

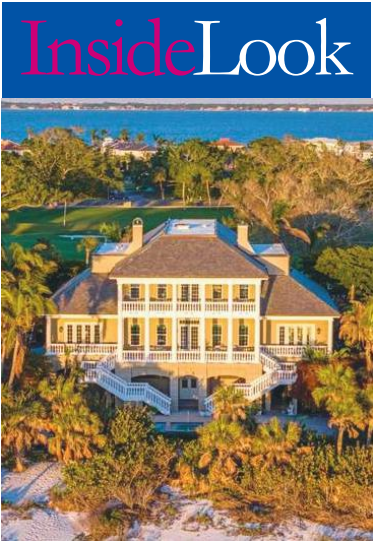


Longboat Key News

May 16, 2025

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InsideLook
Longboat Key tops \$10 million ...page 11



Enjoy a taste of Sarasota ...page 15



How many are really visiting? ...page 12



Car wins in LBK gate altercation ...page 10

Sarasota votes 4-1 to halt 327-Foot Obsidian Condo

Ever-growing opposition and controversy loomed over the Sarasota City Commission as it debated whether the planned Obsidian condominium project is compatible with neighboring development as well as city code.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com
In the end, opponents won when the Sarasota City Commission voted 4-1 last Tuesday to uphold an appeal against the 327 – foot, 18 story residential tower proposed for 1260 N. Palm Avenue.

It took approximately about five hours of debate before the vote that supported what Bay Plaza Owners Association has long asserted — the structure as designed was not suitable in the chosen location.
The vote overturns a vote last February by the Sarasota Planning Board wherein they decided the city’s Development Services staff correctly applied the city standards in approving the project.
Mayor Liz Alpert was the only city commissioner to support the

See Obsidian, page 2



Longboat Key tells County ‘Library a go’

Tipton told Longboat Key News Friday that it had pledges totaling \$2.8 million toward the necessary goal of \$3.5 million for the Longboat enhancements.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com
Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton embedded a memo to Sarasota County Administrator Jonathan Lewis with some major news: The Town has raised enough money to build the desired enhancements to the future Longboat Library project.
Tipton said, “The town has fulfilled its commitment to provide funding for the additional community spaces that are requested as part of the Longboat Key Library build, and respectfully request that the County Commission approve the project and begin final design as well as associated land-use processes.”
Tipton told Longboat Key News on Friday that it had pledges totaling \$2.8 million toward the necessary goal of \$3.5 million for the

See Library, page 2

Lido mom launches candidacy for School Board

Lido Key resident Heidi Brandt, a Southside Elementary mom and education advocate, has announced her candidacy for the Sarasota County School Board District 1 seat, currently held by Bridget Ziegler.
Ziegler was appointed to the Sarasota County School Board by former Florida Gov. Rick Scott in June 2014. Later that year, she was elected to the SCS board and was re-elected to the board in 2018 and 2022.
Ziegler, who became embroiled in a sex scandal last year, is not expected to run for re-election, according to Brandt’s campaign.
Brandt is the mother of an eight-year-old daughter and the vice president of the Southside



Elementary School PTO. Southside has been an “A”-rated school for 21 consecutive years.
“I take great pride in sending my daughter to public school in Sarasota County,” said Brandt. “It is imperative that we continue to empower parents, invest in high-quality teach-

ers and enhance workforce training so students can thrive inside the classroom and beyond.”
Brandt listed another reason prompting her to run: a recent spike in lockdowns of school campuses. With 8-year-old daughter Mia attending school, that has Brandt concerned as a parent.
“Just last month, three public schools in South Sarasota County locked down due to threats received,” she said. “We are fortunate to have a Sheriff’s Department that is so well-trained and prepared, but we can always do more to ensure the safety and security of our students, teachers and staff.”
The election is scheduled for next August and a potential runoff would be in November.

Rabbi Jessica Spitalnic Mates Named Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel on Longboat Key



Temple Beth Israel of Longboat Key announced that Rabbi Jessica Spitalnic Mates will become its next Rabbi, effective June 01, 2025.
A highly experienced and compassionate leader, Rabbi Mates brings a wealth of knowledge, a deep commitment to Jewish life, and a passion for Holocaust education to the congregation said the Temple.
With a distinguished career in Jewish leadership, Rabbi Mates has been recognized for her ability to connect with people of all backgrounds, foster spiritual growth,

See Rabbi, page 13

Former Longboat Key Mayor Joan Webster passes

Joan Marie (Derezinski) Webster, PhD. Passed away on May 8, 2025, in Sarasota, Florida. Joan passed from natural causes and was surrounded by her family on the day she passed.
Joan was born to Chester and Lillian (Kloska) Derezinski in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on January 29, 1936. She was educated in the Catholic schools and graduated in 1953 from Catholic Central High School. She attended Aquinas College and earned her bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Michigan State University where she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority. It was at Michigan State University that Joan met her future husband, Richard, (Dick) Webster. They were married for 67 years.
Joan’s career was in education, and she held many positions in the field including elementary teacher and principal at several elementary schools and leadership positions in Head Start and Follow Through programs. She

See Webster, page 13



Library, from page 1

Longboat enhancements. But, Tipton said the Town will guarantee the pledges, which can be paid over time, as well as the remainder of the shortfall which is about \$700,000.

Tipton said he is confident that he and the fundraising team will reach the full amount by June 4, which is when the county will formally discuss and likely vote on the project.

It was five years ago when Sarasota County was told by the Longboat Key Town Commission that it desired permanent public library services on the island.

Over the next three years, the Longboat and Sarasota commissions developed principles of an agreement that includes a county built and run library on Town-owned land, part of the Town Center Green Park, which is a 4.81 acre parcel that the Town has spent \$5.6 million purchasing and developing.

Sarasota County has budgeted about \$11.5 million for the main library, and Longboat is responsible for \$3.5 million to build out what the Commission has called community-desired improvements and gathering spaces.

Tipton says the main Longboat Key amenity is the community hall space, which will consist of both an inside meeting space as well as an outside terrace to tie the library into the Town Center Green.

In his memo to the County, Tipton said the environment for fundraising in the fall of 2024 was extremely difficult due to Hurricanes Helene and Milton, which caused more than \$225 million in damage to the Longboat Key community.

“Essentially four months of fundraising time were lost as the Town and our residents were rightly focused on storm recovery. That was followed by a drop in stock markets and an economic uncertainty that further limited what people would consider as a donation. Lastly, with reductions in federal and state spending, many of the island’s philanthropist are being inundated by organizations with requests to make up funding shortfalls,” said Tipton.

And while the town has not raised the full \$3.5 million needed, Tipton said it is imperative that the county move forward in order to design the project and get true bids. Tipton said the county should vote on the issue on June 4.

Tipton is asking the county to not only move forward with the enhanced library, but also loosen its requirements for the naming rights.

According to Tipton, the Town has one donor who has pledged \$1 million, one donor who has pledged \$500,000, one who has pledged \$350,000, two who have pledged \$250,000, four who have pledged \$100,000 and two have pledged \$50,000.

Tipton said that given the economic reality and the challenges of fundraising, he wants the county to relax it’s requirement that 25% of the total cost of the project be donated in order to earn the naming rights. That means someone would have to give a \$3.5 million gift to have their name on the entire library, which will cost about \$14 million.

Tipton said that the person offering the \$1 million pledge for the additional Longboat add-ons is asking for the naming of the entire library. It would take an approval by the Sarasota County Commission to make that exception happen.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Tipton’s memo is that the Town is guaranteeing the pledges, which he says the County will require in order to view the project as fully-funded.

If the county approves the plan with the additions on June 4 as well as the exception to the naming rights policy, the library could break ground as soon as June 1, 2026.

Obsidian, from page 1

project. She said, “I don’t see where it doesn’t fall within all of the requirements of Downtown, our City Plan. However, it’s very obvious that we have four people here who don’t believe that.”

City commissioners ultimately concluded the project was incompatible with key provisions of Sarasota’s comprehensive plan and zoning code, including sections that govern development compatibility, building scale and design.

Vice-Mayor Debbie Trice and commissioners Jen Ahearn-Koch, Kyle Battie and Kathie Kelley Olrich supported the appeal, filed by the Bay Plaza Owners’ Association. Mayor Liz Alpert cast the lone dissenting vote, maintaining that the project met legal standards and should have been allowed to proceed.

The decision overturns approvals previously granted by city staff and the planning board and halts the project, at least temporarily

The project, submitted by developer MK Equity Corporation, called for 14 residential units atop two floors of amenities and two bottom levels of commercial space.

It remains to be seen whether the applicant changes the project or challenges the decision legally.



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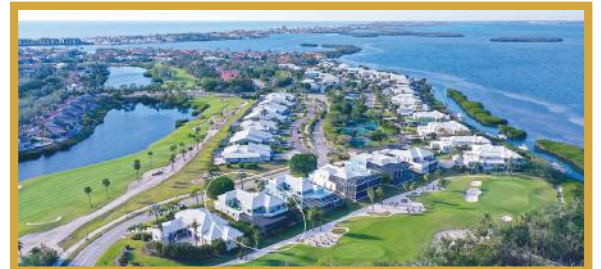
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Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



131 GARFIELD DRIVE #4D | LIDO BEACH
\$775,000
2 Beds 2 Baths 1,161 Sq. Ft.
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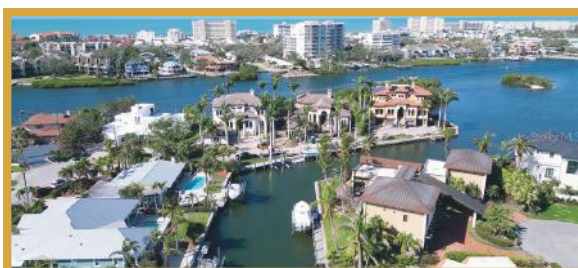
129 TAFT DRIVE #W102 | SARASOTA
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EditorLetters



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.

Thank You for Meeting with Us

To: Shawn Leven and Eric Drummond
I appreciate the time you took to meet with me, and the other commissioners, to discuss possible ways pickleball play might be expanded on the island. Your knowledge of the sport and enthusiasm for its future is inspiring.
Penny Gold
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Thank You for Meeting with Us

To: Longboat Key Commission
On behalf of Eric and myself, thank you for taking the time to meet with us to discuss the future of pickleball on Longboat Key.
We truly appreciated the opportunity to hear your thoughts and to share ideas about how to meet the growing demand for this sport. It was encouraging to explore ways the tennis and pickleball communities might work together to support each other and make the best use of shared resources.
We are especially grateful for your willingness to broaden the conversation and consider new possibilities for identifying land that could accommodate additional pickleball courts. As we mentioned during our meeting, we believe that imaginative thinking leads to creative solutions—and we appreciate your openness to thinking outside the box with us.
Thank you again for your time, insight, and support as we work together to enhance healthy social and recreational opportunities on Longboat Key.
Eric Drummond and Shawn Leven
Longboat Key

Developer offer to buy Spanish Main

To: Tom Freiwald
Interesting (to say the least). Thank you for keeping us posted, Tom.
Sarah Karon
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Developer offer to buy Spanish Main

To: Longboat Key Commission
Just for your general information, the developer of the Sage Condo on LBK (PMG) has made approximately 212 individual offers to the 212 owners of Spanish Main, through Coldwell Banker. It's unclear if every SMYC owner received an offer due to lack of correct email information. PMG is asking the Town for a change in height zoning of SMYC, which of course they have every right to do.
Tom Freiwald
Longboat Key

Commission Mail

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
I've asked Charlie to review and advise.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager, Town of Longboat Key

Commission Mail

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Is this worth pursuing.
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Secure Federal Funding for Florida’s Beaches - the American Coastal Coalition

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission
Last month, you should have received an invitation from Cordy Crane with the City of Venice for a luncheon to learn about the American Coastal Coalition (ACC). While that event was postponed, we look forward to rescheduling later this summer.
In the meantime, I want to share why joining the ACC matters for your community.
The ACC is a national coalition that brings federal funding and resources to coastal communities such as funding for beach nourishment, dredging, seawalls, dunes, marshes, and more. Our mission is to help cities like yours respond to sea level rise, hurricanes, and flooding while supporting tourism and coastal economies.
With over 40 years of experience and \$1.5 billion already secured for local governments, ACC is the leading voice for coastal communities in Washington, DC. Our members benefit from our expertise in working with the Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies on coastal projects like beach nourishment. We also equip members with expert guidance on congressional earmarks, grants, and infrastructure programs to help you stay competitive and prepared.
Putting sand on your beaches and protecting your coast with resilient infrastructure is critical in your communities, which is why I encourage you to join the American Coastal Coalition today.
If you're interested in learning more or joining, just reply to this email. I have also attached our 2025 brochure. We look forward to connecting with you soon.
Dan Ginolfi
Executive Director
American Coastal Coalition

Permit has been issued

To: Christine Rothberg
We strive to work diligently in getting these situations resolved and appreciate your feedback. Again, thank you for taking the time to reach back to us letting us know of your positive feedback, it means a lot to us. If you have any questions or need additional information please let us know. Have a great day.
Patti Fige
Building Official
Town of Longboat Key

Permit has been issued

To: Longboat Key Commission
Thank you all for your efforts in securing the restoration permit for the Sea Horse Beach. With this step complete, we look forward to continuing our work with the Town of Longboat

See Letters, page 6

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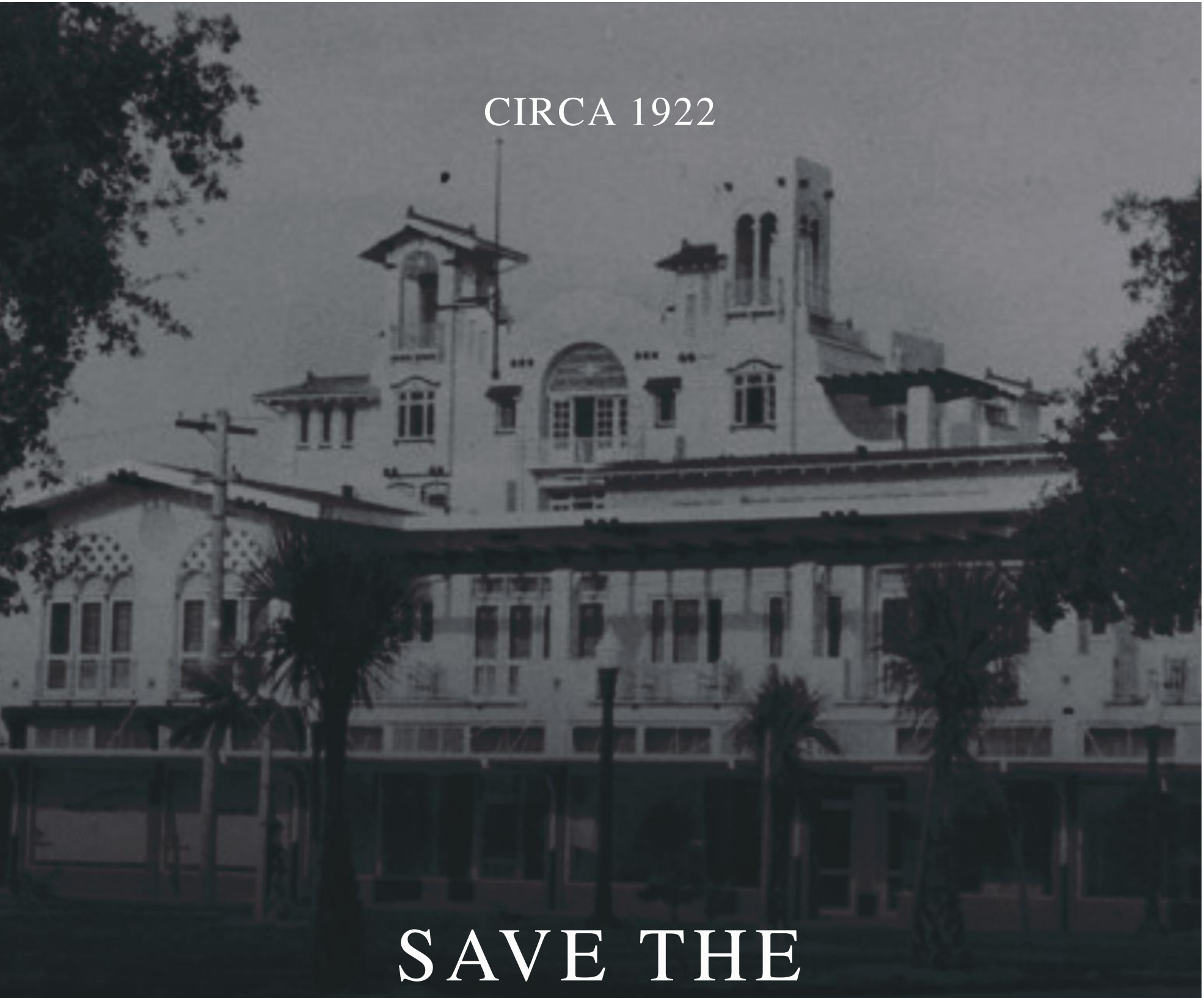
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Letters, from page 4

Key on additional restoration projects.
Christine Rothberg
Longboat Key

Thank You for Meeting with Us

To: Shawn Leven
Shawn and Eric, it was a pleasure to talk pickleball with you dedicated enthusiasts. I was

especially happy to hear about the lively, involved community that exists around this recreation. As always, we will keep you in mind for future opportunities.
Sarah Karon
Commissioner, Town of Longboat Key

Thank You for Meeting with Us

To: Longboat Key Commission
On behalf of Eric and myself, thank you for taking the time to meet with us to discuss the future of pickleball on Longboat Key.
We truly appreciated the opportunity to hear your thoughts and to share ideas about how to meet the growing demand for this sport. It was encouraging to explore ways the tennis and pickleball communities might work together to support each other and make the best use of shared resources.
We are especially grateful for your willingness to broaden the conversation and consider new possibilities for identifying land that could accommodate additional pickleball courts. As we mentioned during our meeting, we believe that imaginative thinking leads to creative solutions—and we appreciate your openness to thinking outside the box with us.
Thank you again for your time, insight, and support as we work together to enhance healthy social and recreational opportunities on Longboat Key.
Eric Drummond and Shawn Leven
Longboat Key

Developer offer to buy Spanish Main

To: Fiona McFarland
Longboat Key has an exciting project that will complete our vision for Longboat Key's Town Center Green. In partnership with Sarasota County, we are building a 200-person community hall with outdoor spaces. This facility will host lifelong learning classes, cultural events and serve as a center for hurricane recovery. It will be part of the new Sarasota County Library, a private partnership with the Town and our philanthropic community.
For decades, our island has worked toward creating a community gathering space and a resilience center. We now have the opportunity to build it at a fraction of the cost of a standalone building, with operating and maintenance costs covered by Sarasota County. The County is contributing \$11 million to the library, and our challenge is to raise \$3.5 million for the community hall and its spaces. The community hall will be named in honor of Congressman Vern Buchanan and his wife. I am hoping you, like many of our other friends in the legal and legislative arenas will make a gift towards this hall honoring Vern, that will be the heart of culture and learning in Longboat Key.
I am attaching the Town Center Green Community Hall Packet as well as a pledge form. The exciting news is that with the support of our community and those that work for and have supported us we have raised \$2.7 million in pledges and aim, with your help, to meet our goal of \$3.5 million by the end of May. Thank you so much for considering this important project to our community.
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

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See Letters, page 8

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Letters, from page 6

Broadway Street Roundabout Project

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
Thank you Commissioner, by copy, I have asked Charlie and Jenn to develop a response.
Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Broadway Street Roundabout Project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
There are many inaccurate statements in this email but I do not have the resources to respond. Is it appropriate to ask staff to provide correct info?
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Broadway St Roundabout Project

To: Longboat Key Commission

I am a Longboat Key resident who has significant concerns about the proposed roundabout project at Broadway St. in the north end. Many residents, like myself, thought that this project had been cancelled, but recently learned that it is apparently back for consideration. This project does not solve any problems, does not provide any true enhancements and will cause significant new issues for many residents if it is completed. I have reviewed renderings on-line and have many concerns. I am an avid walker and cyclist and am very familiar with the flow of this intersection.

Pedestrian safety

There is minimal pedestrian activity at the intersection of Broadway St. and Gulf of Mexico Drive (GMD). Pedestrians that want to cross GMD can currently do so safely at the current striped safety light crossings. This currently works well and does not need any improvement. Additional striping can be placed at any of the four corners to provide for additional crosswalks.

Bicycle Safety

In the renderings, the bicycle lanes terminate before the circle and will force the cyclists to move into traffic in order to ride through or around the circle. This will create unsafe conditions for cyclists. The bike lane does not resume on the north side of the circle, leaving the cyclist to continue to ride with vehicles until the shoulder can again accommodate a cyclist for the approach to riding over the Longboat Key Pass Bridge.

Vehicle Passage and Traffic

In the rendering, it shows that in the northbound lane, the right turn lane will be eliminated and the left hand turn lane will be eliminated. This will cause significant problems for the local residents.

I am sure that you are aware of the traffic issues on GMD during peak times in season. Northbound traffic is frequently backed up starting at the Bridge Street Roundabout, past Coquina Beach, across the bridge and on to Longboat Key. It is very common to have a backup of standstill traffic for three to five miles every day. This is a cause of much stress for us who live in the local area, where we have to manage our schedule and lifestyle to try to avoid the chronic traffic problems.

Currently, when the northbound traffic is backed up from the bridge and south past Broadway St., we can get some relief in being able to use the right hand turning lane to make a right onto Broadway St, or making a right on to Cedar St and continuing to Palm Drive to Broadway St. Residents making a left onto Broadway St are able to use the left turning lane. Under this proposal, both turning lanes will be eliminated, forcing all traffic to move into the roundabout. Residents turning to the right will have to stay on GMD and move into the circle in order to make the right turn. Residents making a left will have to stay on GMD and travel

completely around the circle in order to make the left on Broadway St.

Obviously the traffic will just back up into the roundabout and increase the traffic on the northbound lanes. Local residents would have no other option but to sit in the standstill and travel into the roundabout. Our options to make a right or a left will have been eliminated. This will worsen the traffic and the experience for local residents with no benefit. The current 3-5 mile backup from Bridge St will likely grow to 5-7 miles.

Water Runoff and Drainage

Water drainage is a serious issue for us on the north end, especially west of GMD. Currently, the water plan is effective. We fear that the construction of the roundabout and the additional area that is required will disrupt the current effective drainage and will lead to water flooding the streets and backing up the retention ponds. I understand that there is a drainage plan that is part of the roundabout construction, but there is a risk that it will not be as effective.

Overall:

Pedestrian Safety - minimal activity: No improvement

Bicycle Safety: Conditions will become less safe

Vehicle Traffic: No improvement, conditions will become much worse

Water Drainage: Risk to disrupting the current effective drainage

This is a very expensive project that will not solve any problems and will create additional issues. I don't know what led to the desire to build this roundabout, but there are better things to do with our taxpayer money.

Larry Nevins
Longboat Key

Broadway Roundabout Project

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
All, Jenn and I worked on pulling this response together.
Charles Mopps
Public Works Director, Town of Longboat Key Public Works

Broadway Roundabout Project

To: Larry Nevins

Sir, thank you for reaching out to us with your comments about the Broadway St. Roundabout (RAB) Project. The Project team has reviewed them and offer the following:

Pedestrian Safety:

At the existing standard intersection, pedestrians must cross traffic coming from multiple directions, increasing their exposure to oncoming traffic. At this particular location there is a sight distance limitation that prevents pedestrians from seeing oncoming traffic until they are well into the travel lanes. The only area that a pedestrian can find refuge is in the center turn lane, which is not an ideal situation. The RAB provides a raised splitter island separating traffic entering and exiting a given leg of the roundabout. This enables pedestrians to cross only one direction of traffic at a time, by stopping on the splitter island if necessary. Additionally the raised splitter islands promote traffic calming by slowing speeds and the proposed designed posted speed would of 25MPH, which would enhance public safety.

Bicycle Safety:

On the approach to the roundabout, bicyclists on the road have 2 options, and can choose what they feel more comfortable with.

Cyclists can either stay on the pavement and use the roundabout OR use the bicycle ramp to use the trail and cross as pedestrians would. Typically, serious cyclists prefer to stay on the road, but for an added safety factor, all cyclists have the choice to use the trail and crosswalks. I circled an example of the bicycle ramp from our graphic below. The existing condition has bicyclists traveling north having to occupy space between the travel lane and the right turn lane, creating potential conflicts.

Some key points for the RAB and for Vehicle Passage and Traffic:

This design offers the important advantage of eliminating head-on and right-angle crashes.

With respect to the roadway drainage, the elevation profile of the road will be raised by as much as two feet in some areas. The drainage improvements are designed to not negatively impact surrounding properties.

This project supports elements of the Complete Streets Concept that has been a top Initiative of the Town Commission.

The Florida Department of Transportation has approved the funding of the Construction of the RAB project and has advanced the funding to FY 2026, as it was originally scheduled for Fiscal Year 2030.

FDOT also has a helpful site listing safety benefits of roundabouts: <https://www.fdot.gov/agencyresources/roundabouts/benefits.shtm>

We hope that this response will help address your comments and if you need additional assistance feel free to reach out to the Town Engineer, Jennifer Fehrs at (941) 316-1988.

Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key Public Works

See Letters, page 12

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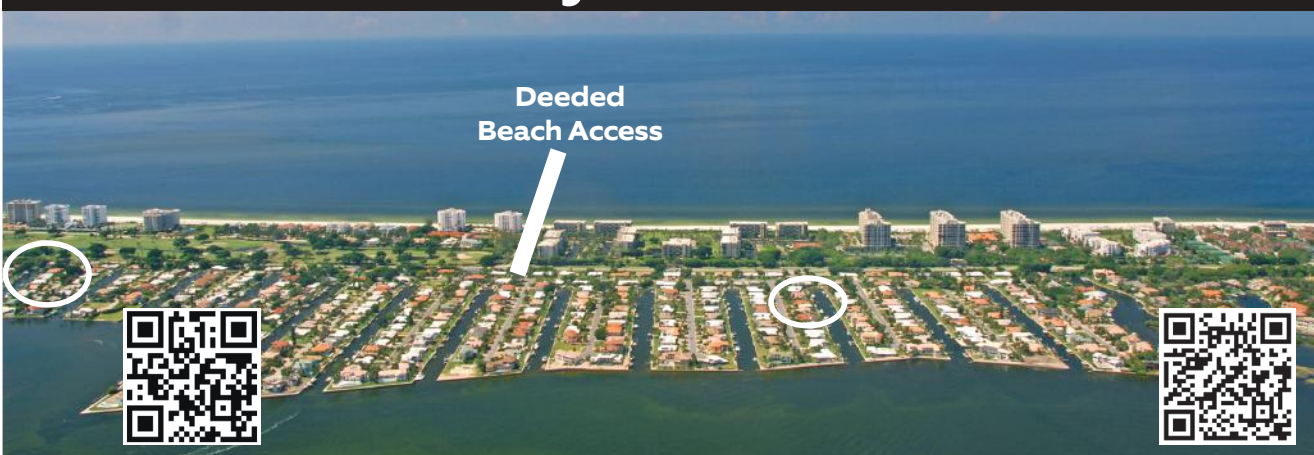
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OnPatrol

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

May 9 Property

10:19 a.m.
Officer Van Dyke was dispatched to Bayside Drive in reference to property damage. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke spoke with the contractor who advised that he drove over a large metal grate in an effort to avoid driving on a nearby resident's grass. Unfortunately, the back-end/rear tire of the red forklift fell into a large storm drain due to a rusty grate collapsing into the hold upon bearing the weight of the forklift. Officer Van Dyke then spoke with the caller who said he was simply concerned with getting his materials dropped off on his property. The caller is an employee of a landscape supply located in Bradenton. Although the truck wasn't involved it was insured by an insurance company, and Longboat Public Works was notified of the incident, in order to repair the grate. Case clear.



Property

9:13 p.m.
Officer Ericsson responded to Bay Isles Parkway on a call about property damage. Upon arrival, Officer Ericsson contacted the security guard. The security guard stated that on May 10, a dark colored vehicle struck the electronic gate arm, knocking it to the ground at the north gate. The security guard said the vehicle was traveling west toward Bay Isles and struck the gate and continued driving. The security guard stated there is video but the video is blurry and the vehicle make, model, color or license plate could not be determined.

Assist agency

12:41 p.m.
Officer Barrett and Officer Mathis were dispatched to the north beach of Lido Key to assist the City of Sarasota with a vessel operating recklessly near the beach with swimmers in the water. Upon arrival, officers located the man operating the vessel. The man was attempting to retrieve his friend who intentionally entered the water from the boat but could not get her back into the boat due to the swift current. Officer Mathis was able to approach the woman and assist her into the police boat. She was then transported to a nearby dock where she was reunited with her friend. Case clear.

Boat

1:45 p.m.
Officer Barrett responded to a suspicious boat call off the beach at the 3000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Officer Barret responded and located the vessel anchored unoccupied with a bow and stern anchor, approximately 300 yards off the beach. The cabin and cockpit area of the vessel is covered with a white canvass cover. The registered owner of the Bessel was identified and attempts were made to contact him by phone with negative results. Due to the registration being expired, a uniform boating citation was prepared and sent to the boat owner via certified mail. Case clear.

Argument

6:15 p.m.
Officer Troyer responded to Longboat Drive South on the report of a disturbance. Officer Troyer met with the complainant that stated he confronted the neighbor whom was cutting the neighbor's grass about working after 5 p.m. The complainant said his neighbor and he began verbally arguing back and forth because the neighbor did not like the way the complainant approached him, and the neighbor was just trying to finish work. The complainant said prior to the officer's arrival, he and the neighbor made up and settled the argument civilly. Officer Troyer spoke with the neighbor whom reported a similar story. The complainant and neighbor both shook hands and agreed there was no hard feelings between both. Case clear.

May 10 Noise

9:00 p.m.
Officer Troyer was dispatched to a restaurant on Broadway on a report of loud music. The complainant called police and reported loud music coming from the restaurant. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer observed the loud music which the complainant reported. The restaurant appeared to be having a music event. Officer Troyer spoke with management and provided them with the complainant. The restaurant management agreed to turn the music down and address the issue. Officer Troyer also provided them with information pertaining to the noise ordinance of Longboat Key. Case clear.

May 12 Alarm

7:22 a.m.
Officer Maple responded to an alarm call at the 400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Officer Maple arrived and canvassed the area and found no signs of criminal activity or forced entry at the scene. Officer Maple contacted the manager of the restaurant. The manager stated workers had inadvertently activated the alarm when they arrived for their morning shift. Officer Maple cleared the scene after confirming no criminal activity had occurred at the location. Case clear.

Incident

3:33 p.m.
Officer Tillman responded to Sands Pointe for a report of a suspicious incident. Longboat Key Fire Department arrived along with the Police Department. A package was mailed from U.S. Postal Service and according to the postal package was labeled to Springfield, Missouri and mailed it to Longboat Key. The complainant said they did not know the person or the area where the package was sent from. Inside the package appeared to have been rotten fruit. The address in question is listed as upward promotions plus a graphic design company. Case clear.

May 14 Marine rescue

2:44 p.m.
Officer Mathis was dispatched to the 1100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a marine rescue. A 911 caller advised the call taker that a small vessel was on fire about two miles out from shore. Officer Mathis responded to the patrol vessel and upon approval from Sgt. Montfort, launched from the whaler lift and responded to the general area. Upon exiting New Pass all emergency response was canceled by Longboat Key Fire Department. No Police assistance was needed as contact was made with the occupants of the vessel and everything was okay.

Drugs

8:16 p.m.
Officer Butler while on patrol, received a target alert service license plate reader hit of a northbound vehicle from the sound end of Gulf of Mexico Drive with the registered owner having a suspended/revoked/cancelled driver's license. Officer Butler found the vehicle and conducted a traffic stop. Officer Butler performed an NCIC/FCIC query confirming that the registered owner of the vehicle had a suspended license. Upon approaching the vehicle, Officer Butler smelled marijuana emanating from the vehicle. The driver rolled down her passenger window and the officer smelled a waft of marijuana (unburned). Officer Butler explained the reason for the traffic stop as she was not the registered owner. Based on the other factors, Officer Butler requested the operator's driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. The driver produced a valid Florida Driver's license and was identified. She provided a valid insurance and registration as well. Officer Butler inquired about the marijuana and she gave Officer Butler the bag of a green leafy substance and added that it was in fact marijuana. Officer Butler asked if she had a medical marijuana card and she said no. Upon her voluntarily giving Officer Butler the marijuana, he conducted a field test using a marijuana kit. Officer Butler and Officer Ericsson took the marijuana to the station house and cited the driver with marijuana possession of 20 grams or less, front head lamp out and a sound violation from the vehicle. The driver was released from the scene.

May 15 Citizen assist

9:28 a.m.
Officer Mathis was dispatched to St. Judes Drive North in reference to potential property damage. Upon arrival, Officer Mathis met with the complainant who advised a tractor trailer came down the street and could have possibly damaged property. The complainant advised that he didn't think such a big truck should be on St. Judes Drive North with such a limited space for him to operate. The complainant further advised that if these types of deliveries continue, it's only a matter of time before property damage occurs. The complainant was unable to get the delivery company name or a registration information from the tractor trailer. At the time of the report, no calls for service were received in regard to any property damage from this particular delivery. Case clear.

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4540 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#204	1,312	\$395,000	2	2	0	129	\$335,000
706 SPANISH DR S Unit#706	1,423	\$255,000	2	2	0	0	\$255,000



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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 8

March Tourism Numbers from Visit Sarasota County

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota County Commission

To get your week started off right – we’re sharing some good news with our March tourism numbers. While visitors are still tracking down slightly – we see an increase in visitor spending.

Here are the numbers comparing March 2025 to March 2024.

Visitors were 155,800 compared to 159,400 in 2024.

Visitor direct expenditures were \$234,521,100 compared to \$232,641,200 in 2024.

Lodging occupancy was 83.3% compared to 83.3% in 2024.

Lodging average room rate was \$386.00 compared to \$366.52 in 2024.

There were 373,000 room nights sold compared to 385,800 in 2024.

Erin Duggan
President/CEO, Visit Sarasota County

Pickleball

To: Longboat Key Commission

On behalf of Eric and myself, thank you for taking the

time to meet with us to discuss the future of pickleball on Longboat Key.

We truly appreciated the opportunity to hear your thoughts and to share ideas about how to meet the growing demand for this sport. It was encouraging to explore ways the tennis and pickleball communities might work together to support each other and make the best use of shared resources.

We are especially grateful for your willingness to broaden the conversation and consider new possibilities for identifying land that could accommodate additional pickleball courts. As we mentioned during our meeting, we believe that imaginative thinking leads to creative solutions—and we appreciate your openness to thinking outside the box with us.

Thank you again for your time, insight, and support as we work together to enhance healthy social and recreational opportunities on Longboat Key.

Eric Drummond and Shawn Leven
Longboat Key

Dangerous storm debris on the beach

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop

Yes, Code will be contacting the property to discuss the debris concerns. Sorry if I wasn’t clear on the prior email.

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Dangerous storm debris on the beach

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Can you advise the right group?

BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Dangerous storm debris on the beach

To: Longboat Key Commission

Because the structure is contained within the private section of the beach (it is all landward of the ECL), this would be a private matter for the debris removal. Code enforcement is the appropriate function to address it.

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Dangerous storm debris on the beach

To: Longboat Key Commission

It is now May, and there is an open and obvious danger on the beach in front of L’Ambiance. It is the dune walkover and now, at certain times of day, the walkover debris is either exposed or partially underwater. Once it led to the beach, but the remnants now lead down to the water and sometimes, under the water. The photos that were taken on different days show exposed giant rusty metal pins or nails and broken wood. Located next to the Longboat Key Club, the wreckage is a tragedy waiting to happen. Someone can walk into the debris if it is hidden under water, and suffer a horrible injury; or a child can be running and trip and fall onto the rusty pins and the rotting wood pieces. L’Ambiance should have removed this dangerous obstacle months ago. It is an accident waiting to happen, and I hope my grandkids are not the victims. Hopefully you will require L’Ambiance to remove all of the pieces of their collapsed dune walkover.

Thank you for your quick action,

Audrey Bear
Longboat Key

Mote Marine

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

Thank you Commissioner for the contact and yes, if you can forward his information to us we’ll work to get him on an agenda this Fall.

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Mote Marine

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Yesterday at the Sarasota County Tourist Development Council meeting we received a presentation from Kevin

See Letters, page 13

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 12

Cooper who is the VP in charge of communications at Moat Marine Laboratories. While his explanation of what Moat plans to do with the city island property was not concrete, there was still a lot of information there I feel that our board could use and may find helpful. He's very receptive to coming out and talking with us whenever is good for our schedule. If you feel it useful and need his contact information, I have it. Thank you. Have a great weekend.

Gary Coffin
Vice Mayor, Town of Longboat Key

Broadway Roundabout project

To: Longboat Key Town Commission

I hope that this email finds you all well. I am contacting you all to register my disagreement to the proposed Broadway Roundabout project on Longboat Key.

My house is located at Firehouse Road, just a bit northwest of the intersection in question, Broadway and Gulf of Mexico Drive. My property is part of the Conrad Beach Homeowners Association.

The first thought that comes to mind is whether this project is really necessary from a safety standpoint. When we first got word of the project, some members of our Homeowner's Association spent their time monitoring activity at the intersection and collecting data. Long story short, they observed nothing that was perilous or atypical of any intersection on the island. On that note, it would be beneficial for all, before moving forward, if more light can be shed on exactly what the safety issues are/have been at the intersection vis-à-vis the size and

scope of this project.

From a practical standpoint, we are also concerned about the potential loss and destruction of the expanse of vegetation on the west side of GMD just north of the intersection. This vegetation provides both a visual and noise barrier to the activity on GMD for many of the houses in our HOA, in addition to our community pool area. Not only do we feel that this is necessary, but that it will be very disruptive and unpleasant.

From a timing standpoint, it is not clear as to when the proposed work would start. Most important is when during the year would it start and how long would it take to complete? Certainly it would not be wise to undertake such a project in a time frame that would impact the busy season. Please clarify.

Finally, there is the issue of cost. Is this really something that the various state and local agencies should be spending in excess of \$6 million on? I'm no expert on the costs of construction, but that does seem excessive, and a questionable use of taxpayer money.

We assume that the primary purpose of the roundabout is to minimize the speed at which vehicles enter and exit the island on GMD. With that in mind (and not the beautification of an intersection), perhaps there is a way to accomplish the goals of this project in a simpler, less disruptive, and more economic way. Please note that I have sent a similar email to Joel Hobbs at the Florida DOT. I can be reached at the number below should you have any questions.

Ted Bookstaver
Longboat Key

Webster, from page 1

She also taught education classes at Aquinas College, Michigan State University, and Western Michigan University. She was Director of Continuing Education at Grand Rapids Community College. She was a dedicated educator and mentored many future teachers and students.

After retirement from education, Joan and Dick moved to Longboat Key, Florida where Joan was a respected politician and served as mayor of Longboat Key for two terms. She and Dick spent summers at their home on Lake Charlevoix, enjoying boating especially exploring the Great Lakes on their sailboats and trawler all named TEQUILA! Winters were spent on Longboat Key in their retirement years until they became permanent Florida residents in 2018. Joan was a reader at St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church, President of Women 's Guild, and Chair of the annual fashion show at the Church. Joan and Dick were also long-time members of Bird Key Yacht Club. She often hosted gatherings for her friends in the Winter when many visited that area of Florida.

When Joan was not entertaining family and friends, Joan would enjoy traveling with Dick. She planned and embarked on many memorable trips to the northwest and northeast coastal areas of the United States. They also enjoyed exploring Europe together.

Joan is survived by her husband, Richard Webster (Dick), sister, Alice Derezinski Donahue, sister-in-law, Marcia Derezinski (Tom dec) and brother-in-law, Tom Miknavich (Phyllis. dec), several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents Chester and Lillian Derezinski, brother Tom Derezinski, and sister Phyllis Miknavich. Per Joan's wishes cremation has taken place and she will be inurned at Holy Cross Cemetery in the Derezinski's family plot Grand Rapids, MI.

Memories may be shared at Toale Brothers Funeral Home. Memorial gifts may be sent to: St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church, 4280 Gulf of Mexico Drive, Longboat Key, FL 34228

Rabbi, from page 1

and create meaningful community engagement. She is a scholar of the Holocaust, committed to preserving the memory of the past and educating future generations about the importance of remembrance and resilience.

"We are thrilled to welcome Rabbi Mates as our new spiritual leader," said Temple President Lois Barson. "Her wisdom, warmth, and dedication to Jewish values will inspire our congregation and strengthen our community."

Rabbi Mates has previously served in various leadership roles, focusing on education, pastoral care, and innovative programming. Her approach to Jewish life emphasizes inclusivity, intellectual curiosity, and a commitment to both tradition and modernity.

As Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel, she looks forward to deepening connections within the congregation, expanding educational opportunities, and continuing the temple's tradition of spiritual and cultural enrichment.

"I am honored to join Temple Beth Israel," said Rabbi Mates. "I look forward to building new relationships, fostering Jewish learning, and ensuring that our synagogue remains a welcoming and vibrant center for Jewish life on Longboat Key and beyond."



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WineTimes

Notes on Sarasota Events: A Craft Rum Tasting and the Overtown Square Celebration

Fishing and diving buddies of Master Distiller Marty Martel, who grew up fishing and diving at the Midnight Pass Fishing Camp on Siesta Key, swapped stories about old Sarasota.

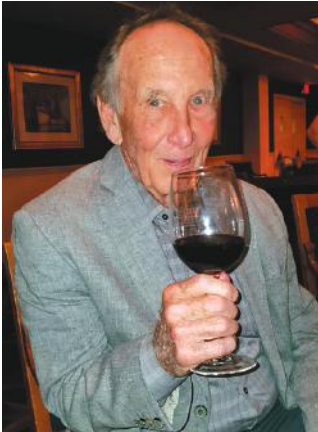
S.W. and Rich Hermansen
Guest Writers
wine@lbknews.com

Rum originated in the West Indies, likely in Barbados in about 1650, as a byproduct of the production of sugar from sugarcane. The base ingredient of rum, molasses, ferments in large vats to produce a molasses wine. Distilling of molasses wine occurs when heating of the wine brings it to the boiling point of alcohol, 73C or 173F. At this temperature, the type of alcohol in molasses wine, ethanol, vaporizes and separates from the water in the wine. A “still” captures the rising ethanol vapors and pipes them into a cool section of the still where the ethanol and other constituents of rum condense back into a liquid form. This old technique makes it possible to craft small batches of rum.

An overflow crowd gathered May 15th at Walt’s Fishmarket on South Tamiami Trail for a happy hour and a tasting event introducing craft rums from the new Broken Plank Craft Rum Distillery on Fruitville Road in Sarasota.

We best describe the Broken Plank rums as sipping rums. Served cold or cooled with a few ice chips in an old fashioned glass, the 80 proof Silver Rum has a slight bite on the tongue and a smooth and clean finish. The Dark Rum, same proof as the Silver, adds a slightly sweet taste up front and an equally smooth finish.

Fishing and diving buddies of Master Distiller Marty Martel, who grew up fishing and diving at the Midnight Pass Fishing Camp on Siesta Key, swapped stories about old Sarasota. Broken Plank owners Marty, TJ Nutter and his wife Angie, and CEO Rex Raymond, have invited us to take a closer look at the art and craft of rum making at the distillery. We’ll take them up on their offer and report what we learn.



Kids from two years old up to early teens tumbled, turned cartwheels and tried back flips, kicked soccer and beach balls, ran around frenetically, and hula hooped with varying degrees of success. Parents and older neighbors stood on the paved area around the grass lawn and ate hotdogs and hamburgers with Calusa beer and soft drinks provided by sponsors in the local business community. In the evening, the Sarasota Reggae band, Jah Movement, between rain showers capped off the event with their unique Island sound.

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.

Overtown Square

At an event, a celebration of Overtown Square in the Rosemary District on Saturday May 10th, Sarasota Vice-Mayor and City Commissioner Debbie Trice pointed toward the close-cut grass lawn in the center of the Square. “They were going to pave the whole park,” she recalled. “I said you have to have grass. A park has to have grass.” We stood for a few minutes watching children romp on the compact, paw shaped playing field of grass.

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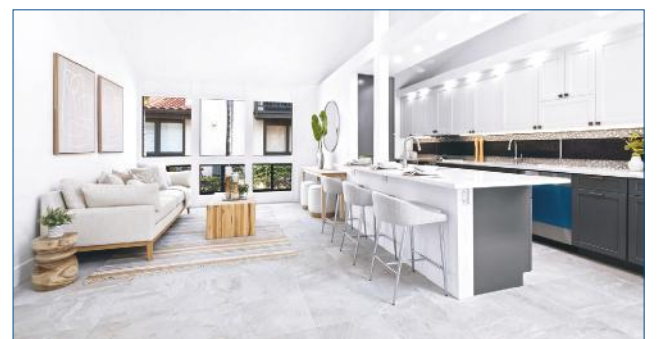
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