



# Longboat Key News

February 21, 2025 *Serving Longboat Key, St. Armands, Downtown Sarasota & Anna Maria Island* FREE

## InsideLook



Your guide to bargain wines ...page 15



Longboat Village hits \$3 million ...page 12



Should Longboat stop Starbucks? ...page 15



Security gate dragged by car ...page 10

## Red tide fighting tech deployed by Mote in first-ever initiative

*Post-deployment analysis of both products demonstrated significant reductions of K. brevis cells, as expected based on years of successful large-scale multi-species mesocosm laboratory testing.*

Last week, Mote Marine Laboratory and partners successfully conducted the first-ever field test deployment of two Florida Red Tide Mitigation and Technology Development Initiative products and technologies to an active red tide bloom.

The two products, Mote's CLEAR and Heartland Energy Group's Xtreme, which both have completed rigorous laboratory testing and received regulatory approvals, were deployed by Mote scientists in collaboration with Heartland Energy Group and A-C-T Environmental & Infrastructure, in select canals during an active bloom in Venice.

These advancements mark a historic step forward in the fight



against impacts of Red Tide blooms (*Karenia brevis*) in Florida's coastal waters.

Post-deployment analysis of both products demonstrated significant reductions of *K. brevis* cells, as expected based on years of successful large-scale multi-species mesocosm laboratory testing.

"Today is an important moment in the ongoing advancement of the Florida Red Tide Mitigation and Technology Development Initiative," said Dr. Michael P. Crosby, Mote Marine Laboratory President &

CEO. "This is the first time these products and technologies have been deployed during an active Florida red tide bloom. We are transitioning from controlled laboratory studies and field testing of real-world red tide bloom applications to the next critical phase of this initiative, which focuses on engineering large-scale deployment technologies required to safely and effectively mitigate the impacts of harmful algal blooms in our coastal waters."

Recent sampling efforts made

by a network of state agencies, Mote scientists, and academic entities, as well as federal partners, have detected medium to high concentrations of the Florida red tide organism *Karenia brevis* off the coast of Florida.

In response, Mote led a team of scientists and partners who deployed CLEAR and Xtreme into select canals in Venice, FL. These scientifically engineered solutions, previously validated in laboratory and mesocosm studies, were strate-

**See Red Tide, page 2**

## Siesta property hits market at record \$31.5 million

*The seller, Crystal Lahners, and her late husband, ophthalmologist Dr. William Lahners, paid about \$3.6 million for two parcels of land in 2019.*

Located on Siesta Key, the 2.7-acre property has a roughly 10,000-square-foot house and a dock on Little Sarasota Bay.

The seller, Crystal Lahners, and her late husband, ophthalmologist Dr. William Lahners, paid about \$3.6 million for two parcels of land in 2019.

When the Lahnerses found the land on Siesta Key, it contained an older home and a tennis court, Crystal said.

They demolished the house and started building a new one, but William died in 2021 at the age of 53, shortly after construction started. Crystal finished the home in 2024. She named the property Crystal Waters.

The gated, West Indies-style estate was inspired by the aesthetic of Palm Beach. The main house has floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking an infinity pool and the bay. There is also a roughly 1,600-square-foot guesthouse.

Amenities in the main house include a gym and elevator as well as a club room with a vaulted Cypress ceiling, billiards table and



bar. The primary suite has his-and-hers closets with custom cabinetry.

The pool is 52 feet long and 20 feet wide.

Roger Pettingell of Coldwell Banker Realty listed the

The property has tennis court and a tennis pavilion. The 90-foot-long dock has a 20,000-pound boat lift. A covered patio with a retractable screen has a summer kitchen, fireplace, bar and roll-

down hurricane shutters.

The current Sarasota County record was set by a home on just under an acre that sold for \$20 million last year.



Red Tide, from page 1

gically dispersed via a specialized A-C-T Environmental & Infrastructure vessel.

CLEAR, a natural biocide designed to target *K. brevis*, was applied through a boat-dispersed liquid treatment targeting the mid-depth within the water column. Xtreme, another liquid treatment solution, was applied using the same specialized sprayer system from a boat, optimizing its distribution for maximum efficacy.

Extensive laboratory and mesocosm testing and numerous regulatory approvals confirmed these products' environmental safety and effectiveness under controlled conditions, and by deploying these technologies in real-world conditions, Mote and its partners collected invaluable data, further advancing efforts to scale these solutions for broader use. This innovative research represents a critical milestone in applying science-based solutions to mitigate the devastating ecological and economic impacts of red tide.

Addressing a longstanding environmental challenge

Florida red tides, or red tide harmful algal blooms, are a higher-than-normal concentration of microscopic alga that occur in ocean and coastal waters. In Florida, the toxin-producing *Karenia brevis* is the algal specie causing red tides. Red tides in Florida have been documented since the 1700s and can harmfully affect sea life, lead to massive fish kills, cause human respiratory problems, close beaches, and determinately impact shellfish, fishing, hotel, restaurant, recreational, and tourism industries.

To address this challenge, in 2019, Mote partnered with the State of Florida through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to establish the Florida Red Tide Mitigation and Technology Development Initiative. This Initiative is an independent and coordinated effort among public and private research entities to develop prevention, control and mitigation technologies and approaches that will decrease the impacts of Florida red tide.

Since its inception, the Initiative has funded more than 50 external partners, supported over 40 projects, and evaluated hundreds of potential mitigation compounds and technologies. Three of these innovations have now progressed to field deployment testing, marking a critical phase in the path toward large-scale application.

Nearly a dozen additional compounds and technologies that have been scientifically proven to significantly decrease *K. brevis* cell counts and the toxins they produce are currently in the final testing stage and/or awaiting federal EPA approval before they can be deployed through this Initiative.

**What's Next?**

- Ongoing Monitoring: Scientists will be closely monitoring the deployment sites to collect data on water quality, marine life impact, and red tide concentration changes.
- Public Reporting: Findings will be shared with state agencies, environmental partners, and the public as data analysis progresses.
- Next Steps: This initial field test is part of an expedited strategy to refine, scale, and expand red tide mitigation efforts across Florida.
- Additional Technologies: Mote has been working with its partners to move additional products (i.e., Prescott Clean Water Technologies – Ozonix and BlueGreen Water Technologies – Lake Guard Oxy) that have completed lab research through the final permitting process to be allowed to deploy them during red tide events.



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**109 GARFIELD DRIVE UNIT 201 | LIDO BEACH**  
\$1,999,999 - Walk to Lido Beach  
3 Beds 2 Baths 1,993 Sq. Ft.  
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



**3408 FAIR OAKS LANE | LONGBOAT KEY**  
\$2,999,999 - Bay Isles  
5 Beds 5 Baths 4,510 Sq. Ft.  
Contact: Nicholle DiPinto McKiernan 941-928-2922



**3927 SOMERSET DRIVE | SIESTA KEY**  
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**PENDING**

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# EditorLetters



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

## Who writes headlines?

To: Editor  
 Thank you for the informative front page news in your 2/14 issue of LBKNews. Both Blake Fleetwood and Steve Reid presented sound local information in good reporting. Both provided leadership thinking. But! I have to ask about your lead headline that “construction noise louder, longer following hurricanes.” My immediate reaction was No bleep!  
 Less construction noise following hurricanes would be News indeed. But more? Now? No \*\*\*\*!  
 John Ehler  
 Sarasota

## Library

To: Editor  
 I am writing to you to support all that you said in your article regarding the library. My husband and I also feel that it is totally unnecessary.  
 When we discovered longboat key twenty years ago, it was the art center that charmed us and opened a new life for us. It was a determining factor for us to purchase on the island. It was a wonderful island oasis where we were able to find our new selves and grow. We were upset when we heard that Ringling purchased it. I was extremely involved with the pottery and devastated that they immediately closed that facility. I felt that, at that time, they were really considering the center as a temporary place. If they were truly committed they would have done a complete renovation. Much of the island spark faded with the closure.  
 When there was the promise of helping to develop the community center I was really hopeful that something great would be created.  
 Sadly, we are very disappointed, yet not surprised. If Ringling did not come through with the promise of a true renovation of the Art Center, why would they keep their promise on a Community Center for the island?  
 I hope that the Board recognizes that we have an adequate library on the island already and that we need to have more cultural learning experiences that don't require a trip to Sarasota where our dollars support the city and not our island. Thank you for your efforts. We support you in every way.  
 Pam and Dr. Mark Rosenblum  
 Longboat Key

## Longboat Key Town Center Green Event Space

To: Editor  
 Have you moved back to Longboat Key and we didn't notice?

Steve, right on, right on, right on! The Library plan should be shelved for all the reasons you put forth especially given the new climate for maximizing tax dollar efficiency. As you said, a Library is not “free”. Longboaters have already spoken in the past few years in the annual resident surveys and they are about to speak again with this year’s survey for Town leadership guidance. A Library is not their priority. Other proven uses that you itemized would certainly encourage people to contribute philanthropic participation to help develop. The Town is currently having difficulty raising funding for a Library.  
 The question is, what is the highest and best use of the Town Center and Green for our tax dollars? What will draw the highest volume of resident use and repeat use of our Town Center which was the original Vision and Mission. It is clearly not a Library based on past Longboat Surveys and general anecdotal feedback vs. enjoying higher volume Community special events on the Town Green. Thank you for your editorial input to the Town for consideration. We hope people will speak up.  
 Bob and Shannon Gault  
 Longboat Key

## How Long?

To: Longboat Key Commission  
 When the voters approved the 2015 and 2016 underground project, they were given the impression that it would be a three year project, and that the beautification of the island would be marvelous. For the past decade the underground project has caused much of the island to resemble a construction zone. Forlorn power poles still dot the landscape.  
 I believe seawater intrusion into transformers, resulting in premature ageing, still needs to be fully addressed. As the climate crisis worsens, more and more transformers may be impacted by flooding. Taxpayers need to be assured that all transformers can withstand repeated seawater intrusion without degrading life expectancy.  
 I believe the second referendum provision for an island-wide fiber network has never been implemented, though it was used to allow already undergrounded property owners to have an equal vote, though their assessment was a fraction of property owners in the “neighborhoods”. Without the fiber network provision, the second referendum would likely have failed. I would be interested if those assessed for only fiber cable were ever charged.  
 Gene Jaleski  
 Longboat Key

## How Long?

To: Gene Jaleski  
 Have you moved back to Longboat Key and we didn't notice?

See Letters, page 8



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# WineTimes

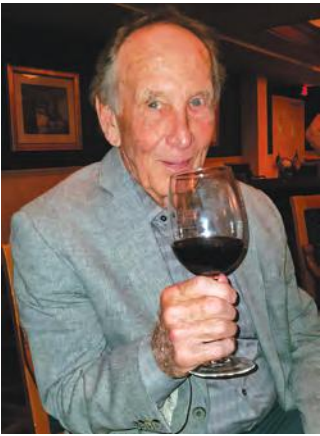
## Bargain Wine Shopping 101

*Use budget white and Rosé wines to create inexpensive, low calorie, and low alcohol cocktails, apéritifs, and digestifs to replace a glass of French or California Chardonnay, a French or New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, a gin and tonic, or a Tequila Marguerita.*

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

Smart shopping will help you find the best values consistent with your wine shopping budget. Remember these tips whether buying wine in a supermarket, a favorite wine shop, or a fine restaurant.

Look for good alternatives to the prestigious brand name. Yes, a highly rated French Champagne really does have the tastes that you would hope to find in a sparkling wine, but at a minimum cost of around \$50 per 750 ML bottle and an upper range that you don't want to know. Neighboring wine regions Burgundy and Alsace sell comparable sparkling wines at about half the cost of Champagne. The André Delorme Crémant de Bourgogne Blanc de Noirs Brut (\$24), a white sparkling wine made from the red Pinot Noir and Gamay grapes, and the Lucien Albrecht Crémant d'Alsace Brut (\$20), made from Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Riesling, and Pinot Blanc, for instance, offer worthy substitutes for the more prestigious Champagnes. French Crémant producers, including those in Loire and Limoux, use the same traditional second fermentation in the bottle process (méthode champenoise) used to produce Champagne.



For that matter, Spanish producers of Cava also use the traditional method and make excellent sparkling wines that sell at rock bottom prices. Many other prestigious wine brands have alternatives that you and your guests will enjoy and will cost much less. Ask wine sellers about alternatives such as California or Washington State Meritage instead of French red Bordeaux; California Russian River, Alexander Valley, and Paso Robles, or Argentine and Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon, instead of pricy Napa Cabs; or South African Chenin Blanc instead of French Vouvray. The fact that owners of prestigious vineyards in Europe and California are acquiring vineyards in the Southern Hemisphere, Washington State, Idaho, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Mexico, and Canada should encourage you to consider cheaper wines from these emerging regions.

Use budget white and Rosé wines to create inexpensive, low calorie, and low alcohol cocktails, apéritifs, and digestifs to replace a glass of French or California Chardonnay, a French or New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, a gin and tonic, or a Tequila Marguerita. Make them by the pitcher or individually. Cava poured over an ounce of fresh orange juice or pear nectar makes a tangy Mimosa or tasty Bellini. A still Chenin Blanc or Torrontés mixed with Seltzer water and a dash of aromatic bitters makes a light spritzer apéritif. Rather than open another bottle of costly Cab, Pinot Noir, or Syrah after finishing beefsteak or lamb, offer a small glass of an Australian Tawny, produced in the same way as a Portuguese Tawny Port, but without the Port label reserved for Portuguese wines from the Porto region. A small bottle of the Australian tawny will serve as a fine digestif to top off a hearty dinner.

Look for sales and specials and buy a few bottles of cheap back-up wines. We have found



wines from smaller vineyards in bargain sections of small and larger shops. These wines have distinctive tastes yet sell at prices less than the cheaper supermarket wines. We buy and keep these wines on hand for backyard and front porch gatherings when we need to open a second bottle. Recently we found nice Pinot Grigio and Chianti (Sangiovese) from Italy and a savory Malbec from Argentina on bargain shelves.

You will find wines that you will enjoy at modest prices. Local wine shops bring wines from around the world for their customers to explore.

S. W. Hermansen has used his expertise in econometrics, data science and epidemiology to help develop research databases for the Pentagon, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Agriculture, and Health Resources and Services. He has visited premier vineyards and taste wines from major appellations in California, Oregon, New York State, and internationally from Tuscany and the Piedmont in Italy, the Ribera del Duero in Spain, the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale in Australia, and the Otago Valley in New Zealand. Currently he splits time between residences in Chevy Chase, Maryland and St. Armand's Circle in Florida.

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

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# Editor Letters



**Letters, from page 4**

Ken Schneier  
Mayor  
Town of Longboat Key

**Longboat Key North Learning Center**

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier  
I am a member of the North End Space Team (NEST) from Sleepy Lagoon. As you know, NEST, a dedicated team of individuals from north end neighborhoods has worked diligently to gather and organize community input and plan the layout of a much needed adult education, exercise, art and meeting place. Enthusiasm for this project exists throughout the population of north end neighborhoods who have many diverse needs for a community center of this kind.  
I'm writing to let you know how disappointed I am in the decision made by Tal Siddique and Manatee County to abandon the current effort to create a community space on the north end of the Longboat Key. The step taken recently to end the lease at Whitney Plaza was a huge setback and the people I've spoken to in the Sleepy Lagoon neighborhood are deeply discouraged by this action. Furthermore, we were shocked to read it in the paper, rather than get this sad news ahead of time.  
I'm concerned that there is so much focus on other projects on the island that this setback may completely derail this project. I respectfully request information about the kind of commitment the town has to continue this effort. When will the town meet with Commissioner Siddique to establish a partnership and a plan to create forward momentum on this initiative? Thank in advance for your reply.  
Deborah A. Di Carlo  
North End Space Team

**Red tide update**

To: Longboat Key Commission  
Manatee Beach - raked and clean  
Coquina Beach N & S - raked and clean  
Bayfront Park - clean  
Longboat Key - needs some work. We are raking with two beach rakes now and should be completed by noon today.  
Carmine DeMilio  
Deputy Director Parks & County Grounds, Manatee County

**Red Tide Update**

To: Manatee County Deputy Administrator Bryan Parnell

Our schedule  
2.17.2025 - Two beach rakes and loader from Coquina to Bayfront, successful cleanup.  
2.18.2025 – Manatee, Coquina & Bayfront successful clean up. Conditions are currently clear.  
2.18.2025 – Assessed Longboat Key - staff will head out early with beach rake and loader.  
2.19.2025  
We will run three beach rakes and will cover:  
Manatee Beach  
Coquina Beach  
Bayfront Park  
Longboat Key  
Updates to follow.  
Carmine DeMilio  
Deputy Director Parks & County Grounds  
Manatee County

**Underground Project**

To: Paul Capioppo  
Thanks for your note. My top priority over the past few years has been to press Town staff, FPL and Willco to complete the undergrounding project, which originally called for completion in 2023. Bottom line: after additional delays caused by our recent hurricanes, we now expect all equipment installations and electrical conversions island wide to be finished by the end of March and the removal of all poles and wires by the end of June, hopefully before then. I was encouraged to see today substantial wire removal going on between the north end of Country Club Shores and Publix. Remaining new light poles will be installed once existing poles that block installation are removed.  
While the completion of this project has taken longer than planned, none of the delays have increased the project's cost to the Town. We remain materially under budget and have not neared the use of contingency amounts included in the budget.  
I am copying this note to Public Works Director Charlie Mopps in case he wants to correct or amplify any of my comments.  
Ken Schneier  
Mayor  
Town of Longboat Key

**Underground Project**

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

See Letters, page 12

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*Country Club Shores*



**521 Wedge Lane - \$1,948,000**  
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**435 L'Ambiance Drive #L807**  
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**435 S. Gulfstream Ave #1004 - \$1,128,000**  
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[RegencyHouse1004.com](http://RegencyHouse1004.com)

*Tangerine Bay Club*



**350 Gulf of Mexico Drive #211 - \$1,078,000**  
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[Tangerine211.com](http://Tangerine211.com)

*Emerald Harbor*



**6011 Emerald Harbour Drive - \$2,495,000**  
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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.*

## Feb. 14

### Suspicious

11:46 a.m.

Officer Van Dyke responded to Jackson Way in reference to a suspicious person. The caller said that someone was illegally trimming mangroves at the property. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke spoke with the property owner and advised him that a subject was illegally trimming mangroves at the property. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke spoke with the property owner and advised him that a caller nearby was concerned that he was illegally clearing the mangroves. Officer Van Dyke didn't observe any obvious violations. The homeowner advised that he was only trimming the mangroves as he intends to sell the property. The owner also advised that he intends to apply for permits to trim the mangroves further. Officer Van Dyke then called the complainant and advised him of the results. Case clear.



welfare check. The complainant advised his father arrived in town earlier and had not checked in with family since arriving. Longboat Key Police Department on scene and made contact with the father who accidentally left his phone on the airplane mode and was sleeping. The father advised everything was fine. Case clear.

## Trespassing

10:18 p.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol responded to Publix on a report of trespassing. According to the complainant, a man was seen refusing to leave the property after being asked to do so. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer met with the complainant to which he reported the following: the employee was trying to close up the store when he observed the man loitering.

tering around the back portion of the property. The employee asked the transient man to leave, but he moved over to the east side of the building. Officer Troyer asked the employee if he wished to have the man trespass from the property, which he indicated he did. The employee informed Officer Troyer he was a Publix employee and was an agent of the property. Officer Troyer spoke with the complainant and informed the transient man for the reason for his contact. The transient man informed Officer Troyer that he felt he was not trespassing because he moved from the rear of the building but he understood. Officer Troyer asked the transient man for a form of identification. The transient man handed the officer his wallet which revealed his Arizona Driver's License as well as a Florida Identification card, which belonged to a man who lived in Clearwater. Officer Troyer asked the transient about he identification card, which he indicated he found the ID recently. The transient man and Officer Troyer conversed about his living conditions. The transient man informed he moved from Arizona and was currently "Going South" from Clearwater, Florida where he could find alligators and make YouTube videos swimming with them. The man refused any type of medical treatment. Officer Troyer cleared the transient through the Sarasota County Dispatch Center for any wants or warrants. The man was clear and had a valid Driver's License. Officer Troyer completed a Longboat Key Police Department Trespass warning per the man's request the transient man signed the form to complete the trespass warning and formally Trespass the man from the property. The manager signed and thumb printed the form as well. Officer Troyer explained Florida Trespass laws to the transient man and observed him leave the property. The trespass warning was turned into the records department an Officer Troyer entered the found identification card into property and evidence as found property.

## Boat

8:32 p.m.

Officer Mathis responded to Harbourside Drive in reference to a disturbance. Upon arrival, Officer Mathis spoke with the complainant who advised he is an employee for the Moorings. He further explained that he observed a vessel tied up in a slip that wasn't supposed to be there. The complainant advised he confronted the people in the vessel about being at the location. A verbal confrontation occurred and according to the complainant the man and woman were at the location visiting friends at a neighboring slip. The complainant asked the man and woman to leave the Moorings and at his request the couple untied their vessel and left the area. At the complainant's request, Officer Mathis reached out to the woman on the boat and received no answer and left a voicemail advising that the Moorings requested they not return to the property unless they wish to pay for future services. At the time of the incident, the complainant was unable to get the registration from the vessel or the man's name. The vessel and the couple were gone prior to Officer Mathis's arrival. Case clear.

## Feb. 15

### Mooring

2:02 a.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol and performing a business check of the restaurant on Broadway, observed a boat moored up to the restaurant docks and the sign said "No overnight mooring." Officer Troyer made contact with the owner of the vessel who identified himself. Officer Troyer informed the boat owner the reason he was there and the owner said he was moored up due to the rudder breaking on his sailboat and being stranded. The owner said he spoke with the manager of the restaurant and was told he could stay overnight until he gets the vessel out of the water for repairs. The owner also said his vessel was not in distress. Based on Officer Troyer's investigation, he had no way of verifying the story due to the time of night and did not have any calls for service regarding the owner's presence. Nothing criminal was observed. Case clear.

## Animal

1:58 p.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to the 6900 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a large brown German Shepherd with two women. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma canvassed the area and observed two women with a large German Shepherd. Officer Pescuma made contact with the owner who stated the dog was a service dog. Officer Pescuma reiterated that the dog must remain on a leash. The owner complied and understood the town ordinance. The caller was notified of the findings. Case clear.

## Welfare check

9:41 p.m.

Officer Mathis was dispatched to the 5300 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a

**Feb. 17**  
**Vehicle stop**

10:06 a.m.

Officer Miklos while on patrol was traveling southbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive saw a registration check of a gray Mercedes van that was traveling in front of his patrol vehicle. The NCIC/FCIC return for the vehicle returned with a valid registration to an owner who had expired Florida Driver's License since Oct 6 2019. The FCIC return described the Hispanic man as 5'6" tall. Officer Miklos initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle via emergency lights and sirens and met with the driver on the New Pass Bridge. Upon making contact with the vehicle, the driver advised that his brother was the registered owner. At this time, the driver matched the description of the FCIC return. Officer Miklos requested the driver's Driver's License. The driver, provided an Argentina Driver's License and passport with a USA visa. The driver advised he had been living full time in the USA for over a year and a half and was still trying to get a driver's license. Officer Miklos returned to his car and issued the driver a criminal citation for operating a vehicle without a valid driver license. The driver acknowledged the Sarasota County Court date. The driver was allowed to park the vehicle at Overlook Park until he made arrangements for a valid driver to pick up the vehicle. Case clear.

## Property

3:00 p.m.

Officer Ericsson was dispatched to Bay Isles Parkway on a reported Property Damage involving an access gate arm being struck by a vehicle. Upon arrival, Officer Ericsson contacted the security guard at the gate for Bay Isles and she said that at approximately 2 p.m. while working the gate, she heard a crashing sound and observed a vehicle traveling west from the gate shack dragging the security gate. The vehicle stopped and she made contact with the driver. Officer Ericsson contacted the guard who said he was leaving the neighborhood and passing the gate house. The gate arm went up automatically for the vehicle in front of his and he proceeded to follow the vehicle. As he passed the gate arm, the arm closed on top of his vehicle causing it to break off. Upon his arrival, an employee had already placed the arm back into its position, but he said the wiring would need to be replaced. The arm itself appeared intact. Officer Ericsson observed a video of the incident, which was consistent with the driver's statement. It appeared the gate arm was up as he was following another vehicle and it closed onto the top of his van, approximately at the passenger side door. It appeared from all statements and the video that the driver was not aware the gate was closing. Case clear.

**Feb. 18**  
**Citizen assist**

9:04 a.m.

Officer Ericsson was dispatched to Kingfisher Lane on an illegally parked Chevrolet Malibu parked in the driveway. Officer Ericsson contacted the homeowner who stated that he called in error. He said the car belonged to a worker who is working on his property and he didn't know they were there. Case clear.

The advertisement for LBK Liqueurs features a central graphic of a pink flamingo standing on its left leg, with its right leg tucked up. The text "LBK" is in a large, black, serif font, and "Liqueurs" is in a black, cursive script font. To the right of the flamingo, the phone number "941.953.1835" is displayed in a black, sans-serif font. Below this, the text "The Island's largest selection of Beer, Wine & Spirits" and "Come check out our competitive prices!" is centered. Further down, "Discounts on cases of wine | Special orders welcome" is centered. Below that, "Locally owned & operated" is centered. At the bottom, the address "Whitney Beach Plaza" and "6854 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL" is centered. On the left and right sides of the bottom section, there are illustrations of three liquor bottles in yellow, teal, and magenta colors.



# KeyRealEstate

## Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath			Days On Market	Sale Price
148 N POLK DR	3,115	\$2,085,500	2	2	1	0	\$2,085,500
250 ROBIN DR	2,548	\$1,900,000	3	3	0	4	\$1,800,000
690 RUSSELL ST	2,577	\$3,199,000	4	4	1	3	\$3,000,000
611 RANGER LN	1,983	\$2,050,000	4	3	0	11	\$2,000,000
1485 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#309	1,839	\$1,350,000	2	3	0	0	\$1,300,000
1485 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#201	1,551	\$1,095,000	3	2	1	32	\$1,025,000
3455 WINDING OAKS DR Unit#28	2,112	\$995,000	3	2	0	42	\$960,000
4700 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#PH6	1,523	\$799,900	2	2	0	251	\$784,950



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410 MEADOW LARK DRIVE, SARASOTA • \$3,550,000  
4BR/2.5BA • 3,257 SF



585 GUNWALE LANE • LONGBOAT KEY  
3BR /3.5BA • OPEN WATER • \$5,995,000



# Editor Letters

## Letters, from page 8

I want to share with you my concerns about the underground project. I own a home on Tarawitt Drive.

The underground project seems to be lagging. If removal of the streetlight poles is an indicator of the degree of completion this project is a long way from finished. I believe the number of existing poles is the key indicator of progress that most residents understand. I think most people get lost in the technical jargon used when the project status is discussed and don't understand when they can expect completion.

Zone 1 (Longboat Key Club to Country Club Shores V) appears to be completed. Zone 2 (North end to Dream Island) appears to be close to completion, but not all poles are down. There are still poles for approximately 7 miles from Country Club Shores V to Longboat Island Chapel, most of these being in Zones 3 and 4 (from North Country Club Shores through the county line to Dream Island). There are also many poles on side streets of GMD. For a project that was originally scheduled to be completed by now, that seems significant. Certainly, the hurricanes caused delays, but is that acceptable justification for the current status? I was earlier told there would be 1 for 1 replacement of streetlights on the side roads.

Paul Cacioppo  
Longboat Key

## GMD Wires

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps

Great to see wires coming down today on GMD along the northern golf course. Thanks. Brw, any news from FDOT on fixing the traffic light GMD/Bay Isles Pkwy? Still have long lines backing up from GMD to Publix.

Ken Schneier  
Mayor  
Town of Longboat Key

## Red Tide Update

To: Manatee County Parks and County Grounds Deputy Director Carmine DeMilio  
Thanks Carmine, your team is doing a great job!

John Chappie  
Mayor  
City of Bradenton Beach

## Gulf of Mexico Drive/White Sands

To: Longboat Key Town Clerk Trish Shinkle

Thank you and FPL is aware. I believe it is planned to come down with the rest of the UG project wires and poles. It's in Phase 4. Charlie has asked Guy to see if it can come down sooner, but it was planned with that phase pole removals, I believe.

Isaac Brownman  
Assistant Town Manager  
Town of Longboat Key

## Gulf of Mexico Drive/White Sands

To: Longboat Key Town Clerk Trish Shinkle

Surely this falling lamplight could pose a serious injury threat to any innocent passer by which could lead to legal action again The Town or FPL? Realizing how busy everybody is right now and thank you for all the town has done, I just wanted

Surely this falling lamplight could pose a serious injury threat to any innocent passer by which could lead to legal action again The Town or FPL?

Realizing how busy everybody is right now and thank you for all the town has done, I just wanted to bring this to your attention. Regards and thanks and no reply needed.  
Michael Bergin  
Longboat Key

## Beach traffic

To: Longboat Key Commission

I have attached the beach traffic slides from my comments at the last workshop, as requested.

As you know, beach traffic is a huge issue for island workers, residents, guests and town employees.

When traffic backs up on the north end, like it did today, google maps often directs drivers going to Bradenton from the northern half of the Key to drive south through St Armands and Sarasota, further stressing southbound traffic. The congestion from the newly opened and expanded Coquina / Cortez beach parking lots is an issue that impacts all of LBK.

LBK North has reached out to Tal Saddique, our Manatee County Commissioner to see what he can do. We know Tip is also trying to make headway with the County Administrator.

I encourage each of you to take the following actions (if you haven't already):

Drive north over Longboat Pass to see first hand the expanded Coquina parking lot, gates and access roads.

Get an accurate count of Coquina Beach parking spaces from the County (in total and new additions)

Ask Manatee County to manage the gates at Coquina to close off cut-through traffic and direct beach traffic to one exit.

Drive further north to see the long section of southern Cortez beach (including parking) currently being reconstructed.

Ask to see the design for Cortez beach parking (from Cortez Road south to Coquina) to assess if issues regarding traffic flow

**See Letters, page 13**

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Letters, from page 12

and ingress/egress are being adequately addressed.  
Ken - Maybe you could connect with George Kruse, chair of BOCC and at-large County Commissioner (given the delay in the joint LBK / Manatee County Meeting). Thank you for any help you can provide.  
Maureen Merrigan  
Co-Chair LBK North

Beach traffic

To: LBK North Co-Chair Maureen Merrigan  
Thanks, Maureen. I'm sure we will address North end traffic at our Workshop this afternoon.  
Ken Schneier  
Mayor  
Town of Longboat Key

Starbucks

To: Ralph Lorenzo DeNino  
Update on Starbucks at the old Saunders office. No application has been submitted to the Town. Given the amount of space they are renting and the current zoning of that space they will have to get a "Special Exception Permit" which would be a hearing before the Planning and Zoning Board. Also, do not know if the parking will be adequate - won't know until Town sees an application. I know the Winslow residents had concerns on a restaurant use with the Ursini project - this is considered a restaurant (Starbucks). Please share with your Board.  
BJ Bishop  
Commissioner  
Town of Longboat Key

Sovereign Immunity

To: Florida House  
Tomorrow morning The House Civil Justice Subcommittee will hear HB 301 (Suits Against the Government). As a Commissioner in Longboat Key FL I urge you to oppose this bill.  
Raising the caps on government liability in negligence lawsuits would impose a massive financial burden on local taxpayers. HB 301 quadruples the current limit from \$200,000 to \$1 million per person and from \$300,000 to \$3 million per incident.  
Higher caps will create skyrocketing insurance costs. The insurance market in Florida is already volatile and this bill would make securing adequate coverage even more difficult and expensive. My community is still recovering from the multiple hurricanes of 2024 - we cannot handle more financial burdens.  
HB301's limits are extreme compared to other states. Thirty-three states have sovereign immunity caps. Texas caps liability at \$250K per person and \$500K per occurrence. Florida should not be setting liability limits drastically higher than peer states. New York and California have no caps, but they also have some of the highest tax burdens in the country. Florida's low-tax, business-friendly environment would be undermined by extreme liability costs.  
See Letters, page 15

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Letters, from page 13

The existing system already provides a pathway for additional compensation through claims bills. There is no need for an across-the-board increase that will strain municipal budgets. Raising lawsuit limits would open the floodgates to excessive and frivolous litigation that only benefits trial attorneys. Please vote no on this bill. The damage it could do to local governments is quite steep. BJ Bishop  
Commissioner, Town of Longboat Key

Beach damage

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Debra Willams  
I submitted and email of concern to the town and received a very fast response. In the email I explained my concern over damage to the beach from sand and debris that extends from the sea grapes on GMD back to the gulf. I was not able to attach some pics. Properties on both sides of Beach Harbor Club (3800 GMD) were cleaned up and Beach Harbor was skipped over. In my email I requested an inspection of the damage and debris. I will forward that e mail separately. In that email the response was those properties have guard rails and we do not. I do not understand why BHC was skipped over. Robert Mulligan  
Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico Drive/White Sands

To: Longboat Key Town Clerk Trish Shinkle  
Thank you and FPL is aware. I believe it is planned to come down with the rest of the UG project wires and poles. It’s in Phase 4. Charlie has asked Guy to see if it can come down sooner, but it was planned with that phase pole removals, I believe. Isaac Brownman  
Assistant Town Manager, Town of Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico Drive/White Sands

To: Longboat Key Town Clerk Trish Shinkle  
Surely this falling lamplight could pose a serious injury threat to any innocent passer by which could lead to legal action again The Town or FPL? Realizing how busy everybody is right now and thank you for all the town has done, I just wanted to bring this to your atten-tion. Regards and thanks and no reply needed. Michael Bergin  
Longboat Key

Noise from Jewfish key sandbar

To: Longboat Key Police Chief Frank Rubino  
As I’m sure your team is already aware, prime time for JFK sandbar parties is roughly noon – sunset on Fridays, Saturdays and holidays. That’s when coverage is most needed at the north end. As we discussed, the mere presence of marine police isn’t enough... they need to ask folks to turn it down (or issue warnings/citations for especially loud or repeat cases). Same goes for drive-by boats. I think as a general rule, if your team can hear the music from 100 yards away, it’s too loud. It would be great if the same messages could be delivered by FWC, Bradenton PD, Sheriff, and other marine law enforcement when they are out there. BTW, Manatee County also has a noise ordinance... but we’d settle for polite requests from them, which does not require any particular authority. Thanks for your continued help and great work! Thanks also for offering to meet with us. I look forward to seeing you in March. James G. Haft  
Longboat Key

Noise from Jewfish key sandbar

To: Jim Haft  
I am meeting with the team this Friday. I know you won’t be back until March. My boat operators are spread amongst all four shifts. As soon as I hear back from everyone, I’ll send you several dates in March. Frank Rubino  
Interim Chief of Police, Longboat Key Police Department

Noise from Jewfish key sandbar.

To: Longboat Key Police Chief Frank Rubino  
Good to talk with you the other day. Per your suggestion, let’s get a date on the calendar sometime in March that Ann & I can come down to meet with you. Please give us a few dates that work Best, Jim James G. Haft

Hi Frank – Good to talk with you the other day. Per your suggestion, let’s get a date on the calendar sometime in March that Ann & I can come down to meet with you. Please give us a few dates that work James G. Haft  
Longboat Key

Noise from Jewfish key sandbar

To: Jim Haft  
Would you please give me a call when you get a free moment to discuss the noise on the sandbar? Thank you. Frank Rubino, Interim Chief of Police, Longboat Key Police Department

Longboat Key Tennis Center

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneider  
Just checking in with you concerning the Tennis Center and the annual tournament. I’ve taken over as President of The Friends of Tennis, Inc since David Green has moved, and will continue to serve as Tournament Director for the annual Masters event (Dec 1st-7th this year). I wondered if you would have time next week for a short conversation either at the tennis center or at Town Hall on the following:  
Wanted to make you aware of a project suggested by Kay that FOT is pursuing with the Town staff and an outside contractor to plant some larger shrubs behind courts 5 and 6 that can act as a bit of a wind screen. We’ll also probably include the replacement of some smaller plantings around the pro shop area that died due to the storm. Talk about an idea we have for the current Town Library property. Let you know some plans for the tournament over the next couple of years. I would also like to attend the next Town Commission meeting in early March with Kay for a brief ‘thank you’ to the Town commissioners and staff for all of their efforts with the prepara-tions for the past year’s tournament and to share some of the results. I don’t know if we need to be scheduled to do so, or if we can just speak during the public comments portion of the meeting-happy to do what you suggest there. Let me know what works best for you. Ron Watts  
Longboat Key

Longboat Key Tennis Center

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneider  
Tough to copy folks on emails sent through the town website, but I wanted to let you know that we passed our thanks to the Public Works staff and Howard for not only getting the tennis center fencing repaired this week, but for all of their efforts over the last several weeks helping to get the center in nice shape for the upcoming tournament. We have 345 registered players for the tournament that runs December 2-8. That’s up from 300 last year and is our highest number of participants outside of the “Covid” tournament of 2021 when we had 387 players. We were not able to use two of our regular facilities (Club Longboat and Water Club) since they weren’t able to get their courts repaired in time. However, both Longboat Key Club and Cedars gave us some extra court time this year that allowed us to make up for those two facilities. Players are excited that the event is being held. Friends of Tennis has come up with a small incentive we’ll fund that will give players and volunteers \$10 off a dinner at one of our five long-time island restaurant sponsors. We hope it will encourage our visitors to enjoy those restaurants during the week as the restaurants begin to get going again after the storms. Thanks for your help with the event. Hope you and your other commissioners can find time to stop by during the week to see some of the tennis. We’ll have the chaired finals scheduled for Friday and Saturday. Ron Watts  
Tournament Director &, Friends of Tennis Board Member

The Turtle Coffee Bar vs. Starbucks

To: Katherine & Steve Palmer  
Like you, I have read the news that Starbucks may open an outlet on Longboat Key. No application has come before our Town Commission regarding this project, likely because none is required. If the proposed plan meets Town law, staff must issue the necessary permits to move forward. We no more “warmly” welcomed Starbucks to our island than we “cruelly” displaced the Turtle Coffee Bar. Many residents and businesses were severely impacted by 2024’s storms, and the Town and other government bodies have worked tirelessly to help those affected within our given powers; but in the end we do not decide who lives where or who operates a business in what location. Ken Schneider  
Mayor, Town of Longboat Key

The Turtle Coffee Bar vs. Starbucks

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneider  
We are writing to you to express our disappointment and dismay, along with many others, regarding the following announcement in the Longboat Key News. We understand that you have granted, the largest international retail coffee chain in the United States, Starbucks, along with some other local partners the permission to open a coffee shop at 3174 Gulf of Mexico Drive. What are you thinking! We can’t tell you how sad and disheartened we are to realize in the process of “warmly” welcoming a gargantuan conglomerate you are cruelly displacing what had become a beloved small business on the island, the Turtle Coffee Bar. This is the kind of small, privately owned, business that you as city leaders should be helping and preserving after the devastation of the past hurricanes. The Turtle Coffee Bar is a unique part of the ambiance of what is truly Longboat Key! You are throwing away a diamond in the rough, but it could still be saved with your help! Please reconsider your decision and do the right thing! Kathy & Steve Palmer  
Longboat Key

Cleanup status

To: Longboat Key Commission  
For several months this tree stump has remained outside of the Town water tower on LBK, an unsightly reminder of Hurricane Milton. Charles Lynch  
Longboat Key

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3BR/3BA • 2,100 SF • Gulf & Bay views



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597 CUTTER LANE  
LONGBOAT KEY, FL  
3BR/2BA • 1,963 SF • 103' of Waterfront



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111 S. PINEAPPLE AVE., #1004  
SARASOTA, FL  
2BR/2.5BA • 1,513 SF • City views



ORCHID BEACH CLUB • \$2,875,000  
2050 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DR. #A601  
SARASOTA, FL  
3BR/3.5BA • 3,242 • Beach/Bay views



LONGBOAT KEY TOWERS • \$1,595,000  
603 LONGBOAT CLUB RD., #1102N  
LONGBOAT KEY, FL  
2BR/2BA • 1,458 SF • Gulf & Bay views



GRAND BAY • \$1,595,000  
3060 GRAND BAY BLVD. #113  
LONGBOAT KEY, FL  
3BR/3.5BA • 2,550 SF • Two terraces



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LONGBOAT KEY, FL  
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