of Mexico. Why does this matter? Because although humans don't cause red tide, we can cause it to be worse. And the biggest influence on the duration and intensity of red tides in Southwest Florida is the nutrient load delivered to our nearshore coastal waters by the Caloosahatchee River. And not only are the nutrient loads delivered from the Caloosahatchee River out of our control, but they also won't be effectively reduced in a sufficient quantity any time soon. There is a lot of good that will arise with the completion of the C-43 reservoir project in South Florida. But it appears that the total amount of nitrogen load reduced won't be sufficient to make much of a difference in the intensity and duration of red tide events. It's not that it's a bad project – certainly not. But the problems with the Caloosahatchee are so huge that the C-43 project alone won't be enough to “fix” the influence of that river on red tides. We need to retrofit the entire watershed, not just one project (no matter how big) in one location).

We should continue to work to reduce our nutrient loads and increase the assimilative capacity of Sarasota Bay for two general reasons: 1) in the absence of red tide events, this makes our water quality better, and our bay healthier, and 2) if a red tide is advected into our bay, elevated nutrient loads can make it worse. By far, the worst red tide event in Sarasota Bay in recent years was the one that was centered around 2018. That year was also one in which we had over 200 million gallons of untreated and treated (but high nutrient) wastewater overflows coming into our bay. The 2021 red tide event in Tampa Bay was made worse – the worst in 50 years in the middle and upper bay – because of the 200 tons of nitrogen that was discharged into lower Tampa Bay from Piney Point. So making our bay healthier is not only good for Sarasota Bay during those times when we don't have a red tide, it will likely help to keep red tide from being worse than it would be if we had a nutrient-rich bay for red tide to encounter.

Hoping you and your families and friends have a great Holiday Break! I'm off all next week – our nearly-graduated (UCF) daughter is visiting from Orlando, and I'm just not going to worry about work during those days!

Dave Tomasko

Executive Director

Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Key Opinion

Opinion, from page 1

and defend the U.S. border. The number of illegal migrants pouring through our southern border is shocking: approximately 730,000 (almost double the population of Tampa) in the last three months alone. Moreover, we have no way of knowing how many terrorists are crossing the border unimpeded. And drug traffickers are moving large quantities of fentanyl through the border, causing more than 70,000 American overdose deaths last year. The No. 1 resolution for Mr. Biden must be to protect our borders and thus, our Homeland.

House Republicans should resolve to avoid childish fight over its leadership in 2024. Lord knows we've all had enough of a handful of short-sighted, self-centered Congressmen and Congresswomen playing petty political games to the detriment of both the Republican party and the country.

How about the Biden Administration and Congress resolving to take action to boost American pocketbooks by reigning in government spending and chipping away at the \$33 trillion debt? Since this Administration (as well as the previous one) and Congress got us into this inflationary mess by doling out trillions of unnecessary dollars, they should resolve to get us out of it. Prices have risen faster than wages the last three years, thanks in large part to profligate government spending. Treating taxpayer money preciously and meticulously is a resolution we should all insist that the political class adopt.

Educators also can help society by resolving to educate fairly and objectively. There are so many wonderful, dedicated teachers and professors throughout our country. Their successes should not be sullied by ideologues in their ranks who could care less about teaching in a well-rounded manner. Administrators dedicated to implementing social experiments on campus should resolve to find other jobs. Alumni, donors and boards should resolve to return their schools to institutional and educational integrity and fairness, and jettison those seeking to indoctrinate rather than to educate.

The media is yet another institution which has come off the rails in the last two decades. Publishers, editors and journalists should resolve to gather all pertinent facts of a story and do the work required to report an issue fairly and accurately. Nothing but the facts, and not just selective facts, please. Opinions belong on the Opinion page, not surreptitiously placed in a news story.

As 2024 is a presidential election year, may all those officials involved in ensuring a fair and honest election see to it that every vote is legitimate and accurately counted. And may each candidate commit to accepting the results.

Relatedly, since former President Trump is a leading presidential contender facing multiple legal challenges, may judges involved in the cases strictly abide by the law itself, and not political beliefs. And may jurors overlook their own personal biases and be guided solely by the facts of the case and the legal basis of the issues brought forward.

Back home, may Longboat Key remain beautiful, teeming with special bird species, a robust turtle season, pure white beaches, and crystal blue Gulf water. We also can hope that the new St. Regis takes its place in Key folklore by combining its 5-star elegance with a welcoming “Colony” attitude toward locals.

Happy New Year! May your year be filled with joy, peace, health, happiness ... and fulfilled resolutions!

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WineTimes

Trends to watch in 2024

We are seeing winemakers in many prestigious wine regions reducing volumes of wine produced and raising prices.

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

Fearless predictions for the New Year always have uncertainties attached to them. Who in early 2020, for example, would have thought that sales of on-premise (restaurants and bars) alcoholic beverages would decrease from 2019? In hindsight, everyone realizes what happened to on-premise sales in 2020.

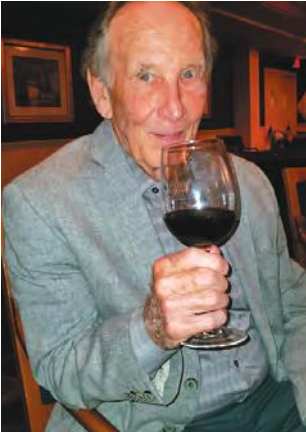
We will focus on longer-term trends that may vary from year to year but seem likely to continue for a number of years due to demographic and socioeconomic trends. Our gaze into a crystal ball tells us that sales of premium wines will increase during 2024. CreditKarma estimates of median household incomes show incomes increasing up to age 54.

The peak at age 54, we suspect, does not reflect any tendency toward reduced incomes after age 54; instead, we believe, it reflects a wave of increases in incomes of women that are playing forward. This wave will push household incomes for people over age 54 much higher in 2022 and afterwards. Combine this income trend with the preference of women in the USA over 55 for wine over spirits and beer, plus the trend in households with incomes over \$100,000 to upscale their wine purchases (called by the ungainly phrase “premiumization”), and you can take to the bank a bet on increases in premium wine sales to women over 55 years old.

Some of the trends to watch merely continue trends that have persisted for a number of years. While some young women opt for hot red wines and hard-edged whiskeys, the increasing popularity of sparkling wines, Rose wines, fruit flavors and infusions in Vodka, botanical Gins, spiced Rums, and flavored hard seltzers appears largely due to their appeal to women.

Men in the beef and California Cabernet Sauvignon camp divide into two groups. Those over forty usually pay steakhouse dinner prices for the premiere Cabs. Those in their late twenties and thirties tend to go for red meat or seafood with robust California Zinfandel, Argentine Malbec, Australian Shiraz/Syrah, or Italian Barola at costs of comparable wines around half those of premiere Napa Cabs.

We see younger men more willing to explore emerging wine regions that offer crafted



wines (akin to craft beers) at budget prices. In the arena of red wines, these include estate Tempranillo, say the 2018 Pesquera Ribera Del Duero Tinto (Crianza \$30) from the Ribiero Duero of Spain, or a Mourvèdre/Mataro/Monastrell, say the 2019 Bodegas Enrique Mendoza Estrecho Monastrell (\$20) from Alicante, Spain.

We are seeing winemakers in many prestigious wine regions reducing volumes of wine produced and raising prices. This trend seems likely to continue. Low quality red wines aren’t selling and higher quality wines are. Winemakers understand these market signals. Now seems a good time to look for moderately priced wines with aging potential, say the 2021 Terrazas de los Andes Reserva Malbec (\$18), 30th on the 2023 list of the Wine Spectators’ Top 100 wines.

We expect to see increases in sales of no-alcohol and low-alcohol wines and “mocktails” to continue increasing as health and safety concerns continue to affect younger and older consumers. The beverage industry is assisting the trend by improving the choices available to health-conscious drinkers.

We look forward to seeing how these trends evolve. Enjoy a healthier and safer 2024.

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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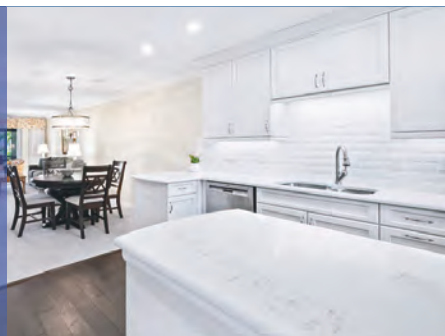
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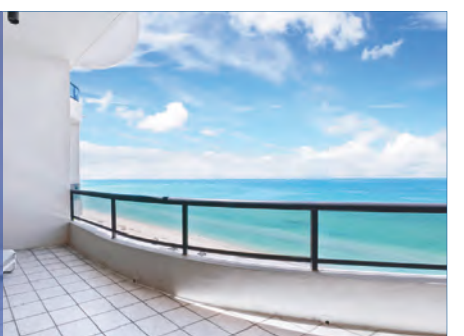
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