



Longboat Key News

January 2, 2026

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A Gilded Renaissance... Longboat Key's 2026 Reinvention Underway

While national headlines scream about Florida's insurance crisis, the reality on the ground in Longboat Key is not a collapse; it is a "flight to quality" of historic proportions.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
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By January 2026, the sun rising over Sarasota Bay still paints the water in shades of impossible violet and gold, a daily reminder of why, exactly, the stakes are so high.

But if you listen closely at the Longboat Key Public Tennis Center or on the bayside terrace at the Dry Dock Waterfront Grill, the conversation has shifted. The panic of 2024—the fear of the "Condo Cliff"—has calcified into a steely, sophisticated resolve.

While national headlines scream about Florida's insurance crisis, the reality on the ground in Longboat



Key is not a collapse; it is a "flight to quality" of historic proportions. The island is not dying; it is molt-

ing. We are witnessing a massive, capital-intensive reinvestment in
See LBK 2026, page 3

LBK Marina Heist Linked to Statewide High-Tech Theft Rings?

Police pursue leads after \$40,000 in electronics stripped from vessels at Cannons Marina; experts warn of sophisticated gangs targeting upscale Florida coast.

As Longboat Key residents ring in the new year, local law enforcement is urging boat owners to remain vigilant following a brazen, high-value burglary at one of the island's most established marinas.

Weeks after thieves stripped more than \$40,000 in high-end GPS equipment from vessels at Cannons Marina, investigators say the case remains active. The precision and speed of the crime have led detec-
See Thefts, page 3

'Complete Streets' Vision Takes Shape on Longboat

With the Country Club Shores turn lane project largely complete, Town leaders look to a future of roundabouts, wider paths, and safer travel along Gulf of Mexico Drive.

As the orange barrels disappear from the Country Club Shores section of Gulf of Mexico Drive (GMD) this month, residents are getting their first real-world glimpse of a much larger vision. The newly installed center turn lanes and curbed medians are not just a standalone improvement—they are the "proof of concept" for a 10-mile transformation of the island's main artery known as the "Complete Streets" initiative.

The completion of this 0.84-mile segment marks a tangible start to a long-term corridor plan designed to change how people move through Longboat Key. The goal is simple but ambitious: to turn GMD from a simple highway into a safer, more aesthetic multi-modal boulevard that serves pedestrians and cyclists just as well as it serves motorists.

Beyond the Pavement

"Complete Streets" is an urban design philosophy that ensures roadways are safe and accessible for all users, regardless of age or ability. For Longboat Key, this means moving away from the "one-road-in, one-road-out" highway feel and creating a "sense of place" befitting a premier residential community.

Town Manager Howard Tipton and local officials have long championed the project to address three critical needs:

1. Safety: Slowing traffic and reducing conflicts between cars, bikes, and walkers.

See LBK Streets, page 3

The Winter Bite: The Art of the January Drift

If the real estate market on Longboat Key in January 2026 is a high-stakes poker game, the fishing is a lesson in patience and finesse.

The frenetic energy of the fall mullet run is gone. The tarpon are ghosts of summers past. What remains is a slower, more intellectual pursuit—a game played in the margins of the tides, where the prize isn't size, but quality.

Right now, as the water temperature dips into the low 60s, the "Winter Savior" has arrived: the Sheepshead.

Forget the glamour species. In January, the smart angler is obsessed with the convict-striped thief found hugging the concrete pilings of the Longboat Pass Bridge and the private docks of Country Club Shores. These fish are spawning now, aggressive yet notoriously hard to hook. The technique is surgical: a small fiddler crab or a piece of shrimp on a knocker rig, dropped vertically against a barnacle-encrusted piling. You don't set the hook when you feel the bite; you set it before you feel it. It is a tactile game, requiring the sensitivity of a surgeon. A five-pound Sheepshead, pulled from the structure on light tackle, fights with a dogged, bulldog intensity that commands respect.

Moving off the structure and onto the bayside flats, the Spotted Seatrout are holding court. But this isn't the mindless popping-cork fishing of



summer. The big "Gator" trout—fish over 25 inches—have moved into the deeper potholes and channels to stay warm. The play here is a slow, methodical drift over the grass flats near Buttonwood Harbor. You're throwing a soft plastic paddle tail on a light jig head, working it "low and slow." The bite in January is a subtle tick on the line, not a slam. It requires focus. On the warmer afternoons, when the sun heats the dark mud bottom, you might find Redfish prowling the shallows, tailing lazily as they root for crustaceans.

See Fishing, page 2

Power in Numbers: Local Women Join Forces to Raise \$100,000 for Charity in One Night

Simple math is about to have a massive impact on Longboat Key. The equation is straightforward: 100 women, each donating \$1,000, resulting in a transformative \$100,000 gift to a single local charity—all in the span of one evening.

This is the vision behind Longboat Key 100, a newly formed philanthropic initiative that is bringing excitement and a spirit of collective giving to the island. The group will hold its inaugural event on February 17, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Longboat Key Club.

Spearheaded by founders Michelle Johnson, Nichole Dipinto, Heidi Barry, Betsy Juliano, Pat Watral, and Julia Woodward, the organization aims to turn individual intentions into a wave of community support.

How It Works

The concept strips away the complexity often associated with fundraising. There are no galas to plan, no silent auctions to manage, and perhaps most importantly, zero overhead costs.

“Longboat Key 100 brings women together to learn about local charities and collectively decide where their individual contributions can make the greatest impacts,” explains co-founder Michelle Johnson.

During the February 17 event, three local charities will take the stage to give brief presentations about their mission and needs. Following the presentations, the attendees will cast their votes. The charity receiving the most votes will be the recipient of the pooled funds.

Because participants write their checks directly to the charity chosen that evening, 100% of the donation goes immediately to the cause.

A Dedication to Service

While the financial impact is significant, the organizers emphasize that the event is equally about building community. It offers a space for women on Longboat Key to connect with one another while learning about the diverse non-profits operating in their backyard.

How to Join the “Select 100”

- The search is on to fill the room with 100 committed philanthropists.
- For Members: Registration is available directly through the Longboat Key Club app.
 - For Non-Members: The community is welcome! Non-members can request to participate by emailing longboatkey100@gmail.com.
- For additional updates and details, visit the group’s page at facebook.com/lbkclub100.

Event Snapshot

- What: Longboat Key 100 Inaugural Vote & Donation Event
- When: February 17, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Where: Longboat Key Club
- Goal: Raise \$100,000 for a local charity in one night.

Fishing, from page 1

For those willing to run offshore—just a few miles out to the artificial reefs and ledges—the culinary prize of the season is waiting: the Hogfish.

While the tourists chase snapper, the locals know that cooler water brings the Hogfish within range. These are the “unicorns” of the reef. They don’t strike aggressively; they graze. Catching them on hook and line is an art form that involves light fluorocarbon leaders and live shrimp threaded meticulously onto a jig head. To land a Hogfish is to secure the best dinner the Gulf of Mexico offers—white, flaky, and sweeter than grouper. It is the ultimate “table trophy” for the sophisticated palate.

In January 2026, fishing off Longboat isn’t about filling the cooler with volume. It’s about the precise, rewarding capture of winter specialists. It’s about drifting in the silence of the bay, watching the osprey circle, and remembering that while the skyline changes, the rhythm of the tide remains the only law that truly matters.



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LBK 2026, from page 1

the island’s future—a transition from the “deferred maintenance” era of the 20th century to a hardened, resilient, and ultra-premium reality for the 21st.

This is the story of how Longboat Key is navigating the “Terminator” statutes and the new structural integrity laws not as a victim, but as a community deciding, consciously and expensively, to save itself.

The Rise of the “Fortress Class”

The most telling data point of 2026 isn’t the foreclosure rate; it is the price per square foot at the St. Regis Longboat Key. While older inventory lingers on the market with an average of 115 days to sell, units at the St. Regis and the wellness-focused Sage Longboat Key are transacting quietly and rapidly at record highs. We are seeing sales close north of \$4,000 per square foot, with specific penthouse units at the St. Regis clearing the \$9 million mark in cash deals.

This is the emergence of the “Fortress Class.” These are buildings constructed post-2020 with impact-rated glass, elevated foundations, and reserves that are fully funded from day one. Buyers in 2026—specifically the “Legacy Investors” from Greenwich, Chicago, and Toronto—are bypassing the “value” of a \$800,000 vintage unit. They are willingly paying a 50% premium for the certainty of new construction.

The investment thesis is simple: In a world of climate volatility, safety is the ultimate luxury. The Aria and Sage developments have proven that there is virtually no price ceiling for “SIRS-proof” real estate. The message from the market is clear: We will pay for paradise, but we demand it be bulletproof.

The “SIRS” Effect: A Badge of Honor

For the island’s vintage inventory—the beloved mid-rise communities built between 1970 and 1990—the acronym SIRS (Structural Integrity Reserve Studies) has transformed from a scarlet letter into a badge of honor.

In the boardrooms of complexes like The Islander Club or Seaplace, a quiet heroism has taken place. Rather than folding to the “Terminator” developers, dozens of associations have successfully rallied. Residents looked at the \$150,000 special assessments for concrete restoration and waterproofing and made a choice: We are staying.

By early 2026, real estate listings have evolved. Agents are no longer hiding the assessments; they are front-loading them. Listings now proudly display “SIRS Compliant,” “Milestone Inspection Passed,” and “Reserves Fully Funded” in bold print. These buildings are seeing a “Resilience Premium.” Buyers are flocking to these “recertified” vintage properties, recognizing that a renovated 1980s unit with 10-foot ceilings and a direct Gulf view—now structurally certified for another 40 years—is a rare gem that cannot be replicated under today’s stricter setback codes.

The “Friendly” Terminator

Even the dreaded “Condo Terminator” statute (Florida Statute 718.117) has proven to be more nuanced than the “predatory” narrative suggested. In 2026, we are seeing the rise of the “Friendly Termination.”

For buildings that truly reached the end of their structural lifespan—where the cost of concrete restoration exceeded 50% of the building’s value—the arrival of developers offering bulk buyouts has been a liquidity event, not an eviction. We are seeing associations actively solicit bids, turning a potential foreclosure crisis into a golden parachute.

Owners in these “end-of-life” buildings are cashing out at 150% of their unit’s prior market value, fueled by the land hunger of developers who know that Longboat Key is a finite resource. This capital is not leaving the region; it is recycling. These sellers are taking their equity and moving into newer, lower-maintenance properties on the mainland or downsizing into the boutique luxury projects rising on the footprints of the old. It is the efficient, albeit painful, recycling of the island’s housing stock.

The Culture of Resilience

Culturally, the “Condo Cliff” has sparked a renaissance of community engagement. The shared challenge of preserving these buildings has brought neighbors together in a way that decades of potlucks never could.

You see it at Whitney’s on the north end, where the morning coffee crowd is younger, sharper, and deeply conversant in “milestone inspections” and “reserve funding ratios.” You see it at Shore, where the patio is packed not just with tourists, but with full-time residents celebrating the completion of a roof project or the passing of a budget.

The “Snowbird” mentality of disengagement is dead. If you own on Longboat in 2026, you are involved. The Town of Longboat Key is seeing record engagement in planning meetings as residents push for underground utilities and improved drainage to match their private investments. The aesthetic of the island is leveling up; as older, tired complexes are renovated or replaced, the curb appeal of Gulf of Mexico Drive is becoming seamless.

The Verdict: A Stronger Paradise

Longboat Key in 2026 is undoubtedly more expensive than it was five years ago. The entry-

level “beach getaway” is largely a thing of the past. But in its place is something more durable.

The fear of the “Condo Terminator” has forced a necessary reckoning that has ultimately strengthened the market. The buildings that stand today are safer. The owners who remain are committed. And the land itself—that thin, glorious strip of sand between the bay and the Gulf—remains undefeated.

For those smart enough to navigate the transition, the “Paradise Tax” is simply the cost of admission to one of the most resilient, exclusive, and well-managed zip codes in America. The sun still sets perfectly over the Gulf, but the people watching it from their balconies now know exactly what that view costs—and they are happy to pay it.

LBK Streets, from page 1

2. Aesthetics: Burying utilities and adding consistent landscaping to beautify the corridor.

3. Resiliency: improving drainage and elevating improved sections to withstand future storms.

The full vision for the 10-mile stretch includes widening the multi-use path to 12 feet on one side (likely the east), installing 7-foot buffered bike lanes, and adding raised landscaped medians throughout the island to calm traffic.

What’s Coming Next: The Broadway Roundabout

With the Country Club Shores segment wrapping up, attention now shifts north to the intersection of Broadway Street and GMD.

This site is slated to become the island’s first roundabout. Town Commissioners moved the project forward late last year, approving funding for necessary utility relocations. The roundabout is designed not only to improve traffic flow at the north end but also to serve as a safer gateway for pedestrians accessing the beach and the Whitney Beach Plaza area.

According to the latest timeline, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), which is funding the bulk of the construction, is expected to advertise for construction bids in July 2026.

The Long Road Ahead

Residents should view the Complete Streets initiative as a marathon, not a sprint. The total overhaul is estimated to cost upwards of \$30 million and will be completed in segments over several years to minimize disruption and manage costs.

Currently, a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study is underway for the remainder of the corridor. This critical study, expected to conclude by mid-2026, analyzes environmental impacts and determines if the Town has enough right-of-way to widen paths without acquiring private land—a key factor that will shape the final design.

For now, the Town invites residents to drive, bike, or walk the newly finished segment at Country Club Shores to see the future of Longboat Key’s infrastructure firsthand.

Boat Thefts, from page 1

tives to coordinate with outside agencies, investigating potential links to organized theft rings that have plagued Florida’s coastal communities throughout 2025.

Overnight Raid

The incident occurred in the early morning hours of Dec. 2 at Cannons Marina, 6040 Gulf of Mexico Drive. According to police reports, the break-in was discovered when a technician returned to a vessel to finish an installation, only to find the equipment he had placed just 24 hours prior was gone.

In total, thieves boarded five boats and removed eight GPS navigation units. The stolen devices, valued between \$3,000 and \$6,300 each, bring the total loss to approximately \$40,100—a figure that elevates the crime to a first-degree felony under Florida statute.

“I observed the wires connecting to the GPS were cut, except for one vessel which appeared as if the wires were not cut and the connectors were simply unscrewed,” an officer noted in the initial incident report.

A “Sophisticated” Pattern

Longboat Key Police Captain Robert Bourque confirmed that the department is looking beyond the island for answers.

“We are working with some other agencies that have had similar instances or similar crimes happen recently, and so we are following up on some promising leads,” Bourque said. “You’ll have burglaries of the boats themselves as grand theft, and multiple times because you have different victims that own different boats.”

This cooperation points to a troubling trend. Florida has long been the nation’s “capital” for marine theft, leading the U.S. in reported watercraft crimes for consecutive years. Recent state data suggests a rise in “cut-and-grab” crews—often traveling from larger metro hubs like Miami or Tampa—who target specific high-value electronics like Garmin and Raymarine systems. These groups are known to strike upscale harbors quickly, often under the cover of darkness, knowing the equipment can fetch thousands on the black market.

Protecting Your Investment

For local captains, the theft is a harsh reminder of the vulnerability of open slips.

“It’s definitely a scary thing to think about getting on your boat for work and everything is gone,” said local Captain AJ Grande.

While many owners rely on standard marina security, experts suggest that the sophistication of modern thieves requires a layered defense. Police and marine security specialists recommend:

- Motion-Activated Lighting: Thieves prefer total darkness; sudden light is a strong deterrent.
- Wireless Security Systems: Modern cellular cameras can alert owners to motion on their deck instantly.
- Remove or Lock: If electronics cannot be removed (as many are flush-mounted), specialized tamper-proof fasteners can slow thieves down.

Ongoing Investigation

As of this week, no arrests have been publicly announced, and the investigation remains open. Cannons Marina, a fixture of the community for over 70 years which was acquired by Ingman Marine in September, continues to cooperate with authorities.

Police are asking anyone who may have seen suspicious activity on the water or near the 6000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in early December to come forward.

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LBK Launches 2026 Citizen and Business Surveys

Input sought for future planning; mailers arrive mid-January

The Town of Longboat Key is initiating its 2026 data collection drive this month, distributing both the Citizen Survey and a newly introduced Business Survey. These instruments are critical for the Town Management Team to gauge satisfaction levels, understand community priorities, and guide service planning for the coming fiscal years.

Property and business owners should anticipate survey mailers arriving around Monday, Jan. 12.

Participation Details

- Town officials emphasize that broad participation is vital for statistically valid results.
- Watch your mailbox: If you do not receive a mailer by Jan. 15, please contact the survey customer service line at (941) 404-8332 to request a secure access code.
- Impact: Data collected will directly influence resource allocation and the Town’s strategic planning sessions later this year.

Call for Artists: Capture the ‘Tranquility’ of Longboat Key

Town seeks cover image for state directory; deadline Friday

Local photographers have a final opportunity this week to have their work featured on a statewide stage. The Town is accepting submissions for the cover of the 2026–2027 Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) Membership Directory.

The Town is looking for a single, high-impact image that conveys the island’s natural beauty and tranquility. In addition to the directory cover, the winning photo will be showcased on the Town’s official website and social media channels.

- Submission Guidelines
- Deadline: Friday, Jan. 9 at 4:00 p.m.
 - Specs: Digital JPGs only. Cropping is permitted, but images must be free of filters, water-

- marks, signatures, or date stamps.
- How to Submit: Email high-resolution files to lbknews@longboatkey.org including full photographer credit.
- The Communications Team will vet entries and select five finalists, from which the Town Management Team will choose the official submission to the FCCMA.

Canal Maintenance: Workshops to Tackle Funding Methodology

Town moves toward ‘fair share’ model for dredging and upkeep

Following the Town Commission’s recent steps toward establishing a dedicated funding source for waterways, the Town is launching a community engagement phase regarding the Canal Navigation Maintenance Program.

The upcoming workshops will focus on the program’s proposed funding methodology—a critical topic that determines how costs will be shared. Discussions will cover the split between ad valorem taxes (paid by all property owners) and special benefit assessments (paid by those with direct canal access). This hybrid model aims to balance the general economic benefit of healthy waterways with the specific value added to waterfront properties.

Get Involved

Residents should watch for specific meeting dates to be announced throughout the season. The Town is also offering to send staff to private Homeowner Association (HOA) meetings to provide detailed presentations. Community leaders can call Town Hall to schedule a session.

Safety Campaign: Speed Limits Enforced on Multi-Use Paths

10 MPH cap for e-bikes; officials warn of lithium battery fire risks

With the seasonal population swelling, Town officials are cracking down on safety protocols for the island’s 10-mile multi-use pathway. A hard 10 MPH speed limit is being enforced for all users, including cyclists and e-bike riders.

“Riders must keep right, pass on the left, and use a bell when passing,” the Town stated in a recent advisory. Officials are particularly concerned about high-speed e-bikes at blind intersections and driveways. Faster e-bikes are strongly encouraged to use the designated bicycle lanes on Gulf of Mexico Drive (GMD) rather than the sidewalk to prevent conflicts with pedestrians..

Turn Lane Project at Country Club Shores Nears Finish Line

Final walkthrough completed; contractor to be recognized Jan. 20

The Gulf of Mexico Drive and Country Club Shores Turn Lane Project, a significant infrastructure upgrade spanning nearly a mile of the state road, is effectively complete. A final walkthrough was conducted on Dec. 15 with representatives from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Town, and the contractor, Superior Asphalt.

Crews are currently addressing a minor “punch list” of remaining items, including final thermoplastic striping and landscape touch-ups on the newly installed medians. The project introduced center turn lanes and curbed medians to improve safety for residents entering and exiting the Country Club Shores neighborhood.

Completion Ceremony

The project team will be formally recognized for their work at the Town Commission meeting on Jan. 20, 2026. This project is widely viewed as the first completed segment of the Town’s broader “Complete Streets” initiative, which aims to improve GMD for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.

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EditorLetters

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

Road Watch Update for the Week of January 4

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission

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

This week’s work will consist of:

- Mobilize construction equipment, including delivery of machinery and materials.
- Install Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) signs and devices.
- Install temporary pedestrian paths around the work zone. Please use designated paths and follow posted detour signs.
- Clear within the right of way and install erosion-control devices.

Lane closures will be in place during various phases of the project. Initial pre-phase work involves building a temporary roadway for use during subsequent phases. This work will not impact existing travel lane configuration.

Construction will primarily take place during daytime hours, with occasional nighttime work. Expect noise from backup alarms, construction equipment, pumps, and power tools during daytime and nighttime operations.

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

Alice Ramos
Community Outreach Manager
Florida Department of Transportation

Road Watch Update for the Week of January 4

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission

S.R. 70 from Lorraine Road to Bourneside Boulevard: Construction project: This project includes widening S.R. 70 from Lorraine Road to Bourneside Boulevard from a two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane or six-lane divided roadway, depending on the location, construction of roundabouts on S.R. 70 at Uihlein Road, Del Webb Boulevard, and Bourneside Boulevard, intersection improvements at the existing signalized intersection of Greenbrook Boulevard and Lorraine Road, construction of four bridges over two Braden River crossing locations, new drainage system, construction of 10-foot shared use paths, street lighting, and landscaping, and installation of new fiber optic cable connecting the two signalized intersections to Manatee County’s regional Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS).

Notice: Please refrain from entering the work zone. New pavement has recently been installed that gives the impression of completed areas of work, but these areas are still active and use by non-project staff is a safety hazard as trucks, equipment, and work is ongoing. All new shared use paths and roadways remain closed until further notice. The work zone is an active construction area. For the safety of all, please stay out of the work area.

This week’s work will consist of:

- Excavation of the pond on the north side of S.R. 70, west of Uihlein Road.
- Driving bridge piles for the easternmost westbound bridge.
- Begin demolition of the existing box culvert to prepare for a new westbound bridge, east of Uihlein Road.
- Grading stabilization between Bourneside Boulevard and Polo Run on the north side of S.R. 70.
- Installing drainage on the north side of S.R.70 between Uihlein Road and Bourneside Boulevard.
- Installing new signal hardware at the intersection of Post Boulevard and S.R. 70.

Please use caution and watch for trucks and construction vehicles entering or exiting the work zone throughout the construction limits. Work will take place Monday through Saturday, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Be aware of workers and flaggers in the area. Please use caution and be aware of workers and flaggers in the area.

S. R. 70 from Bourneside Boulevard to Waterbury Road, Bradenton: Construction project: This project includes widening S.R. 70 from Bourneside Boulevard to Waterbury Road from a two-lane undivided roadway to a four-lane divided roadway, Safety features will include roundabouts to be constructed at 197th Street East/Lindrick Lane, 213th Street East, 225th Street East/Panther Ridge Trail and County Road 675/Waterbury Road. The project will also include the installation of a new drainage system, new curb and gutter, construction of 10-foot shared-use paths and five-foot paved shoulders on both sides of the roadway, street lighting throughout the project and landscaping inside the roundabouts.

Notice: Please refrain from entering the work zone. New pavement has recently been installed that gives the impression of completed areas of work, but these areas are still active and use by non-project staff is a safety hazard as trucks, equipment, and work is ongoing. All new shared use paths and roadways remain closed until further notice. The work zone is an active construction area. For the safety of all, please stay out of the work area.

This week’s work will consist of:

- Continuing eastbound construction with base work between Panther Ridge Trail and east of Meadow Dove Lane on the south side of S.R. 70.
- Grading for curb and stabilization east of Lindrick Lane for future eastbound lanes.
- Grading embankment west of Lindrick Lane for future eastbound lanes.
- Backfilling of a box culvert between Lindrick Lane and 213th Street within the existing S.R. 70 lanes where traffic was previously diverted.

- Clearing on the north side of S.R. 70 for future shared-use path at 197th Street.
- Relocating utilities on the north side of S.R. 70.

Meadow Dove Lane will be closed beginning January 12, 2026, for construction of the south portion of the Meadow Dove Lane/C.R. 675 roundabout. During the closure, no traffic will be permitted to enter or exit Meadow Dove Lane via S.R. 70. A full detour will be in place, with message boards directing traffic along the detour route. The closure is expected to remain in effect for approximately 60 days.

Alice Ramos
Community Outreach Manager
Florida Department of Transportation

FLM News

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Debra Williams

Done! I have you checking in on Feb. 12 and check out Feb. 13, but if you need me to change anything just let me know.

Savannah Cobb
Assistant to Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

FLM News

To: Longboat Key Assistant to Town Manager Savannah Cobb

BJ will be attending with me. Can you please register her as well?

Debra Williams
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

FLM News

To: Longboat Key Assistant to Town Manager Savannah Cobb

Can you please register me for this conference on 2/12-2/13?

Debra Williams
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

FLM News

To: Longboat Key Assistant to Town Manager Savanna Cobb

I hope you had a great holiday. Just looking at the potential meeting with Tip on February 12. I have a tourist development council meeting in Venice at 4 o’clock so that will not work. I could meet with him the 12th at 10 o’clock or 11 o’clock or noon. I’m also open all day Wednesday, whichever works for him is fine by me thanks,

Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Weekend questions

To: Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Director Allen Parsons

Thanks Allen - it us a huge property- was wondering if they were doing more than replacing what’s there.

See Letters, page 6

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 5

BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Weekend questions

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Wow, what a big milestone – yes, that would be a good thing!
Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Weekend questions

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman
Thanks Isaac - we close on construction loan tomorrow- hope we can break ground for a house to live in.
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Weekend questions

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
I have copied Allen Parsons regarding work at 6622 GMD to see if he has any information on what that is about. Also, yes, the GMD streetlight locations were voted on by the commission after many meetings and discussions, and the decisions was basically that...focus on commercial areas and other event centers, like houses of worship, along GMD. In particular, that is mainly because the FDOT would not allow the town to fully light the corridor at a dimmer standard but would allow the Town to light blocks or groupings of the corridor to their bright light roadway standards. Thank you! Hope you are having a good holiday season.
Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Weekend questions

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman
There is a large parcel at 6662 GMD that is being cleared. Do we know what is happening there? The streetlights on GMD don't make much sense to me. A plethora across from Whitney shopping center than nothing. The next group across from Chapel than nothing, across from

a center Shoppes. Do we only light commercial areas?
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Weekend questions

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Following up on the property. I think the address is 6670 GMD (6622 GMD doesn't exist). It is a large property (4.3 ac). It had a demolition of the prior single-family house & pool (damaged via Hurricane Helene) on the property. There also appears to be tree trimming/removal of damaged trees. No permits have been submitted yet for a replacement house.
Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Weekend questions

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
I have copied Allen Parsons regarding work at 6622 GMD to see if he has any information on what that is about. Also, yes, the GMD streetlight locations were voted on by the commission after many meetings and discussions, and the decisions was basically that...focus on commercial areas and other event centers, like houses of worship, along GMD. In particular, that is mainly because the FDOT would not allow the town to fully light the corridor at a dimmer standard but would allow the Town to light blocks or groupings of the corridor to their bright light roadway standards. Thank you! Hope you are having a good holiday season.
Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key
Suncoast Waterkeeper Sampling Results for Dec. 22
To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission

On December 22nd, Monday, the enterococci survey was carried out during a rising tide, from -0.45 to -0.2 ft. No rainfall was recorded in the 24 hours preceding sampling. The water was slightly murky at Caples, with 1 man fishing in the water, who said he caught a trout. There were suspended solids in the water column at Indian Beach, The Bay Park, and Sarasota Sailing Squadron, causing the water to be murky. It was a windy day with 6 to 13 mph winds, resulting in suspended solids in some sites. At Longboat Key Bayfront Park, there was thick wrack on the shore. The water was calm and clear at Longboat Key Boat Ramp, and there were 8 mooring boats in the water. The water was slightly murky at Palma Sola and horses were in

See Letters, page 12

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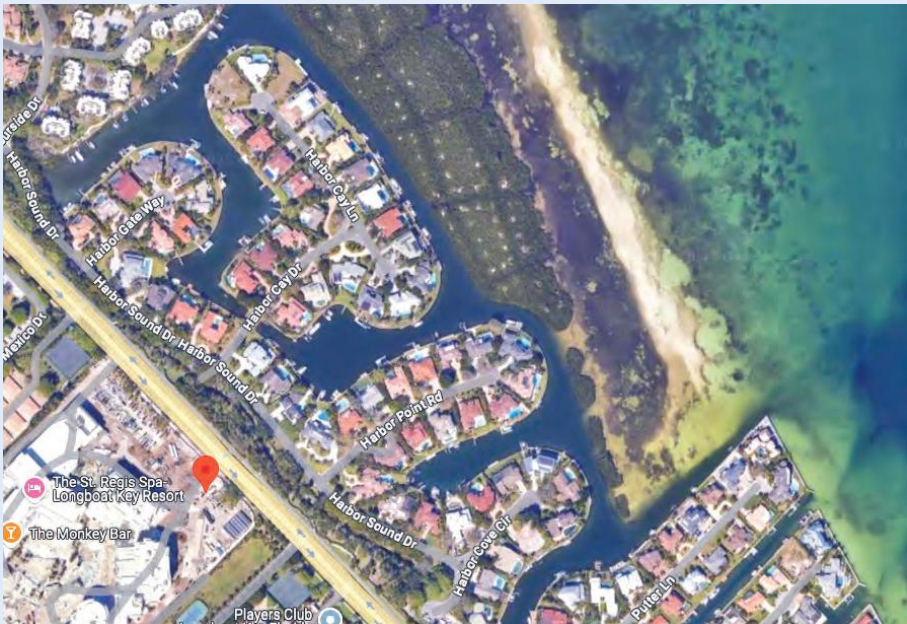


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Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

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1750 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR Unit#6B	1,364	\$1,400,000	2	2	0	150	\$1,300,000
235 GRANT DR	1,182	\$1,345,000	2	2	0	336	\$1,250,000
1591 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#410	3,130	\$7,100,000	2	2	1	85	\$6,400,000
4651 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#402	3,989	\$5,999,000	4	4	1	355	\$5,687,500
3030 GRAND BAY BLVD Unit#324	2,550	\$1,998,000	3	3	0	13	\$1,887,500
1930 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#136	1,270	\$679,000	2	2	0	16	\$605,000



1591 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#410



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Dziekuje *Dank u wel*
Kiitos *Teşekkür ederim*
спасибо *Paldies*
Xie xie *Arigatou*
Nayāñ *barşakō*
śubhakāmanā

for another wonderful year

Leah Judy Steven

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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. 26

Citizen assist

11:02 a.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to the 2000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a public service call. The call was in regards to a ruptured water main. Upon his arrival, Officer Maple located the ruptured water main that the plumbing company had accidentally punctured a main line prior to meter. Officer Maple contacted Public Works who stated he would get someone out to shut off the water main. No further law enforcement actions required. Case clear.



employee left the incident in the Uber and will return on Dec. 29 to retrieve his vehicle when he is sober. Case clear.

Dec. 29

Property

12:00 p.m.

Officer Van Dyke responded to the 1000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to property damage. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke met with the caller who advised that his paddleboard was discovered to be damaged. The incident occurred approximately two weeks ago during an unknown timeframe. There is a small crevice near the dumpsters that contains a

paddleboard rack along with several other paddleboards. The caller advised that no video footage is available, the HOA isn't cooperating and it's not unusual for contractors to be in the area of the paddleboards. The paddleboard is a white 7-foot SUP. Officer Van Dyke observed several large dimples along the bottom of the paddleboard, but it appears to be heavy items such as bricks placed on top of the paddleboard. The incident doesn't appear to be a crime and the owner merely requested a report for documentation purposes. Case clear.

Dec. 30

Vehicle

12:16 p.m.

Officer Pescuma received license plate alert for a suspended/revoked driver's license. Officer Pescuma queried the FCIC/NCIC database and confirmed that the registered owner's driver's license was suspended on Aug. 9, 2024. The vehicle and trailer was located and a traffic stop was conducted on a black GMC truck. Officer Pescuma made contact with the driver and introduced himself and provided the reason for the traffic stop. Officer Pescuma advised the driver that the registered owner did not have a valid driver's license. While investigating, the driver stated, "I do not want to go to jail," I asked why and he stated he does not have a driver's license and produced a copy of his Mexico passport. Officer Pescuma located the driver's information in DAVID which shows that he does not have a valid driver's license and was never issued one. Officer Pescuma then asked the driver for his license, vehicle registration and current proof of insurance. The driver showed Officer Pescuma a copy of his passport. Officer Pescuma asked why he was driving and the driver stated he was working on Longboat Key. Officer Pescuma issued a criminal citation for no valid driver's license. Case clear.

Missing property

6:00 p.m.

Officer Tillman responded to Fair Oaks Lane for a stolen kayak. The complainant called to report their kayak had floated away from their dock. Upon arrival, the complainant stated that the kayak was last seen on their dock yesterday around 5 p.m. The complainant stated that the kayak has a history of floating away and wanted to report it, in case it was found. The kayak is described as being blue/green and an 8-foot single seat. No serial numbers or any significant characteristics other than a lot of scratches on the bottom from the oyster beds. Case clear.

Jan. 1

Landscaping

4:36 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to Hibiscus Way on a call of a disturbance. Upon arrival, Officer Tillman was met by the complainant standing outside along the street next to a green Toyota SUV loading tree debris into a trailer. The man stated he owns his own tree removal/landscaping business and he was contacted by the resident of Hibiscus to trim a coconut palm. The man stated when he arrived this morning the female homeowner started yelling at him for being late. The man stated he told the woman that they had never agreed upon a start time plus he was having trouble finding someone to help him since it was the holiday. The man stated that when the woman continued to argue with him he decided the job was not worth the trouble and told the woman he would not cut her palm. The man stated he had work to do at another house on the block so he went to work there. The man stated later the woman's husband came outside to confront him and a heated argument ensued. Officer Martinson then spoke to the man who gave a similar version of events but stated he had spoken rudely to his wife about not taking the job to cut the palm tree so he went outside to confront him about his behavior. The man said he got into a verbal argument with the woman and his employee but nothing physical had happened. The man stated he walked away and called 911 before the situation got worse. The man advised he was done working and was going to leave the island. Officer Martinson also advised the man that in the future there is no tree cutting allowed on holidays. Case clear.

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WineTimes

Serendipity in Field Research; A Carnivore’s Choice

The Alpine Steakhouse has become famous for Its TurDucKen: a Cajun composition of a boneless chicken stuffed inside a boneless duck stuffed inside a boneless turkey. A Carnivore’s choice cubed!

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

Our tireless field research in food and wine venues paid off this week. In search of red wines, we visited the Alpine Steakhouse on South Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. A fortunate choice, it turned out.

The restaurant has a butcher shop and a retail wine shop under one roof. Or perhaps it’s a butcher that sells wine and a restaurant has grown around it. Sarasota features a number of these hybrid food and beverage venues. Call it what it is.

The Alpine Steakhouse has become famous for Its TurDucKen: a Cajun composition of a boneless chicken stuffed inside a boneless duck stuffed inside a boneless turkey. A Carnivore’s choice cubed!

Toward the back of the restaurant, a poster of Guy Fieri of Triple D fame stands watch over a small bar. Fieri brought national exposure to the proprietor of Alpine Steakhouse, Mark Redham, and his Turducken specialty.

From prior visit, we remembered not so much the Turducken but the diverse selection of lighter red wines, apropos for winter feasts, on the wine list. The bar does not serve spirits: wine and beer only. It compensates with a truly interesting selection of wines by the glass and by the bottle. Andrea, behind the bar, had a couple of nearly empty bottles of wine that we noticed. She mentioned that a wine distributor had visited earlier and had opened bottles to taste and left them. We recognized the Flowers Pinot Noir label on one of the bottles.

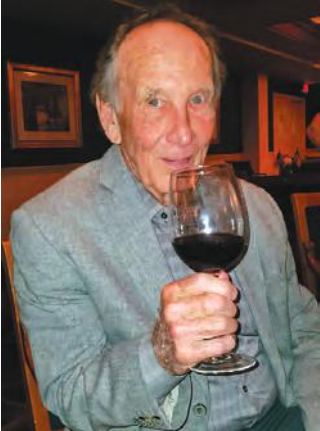
In a serendipitous moment, Andrea poured us a taste of the Flowers Pinot Noir (\$55 retail) from the Sonoma Coast of California, to see what we thought about it. This wine has a delicate fragrance on the nose that carries over to a fresh fruit taste and lingers like red plum through the finish. Serve it with medium rare pork chops, smoked turkey, ham, or roasted vegetables. It will enhance the tastes of yams, corn, yellow squash, and dressing.

Andrea also poured a small taste of the other wine: the Napa Ink Grade Andosol Red Field Blend (\$84 retail). Named after California pioneer Theron Ink and the Ink Grade road that he built ascending Howell Mountain in Napa, this wine has the deep, dense color of black plum and blackberry juice and a smooth transition to a chicory coffee finish. Better with a prime beefsteak or grilled rack of lamb than a winer feast, but a delight to taste. Howell Mountain vineyards lie above the fogline of the Pacific Coast in volcanic ash soils.

We have found two other wines that fit a dedicated carnivore’s diet, but go easier on the budget, The 2023 Légende de Bonpas Luberon (\$14) from the Southern Rhone Valley has a clean but rich mouth feel that will bring out the flavors of light meat and vegetable dishes during a winter dinner. The 2023 Petiole Pinot Noir (\$12) from the Willamette Valley of Oregon has a light, fruity taste of a young Pinot Noir. It pairs well with the flavors of pork loin, turkey, ham, and root vegetable.

We give thanks for the bountiful harvests in the USA. May we share the produce of our land with all.

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 Orego Valley in New Zealand. Currently he splits time between residences in Chevy Chase, Maryland and St. Armand’s Circle in Florida.

Rich Hermansen selected has first wine list for a restaurant shortly after graduating from college with a degree in Mathematics. He has extensive service and management experience in the food and wine industry. Family and friends rate him as their favorite chef, bartender, and wine steward. He lives in Severna Park, Maryland.



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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 12

Monday January 5, 2026 Regular City Commission Meeting

To: Sarasota City Commission
The Monday, January 5, 2026, Regular City Commission Meeting Agenda packet is now available through your iLegislate app.
Please note that paper packets will be available for pickup in the Commission Liaison Office for those who have indicated a wish to continue to receive them. Please let us know if you have any questions or require further assistance. Thank you.
Shayla Griggs
City Clerk
City of Sarasota

Leaking pipes

To: Cheryl Foa Pecorella
Thanks for the email and please accept my apologies for the delay in responding. I’ve copied the City Manager on this email to direct it to the appropriate department for a response. I am confident they will be in touch soon,
Jen Ahearn-Koch
City Commissioner
City of Sarasota

Leaking pipes

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch
When my son, Andrew Pecorella, came in for his CWD board reappointment interviews, you mentioned that I could contact you. Well ... hello!
I’m writing because during the summer I noticed that water was dripping from the pressure relief valves at the driveway side of the property at 1605 Main St., the Wells Fargo Advisors bldg at the corner of Main and Adelia. Orangetheory Fitness, Mlle Paris and Synovus are also in that building.
I’ve sent two notifications to Click-2-Fix over several months, but the situation has not changed.
I’m guessing it’s not a City repair problem, so I thought you might know how to get the Landlord to fix it. Soooo much water is being wasted every minute of every day.
I’ve included 3 attachments, one photo of the pipes, and two videos of the leaking sections. I hope you can open them.
Cheryl Foa Pecorella
Sarasota

Developer Parking Obligations

To: Sarasota City Manager David Bullock
Dave, I’m hearing quite a bit of support for requiring developers to allocate a portion of a building’s parking to visitors.
Debbie Trice
Mayor
City of Sarasota

Developer Parking Obligations

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice
Hope all is well, Happy Holidays, and Merry Christmas! On the city’s public access email webpage, I came across your December 23rd email to Dave Bullock regarding the need for more guest parking in the Rosemary District. I’m a frequent visitor to the Rosemary District (because my mom lives there), and I know exactly what you mean and agree with you entirely. I often have to park blocks away.
On St. Armands, we know that one developer has submitted plans to add “residential units” to an existing building. We believe these will be short-term Airbnb rentals; hotel rooms in all but name.
And, we believe this developer will be asking the City Commission to eliminate or reduce the number of parking spaces that the city currently requires for St. Armands Circle employees, service workers, delivery vehicles, and, in the case of “residential units”, for residents and guests.
The developer may claim that there is excess parking in the St. Armands parking garage that they would like to use instead. Just so they can add as many short-term Airbnb rentals as possible. Just so they can make more money. Not fulfilling any community need.
Once this is granted for one project, it becomes available to any project. The logical result, over time, is bigger buildings, more intense use, less parking for employees and customers, and probably worse traffic.
I ask you to consider that developers in the city, whether in Rosemary, St. Armands, or anywhere else, should be required to provide more guest + service worker parking, not less.
Chris Goglia
President
St. Armands Residents Association

Parking Formula for Developers of Multi-family buildings needs refinement

To: Sarasota City Manager David Bullock
Thanks. Will do.
Debbie Trice
Mayor
City of Sarasota

Parking Formula for Developers of Multi-family buildings needs refinement

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice
Will do. This is code. By copy I am asking Planning and dev services to take a look and prepare a discussion item. It would be best if you brought this up at an upcoming meeting

directing the manager to bring back an analysis of parking requirements and an assessment of the impacts of our code on parking demands left to the city.
David Bullock
Interim City Manager
City of Sarasota

Parking Formula for Developers of Multi-family buildings needs refinement

To: Sarsota City Manager David Bullock
One of the reasons the number of parking spaces is inadequate Downtown and in Rosemary District is that developers of multi-family dwellings don’t provide adequate parking for residents’ guests and service workers. Many of the structures are like CitySide, where I live: there’s more than enough parking for residents behind restricted-access gates, but all but a handful of visitors must avail themselves of street parking.
The requirement for the developers to provide parking is likely designed to shield the City from the expense of meeting the parking needs of a private development. But, under the current scheme, the City still has the burden of providing parking for guests and service workers. This also places a burden on local businesses whose patrons have to compete for limited public parking. (We see greater pressure during the holiday season when residents are entertaining friends in their homes and restaurants are serving holiday meals.)
I propose that the formula be adjusted so that a percentage of the total number of spaces must be accessible to the residents’ guests. Perhaps you could direct Planning to look into this. If this needs to be an Agenda Item, please consider this a request.
Debbie Trice
Mayor
City of Sarasota

FL Public Records Law prohibits alteration

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice
I’d like to meet up with you on this topic, next week if possible? Thank you Mayor and hope you have a great holiday in the meantime!
Joe Polzak
City Attorney
City of Sarasota

FL Public Records Law prohibits alteration

To: Sarasota City Clerk Shayla Griggs
I participated in today’s FLC Quarterly Ethics webinar. Halfway through it, Randy Mora gave a hypothetical example of someone using AI to create a transcript of a meeting – thereby creating a public record. The person reviewed the AI-generated transcript and decided that it didn’t accurately reflect what the meeting participants meant, so the person altered the transcript. According to Randy, this alteration of a public record was illegal under Florida Statutes. So, it sounds to me like public records may not be corrected. (New and additional public records created, as needed?)
Debbie Trice
Mayor
City of Sarasota

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BreakPoints

The Court of Two Kings: Why the Alcaraz-Ferrero Split Was Inevitable

By removing Ferrero, the Alcaraz camp has removed the one voice in the room willing to say “no.” The danger now is that Alcaraz surrounds himself with a team that serves the family hierarchy rather than the brutal necessities of the tour.

**Special to Longboat Key News
news@lbknews.com**

The silence in Carlos Alcaraz’s player box this January will be deafening. For seven years, the piercing gaze of Juan Carlos Ferrero was as much a part of the Alcaraz phenomenon as the thunderous forehands and the audacious drop shots. But as the 22-year-old superstar heads into the 2026 season, that seat will be occupied by a new face, and the tennis world is left grappling with a divorce that feels less like a professional parting and more like a family fracture.

While official statements have been polite—citing contract disagreements and a need for “new adventures”—insiders whisper a different, older story. The sudden split between the six-time Grand Slam champion and his mentor appears to be the classic, tragic collision of two powerful forces: the biological father and the professional father figure. In the high-stakes ecosystem of elite tennis, there is rarely room for two patriarchs.

The Conflict of “Two Dads”

To understand why this partnership dissolved, one must look beyond the baseline. Juan Carlos Ferrero was never just a coach. He was a molder of men. He took a raw, chaotic talent from Murcia and refined him into a world-beater, often employing a “tough love” approach that mirrored parenting. Ferrero was the one who imposed curfews, confiscated phones to ensure focus, and demanded a level of discipline that young prodigies often resent but desperately need.

This dynamic creates a potent, unspoken rivalry with the biological family. For years, rumors have circulated about tension between Ferrero and Carlos Alcaraz Sr. The elder Alcaraz, himself a former player with unfulfilled professional dreams, has been an omnipresent force in his son’s life. As Carlos Jr.’s fame and fortune ballooned into the stratosphere, the boundaries of control began to blur.

Sources indicate that the final straw wasn’t money, but authority. Reports of a “big fight” and a contractual ultimatum delivered to Ferrero suggest a power struggle where the Alcaraz family sought to reclaim the reins. It is a tale as old as the sport itself: the coach builds the machine, but the family owns the keys. When a coach assumes the role of a “third parent”—disciplining the player, managing their schedule, and shielding them from “yes men”—they inevitably clash with the actual parents, who may view this protection as exclusion.

The Weight of the Coaching Bond

In tennis, the player-coach relationship is arguably the most intimate in sports. Unlike team sports where a coach manages a roster, a tennis coach is a travel companion, a psychologist, a tactician, and a confidant, 24 hours a day, 10 months a year. Ferrero’s value was his ability to be the “bad cop”—the voice of



reason who could tell the World No. 1 that he wasn’t working hard enough.

This is where the “father figure” role is distinct, and dangerous. A biological father provides unconditional love; a professional father figure provides conditional approval based on performance and discipline. Alcaraz thrived on Ferrero’s approval. We have all seen Carlitos look to his box in moments of panic, seeking not just tactical advice, but emotional stabilization from Ferrero.

By removing Ferrero, the Alcaraz camp has removed the one voice in the room willing to say “no.” The danger now is that Alcaraz surrounds himself with a team that serves the family hierarchy rather than the brutal necessities of the tour. History is littered with careers derailed when the “family business” took precedence over professional detachment.

The Shadow Over 2026

As Alcaraz prepares to defend his ranking in 2026, the absence of Ferrero presents a terrifying variable. The technical adjustments—such as the new service motion currently being supervised by replacement coach Samuel López—are


minor compared to the psychological void.

The challenges for Alcaraz in 2026 will be internal. When the fifth set deepens at the Australian Open and the legs get heavy, who will anchor him? Ferrero’s stoicism was Alcaraz’s mirror; without it, will the young Spaniard’s fiery temperament burn too hot? Critics like Todd Woodbridge have already predicted a potential “Grand Slam-less” year, fearing that Alcaraz will feel “unsure of himself” without his longtime compass.

Furthermore, the timing is perilous. Rivals like Jannik Sinner are surging, sensing blood in the water. Sinner’s team is a model of clinical, corporate efficiency, contrasting sharply with the emotional upheaval currently rocking Team Alcaraz.

Carlos Alcaraz is now a grown man, as former World No. 1 Yevgeny Kafelnikov recently noted. He is free to make his own choices. But in siding with his bloodline over his sideline mentor, he has taken the biggest gamble of his career. He has regained his autonomy, but he may have lost his armor. The 2026 season will reveal whether the King of Clay can rule without the man who built his crown.

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