



Longboat Key News

January 9, 2026

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

FREE

InsideLook



Drink Less, But
Drink Better
...page 15



The Road
to Repair
...page 2



Bird Key soars
with major sale
...page 7



The case of the
shining light
...page 10

Sarasota and Longboat Execute ‘Luxury Reset’ and Challenge Naples Dominance for 2026

“The quiet hurricane season in 2025 gave our barrier islands the breathing room they needed. We aren’t just ‘open’—we are upgraded.”

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

As the first cold fronts of 2026 push northern travelers south, the tourism economy in Sarasota, St. Armands Circle, and Longboat Key is entering a defining season. Shaping up to be a year of “stabilized optimism,” the region is capitalizing on a quiet 2025 hurricane season and a massive consolidation of luxury inventory to pivot its strategy from volume to value.

While visitor headcounts are

projected to remain strategically “flat”—a deliberate strategy by local tourism officials—economic yield is trending upward. This shift is driven by record-breaking capacity at Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (SRQ) and a coordinated elevation of the hospitality market that is effectively narrowing the gap with rival destination Naples.

The ‘Quiet Season’ Dividend

After the volatility of the 2024 hurricane season (Helene and Milton), which caused significant

disruption, the relative calm of late 2025 has been a decisive economic factor. The absence of major storm impacts this past autumn allowed businesses to focus on capital improvements rather than emergency repairs, setting the stage for a confident, high-polish reopening.

“We are seeing what we call a ‘stabilized optimism,’” said a representative from Visit Sarasota County. “The quiet hurricane season in 2025 gave our barrier islands the breathing room they needed.

See Tourism, page 3

Why the 2026 Australian Open Belongs to the New Ruling Class

The air in Melbourne tastes like ozone, cheap sunscreen, and impending violence.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

The air in Melbourne tastes like ozone, cheap sunscreen, and impending violence. It is January 2026, and the blue courts of Melbourne Park are already radiating a heat that feels less like a weather pattern and more like a personal vendetta from the sun.

As the circus descends on the Yarra, we are witnessing the dawn of the Separation Season. The hierarchy of professional tennis is no longer fluid; it has calcified into a cruel and beautiful binary system.

See Tennis, page 15

Stick Figure Drummer Kevin Offitzer Hosts Meet-and-Greet at Cirque St. Armands

One of the primary reasons Offitzer left Maryland for Sarasota was the search for a vibrant musical ecosystem.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

For fans of American reggae, the name Stick Figure is synonymous with a movement.

They are the band that redefined the genre, selling out amphitheaters like Red Rocks and consistently topping the charts. Usually, seeing them requires a ticket to a massive festival and a view from the back of a stadium.

But this January, the “Stick Family” on the Sun Coast is get-

ting a rare, face-to-face opportunity right in their own backyard.

Kevin Offitzer, the 37-year-old rhythmic anchor of the chart-topping juggernaut, will host a special two-day pop-up meet-and-greet at the Cirque St. Armands Beachside Hotel on January 14 and 15, 2026.

While the event offers a chance to shake hands with a world-class musician, it also serves as a welcome party. Offitzer has quietly traded the Pacific swells for the Gulf Coast, moving to Sarasota full-time with

See Drummer, page 2



End of the “Purple War”? Van Wezel Heirs Back New \$300M+ Performing Arts Center as Project Pivots

For Sarasota’s business community and tourism sector, the stakes are high. A Renzo Piano-designed facility would place Sarasota in an elite tier of global cultural destination.

The ambitious, often contentious effort to build a world-class performing arts center on Sarasota’s Bayfront has cleared a significant hurdle. Following years of community debate regarding the fate of the city’s iconic, purple-hued landmark, the grandchildren of its original benefactors have officially thrown their support behind the new project.

The announcement marks a pivotal moment for the Sarasota Performing Arts Center (SPAC), a project that has faced headwinds over costs, environmental resilience, and historical preservation.

Dr. Anthony (Tony) Van Wezel Stone and Katherine Van Wezel Stone, Esq., grandchildren of Lewis and Eugenia Van Wezel, issued a statement this week backing the project following months of private negotiations with the Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation. The endorsement effectively neutralizes one of the most potent arguments against the new center—that it would dishonor the family legacy of the original 1969 hall.

“Our Grandfather and his wife, Eugenia, loved Sarasota and believed in the power of the arts to strengthen community,” the family said in a joint statement. “After meeting with the Foundation, we are pleased that the Performing Arts Center project will build on their vision while ensuring our family’s legacy continues to serve our community.”

The “Purple” Controversy and The Compromise

For the last three years, the project has been mired in a “preservation vs. progress” battle. The original Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, designed by William Wesley Peters of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, is beloved for its quirky, seashell-inspired architecture.

Critics, including the local “Purple Ribbon Committee,” feared the new center would lead to the demolition of the historic hall. However, the agree-

See Van Wezel, page 4

Drummer, from page 1
his wife and three young children.

The Kings of American Reggae

To understand the significance of Offtizer’s arrival, one must understand the sheer dominance of Stick Figure. What began as frontman Scott Woodruff’s solo DIY recording project has exploded into the undisputed heavyweight champion of the American reggae-rock scene. For years, the Billboard Reggae Albums chart was immovable, ruled perpetually by the legend himself, Bob Marley. Stick Figure changed the math. They became the only artist to effectively unseat the King, logging historic runs at No. 1 that have turned the industry on its head. “When we topped the Billboard charts, it was the most amazing, coolest event,” Offtizer recalls. “The charts have always been ruled by Bob Marley. To be the artist to unseat the legend is surreal.” Today, Stick Figure is a touring leviathan, commanding a fanatically loyal fanbase that sells out major venues worldwide. Offtizer, who joined in 2012 as the first permanent live member, has been the engine behind this rise, traveling everywhere from Europe and South America to Alaska and Hawaii to bring the music to the masses.

Chasing the Sun to Sarasota

Offtizer’s journey to Sarasota was driven by a simple, non-negotiable need: light. Originally from California, Offtizer and his wife—a Maryland native—initially settled in her home state. “I needed sunshine. I’m from California,” Offtizer explained. While his wife’s parents had long frequented Sarasota, the drummer didn’t need to “discover” the city so much as surrender to it. Once he visited, he fell in love. Now, the Offtizer family—including kids aged seven, five, and 15 months—are local fixtures. When not on tour, they can often be found taking “barefoot hikes” through the scrub at Oscar Scherer State Park, embracing a lifestyle that mirrors the “Sun Soaked” vibes of the music.

From “Rambunctious” Kid to the Big Leagues

Offtizer’s path to the global stage began at age nine, when he became obsessed with the drums. Growing up in Southern California, he describes himself as a “hybrid of discipline and rambunctiousness”. He had a massive advantage at home: his father was a bass player.

“In many ways, he’s the equivalent of a baseball dad, and I’m the kid who made it into the big leagues,” Offtizer said. His parents were endlessly supportive, providing a home large enough for a dedicated music room where he could hone the skills that would eventually take him around the world. “The drum is the heart,” Offtizer says. “Historically, it is the basis of music.”

The Art of Restraint (and Speed)

While Stick Figure requires Offtizer to exercise “restraint and leaving space” within the deep pocket of reggae, the drummer hasn’t lost his roots in punk and metal. “I started off playing as fast as I could play,” he admits. To satisfy that need for speed, he is also a member of Algorithm, a three-person group (plus their manager, whom he calls the “fourth member”) that specializes in high-energy festival after-parties. It is there that he unleashes the full, rapid-fire arsenal of his drumming. But whether playing fast or slow, his focus remains the same: the crowd. “All I ever wanted to do was be in a band on tour,” he said. “I wanted to see the world.”

Building a Local Music Community

One of the primary reasons Offtizer left Maryland for Sarasota was the search for a vibrant musical ecosystem. “There was really a lacking access to a music community there,” he noted. In Sarasota, he has found the opposite. He says the local scene is “great,” and he has wasted no time diving in, playing gigs everywhere from Fort Myers to Anna Maria Island. Whether on a world tour or at home, he is also dedicated to the next generation, giving countless music lessons both online and in person.

Event Details: Up Close & Personal

Hosted at the hotel’s retro-chic Midway Lounge, this rare appearance is strictly a meet-and-greet engagement—a chance to talk music, get an autograph, and meet the man behind the kit without the barrier of a stage.

- Dates: Wednesday, Jan. 14 & Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026
- Time: 4:00 PM EST
- Location: Cirque St. Armands Beachside (233 Benjamin Franklin Dr, Lido Key)
- Activities: Meet-and-greet, photo ops, and drumstick signing.

To learn more about Kevin’s latest art projects, tour updates, and local adventures, you can follow him on Instagram at @kofftizer.



CREATIVE KITCHENS & BATHS

YOU CREATE THE DREAM — WE CREATE THE REALITY

LEADING CONDO AND HOME REMODELING SPECIALIST LOCATED ON LONGBOAT KEY!



941-925-3723 Transforming your home, one room at a time — bringing your vision to life on Longboat Key.

Longboat Key Showroom

By Appointment Only
5610 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL 34228
State Certified General Contractor CG-C-1531837

Serving Longboat Key, Lido Key, Bird Key and St. Armands

CKB has a team comprised of general contractors, designers, expert carpenters, project management and more. We will bring your vision to life from first conversation to job completion.

- Full Condo & Home Remodeling
- Custom & Semi-Custom Cabinetry | Custom Tile Work
- Hardwood & LVP Floors | Solid Core Doors
- Baseboards & Ceiling Molding/Trim



www.CreativeKitchenAndBaths.com



SECUR-ALL INSURANCE AGENCY

Sandra Smith | 941.383.3388

VISIT US ACROSS FROM TOWN HALL! 510 BAY ISLES ROAD SUITE 1, LONGBOAT KEY, FL 34228
CHUBB, AIG, UNIVERSAL, UNITED, SAFECO, PROGRESSIVE, FRONTLINE, VAULT, FLOOD, WE HAVE YOU COVERED!

Infrastructure Upgrades Begin on St. Armands Artery Despite Concerns

Commuters and residents traversing the John Ringling Causeway—the primary artery connecting downtown Sarasota to the barrier islands—are facing a new logistical reality this week.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has commenced the first of two significant infrastructure projects along State Road 789.

While the initiatives promise long-term improvements in drainage and multi-modal transit, their launch coincides with the height of Sarasota’s tourist season, prompting scrutiny regarding the timing.

Here is an analysis of the impending changes and the long-term objectives for the corridor.

Project I: The Causeway Overhaul

Scope and Timeline:

Budgeted at \$12.3 million, this primary initiative focuses on the stretch between Sunset Drive and Bird Key Drive. Preliminary mobilization began on January 5, with full completion projected for early 2027.

Strategic Objectives:

According to FDOT filings, the project aims to reduce travel friction and enhance climate resilience. Key components include:

- Multi-Modal Expansion: The addition of dedicated bicycle and transit lanes on the Ringling Causeway Bridge to alleviate vehicular congestion.
- Flood Mitigation: Raising the seawall cap near Sunset Drive and upgrading drainage systems to address chronic flooding at the bridge’s base—a topographic low point notoriously susceptible to rain events.
- Signalization: Installation of new traffic signals at Sunset, Golden Gate, and Bird Key Drives.

Operational Impact:

While current lane configurations remain temporarily intact, drivers should anticipate significant shifts:

- Speed Limit Reduction: The speed limit on Gulfstream Avenue and John Ringling Causeway has been lowered to 35 mph.
- Strict Enforcement: Fines are doubled within the construction zone.
- Schedule: Work will occur primarily during daylight hours, though occasional nighttime operations (9 p.m. to 7 a.m.) are scheduled.

Project II: St. Armands Circle Traffic Calming

Scope and Timeline:

Beginning January 13, a secondary, short-term project will address safety within St. Armands Circle itself.

Crews will replace the existing modular speed humps—which have caused pavement distress over time—with permanent asphalt speed tables. The goal is to create a smoother, more predictable environment for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

To mitigate disruption to the commercial district, this work is restricted to overnight hours (9 p.m. to 7 a.m.). The process, including curing time for the asphalt, is expected to span approximately 12 days, weather permitting.

The commencement of heavy civil engineering work during January—when the local population swells with seasonal residents and tourists—has drawn sharp criticism from the public.

City officials, however, argue that the project’s scale necessitates a year-round schedule. In correspondence regarding the timeline, City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch noted that the duration of the project (projected at one year) made overlapping with “season” unavoidable. She emphasized that the drainage improvements are critical, noting that the roadway floods severely during rain events, and that the redesign is essential for future traffic flow efficiency.

Drivers are advised to utilize FL511.com for real-time updates and to exercise heightened caution as the corridor undergoes this substantial transformation.

Tourism, from page 1

We aren’t just ‘open’—we are upgraded.”

Aviation: The SRQ Boom

The strongest indicator of a healthy season comes from the tarmac. Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (SRQ) has shattered previous records, with passenger traffic for the 2025 calendar year projecting to hit an all-time high of 4.5 million passengers, a massive leap from the 1.9 million seen in pre-pandemic 2019.

Data indicates that while drive-market traffic has softened slightly, fly-in traffic is surging. March 2025 set the tone early as the busiest month in the airport’s history (up nearly 8% year-over-year), and carriers have responded by maintaining capacity. The opening of the new five-gate Concourse A has been instrumental in handling this influx, facilitating new nonstop routes that are feeding high-spending visitors directly into Longboat and Lido Key resorts.

Market Consolidation: The Walsh Family Portfolio

The most significant structural shift in the local market is the dominance of the Opal Collection, owned by the Walsh family (Ocean Properties). Their portfolio now controls the premier inventory across Longboat and Lido Keys, creating a “resort corridor” that allows for coordinated yield management similar to corporate strategies seen in major urban centers.

By controlling the “Opal” assets on both keys, the group ensures that revenue stays within the same ecosystem, regardless of the traveler profile:

- The Resort at Longboat Key Club: Continuing as the volume and revenue anchor for the islands, this property has leveraged substantial renovations to its golf and marina facilities to attract corporate groups and extended-stay wealth, moving beyond the traditional vacationer.
- Zota Beach Resort: On Longboat Key, Zota has successfully pivoted to a contemporary boutique model. Since rebranding from a Hilton property, it is commanding rates competitive with top-tier Miami hotels, capitalizing on new nonstop flights from New York and Boston.
- Lido Beach Resort: Positioning itself as the premium family-centric option, this property is benefiting heavily from the spillover of the nearby St. Armands Circle renaissance.
- The Newcomer: Cirque St. Armands Beachside Hotel: The most buzzed-about addition is the Cirque St. Armands, which opened in early 2025. Now entering its first full peak season, the 135-room property pays homage to Sarasota’s Ringling circus heritage with Art Deco design. It fills a critical market gap for travelers seeking high-end “city-style” lodging within walking distance of the Circle’s dining scene.

Longboat Key: The “St. Regis Effect”

Complementing the Walsh portfolio is the headline driver for the 2026 season: the St. Regis Longboat Key Resort. With room rates frequently exceeding \$1,000 per night, the property is generating outsized returns on the county’s 6% Tourist Development Tax (the “bed tax”).

“One suite at the St. Regis can generate the same tax revenue as a dozen budget rooms elsewhere,” noted a local hospitality analyst. This “luxury shift” allows the region to maintain economic impact numbers without overcrowding the beaches—a key goal for sustainable tourism in the county.

St. Armands Circle: A Commercial Renaissance

The commercial hub of St. Armands Circle is entering the busy season with fresh concepts that signal a complete recovery from past storm damage.

- Nönnö Umberto (formerly Le Colonne): In a symbolic win for the Circle, the longstanding Italian staple Le Colonne reopened in January 2026 under the new name Nönnö Umberto. The reopening, led by the next generation of the founding family, drew over 800 diners in its opening week, signaling strong pent-up demand.
- Tommy Bahama: After suffering storm damage, the iconic retailer and restaurant reinvested rather than retreating. The brand has reopened in a prominent new location (formerly the Shore restaurant space), upgrading its footprint and reaffirming confidence in the Circle’s commercial viability.

Regional Competitiveness: Sarasota vs. Naples

For the 2026 fiscal year, the Sarasota-Longboat cluster is aggressively challenging Naples for the Gulf Coast’s luxury market share. While Naples still commands the highest Average Daily Rate (ADR) in the region, Sarasota is winning on demographic shifts and accessibility.

- The Vibe Shift: Naples remains the epicenter of “refined tranquility” and golf-centric retirement wealth. In contrast, Sarasota is capturing the “active affluent”—travelers aged 40-60 who prioritize cultural density (opera, ballet, nightlife) alongside beach access.
- Logistics: The expansion of SRQ gives Sarasota a distinct advantage over Naples, which relies heavily on Fort Myers (RSW) for commercial traffic. The “convenience premium” of flying directly into Sarasota is allowing hotels to push rates higher.
- Product Diversity: The ability to pair a resort stay at the Longboat Key Club with the urban walkability of St. Armands (anchored by the Cirque hotel) provides a dual-experience value proposition that the more singular Naples market lacks.

Forecast: Value Over Volume

Heading into February and March—the traditional peak of the “snowbird” season—bookings remain strong for premium inventory. While budget travel faces headwinds from inflation, the Sarasota region’s pivot toward an affluent demographic appears to be insulating it from broader economic slowdowns.

“The recovery is in the rearview mirror,” said a St. Armands business owner. “We are now in growth mode.”

The strategy appears to be working. Sarasota and Longboat Key have successfully moved up-market, shedding the “budget beach” image for a polished, resort-driven identity led by the Opal Collection.

“We aren’t trying to be Naples,” said one Longboat Key general manager. “Naples is where you go to retire. Sarasota is where you go to live.”

Live life in the perfect light...

Custom window treatments save energy, protect interiors and add beauty



Now 35% Off
Roller and Solar
Screen Shades with
Free Cordless option

2024

THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY CHOICE AWARDS

Sarasota

WINNER

2025

THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY CHOICE AWARDS

Sarasota

WINNER

Call for a Free Quote

941-360-9200

Visit our Showroom

4201 N. Washington Blvd. Sarasota

Mon-Fri 9 am to 5 pm & Sat 10 am to 2 pm

www.blindsanddesignsofflorida.com



Ads that work...

ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

Van Wezel, from page 1

ment with the Van Wezel family codifies a “dual-venue” strategy.

According to the family, discussions led to an appreciation that the project is now an “evolving concept” where the historic hall “will continue to serve the City as a venue for the arts in harmony with and alongside the new Performing Arts Center.”

Tania Castroverde Moskalenko, CEO of the Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation, confirmed this pivot toward a “unified cultural campus.” She stated the Foundation is prepared to steward multiple venues, with the original hall hosting specific artistic performances and educational opportunities, while the new center handles large-scale Broadway productions and contemporary acoustics.

“Concept 2.0”

The family’s support comes as the project undergoes a significant structural and financial “right-sizing,” dubbed Concept 2.0.

Following a pivotal and tense City Commission meeting on March 17, 2025, city leaders demanded the project align more closely with financial realities and environmental concerns. The original concepts presented by the Pritzker Prize-winning architecture firm Renzo Piano Building Workshop were criticized by some segments of the public for potential cost overruns and placement vulnerabilities.

Key changes in Concept 2.0 include:

- Relocation: The new center moves to the south side of the Centennial Park canal. This shifts the building away from the most vulnerable flood zones—a critical adjustment following the storm surge anxieties raised during the 2024 and 2025 hurricane seasons.
- Cost & Capacity Alignment: The project has been recalibrated to match the seating capacity and budget constraints of the original 2023 Request for Proposal (RFP). While exact figures for the new concept are pending a spring reveal, the project is targeting a budget in the \$275 million to \$300 million range, funded through a 50/50 public-private partnership.
- Resiliency: The new design prioritizes “climate-adaptive” architecture, essential for a major capital asset sitting on the Gulf Coast waterfront.

The Financial Outlook

The Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation is tasked with raising the private half of the funding, a massive capital campaign that required the Van Wezel family’s blessing to proceed



effectively.

“More than 50 years ago, Lewis and Eugenia Van Wezel gave Sarasota a gift that shaped its cultural identity,” said Moskalenko. “Today, Tony and Katherine are ensuring their family legacy lives on through a new, inclusive, and resilient Performing Arts Center.”

The City of Sarasota’s portion of the funding relies largely on Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenue generated by rising property values in the district surrounding The Bay park. With the family dispute resolved and the location settled, the Foundation and City anticipate releasing updated renderings and financial models later this spring.

Next Steps

The Van Wezel family has committed to participating in upcoming engagement efforts, including the “Center Stage Conversations” series, to rally public support.

For Sarasota’s business community and tourism sector, the stakes are high. A Renzo Piano-designed facility would place Sarasota in an elite tier of global cultural destinations, potentially rivaling the architectural draw of museums and halls in Miami and Los Angeles. However, keeping the budget in check while maintaining two aging waterfront facilities (the new center and the historic hall) will be the City Commission’s next major challenge.

“Their support reflects a shared belief in honoring our legacies while embracing our future,” Moskalenko added, signaling that for the first time in years, the project is moving forward with a unified front.

BREAKFAST • BRUNCH • LUNCH • DINNER • CATERING • GOURMET DELI & BAKERY • CORNER STORE



WEEKLY SPECIALS

BEST BRUNCH
ON LONGBOAT KEY

20% OFF BOTTLES OF WINE DAILY

RESTAURANT & DELI

HAPPY HOUR 3-6

NIGHTLY DINNER SPECIALS



525 ST. JUDES DRIVE • LONGBOAT KEY, FL 34228 • HARRYSKITCHEN.COM • (941) 383-0777

Ads that work...

ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

Growing in Jesus' Name



CHRIST CHURCH
OF LONGBOAT KEY
PRESBYTERIAN (U.S.A.)

Worship With Us at Our Church

Sunday Service 10:00 AM

Dr. Julia Wharff Piermont, Pastor

Visitors & Residents Welcome

Watch Our 10:00 AM Service Live:
www.christchurchoflbk.org (follow YouTube link)

WINTER CONCERT SERIES

Sunday • January 18, 2026 • 2:00 PM



Cruisin' with Alexa -
Season Premier
Recital



Everyone’s invited to see in person
The Sensation of The Four Seas, Alexa Lowrey.
Following eight months as the Principal Entertainer of the Seabourn Sojourn where she dazzled audiences from around the world, you now can experience her thrilling repertoire of classical, pop, sacred, and Broadway selections. Accompanying Alexa is the acclaimed **Shawn Marren**, (“The Human Cannonball” from his circus days) on the piano.

CONCERTS & PARKING ARE FREE  VISITORS & RESIDENTS WELCOME

6400 Gulf of Mexico Dr. • 941.383.8833 • www.christchurchoflbk.org

THE LAZY LOBSTER



NEW HOURS!
NEW MENU!

Enjoy your favorites all day!

Great food & drinks served continuously.

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 11:30 AM - 9:00 PM

Early Dining & Happy Hour Menu

11:30 AM – 5:00 PM

All-Day Dinner Menu

11:30 AM – 9:00 PM

SATURDAY: 1:00 - 9:00 PM

Early Dining & Happy Hour Menu

1:00 – 5:00 PM

All-Day Dinner Menu

1:00 – 9:00 PM

CLOSED SUNDAYS

5350 Gulf of Mexico Dr. | In the Centre Shops

www.LazyLobsterofLongboat.com | 941-383-0440

EditorLetters

Longboat Key News and Sarasota City News encourages Letters to the Editor on timely issues. Please email to: letters@lbknews.com or mail to PO Box 8001, Longboat Key, FL 34228. We also print letters sent to Town Hall that address Longboat Key issues. We reserve the right to edit.

E-bikes on our Sidewalk

To: Editor
The town needs to figure out how to keep E-Bikes away from pedestrians and bicyclists that use the ONLY sidewalk on the island along Gulf of Mexico Drive. It's a gem of our town.
E-Bikes are becoming more popular all the time, and their speed and weight can be deadly when in collision with pedestrians and regular bicycles.
One suggestion on how to deal with this while we wait for the enhanced roadway scenario:
Create a speed limit on the sidewalk 5 - 10 mph and enforce it with fines. The police on patrol have excellent visibility and access to the sidewalk.
Stacie Steinke
Owner, Windward Bay

Briefing Offer

To: Longboat Key Commissioner-elect Nicholas Gladding
Good morning, Nick! It's January and we're fully back in the swing of things and looking forward to a busy season. If you would like to be included in the agenda briefing process prior to you being sworn in in March, just let us know and we'll work to schedule you into our briefing schedule. You certainly don't have to do anything prior to taking your seat, but we just wanted to give you the option in case you felt it will help you in your preparation.
Just let us know and we can schedule something over the phone or in person.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Wow, great news, hoping for the best.
Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin
Interesting development to your question. We'll keep you posted on what the analysis shows but could be really good news.
Howard Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Tip, could be a huge savings and a bunch less impact to the community. We will keep you updated after the discovery process. Either way, we would still target the end of April/May to move forward with the next steps (outside of season).
Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
The short answer is that we were initially planning to start this project in April 2026. As you know, this project is very important to the town because it concerns the last of the AC pipe on the island.
During our discussions and when reviewing the current As-Builts, we discovered that the AC pipe from the 1970s may have been upgraded to C900 plastic pipe. I want to note that C900 is a standard type of pipe used in water distribution systems, recognized industry wide.
To confirm this, we are currently in the process of field verification. We have conducted vacuum excavations on a few streets and have found evidence of the updated C900 pipe.
We expect to have more definitive information within the next month, which will help us determine the best course of action moving forward. If it turns out that the entire system, or at least the sections we've examined, are indeed made of C900 pipe, this would be a significant advantage for the town. It could mean that we only need to replace the water services rather than the entire water system within those streets. I will keep Charlie updated as the exploration and verification process continues.
Jessie Camburn
Utilities Manager Public Works Department
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
Hoping you can help with an answer. Thank you.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Tip, A neighbor stopped by yesterday regarding the timing or start date of the construction

See Letters, page 6

Live in Your Home’s Best Light
CALL BRINGLES BLINDS TODAY

SALE! \$500 OFF all Custom Interior Shutters & Shades



Longboat residents
and business owners
Chris & Dana Bringle


Bringles Blinds provides affordable blinds, shutters, shades,
and master installation services to the Longboat Key,
Sarasota, Bradenton, Lakewood Ranch and surrounding areas.

CALL FOR A FREE QOUTE — 941-320-7019
BRINGLEBLINDS.LBK@GMAIL.COM
BRINGLESBLINDS.COM
*Offer valid with minimum purchase of three

Ads that work...

ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

RINGSIDE
EAT. DRINK. SAVOR



Sarasota’s Newest Dining Spectacle - Now Open!

A fresh, inventive dining destination just a short stroll from St. Armands Circle, Ringside balances bold flavors and Gulf seafood favorites in the mesmerizing setting of Cirque St. Armands Beachside.

opalcollection.com/cirque-st-armands941.388.5555

Editor Letters



Letters, from page 5

for the Country Club Shores phases 1 & 2 and 3 water main project. I know it's on our strategic plans initiatives to begin this year, just wondering if we have a closer date.
Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Wow, great news, hoping for the best.
Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin
Interesting development to your question. We'll keep you posted on what the analysis shows but could be really good news.
Howard Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Jessie Camburn
Tip, could be a huge savings and a bunch less impact to the community. We will keep you updated after the discovery process. Either way we would still target the end of April/May to move forward with the next steps (outside of season).
Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps
Hoping you can help with an answer. Thank you.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Country Club Shores water line project
To: Longboat Key Town Manager Charlie Mopps
Tip, A neighbor stopped by yesterday regarding the timing or start date of the construction for the Country Club Shores phases 1 & 2 and 3 water main project. I know it's on our strategic plans initiatives to begin this year, just wondering if we have a closer date.
Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

To: Vicki Morton

I received information from our Public Works Director concerning the sidewalk problem. It appears the damage is the result of some Comcast work. The department is on it.
Also, the newest Tip Talk video, featuring Police Chief Maher, is devoted to e-bike and sidewalk safety. This is being released Town-wide. I've included a copy of the release and link to the video below:
View the full video here: Tip Talk Featuring Police Chief Russ Mager
With increased activity on our sidewalks and multi-use paths, this short video serves as a helpful reminder of key safety guidelines designed to keep everyone safe:
• The speed limit on sidewalks and multi-use paths is 10 MPH.
• Bicyclists and riding equipment should keep right and pass on the left.
• Riders are asked to ring a bell when passing pedestrians or other cyclists.
• All riders should reduce speed and use due care at intersections, especially near sudden driveways and potentially blind crossings.
• For faster-moving e-bikes and equipment, please consider using the designated bicycle lane on Gulf of Mexico Drive, while remaining mindful of roadway hazards such as parked vehicles or vehicles entering traffic.
Additionally, as a friendly reminder for e-bike owners, we would like to share a few tips on the proper care of lithium batteries in our island's salt and saltwater environment. Recommendations include proper elevation and storage, or preferably, not leaving lithium-powered devices on the island during extended absences.
Penny Gold
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Longboat Key sidewalk issues

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Penny Gold
Ma'am, Julie got the response from FDOT already.

See Letters, page 12

Elevate your leisure time with unparalleled experiences.

As a member you'll enjoy:

• Championship Golf

• Private Beach & Pool

• Deep-Water Marina

• Pickleball & Tennis

• Spa & Wellness Center

• Five Exclusive Restaurants

Contact membership@longboatkeyclub.com or (941)387-1661 for a tour.



LONGBOAT•KEY•CLUB





LEARN MORE

KeyRealEstate

Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath			Days On Market	Sale Price
604 MOURNING DOVE DR	5,240	\$5,295,000	5	5	0	22	\$5,100,000
2333 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#1A2	3,060	\$4,500,000	3	2	1	217	\$4,300,000
655 LONGBOAT CLUB RD Unit#16B	3,139	\$4,250,000	3	3	1	48	\$3,875,000
560 SCHOONER LN	3,666	\$3,500,000	4	3	1	242	\$3,310,000
435 L AMBIANCE DR Unit#K506	2,820	\$3,299,000	3	3	1	12	\$3,100,000
535 SANCTUARY DR Unit#A602	2,580	\$2,599,000	3	2	1	225	\$2,300,000
1281 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#906	2,655	\$2,495,000	2	3	0	221	\$2,200,000
4241 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#202	1,660	\$1,350,000	3	2	1	117	\$1,150,000
691 LINLEY ST	1,820	\$1,200,000	2	2	1	235	\$915,000
1465 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#402	1,668	\$999,000	2	2	0	51	\$890,000
4234 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#H1	1,150	\$695,000	2	2	0	11	\$695,000



604 MOURNING DOVE DR



JEFF
RHINELANDER

941-685-3590

Jeff@jeffrhinelander.com



COURTNEY
TARANTINO

941-893-7203

courtney.tarantino@floridamoves.com



443F John Ringling Blvd. • Sarasota, FL 34236



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



BIRD KEY • SARASOTA
605 Wild Turkey Lane
2,200 SF • \$1,995,000



L'AMBIANCE • LONGBOAT KEY
435 L'Ambiance Dr #J703
3BR/2BA/1HB • \$4,795.000

JUST LISTED



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



BEACHES • LONGBOAT KEY
775 Longboat Club Rd #203
3BR/3BA • Gulffront • \$1,999,000



COUNTRY CLUB SHORES • LONGBOAT KEY
510 Wedge Lane
4BR/3BA • Canal front • \$2,215.000



**TOP .5%
IN THE WORLD**



JUDY
KEPECZ
HAYS
Team



Leah
George
941-780-0597



Judy
Kepecz-Hays
941-587-1700



Steven
Kepecz
941-376-6411



\$3.4 Billion Career Sales

Casa del Carnevale on St. Armands



139 S Washington Drive
\$16,850,000
CasaDelCarnevale.com

Hideaway Bay



757 Hideaway Bay Drive
\$7,488,000
757HideawayBay.com

Islander Club



2301 Gulf of Mexico Drive #11N & #12N
\$2,488,000
IslanderClub11N-12N.com

Our expertise is undeniable—deeply understanding the local market and truly listening to our clients.

Ritz-Carlton Managed



The Beach Residences
1300 Benjamin Franklin Drive #709
\$3,750,000
BeachResidences709.com

Sanctuary



545 Sanctuary Drive #B506
\$1,948,000
SanctuaryB506.com

L'Ambiance



415 L'Ambiance Drive #A801
\$6,995,000
LAmbianceA801.com

435 L'Ambiance Drive #L807
\$3,500,000 | Furnished
LAmbianceL807.com

415 L'Ambiance Drive #B202
\$2,500,000 | Furnished
LAmbianceB202.com

Tangerine Bay Club



350 Gulf of Mexico Drive #211
\$938,500
Tangerine211.com

Longboat Key Towers



603 Longboat Club Road #402N
\$1,350,000
LBKTowers402N.com

Promenade



1211 Gulf of Mexico Dr #704
\$889,000
Promenade704.com

Golden Gate Point



660 Golden Gate Point #32
\$849,000
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. 2 Alarm

Officer Van Dyke responded to Bay Isles Parkway in reference to a duress alarm. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke and Officer Pescuma approached the business from the rear, no indication of a disturbance was observed. Upon approaching the business from the front entrance, Officer Van Dyke was met at the door with a woman dressed in a Publix uniform stating that she just opened the store and didn't realize an alarm was triggered. A canvass of the interior and exterior property was conducted to ensure the validity of the incident. Nothing unusual was observed during the canvas. Therefore, the alarm appeared to be accidental.



advised that she had already contacted American Airlines and Sarasota/Bradenton Airport regarding the property. Additionally, the item was last seen outside of Longboat Key jurisdiction therefore, no property has been added to this case and no further investigation. Case clear.

Jan. 5

Trespassing

3:00 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to the police department on a call of a trespass. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson was met by the complainant inside the front lobby and he stated that on Jan. 3, he was

doing some home construction work inside his condominium unit. He said that at 12 noon he left the unit with the door closed but unlocked and went to the hardware store for supplies, and when he returned at 3 p.m. he found the door open and his neighbor inside his unit. The complainant stated he confronted the man about why he was inside his unit and the man said he heard construction noise and believed it was workers doing work on the weekend which is not allowed. The complainant said he yelled at the man and told him to leave and never enter his property again. The man apologized to the complainant for entering his unit and left without further incident. The complainant stated he did not want the man trespassed from his property and only wanted the incident documented. Case clear.

Vehicle

3:24 p.m.

Officer Pescuma responded to the 4400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to an abandoned vehicle in a parking spot. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma located the vehicle with a Kentucky license plate. Officer Pescuma conducted an FCIC/NCIC query on the vehicle in which it did not come back as stolen. Officer Pescuma notified the caller and HOA staff member and advised the same. The man stated that the vehicle is parked in another homeowner's assigned parking space and the association will tow it since it is on private property. Officer Pescuma was able to locate the owner who is a guest at one of the condominiums and will be returning in a couple of weeks. The vehicle was accidentally parked in the wrong assigned spot. Case clear.

Jan. 3
Vehicle

5:15 p.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to Bayview Drive in reference to a suspicious vehicle. The caller reported two or three vessels in the canal behind his residence and the occupants were drinking and fishing. While enroute, Officer Troyer contacted the complainant by phone and he only had questions about the legality of the occupants being in the canals, and did not wish for him to respond. Based upon what the complainant reported, Officer Troyer did not hear any statements to believe any crime was committed and the occupants were engaged in lawful fishing activities. Case clear.

Trespassing

9:30 p.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol observed people on a closed golf course. Having recent trespassing calls from the same location referencing fishermen trespassing, this was the incident occurring. The resort security officer was contacted and he investigated the incident. The security officer was able to get the men off the property. Officer Troyer observed the two vehicles parked at the gas station with fishing poles in them. Officer Troyer believed this to be the violators vehicles. Eventually the men all showed up at the vehicles and were identified. Security Officer from the resort informed Officer Troyer he did wish for the three men to be trespassed forever. Officer Troyer completed three trespass warnings issued to the men on behalf of the resort. Officer Troyer also explained to the men the meaning of the trespass warnings and how they could not return to the property. All the men left the area after receiving their trespass warnings without incident. Officer Troyer contacted the dispatch center and advised them to enter the trespass warnings. Case clear.

Jan. 4 Property

12:55 p.m.

Officer Van Dyke responded to Bayou Sound in reference to a woman who advised she thinks she left her driver's license on an American Airlines flight. Officer Van Dyke provided her with the state's website for issuing replacement for her driver's license. Additionally, she

Vehicle

6:30 p.m.

Sgt. Smith responded to the beach in reference to a suspicious vehicle complaint. Dispatch advised that a woman called and reported a vehicle had turned around and shined a light in her direction while she was walking on the beach. Upon arrival, Sgt. Smith made contact with the caller who advised that the vehicle did not approach her, no words were exchanged and no criminal activity occurred. The caller stated she was concerned due to the light being shined in her direction but did not report any further suspicious behavior. Sgt. Smith conducted a check of the surrounding area and did not observe any suspicious vehicles, persons or activity. No suspects were located and no further action was required. Case clear.

Jan. 6 Property

11:28 a.m.

Officer Zunz responded to the front lobby of the police department with a request to file a lost property report for an item lost while on vacation. As the person is now at home in Georgia, Sgt. Puccio instructed Officer Zunz to take the report over the phone. The man advised that he and his wife spent this past holiday weekend at the moorings. He believes that his wife lost her bracelet on the evening of Jan. 2 when she went over to say goodbye to friends staying at a neighboring slip. The bracelet is described as a 14 k/white gold ladies tennis bracelet, with a diamond weight of 15 carats. The subject stated it has an insured value of \$9,000 for the bracelet. Case clear.

Jan.7
Citizen assist

12:05 p.m.

Officer Barrett while on patrol observed a woman aboard a white sailboat that was anchored just east of the Linley Street boat ramp and it appeared to be a live aboard vessel. Officer Barrett approached the vessel and asked her if she lived on the vessel and if the vessel was hers. She advised that the vessel was owned by her friend. She telephoned the man and placed the phone on speaker. Officer Barret identified himself and advised that live aboard vessels could only be stationary for 72 hours within a 30-day period and that he was in violation of Longboat Key Town Ordinance. The man advised that he could not move the vessel at this time, but advised he would work on it. Officer Barret warned the man that he needed to comply with the town ordinance or he would be cited. Case clear.

Jan. 7
Citizen Assist

5:33 p.m.

Officer Van Dyke was dispatched to the 200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive to a citizen assist call. Officer Van Dyke called the complainant and she advised that sewage belonging to the restaurant is backing up into her business but they refused to cooperate. According to the complainant, staff from the restaurant is pouring grease down the drains. Officer Van Dyke then called the restaurant and spoke to the manager who advised that his staff has no responsibility for the sewage but the landlord is aware of the situation and actively sending contractors to work on the issue. Officer Van Dyke advised the woman that the incident is a civil issue therefore she should contact the court system. The woman advised that she will be contacting the EPA regarding the matter. Case clear.

Jan. 8
Citizen assist

5:35 p.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to the police department regarding a lost backpack with a driver's license inside. The complainant was not in the State of Florida anymore. Upon contacting the complainant by phone, the woman reported the couple last saw their black backpack at the Linley Street boat ramp. The woman said they were currently back in Ohio and were curious if their backpack was turned in. Officer Troyer spoke with Officer Pescuma on dayshift, whom reported there was nothing turned in. Case clear.

LBK
Liquors



941.953.1835

The Island's largest selection of Beer, Wine & Spirits
Come check out our competitive prices!

Discounts on cases of wine | Special orders welcome

Locally owned & operated

Whitney Beach Plaza
6854 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL

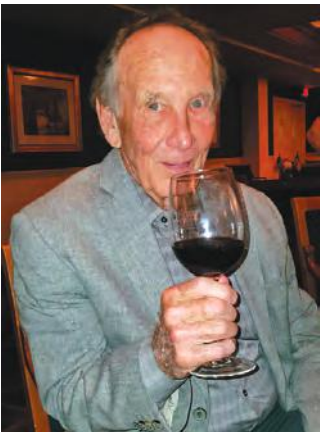


Drink Less But Drink Better

Observers of trends in the alcoholic beverage sector have no illusions about the headwinds their industry is facing.

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

Observers of trends in the alcoholic beverage sector have no illusions about the headwinds their industry is facing. Tariffs are forcing exporters and importers alike to look for new markets. US exporters have lost the lucrative Canadian market. Importers of European Union wines and liqueurs are being priced out of the market. Long term trends show decreased volumes of alcoholic beverages sold. Dry January resolutions in the 2026 New Year have taken a bite out of 2026 sales. Health risks of moderate and heavy drinking have raised concerns among young women, senior citizens, and automobile drivers. The drinks and dinner with wine evenings of the pandemic years have reverted to workouts and early evening events followed by sober drives home for the night.



The strategies for the alcoholic beverage industry going forward seem inclined to compensate for lower volumes of sales by shifting consumers to better quality beverages at higher prices. Here's how that might work.

Take sales of spirits such as Scotch, Kentucky Bourbon, or Tennessee whiskey as an example. These classic spirits as a rule have a higher proof (ABV – Alcohol by Volume) than cheaper alternatives. Drinkers of these spirits may pay more per bottle than buyers of cheaper bottles, but, as we learned while in bars in Scotland and watching locals, diluting a single malt Scotch with about one-third cool water not only increases the volume of the drink but also enhances the taste of the whiskey. One may drink less whiskey but drink better following this practice of people who know best from a long tradition of Scotch and water, barrel-aged Bourbon and Branch, and “Whiskey in my water” as famously recommended in the country song “Tennessee Whiskey”, by David Allan Coe and made popular by George Jones and Chris Stapleton.

Buyers of supermarket lower price tier white wines have to realize that high local, state, and federal taxes on wines, increased even more by tariffs, mean that buying a good but cheap Chenin Blanc or Pinot Gris/Grigio and mixing it with Topo Chico sparkling mineral water or another non-alcoholic soda will reduce the amount of alcohol consumed and make a better drink. Wine from authentic wine producers will taste better even if mixed with sparkling water or fruit drinks.

Of course, the strategy of buying better wines and drinking less of them will help reduce health risks and increase pleasure. If that proves difficult, try exploring high quality wines that have not become popular as yet. Australian Shiraz and Grenache blends, South African Chenin Blanc, and German Pinot Noir come to mind. Drink better but less, my friends.

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.

letters@lbknews.com

Ads that work...

ads@Lbknews.com or 941.387.2200

LONGBOAT KEY TENNIS CENTER

Join the fun!

10 OPEN COURTS | TOURNAMENT PLAY | LESSONS

FULL SERVICE TENNIS PRO SHOP

ROUND ROBIN LEAGUE

CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS AND CLINICS

OPEN MON-FRI 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM

SAT-SUN 7:30 AM - 1200 PM

SEASONAL AND ANNUAL PASSES ENJOY

UNLIMITED FREE PLAY!

590 BAY ISLES ROAD | LONGBOAT KEY, FL

941.316.8367



Top-Ranked for a Reason

Perched on the eighth floor of **Lido Beach Resort**, Drift ranks #1 among 900 Sarasota restaurants on TripAdvisor for its unrivaled views and unforgettable flavors.

opalcollection.com/lido-beach

941.388.2161



Editor Letters



Letters, from page 12

Police Chief
Town of Longboat Key

Dogs on beach

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
On tennis court this morning I was told dogs on beach without leashes continues to be an issue in area of St. Regis. When they spoke to dog handler the response is no leashes are required on “their private beach”. I believe ordinance is clear. Dogs leashed and no dogs on beach. Can we ask management to help over there?
Ryan Gandy
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Need Municipalities to weigh in New Offshore Drilling Proposed Off Florida

To: Longboat Key Commission
Reaching back out on a critical and time sensitive issue regarding new offshore drilling proposed off Florida’s Gulf Coast. As you may know, in November 2025, the Department of the Interior released the Draft Proposed Program (DPP) for the 11th National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.
The federal government has proposed expanding offshore drilling to include a massive area off Florida’s Gulf Coast. One incident in this area could send oil and pollution to our region’s beaches and estuaries wrecking our environment, beaches, and tourism industries. Given the federal comment deadline of January 23, I am reaching out to all Florida coastal leadership simultaneously to ensure a coordinated regional response.
How Your Municipality Can Help
Oceana is working tirelessly to prevent this expansion, but the voices of our coastal cities and counties are the strongest defense we have. We are asking your municipality to take two critical steps:
Submit a Public Comment: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is currently accepting public comments on the DPP until January 23, 2026. You can submit your municipality’s official stance via the Federal Register here: (Regulations.gov).
Pass a Formal Resolution: We urge your council to consider passing a new resolution formally opposing any new offshore drilling leases. This sends a powerful message to federal leaders that California’s coast is not for sale. If you are unable to pass a resolution in this time frame, please consider uploading your most recent resolution to the Federal Register at the link above.
If you have already passed a resolution and do not have time to pass a new resolution, I encourage you to submit a previously passed resolution as your comment here: Regulations.gov
Florida’s local opposition has successfully held back proposed drilling for decades. We hope you will join us in calling on federal leaders to end new leasing and protect Florida’s coastline for generations to come.
I have attached a fact sheet and a template resolution for your review. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information or speak virtually at an upcoming council meeting.
Hunter Miller
Senior Field Campaigns Manager
Department of the Interior

Burns Square Public Parking

To: Denise Kowal
I just spoke to the city manager, and he has Broxton Harvey, our parking manager, looking into what can be done. We can’t guarantee there will be a solution by this weekend, but they are working on trying to find one. If you have any other suggestions, let us know.
Liz Alpert
Commissioner
Sarasota City Commission

Burns Square Public Parking

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert
I failed to request to be copied on directive emails to staff to pursue this matter so that I can know exactly which commissioners are following through with efforts on our behalf.
Denise Kowal
BCC Burns Square Stakeholders

Burns Square Public Parking

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert
This issue is urgent, not something that can wait as businesses that have their life’s savings invested into. Every day that we cannot tell our customers where to park is a loss of millions and possible loss of important clients. I do not need staff to walk with us, I need to speak with you and walk around with you. This is your district and those in the neighborhood deserve your attention immediately to this dire situation.
In the meantime, could you please direct staff with urgency to negotiate with the owners of the ‘Williams Parker’ and ‘County’ parking immediately so we can maybe have a temporary solution by this weekend. Awaiting your response.
Denise Kowal
BCC Burns Square Stakeholders

Burns Square Public Parking

To: Denise Kowal
I am not sure how much good it would do for me to walk around with you in Burns Square. I live in the 400 block of Palm, so I am very familiar with Burns Square. Do you have suggestions as to where parking could go that you would like to show me? If you still would like me to come, I can do the morning of 1/14 around 9:00 or 10:00. I will see if any of our staff can accompany me.
Liz Alpert
Commissioner, City of Sarasota

Burns Square Public Parking

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert
I would appreciate a walkabout this week with you in Burns Square. Please let me know a time that works for you. I am up super early so a morning stroll or late, either are nice times for me.
Denise Kowal
BCC Burns Square Stakeholders

Burns Square Public Parking

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Liz Alpert
Nobody has provided any solutions today, why?
Denise Kowal
BCC Burns Square Stakeholders

Burns Square Public Parking

To: BCC Burns Square Stakeholders Denise Kowal
I hope you have already received a response. But, if not, I am copying the interim city manager and deputy city manager with this email so the appropriate staff can respond.
Liz Alpert
Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Burns Square Public Parking

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice
Hello Mayor Trice, City Commissioners, City Manager, City Parking Manager,
Following up. Urgent! We have three days until January 5th. We need a plan from you on where to tell our customers to park.
Denise Kowal
BCC Burns Square Stakeholders

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice

For the past several years, Burns Square businesses, their employees, shoppers, guests, and residents have relied on the former “Verizon” lot at the corners of Laurel Street, South Orange Avenue, and Morrill Street as a vital parking resource. No longer - please see the attached notice.
To date, the City has not invested in or created the public parking infrastructure outlined in the adopted Parking Plan, which called for a Burns Square public parking garage to be completed in the Tier 1 phase by 2008. A plan many of us who own property and businesses here relied on.
As we are now entering peak season and anticipate increased activity in the district, it is critical that clear direction be provided immediately. Please advise where everyone should direct employees, customers, and visitors to park once use of the above-referenced lot is no longer permitted.
Timely guidance is essential to ensure continued access, economic vitality, and safety for Burns Square. We respectfully request a prompt response. Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Denise Kowal, Resident/Business Owner
Burns Square Businesses & Property Owners

Place Your Bets!

ONE EYED JACKS POKER ROOM

70 TVS - SIMULCASTING

Watch and wager on thoroughbred & greyhound tracks from across the country

DAILY & MONTHLY TOURNAMENTS

HIGH HAND PAYOUT SPECIALS

Poker

LIVE ACTION CASH GAMES

TEXAS HOLD 'EM
7 CARD STUD • OMAHA

VEGAS STYLE GAMES

ULTIMATE TEXAS HOLD 'EM
WILD STUD 3-CARD
FACE UP PAI-GOW



DINING AVAILABLE - ENTREES, HANDHELDS, PIZZAS, SALADS

4404 BEE RIDGE RD
SARASOTA, FL 34233

SUNDAY: NOON - MIDNIGHT
MON-SAT: 10:00AM - 2:00AM

WWW.SKCPOKER.COM
941-355-7744 EXT 1001

Business Directory

Professional Home Watch & Concierge Service



CERTIFIED • BONDED • INSURED • TRUSTED



- Detailed Interior & Exterior Home Checks
- Time & Date Stamped Reporting & Photos
- Concierge Services to Fit Your Needs
- Home Maintenance Coordination

Cindy Jessup, Owner



WHC Welcome Home
CONCIERGE
The Home Watch Experts
941.915.1248
www.whcsarasota.com



L♥ved again
Boutique
UPSCALE WOMEN'S CONSIGNMENT STORE



HIGH END CLOTHING, SHOES, AND ACCESSORIES

- JOHNNY WAS • CHANEL
- HERMES • JIMMY CHOO

4141 S. Tamiami Trail #8 • Sarasota
BESIDE TRADER JOE'S
941.702.8159



GREENWICH INTERIORS, LLC

*Creating beautiful, functional
residential and commercial spaces.*

- New construction
- Remodeling
- Project management

We bring your vision to life.

NANCY O'ROURKE, Principal
(941) 279-7500
nancy@greenwichinteriors.com
Greenwichinteriors.com



Mesa Aesthetics
wellness

BE WELL WITH DR. MESA!

- Direct Primary Care
- Weight Management
- Anti-Aging Care
- Now Offering: The HydraFacial

Dr. Nathalia Mesa
941-251-0600
www.mesaesthetics.com

Wildewood Professional Plaza
3645 Cortez Road West, Suite 110
Bradenton, FL 34210

Hablo español



Cortez Bait & Seafood

Fresher than Fresh!
Local Florida Seafood
Oysters • Shrimp • Clams
Fish Spread • Smoked Mullet



MON - SAT: 10 AM TO 6:30PM | SUN: 10AM TO 5PM
941.794.1547 12110 Cortez Road West
www.cortezbaitandseafood.com Cortez, FL
SEE US ON FACEBOOK



Call for a
FREE Evaluation!

SERVICES

- Personal Care
- Respite Care
- Alzheimer's Care
- Light Cleaning
- Med Administration
- Meal Preparation
- Errands & More

ROSA TORRES, OWNER
941-536-6372
epichomecareprovider@gmail.com

KAREN & ANGELO POMPETTI
Two Generations of Master Barbers

Traditional & Cutting Edge Barbering
38 Years in Business



200 CENTRAL AVE. SUITE 11
ACROSS FROM WHOLE FOODS
484-889-8991 • menshaircutsarasota.com

Steff's Stuff

ANTIQUES AND TREASURES
ESTATES & CONSIGNMENTS ARRIVING DAILY

5380 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE
IN THE CENTRE SHOPS • 941.383.1901
SteffsStuffLBK.com

ANTIQUE ORIENTAL RUGS.COM



FOR OVER 40 YEARS...
ALL HAND CHOSEN
ALL ONE-OF-A-KIND
BOUGHT • SOLD • APPRAISED

Visit our Sarasota Gallery
Call Robert Mosby
941.925.1025
By appointment only

DESIGN
DESIGN
DESIGN
DESIGN
DESIGN

Celebrating 27 years
on the island!

EXCELLENCE
AND EXPERIENCE
IN HAIR AND NAIL DESIGN

941-387-9807

Welcoming the clients and
stylists after the closing of
David Gregory Salon!

6840 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE
AT WHITNEY BEACH PLAZA
www.design2000longboatkeyfl.com

THE FISH HOLE

18 HOLES
OPEN 9am-9pm
7 days a week
COME PLAY
a ROUND!



ADVENTURE GOLF

115 BRIDGE STREET
BRADENTON BEACH, FL
34217
PHONE: (941) 778-3388 www.THEFISHHOLE.com

Angelo Pompetti Bonetti

Professional men's barber services.
At our salon or at your residence
on Longboat or Lido Key.
Call or text for appointments.

200 Central Ave. 941.297.8991
Suite 11
www.menshaircustsarasota.com

SARASOTA
PAINTING

INTERIOR / EXTERIOR / CABINET

FULLY INSURED • OWNER OPERATED

CALL OR TEXT 941-900-9398 TODAY!


OWNER: DON HUBIAK
Instagram Page: @SarasotaInteriorPainting



Taxes and Accounting 5370 #202

941-387-0926 CPA GMD

Bob and Mary are @
5370 #2020 Gulf of Mexico Dr



Art Ready To Hang
Sale



BreakPoints

Tennis, from page 1

On both the ATP and WTA tours, a duopoly has separated itself from the pack with the efficiency of a guillotine blade. For the ruling class—Carlos Alcaraz, Jannik Sinner, Aryna Sabalenka, and Iga Świątek—this Australian Open is not a tournament. It is a hostile takeover. It is a crucible designed to strip away the Nike marketing varnish and reveal which of these freaks has the stomach for total, absolute domination. The gap between them and the field isn't just a points spread anymore; it's a different tax bracket. And they are here to collect.

The ATP: The Artist vs. The Algorithm

On the men's side, the numbers are frankly obscene. Carlos Alcaraz enters Melbourne as the World No. 1, sitting on a mountain of 12,050 points. He isn't just leading the tour; he is lapping it. His closest rival, Jannik Sinner, sits at roughly 11,500. And the rest? Alexander Zverev, the world No. 3, is languishing more than 6,000 points behind. Do the math. The gap between No. 2 and No. 3 is wider than the Pacific Ocean.

Carlos Alcaraz (World No. 1)

The Spaniard arrives with the swagger of a man who conquered the world in 2025, bagging both Roland Garros and the US Open. He leads the head-to-head against Sinner 10-6. Alcaraz is the Artist—tennis by jazz improvisation on a lethal dose of mescaline. He wants to paint the Mona Lisa when a stick figure would do. His test here is discipline. The Australian hard courts punish hubris. If he gets bored, if he starts playing for the applause instead of the jugular, the Machine will eat him alive.

Jannik Sinner (World No. 2)

Sinner is the Algorithm. He arrives as the defending champion (AO 2024 & 2025), a man who has turned unforced errors into an extinct species. He doesn't play "fun" tennis; he plays suffocation tennis. He hits the ball with a flat, concussive violence that removes the oxygen from the stadium. His 2025 season was a masterclass in efficiency, but he lost the No. 1 spot to Alcaraz's brilliance. For Sinner, this fortnight is about reclamation. He needs to prove that his robotic precision can still short-circuit Alcaraz's chaos and secure the coveted "Three-Peat."

The WTA: The Butcher vs. The Architect

On the women's side, the violence is even more pronounced. Aryna Sabalenka has seized the No. 1 ranking by the throat, currently sitting nearly 4,000 points clear of Swiatek.

Aryna Sabalenka (World No. 1)

Sabalenka walks through Melbourne Park like she owns the deed to the land. She treats this tournament like her personal living room and the tennis ball like it owes her money. The "Queen of Melbourne" is the two-time defending champion, and her game has evolved from reckless power to calculated brutality. She is the Butcher. She doesn't outthink you; she bludgeons you until your will to live evaporates. Her test is complacency. Can she keep the hunger of a starving wolf when she's wearing the crown and sitting on a dynasty?

Iga Świątek (World No. 2)

Then there is the Polish Architect. After finally exorcising her grass demons to win Wimbledon in 2025, Świątek has



only one box left to check: The Career Grand Slam. She is a genius of geometry, a player who turns defense into offense faster than anyone alive. But Melbourne has historically been a puzzle for her—the courts are too fast for her clay-court slide, too slick for her obsessive setup. She is desperate to close the gap on Sabalenka, and nothing less than a title here will satisfy her. If she wins, she joins the immortals. If she loses, the gap at No. 1 widens to a canyon.

The Verdict

What makes the 2026 Australian Open so compelling is

the sheer cruelty of the math. The pretenders have been weeded out. The "dark horses" have been sent to the glue factory. We are entering an era of tyrants.

Sinner and Alcaraz have turned the ATP Top 10 into a VIP section of two. Sabalenka and Świątek have done the same to the WTA. They have raised the floor of what is required to win a major so high that the rest of the tour needs an oxygen mask just to compete.


The Melbourne sun is unforgiving, the flies are biting, and the new ruling class is here to collect.

Ads that work...


ads@Lbknews.com

941.387.2200

Come Find Your Joy...



18 South Blvd. of the Presidents
St. Armands Circle
(941) 388-6402



PD by CSTF



SCAN HERE TO
SUBMIT A TIP OR
DOWNLOAD OUR
FREE MOBILE APP



PRIME STOPPERS
of Sarasota County

REWARDS UP TO \$5000
FOR ANONYMOUS TIPS THAT LEAD TO AN ARREST

941-366-TIPS
SarasotaCrimeStoppers.com

Longboat Key News
Sarasota City News

PO Box 8001
Longboat Key, FL 34228
941-387-2200
www.lbknews.com

Steve Reid, Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Associate Publisher
Melissa Reid

Sales
Lillian Sands
Steve Reid
ads@lbknews.com

Graphic Production
Dottie Rutledge

Letters to the Editor
letters@lbknews.com



UNCOMPROMISING QUALITY

Mira Mar Residences are defined by a relentless commitment to quality - where thoughtful planning, precise construction, and elevated materials come together to create homes of lasting distinction. Every detail, from structure to finish, reflects an approach rooted in craftsmanship, durability, and hands-on oversight guided by an exceptional professional development team. This methodical, quality-first approach ensures that Mira Mar is more than beautiful - it's exceptionally built to endure and exceed expectations. The result is a collection of luxury residences that balance refined design with the confidence of construction done right.

At Mira Mar, luxury isn't just what you see - it's how it's built.



MIRAMARSARASOTA.COM

(941) 390-2955 | 1258 NORTH PALM AVENUE, SARASOTA, FL 34236



ORAL REPRESENTATIONS CANNOT BE RELIED UPON AS CORRECTLY STATING REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVELOPER. FOR CORRECT REPRESENTATIONS MAKE REFERENCE TO THIS BROCHURE AND TO THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY SECTION 718.503, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO BE FURNISHED BY A SELLER TO A BUYER OR LESSEE. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FILED IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND NO OTHER STATE. THIS IS NOT AN OFFER TO SELL OR SOLICITATION OF OFFERS TO BUY THE CONDOMINIUM UNITS IN STATES WHERE SUCH OFFER OR SOLICITATION CANNOT BE MADE. PRICES AND AVAILABILITY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE ANYTIME WITHOUT NOTICE.