



Longboat Key News

February 6, 2026

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my Valentine?
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I am Fishing,
not Jumping
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City Commission to Name Finalists for City Manager Amidst “Revolving Door”

Failure to secure a permanent executive could force the appointment of a third interim manager, prolonging a chapter of uncertainty that has plagued City Hall since the controversial exit of former manager Marlon Brown.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

The City of Sarasota is facing a defining moment. After nearly 18 months of leadership instability, a fired search firm, and a carousel of interim administrators, the City Commission will meet in a high-stakes special session this Monday, Feb. 10, to select the finalists for its next City Manager.

The pressure is palpable. With Interim City Manager Dave Bullock—the second temporary leader to hold the post since 2024—set to resign on March 6 for a long-delayed retirement, the city is racing

against the clock. Failure to secure a permanent executive could force the appointment of a third interim manager, prolonging a chapter of uncertainty that has plagued City Hall since the controversial exit of former manager Marlon Brown.

The Monday Showdown: Whittling 36 to Six

At 10 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 10, Commissioners will attempt a daunting logistical feat: cutting a field of 36 semi-finalists down to a shortlist of just six.

Mayor Debbie Trice has expressed urgent concern over the process, fearing a chaotic vote or, worse, the

selection of a candidate who cannot pass vetting. In emails to City Auditor and Clerk Shayla Griggs and City Attorney Joe Polzak earlier this week, Trice pushed for clarity on background checks before a final vote is cast.

“I would hate to vote on our final choice only to have that person ‘fail’ the background check,” Trice wrote in an email on Feb. 2. “I doubt the second-choice would happily accept a subsequent offer from us knowing they were not our preferred candidate.”

Griggs confirmed that the city’s consultant, Sumter Local

See Manager, page 4

**Longboat
Key to
unveil Canal
Strategy
at Critical
Town Hall
Meeting**

For the first time in nearly two decades, the Town of Longboat Key is moving toward a comprehensive solution for its clogging arteries—the 81 miles of canals and waterways that define the island’s character and property values.

After years of debate, stalled starts, and deteriorating navigational depths, Town officials and consultants from First Line Coastal will present the final details of the Canal Navigational Maintenance

See Canals, page 2

New Life for New Pass: Dredges Pump Sand to Sarasota in Historic “Alternating” Deal

Fresh, white sand began pouring onto the Sarasota shoreline this week, marking the visible start of a massive dual-purpose infrastructure project that is as much about diplomacy as it is about geology.

Dredging and sand pumping work to renourish Lido Key is moving forward rapidly. This fully Federally-funded effort includes the dredging of New Pass and the beneficial placement of approximately 300,000 cubic yards of sand along 1.2 miles of Sarasota’s shoreline.

According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the project remains on schedule and is anticipated to be complete by early April, just before the start of sea turtle nesting season.

“A key advantage of this effort is efficiency. By pairing needed navigation dredging with shoreline renourishment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is effectively accomplishing two projects at the cost of one, maximizing value for taxpayers while supporting coastal resilience,” USACE said in its latest update.

The “Shared Sand” Agreement

While the sight of industrial pipes on the beach is familiar to locals, few realize that the sand flowing out of them is the subject of a unique “time-share” arrangement between neighbors.

New Pass, the shifting inlet that separates the southern tip of Longboat Key from the northern tip of Lido Key, is a shared resource. Historically, battles over who gets the precious dredged sand—which is essential for fighting erosion—have been contentious.

To settle the tug-of-war, the Town of Longboat Key and the City of Sarasota operate under a cooperative sand-sharing agreement with the Army Corps. The arrangement is simple but strict: the sand is alternated.

In this current cycle, the “beneficial use” of the dredged material belongs to the City of Sarasota, meaning the pipelines are running south to renourish Lido Key. When the pass requires dredging again—typically in a 3-to-5-year cycle—the pipelines will likely run north, delivering the sand to the beaches of Longboat Key.

This alternating schedule ensures that both barrier islands benefit from the inlet’s natural sand-trapping rhythms without competing for the same grain of sediment.



See Sand, page 3

Canals, from page 1

Program at a series of high-stakes informational meetings starting this Wednesday.

Residents are urged to attend to learn how the proposed "cut and fill" dredging strategy and a new 80/20 funding model will impact their property taxes. The meetings will be held at Town Hall on Feb. 12 and Feb. 19, with sessions available at 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on both days.

A "Cut and Fill" Approach to Restoration

The centerpiece of the technical presentation is expected to be the "cut and fill" strategy developed by First Line Coastal. This engineering approach is designed to be both fiscally responsible and environmentally sound.

The plan involves surgically "cutting" (dredging) accumulated sediment from shoaled canals to restore safe navigable depths. Rather than treating this material solely as waste, the program aims to "fill" or beneficially reuse compatible sediment where possible to bolster shoreline resilience or restore environmental features, a hallmark of modern coastal management.

This method marks a shift from the piecemeal dredging of the past. The new program promises a town-wide baseline dredge to "reset" the canals, followed by a routine maintenance schedule that prevents the waterways from returning to their current state of neglect.

The Price of Navigability: The 80/20 Split

Perhaps the most anticipated topic of discussion is the price tag. The Town Commission has tentatively backed a funding model that attempts to balance fairness with the reality that waterfront living comes with premium costs.

First Line Coastal's recommendation outlines an 80/20 cost-sharing split:

- 20% Ad Valorem (Town-wide): Because healthy waterways support property values, drainage, and the island's overall brand, 20% of the program's cost would be funded by a general property tax paid by all Longboat Key property owners.

- 80% Non-Ad Valorem (Direct Beneficiaries): The bulk of the funding would come from a specific assessment on properties that have direct access to the water.

To ensure equity, the assessment uses Equivalent Benefit Units (EBUs). A standard single-family home with a canal-front dock might represent 1 EBU, estimated to cost approximately \$640 annually for the first five years. Commercial marinas or larger multi-family complexes with more intensive use would be assigned higher EBU counts, scaling their contribution accordingly.

**Interactive Map & Transparency**

In a move to provide total transparency before the final vote, the Town has launched a digital tool for residents. By visiting <https://firstlinecoastal.com/lbkwaterwaysprogram/>, property owners can access an interactive map.

Residents can enter their specific address into the portal to see:

See Canals, page 3

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Canals, from page 2

1. Their property's specific EBU classification.
2. The "tentative" assessment amount they would see on their tax bill.
3. The specific dredging status of the canal adjacent to their home.

Decades of Deferral

The urgency of these meetings cannot be overstated. Longboat Key's canals have not seen a comprehensive maintenance program in over 20 years. In that time, storm runoff and natural sedimentation have rendered some channels non-navigable at low tide, threatening not just boating activity but the swift flushing of water necessary to maintain water quality.

"This is an overdue investment in our water, our quality of life, and our future," a Town spokesperson noted. With the "Canal Maintenance Special District" legally established in late 2024, the only hurdles remaining are the finalization of the assessment roll and the green light from the Commission.

Meeting Details

What: Canal Navigational Maintenance Program Briefings

Where: Town Hall, 501 Bay Isles Rd.

When:

- Wednesday, Feb. 12: 2:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, Feb. 19: 2:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

Residents unable to attend can submit questions directly to
CanalDredging@longboatkey.org or call 941-893-1632.

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Sand, from page 1**Unclogging a Vital Artery**

For the boating community, the destination of the sand is secondary to the removal of it. New Pass has historically been a treacherous stretch of water. Over the last decade, relentless shoaling clogged the channel, reducing depths to as little as a few feet and forcing the U.S. Coast Guard to remove navigational markers in 2017 because the channel shifted too frequently to track.

The current operation is surgically carving a channel roughly 10 to 13 feet deep and up to 200 feet wide.

"It's a win-win-win," said a local marine logistics coordinator. "The boaters get a safe channel back, the City gets a wider beach, and Longboat knows their turn is coming next."

Fueling the Economic Engine

The stakes of this project extend far beyond boat drafts and beach towels. The region's coastline is its primary economic engine.

According to state economic data, Florida's beaches account for more than 25% of the state's attractiveness to visitors. Locally, a healthy Lido Beach generates an estimated \$82 million in direct visitor spending annually. The renourishment protects this asset, buffering the luxury real estate and public parks that sit just yards from the high-tide line.

USACE, Sarasota County, and the City of Sarasota are expected to announce a ribbon-cutting date soon to celebrate the reopening of the pass and the restoration of the beach—a celebration that will likely be attended by officials from both sides of the inlet, united by a shared, if alternating, resource.

Longboat Key News

Sarasota City News

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Letters to the Editor

Town of Longboat Key ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS

The Town of Longboat Key is accepting applications for appointment to the following board and committee:

Planning and Zoning Board Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizen Advisory Committee

All applications must be submitted to the Office of the Town Clerk by **12:00 p.m. on February 20, 2026**. All applicants must be registered voters of the Town of Longboat Key. Late applications will be held for one year for any future board/committee vacancies that may arise.

All members of the Planning and Zoning Board are required to file a financial disclosure form within 30 days after appointment and annually thereafter for the duration of the appointment as required by Florida Statutes Chapter 112.

The Town Commission may schedule a Meet and Greet with applicants at a later date. Please call the Office of the Town Clerk at 941-316-1999 for an application or for any questions. Completed applications may be submitted to:

Town of Longboat Key – Office of the Town Clerk
501 Bay Isles Road
Longboat Key, FL 34228

Stephanie Garcia, Deputy Town Clerk II
Published: 01-30-2026, 02-06-2026

Manager, from page 1

Government Consulting, has begun uploading video interviews of the semi-finalists for Commissioner review. However, the sheer volume of applicants—originally over 85, now narrowed to 36 semi-finalists—presents a significant challenge for the board.

"We have the challenge of going from 36 down to six finalists," Trice told her colleagues at the Feb. 2 meeting, urging them to come prepared with their own top-10 rankings to streamline the debate.

A History of Upheaval and Missed Opportunities

To understand the urgency of Monday's meeting, one must look at the turbulence of the last two years. The City Manager's office has been vacant on a permanent basis since October 2024, when Marlon Brown resigned under pressure.

While officially cited as a retirement due to health and "life challenges," insiders point to the collapse of a high-profile affordable housing deal as the catalyst for Brown's departure. Just a month prior, the city had finalized a \$7 million downtown property purchase for the project, only for funding partners to back out, leaving the city with the land and a crumbled deal.

Following Brown's exit, the city appointed Public Works Director Doug Jeffcoat as the first interim manager. The search for a permanent replacement initially ended in disaster in May 2025, when the Commission voted to fire its first headhunting firm, Colin Baenziger & Associates, citing a breakdown in trust.

This reset the entire process, necessitating the hiring of Dave Bullock, the former Longboat Key Town Manager, to stabilize the ship in June 2025. Now, with Bullock's firm exit date of March 6 looming, the city has no buffer left.

The "Objective" Scoring Matrix

The current search is being led by Warren Hutmacher of Sumter Local Government Consulting. In an effort to avoid the pitfalls of the previous search, Sumter utilized a rigorous, albeit purely objective, scoring matrix to rank the initial 85 candidates.

Hutmacher frankly admitted to Commissioners on Jan. 13 that the system "is not perfect" because it does not account for soft skills. Instead, it heavily weighted specific criteria:

- Experience: Top points for >10 years as a City Manager.
- Scale: Bonus points for managing cities with populations over 50,000.
- Geography: Special consideration for experience in coastal communities and major tourism destinations.

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• Credentials: Points for Master's degrees and ICMA (International City/County Management Association) credentialing.

This "by the numbers" approach has produced a "Tier 1" list of candidates that heavily features seasoned administrators, though not all come without baggage.

The Front-Runners and The Field

The Tier 1 list is led by Thomas Thomas, a veteran administrator who received a perfect score on the matrix. Thomas previously served as City Manager of Compton, California (2023) and Unalaska, Alaska (2018-2019).

He is joined by other top contenders including:

- David Vela: Former City Manager of Odessa and Sweetwater, Texas.
- Tim Gleason: Current Interim Administrator in Davenport, Iowa, and former Manager of Decatur, Illinois.
- Yvonne Kimball: Former City Manager of Morro Bay and Jackson, California.
- Carl Geffken: Longtime Manager of Fort Smith, Arkansas (2016-2024).

Local and Regional Interest

Several candidates with Florida or regional ties have also made the cut, potentially appealing to Commissioners seeking someone familiar with the Sunshine State's unique regulatory environment:

- Andrew Butterfield: City Manager of New Port Richey and former Deputy County Administrator for Manatee County.
- James K. Harriott Jr.: A Sarasota local, former Sarasota County engineer, and former Deputy Manager of Alachua County.
- Tony Palermo: Assistant Community Development Director for Fort Myers and former Lee County senior planner.
- Robin Gomez: Former City Manager of Madeira Beach.
- Tarik Rahmani: CFO and Interim Deputy CM of North Miami Beach.

Unique Backgrounds

The list also includes unconventional candidates outside the traditional municipal track, such as David Wulf, a Rear Admiral in the U.S. Maritime Service and Deputy Superintendent of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and Michael Jensik, a former global head of security for Brinks Co.

However, the field has already thinned. Six recommended candidates, including Kelcey Young and James Gleason, have already withdrawn, highlighting the competitive nature of the market for top-tier talent.

What Happens Next?

If the Commission successfully selects six finalists on Monday, the timeline accelerates rapidly:

- Mid-February: Finalist interviews will be conducted.
- Late February: Background checks completed and a formal offer extended.
- March 6: Dave Bullock departs.

The selected candidate will inherit a city teeming with potential but riddled with complex challenges, including the very affordable housing crisis that ended the tenure of the last permanent manager, intensifying coastal resilience needs, and a community demanding transparency.

"Stability is the goal," said a City Hall source. "We cannot afford another false start."

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Editor Letters



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

Lazy Lobster

To: Editor

We appreciate your kind words about our food and wine review. We also hold Mike Garey in high regard for the cuisine and wine list at the Lazy Lobster on LBK. From a brief conversation with Mike during a visit to the Lazy Lobster, we gathered that he had worked in wine distribution and has deep knowledge of wines, as reflected in the wine list. Recently in our review of the Kiwanis Club Lawn Party on the Bay, we wrote "...this annual event has raised tens of thousands of dollars to help kids in need. Led by the Event Chair, Michael Garey, co-owner of the Lazy Lobster restaurant on LBK, and staffed by a legion of volunteers, the Lawn Party provided a showcase for the hospitality industry on Longboat Key and its Sarasota and Manatee County neighbors."

We have visited the Lazy Lobster in the past and reviewed wines and bar bites; nonetheless, a follow-up review seems overdue. We will plan to visit soon.

I see that we have missed Mike's wine tasting during January at the Education Center. Please let us know when to register for the next wine tasting. We look forward to attending.

Thank you for the feedback Isaac. It's comforting that they have verbally acknowledged it, however I don't see it specifically on this plan. Surely that would be part of the plan. If you can't exit from the area you're re-engineering what's the purpose?

Rich Hermansen

Sarasota

St. Armands Area Resiliency: Follow up

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

You had a question recently about whether or not the City of Sarasota's St. Armand's Resiliency Project includes consideration of upgrades to John Ringling Blvd. northeast of the circle. I wanted to share a couple of graphics that the city included in their package to the county. The first one below shows roadway deficiency areas, including the John Ringling Blvd. stretch in question, and the other one shows a layout of drainage collection and outfall system, I believe, also including the portion on that leg. While all conceptual, to me it shows that this leg is part of the overall project area in need of upgrade. The Town will also continue to convey to the city, the county, and the state FDOT the importance of addressing that leg of John Ringling Blvd. The city has acknowledged that and confirmed that it is part of the overall plan with staff.

Isaac Brownman

Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Longbeach Village meeting

To: Carla and Pete Rowan

You have a wonderful community. It has been my pleasure to work with you both all these years, and to get some things done. You may not have heard the last of me.

Ken Schneier

Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Longbeach Village Meeting

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

Good morning Mayor. Thank you so much for participating in our Longbeach Village

meeting. Your comments were extremely well received. We all appreciate your service to Longboat Key (as well as our Village neighborhood) on the P&Z board, as a commissioner, and as our mayor. We hope your future endeavors are rewarding - and that you consider rejoining the Longboat Key government in the future.

Carla & Pete Rowan

Longboat Key

Broadway Roundabout.

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

Please see below and let me know if you have any questions. Thank you!

Brief Project Recap

The Town worked closely with FDOT on an enhanced design based on their comments to the original project. Town re-engaged Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. ("KHA") in late 2023 to produce the enhanced design. The enhanced design not only includes a roundabout at Broadway Street, but also removes the roadway superelevation per FDOT, and simultaneously adds about 2,000-feet of complete street components, such as 7-foot buffered bike lanes, a 12-foot wide multi-use trail, elevation improvements, and the like. To achieve some of these elements, the project will involve adding retaining walls and handrails, removing existing vegetation on the west side to re-establish the drainage ditch, and adding landscaping.

Construction funding available by FDOT and Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Currently, FDOT now has about \$8.3 million (available for FDOT Fiscal Year 2027 which begins July 1, 2026). Town responsible for the cost of water and wastewater relocations, added landscaping, and brick pavers.

FDOT assumed funding and administrative responsibilities for:

Overall project from bid advertising through construction completion

Compliance with FDOT project delivery and procurement requirements

Project Timeline

Bi-weekly project coordination meetings have been conducted since January 2025

Phase IV Design Submittal – submitted late November 2025, and KHA is handling FDOT review comments

Permitting is in progress – FDOT and KHA have a meeting with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding a small wetland impact on February 9, 2026. FDEP permitting ongoing.

Final Plans Production – planned for March 2026

Project Bid Opening – August 2026

Construction Time. Beginning 3 to 6 months after Bid Opening and then running about 18 months. Complex Maintenance of Traffic with some night work. Plan is to maintain 2-way traffic during the day to the extent feasible.

Isaac Brownman

Assistant Town Manager, Town of Longboat Key

Broadway Roundabout.

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Please send me a brief update on the roundabout status before my meeting with the Village owners at 5 pm this evening. This is the one thing they asked to hear about. Thanks.

Ken Schneier

Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 6

Growing in Jesus' Name



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Dr. Julia Wharff Piermont, Pastor

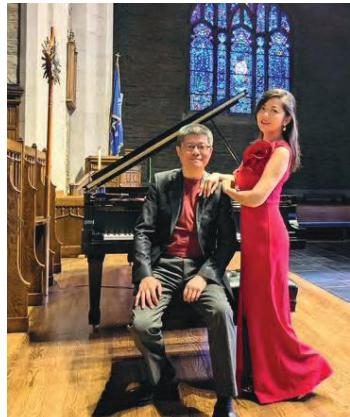
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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 5

CAC Board

To: Longboat Key Commission

As requested at last night's CAC meeting, would you forward this email and attachment to the entire CAC board. On February 10, BJ Bishop, a LBK Commissioner and President of the Manasota League of Cities, will be speaking about the continual threats to home rule (i.e. local government powers) coming out of Tallahassee. Anyone who shares this concern should write letters to their State Senators and Reps. Unfortunately, I'll be out of town that day.

James G. Haft

Longboat Key

USACE New Pass Dredge

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

Regarding the U.S. Army Corps dredge project being conducted at New Pass, contact information for the project is provided below. Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Isaac Brownman

Assistant Town Manager

Town of Longboat Key

USACE New Pass Dredge

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager

This is the PM From the Corps of Engineers:

William C. (Bill) Aley

Project Manager

Programs and Project Management Division

Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Meeting with Lighthouse Point Association

To: Marie DeSantis

OK will do, What time of the day do you think would work for your group?

Gary Coffin

Commissioner

Town of Longboat Key

Meeting with Lighthouse Point Association

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

Looks like our schedules are all over the place. Please give me a good day and time for you and Charlie and I will try to make it work.

Marie DeSantis

Hon. Representative Fiona McFarland

Tallahassee, FL

Meeting with Lighthouse Point Association

To: Marie DeSantis

We are trying to keep the pool from freezing over.... I need to check with a few of the staff and find out their schedules prior to our discussion. How about if I call you later today before 5 o'clock? I trust Bob's closing went well yesterday he was in my thoughts.

Gary Coffin

Commissioner

Town of Longboat Key

Meeting with Lighthouse Point Association

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin

I hope you are keeping warm. It was very nice meeting you the other day.

Would you please tell me exactly what you would like to talk about with our board and I will convey that to them.

Marie DeSantis

Hon. Representative Fiona McFarland

Tallahassee, FL

Meeting with Lighthouse Point Association

To: Honorable Rep. Fiona McFarland

Thank you so much for with me and the other Longboat Key Commissioners at the Capitol during The Florida League of Cities Legislative Days. We know how valuable your time is during session, so we appreciate that you shared some of it with us.

Thank you also for listening to our concerns about the impacts of the property tax bills circulating this session. Each one could seriously impact the quality of life in Florida's neighborhoods, cities and towns. As always, we appreciate your thoughtful work on behalf of your constituents and the people of Florida.

Penny Gold

Commissioner

Town of Longboat Key

To: Sarasota City Commission

I am writing to request your feedback regarding the recent candidate interviews and to

See Letters, page 12

MEMBERSHIP: Come Test the Waters.



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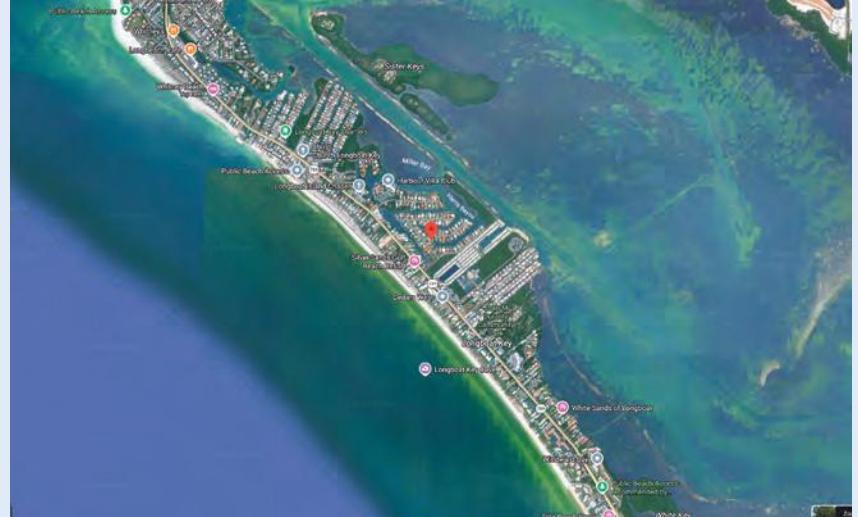
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3060 GRAND BAY BLVD Unit#175	2,143	\$1,950,000	3 2 1	86	\$1,766,000
360 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#332	2,949	\$1,749,000	3 3 1	3	\$1,700,000
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618 BUTTONWOOD DR	3,220	\$1,495,000	4 3 0	15	\$1,350,000
1055 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#305	1,503	\$1,449,000	2 2 0	142	\$1,300,000
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Islander Club

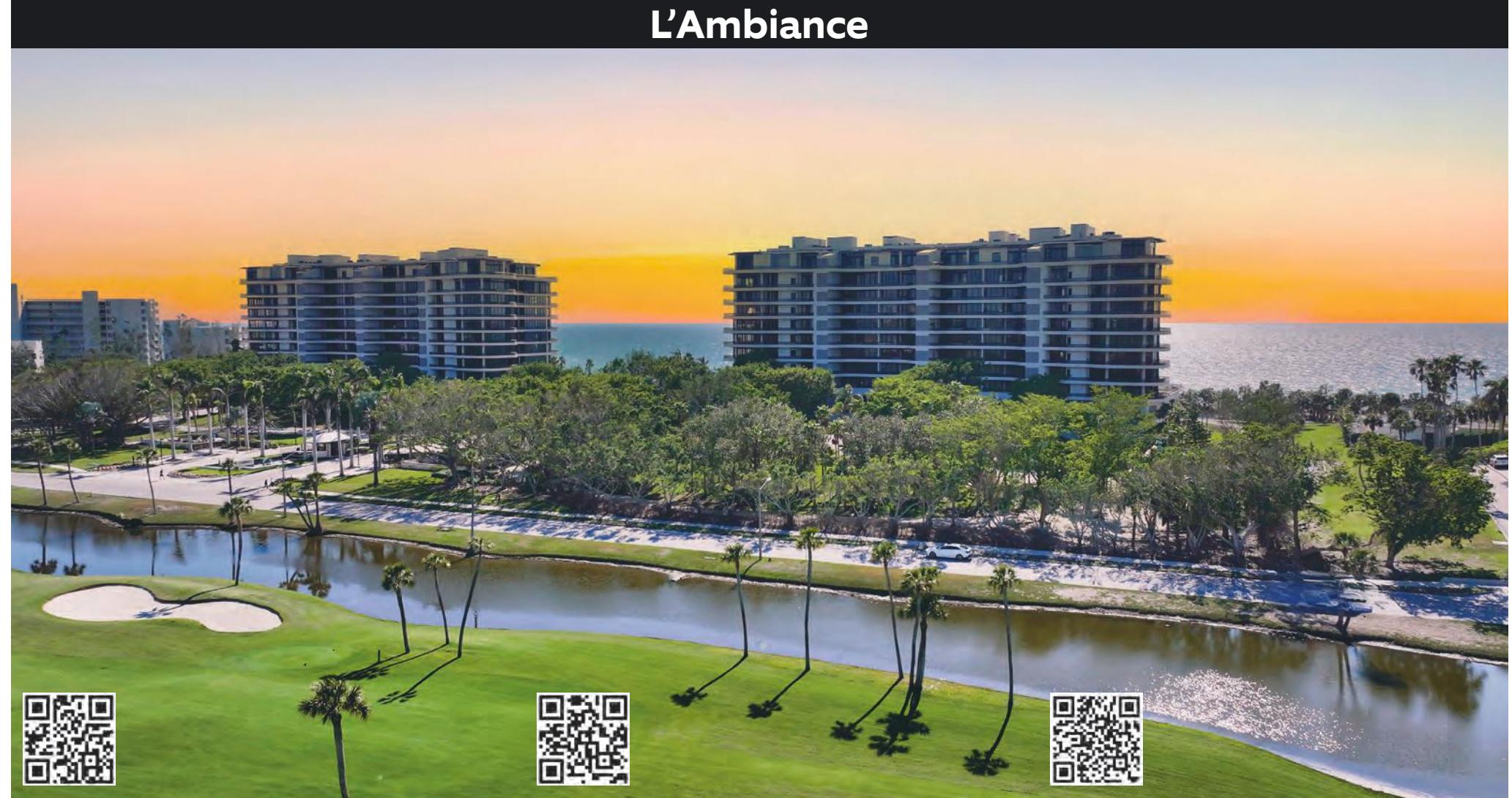


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On Patrol



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

Jan. 31

Vehicle

8:03 a.m.

Officer Pescuma while on patrol observed a vehicle traveling northbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive fail to stop at a steady red signal before making a right hand turn onto Bay Isles Parkway. The vehicle was then traveling eastbound on Bay Isles. The vehicle was located and a traffic stop was conducted on a blue Chevy pickup truck and trailer. Officer Pescuma made contact with the driver and provided the reason for the traffic stop. Officer Pescuma asked the driver for his driver's license registration and current proof of insurance.

The driver handed Officer Pescuma a Mexican ID card. Officer Pescuma asked if he had a driver's license in which she said, "No." Officer Pescuma then asked the man if he was ever issued a driver's license and he said "No." Officer Pescuma conducted an FCIC/NCIC query which confirmed that he does not have a valid driver's license and results yielded negative for wants/warrants. Additionally, the man could not provide current proof of insurance. The man said he was working construction on Longboat Key and did not advise that there was an emergency as to why he was driving. Officer Pescuma issued criminal citation for No Valid Driver's License, Operating a Vehicle Without Insurance and Failing to stop at a red signal before making a right turn. Officer Pescuma advised that the driver could not drive and escorted her to nearby job site to arrange for transportation. Case clear.



Feb. 1

Vehicle

3:36 p.m.

Officer Butler conducted a traffic stop after he saw a vehicle attempting to evade his marked patrol unit and a records check revealed the registered owner's Florida Driver License was suspended and the vehicle had no valid insurance. The driver, who was also the registered owner, admitted her license was cancelled due to nonpayment and that the vehicle was uninsured. The driver was ticketed and the incident was handled as a non-custodial arrest and the driver made arrangements for another party to take possession of the vehicle. Case clear.

Feb. 2

Family

11:22 p.m.

Officer Smith was dispatched to Marbury Lane in reference to a reported verbal disturbance. Upon arrival, Officer Smith made contact with a man and woman outside the residence. The parties were separated and Officer Smith conducted individual interviews. The woman stated there had been a disagreement earlier in the evening with a bartender at the restaurant. She indicated her husband appeared to side with the employee during the incident. The woman advised she told her husband she was leaving for the night and returning home, instructing him to call when he was ready to be picked up. The woman stated that upon picking up her husband, he began arguing with her and the verbal disagreement continued as they approached the front door of the residence. She indicated she informed him several times that she no longer wished to argue and only wanted to go to bed. She stated that after entering the residence and closing the door the man continued speaking through the door and attempted to open it. The woman advised she informed him she was going to call 911 if he continued arguing. The man continued and she subsequently called 911. Officer Smith then spoke with the man who stated they had engaged in a verbal argument regarding the way the woman spoke to staff at the restaurant. He said that she went into her bedroom and he continued attempted to discuss the incident at which time she called 911. Neither party indicated the argument became physical. There were no visible injuries observed on either subject. There were no signs of a struggle or damage observed inside the residence. Officer Tillman completed a lethality assessment with the woman who did not indicate a high risk situation. Both parties agreed to remain in separate bedrooms for the remainder of the evening. Case clear.

Feb. 3

Open Door

5:22 p.m.

Officer Tillman located the unlocked door at the northeast corner of the church. It appeared that the door was unable to lock and was left unsecured. All other doors were secure and a keyholder was not available. A business card was left explaining the open door. Nothing was out of place. Sgt. Puccio advised that periodic night checks will be passed onto night shift and checked throughout the night. Case clear.

Feb. 4

Lost/Found property

3:41 p.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to Bogey Lane in reference to a medical call for a 76 year old woman. The caller did not know the subject and thought the woman was in need of medical assistance due to being confused and frantic. Upon arriving on scene, EMS requested a LEO because the woman did not need medical assistance and that she lost her phone with Florida Driver's License and miscellaneous credit cards and insurance cards. Officer Pescuma called her phone and a man answered and stated that he found the woman's phone on Gulf of Mexico Drive and requested to know how to return it. Officer Pescuma picked up the phone and contents and returned the property back to the woman without incident. Case clear.

Citizen assist

4:05 p.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to Kingfisher Lane in reference to a traffic condition. The caller stated that there are work vehicles obstructing the roadway and the road was flooded. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma did not observe any violations and spoke with the workers who stated that they are drilling a well at Kingfisher Lane and have permits to do so. The workers stated that the caller was complaining about the construction noise, however, they were working within 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Officer Pescuma explained to the caller that there were no violations observed. Case clear.

Citizen assist

4:45 p.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol observed an intercoastal water marker floating in the Sarasota Bay. Officer Troyer contacted the U.S. Coast Guard and notified the officer on duty of the situation and provided grid coordinates. Due to the marker being a hazard to navigation, Officer Troyer towed the marker Bayfront Park using a patrol vessel. Public Works will be notified.

Suspicious

8:00 p.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to Sands Point Road in reference to a suspicious incident. The complainant reported finding what he believed to be a human tibia on the beach. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer met with the complainant and his spouse who said they were finding shells on the beach when they came across what they believed to be a human bone. The woman described the bone as having a distinctive smell as well. The man shared his knowledge of being a prior ER nurse, which he believed the bone was a portion of a human tibia. Officer Troyer contacted the medical examiners office and spoke with the on call employee. Officer Troyer provided pictures of the bone as well. The medical examiners office told Officer Troyer the bone was not human. Due to the bone appearing to not be human, Officer Troyer did not collect the bone. The couple kept the bone. Case clear.

Welfare Check

10:26 p.m.

Sgt. Montfort was dispatched along with members of the Sarasota City Police Department for a possible suicidal subject sitting on the railing of the New Pass Bridge. Dispatch was unsure of the exact location of the subject but was reported to be wearing dark clothing. Sgt. Montfort arrived on scene within a short period of time and was greeted by a man in all black who was fishing. The subject stated he was in fact leaning over the edge, but he was just untangling his fishing line. The man did not report any suicidal ideations and was in good health. Case clear.

Feb. 5

Person

12:34 a.m.

Officer Troyer while on patrol observed a person walking northbound on the right of way, facing the southbound lane of travel. This was a pedestrian violation pursuant to State Statute as there was a sidewalk provided in the area. Officer Troyer made contact with the person who said they did not have an ID on her person, however her identity was confirmed. The woman was walking in the area as she was walking in the area she was dropped off by a trolley in St. Armands Circle. The woman didn't have anywhere to go particularly and didn't want to go home at the moment, which was in Bradenton. Officer Troyer asked the woman if she was willing to let the officer provide her with a courtesy transport to Bradenton Beach or Bradenton. The woman didn't want to at first, but later changed her mind and wanted a courtesy transport. Officer Troyer transported the woman to Circle K without incident. Case clear.



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WineTimes



A Sparkling Valentine's Day

Due to the many quality standards of the Champagne region of France, other producers of sparkling wines offer much better deals.

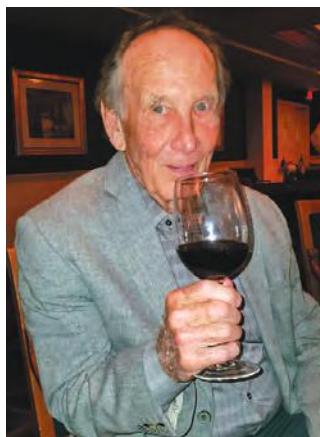
S.W. and Rich Hermansen
Guest Writers
wine@lbknews.com

Sparkling wine has a special role on Valentine's Day. The rising bubbles in two glasses reflect a shared expression of joy in a romantic evening.

The venues of romantic evenings depend on the locale. Favorite restaurants in the Sarasota area, for example, feature outdoor tables and fresh seafood. The ice and snow in the northern cities bring the occasion indoors to a cozy room with candles and a fireplace. Sparkling wines dispel the winter gloom.

So what sparkling wine do you order for Valentine's Day?

In a chic French restaurant, choose a Champagne. For a memorable Champagne, say the Bruno Paillasson, Rose Première Cuvée at Maison Blanche on Longboat Key Florida, expect to pay about twice the retail price (\$80). Should price be no object and you have a yen to impress someone who knows Champagne, choose a vintage Champagne with a year next to it on the wine list. The Champagne houses usually blend Champagne from more than one vintage in the wine that they release in a vintage year, but when a vintage has all the virtues of a great wine, they bottle only the wine from that vintage and label it with the year. The Louis Roederer "Cristal" 2013 (\$400) comes from a great vint.



Due to the many quality standards of the Champagne region of France, other producers of sparkling wines offer much better deals. Close to Maison Blanche, Harry's Continental Kitchen in addition to fine Champagne offers a Method Charmant sparkling wines; that is, a wine made fermented in tanks, similar to Italian Prosecco, with Colombard and other grapes from Burgundy or Bordeaux. The Veuve du Vernay, Brut Sparkling Wine, France, has a fresh, fruit nose and a crisp taste that works well on Valentine's Day as a less expensive alternative to Champagne (Chardonnay or Pinot Noir grapes fermented in the bottle).

Sparkling wines made in the same style as Champagne usually have Methode Champenoise on the label. The French Crémant, the Spanish Cava, and the USA sparkling wines from French Champagne houses usually have the same varieties of grapes and use the same Methode Champenoise method for fermenting wine in the bottle, as do some of the Italian spumante wines. All of these will put the sparkle in your Valentine's Day evening.

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 6

address several points that may benefit from clarification or correction.

It has been brought to my attention that, following the interviews, there may be some misunderstandings about the City of Sarasota that could be helpful to clarify. After observing the interviews, I have outlined the following items for your consideration:

Clarify / Correct Misunderstandings

Infrastructure needs in Sarasota County

Growth and development are primarily occurring outside the City. Within the City, development is largely focused on infill and redevelopment (for example, the Hyatt project).

“Safety” concerns

The primary safety concern is not crime, but rather traffic specifically vehicles traveling through neighborhood streets at speeds higher than residents, particularly parents, are comfortable with.

Downtown redevelopment / revitalization

Downtown redevelopment began approximately 25 years ago and was widely successful some would say overly so. An ad hoc committee has recently been formed and is charged with updating the downtown plan.

Tourism and seasonal residents

While tourism is an important component of our economy, seasonal residents are also a significant part of the community. Owners of second homes are non-voting taxpayers, and many are actively engaged with local government.

If there are additional items you would like me to include or address, please feel free to email me separately. Do not reply all! Thank you, and I look forward to your feedback.

Shayla Griggs

City Clerk

City of Sarasota

City Manager Search Semi-Finalist Candidates

To: Sarasota City Commission

The Tuesday, February 10, 2026, Special City Commission Meeting for the purpose of Discussing City Manager Search Semi-Finalist Candidates; and any other matters that may come before the body; Agenda packet is now available through your iLegislate app. Also attached for your reference you will find the Initial Candidate Recommendation Report (This meeting will begin at 10 a.m.).

Please note that paper packets are available for pickup in the Commission Liaison Office for those who have indicated a wish to continue to receive them. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance, or if you have any questions. Thank you. Have a great day!

Shayla Griggs

City Clerk

City of Sarasota

City Manager Search Semi-Finalist Candidates

To: Sarasota City Clerk Shayla Griggs

I suspect that members are referring to an earlier list of topics and speakers for the season. I will follow up with Lee-En Chung, who told me last night that she's looking forward to my appearance (and organizing a table) in March.

Debbie Trice

Mayor

City of Sarasota

Does the city have such a system in place

To: Ms. Lehrer

Thanks Ms Lehrer for your email and inquiry. I had not heard of this system in the area but you never know! I learn something new every day! Thank you Mr. Fogle for looking into this so thoroughly, I really appreciate it!

Jen Ahearn-Koch

City Commissioner

City of Sarasota

Does the city have such a system in place

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch and Ms. Lehrer

I hope your day is going well. The Public Works Department of Longboat Key manages Parks and Recreation, and they do not utilize lightning detection systems for their beaches.

Please see the below email from Nicole Rissler (Assistant County Administrator). The County does not use lightning detection in any of their beaches, including Lido Beach and North Lido Beach Park, which are City properties that are maintained by the County per the Interlocal Agreement between the City and County.

To assist with safety at the City's public pools (Robert L. Taylor Community Complex/ Arlington Recreation Center/Lido Beach Pool), the Parks and Recreation Department utilizes WeatherBug, a tool that offers real-time data alerts for the City's Red Cross certified lifeguards. Thanks, and enjoy your day!

Jerry Fogle

Parks and Recreation Director

City of Sarasota

Does the city have such a system in place

To: Sarasota City Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Fogle

Jerry no we do not do lightning detection in any of our parks or beaches due to the guidance of our risk and attorney's offices. Our individual leagues have their own handheld systems but nothing that is installed or monitored by the County.

For regular parks questions you can be reach out to Shawn Yeager who is Interim Director. However, if it is related directly to the current conversations related to the transfer you can work directly with Kim Heuberger, Senior Manager and myself. Thanks Jerry – see you on Friday.

Nicole Rissler

Assistant County Administrator

Sarasota County

Does the city have such a system in place

To: Sarasota County Assistant County Administrator Nicole Rissler

I hope your day is going well. Could you please let me know if the County has a lightning alert system at Lido Beach/North Lido Beach Park? I believe I know the answer but just wanted to verify. Could you let me know if there is another contact I could reach out to for inquiries pertaining to parks and recreation items (including Lido/North Lido), considering your responsibilities as the Assistant County Administrator? Thanks, and enjoy your day!

Jerry Fogle

Parks and Recreation Director

City of Sarasota

Does the city have such a system in place

To: Sarasota City Manager Dave Bullock

Please see the attached article... could you add any clarity to this? Very interesting. I am aware that the County manages the beaches but was not sure if this exists on Lido and on LBK still? Please let me know when you are able.

Jen Ahearn-Koch

City Commissioner

City of Sarasota

Westway Drive

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

Thank you very much. We were able to speak to the billing office and they walked us to the audit.

Also, thank you for letting us know about the grasses. We were led to believe that they would be replaced so it's good for us to know that they won't be. Thank you for your prompt response very much appreciated.

Erika Ivanyi

Sarasota

Westway Drive

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

Upon receipt of this email I spoke with Distribution staff and Billing Office staff to understand the situation at 1354 Westway Drive. Field crews were on site to make repairs to the fire hydrant which required removal of the rocks and bushes around the hydrant. Staff have replaced the rock around the hydrant but the bushes cannot be replaced as they were. I have attached pictures that show before and after the rocks were replaced. Staff indicated the bushes were too close around the hydrant and impeded access. Any work done to the hydrant would not have caused the issue with the water meter because the hydrant is tied directly to the water main on the corner of Westway Place and Westway Drive. The water service and meter come in off the water main on the opposite corner on Westway Place and John Ringling Parkway. I've attached a simple screen shot of the GIS system that shows the location of the hydrant (the red dot) and the water services,

Billing Office staff indicate they did review the customer's account on January 5th and January 12th and entered a work order for a high consumption check on the 12th. The high consumption check was completed on January 27th. The Billing Office Manager spoke with the customer today and explained what the data log indicates. Based on the recorded data, there does not appear to be an ongoing issue as the usage was not continuous. It would appear more likely to be something was running such as a toilet flapper or hose bib. The customer will review the information provided and reach out to the Billing Office with any further questions or concerns.

Verne Hall

Utilities Director

City of Sarasota

Westway Drive

To: Erika Ivanyi

Thanks for the email per your water bill and request for an audit. I have copied the City Manager on this email to respond accordingly (and copy me please), and I am confident we will hear from his soon.

Jen Ahearn-Koch

City Commissioner At-Large

City of Sarasota

Westway Drive

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

Sorry to reach out to you about this but not sure how to get help. We received our water bill for November/ December and December / January and they went from an average of \$250 a month to \$550 for the November December bill and \$770 for the December to January bill.

We called the city in early January to ask for an audit and they said it would take two weeks. After we received this last bill, we called again and said that the audit still hadn't taken place in the last bill and that a work order has been put in, but nothing has happened.

On a separate note in November Workers from the city came to work on the fire hydrant outside of our house and we're not sure if somehow that is what's causing the issue. They also took up rocks and grasses and have not fixed it the way it was before they fixed the fire hydrant.

In any case we are not looking for special treatment. We just want to understand why our water bill is so high and what we could do if there's a leak. It feels wasteful and also we're trying to sell the house so it's not a great look that our water bill is high and that our front yard is still not back to the standard it was before the city came to fix the fire hydrant.

This house is for sale and we no longer live in it so the water bill should be very low. Matthias has now shut off the water, but obviously we need to fix any problems. Any help you could give to us would be great. Thank you.

Erika Ivanyi

Sarasota

KeyCulture

What's Happening At The Education Center?

Here are some highlights, just a taste of the February and March programs.



SUSAN GOLDFARB
Guest Writer
NEWS@lbknews.com

It's the height of the season at The Education Center at Temple Beth Israel! The Center is averaging 10-12 classes a day, Monday through Friday, concerts on Sundays, Happy Hour Jazz Nights Wednesdays, and the ongoing annual Lecture Series offering one-time lectures every Tuesday afternoon from 3-4:30 pm with diverse subjects and distinguished speakers.

Here are some highlights, just a taste of the February and March programs, which convey an amazing variety of subjects to enjoy, from Shakespeare to Billy Joel to art appreciation and iPhone classes. As Leonardo da Vinci said, "Learning is the only thing the mind never fears and never regrets."

THE CREATION OF "WICKED", a one-time lecture, will be offered on Tuesday, February 10 from 3-4:30 pm. Stephen Schwartz's immensely popular score of "Wicked" will be examined by Charles Troy, acclaimed dramatic musical theatre historian, in a thoroughly entertaining and informative multi-media presentation with video clips and audio tracks.

MANAGING AND ORGANIZING YOUR APPLE PHOTOS will be conducted by Apple instructor Helen Hoffenberg, who will give two sessions on Thursday, February 12 and 19, from 1-3 pm, covering changes that iOS 26 brings to the Camera and Photos apps. She will also offer a class on Enjoying Your Apple Watch, Thursday, February 26, from 1-3 pm.

BILLY JOEL: Just The Way He Is will be presented by musical biographer Susan Benjamin, Cantor Jay Obrien, and pianist Robert Hanson on Sunday, February 15 from 3-4:30 pm. The program will include fascinating life stories of Billy Joel and a sensational selection of some of his greatest hits.

VISIONS THAT TANTALIZE—The Orientalist Painters—The most celebrated artists of Ottoman culture in the 19th century will be highlighted by art critic Kevin Costello on Wednesday, February 18 and 25 from 11 am-12:30 pm.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS' DREAM- Jonny Epstein, teaching professor of classical performance at the Asolo Conservatory, will engage students with Shakespeare's most enchanting comedy on Friday, February 20 and 27, from 11 am-12:30 pm. Jonny is a longtime, popular teacher of Shakespeare at The Education Center. He brings the plays to life for newcomers and scholars.

Other programs include: Performance and Live Arts at the Historic Asolo Theater; Gene Kelly; The Christian Origins of Antisemitism; Staying Smart in a World Full of Scams; Wind Down Wednesday Happy Hour with wine and cheese, on February 25 from 5-6:30 pm featuring "American and Brazilian Jazz Adventures" with the Thomas Carabasi Quartet, and much more!

Check into these SUNDAY CONCERTS in March, held from 3:00-4:30 pm, which promise to be uplifting and thoroughly enjoyable!

- Mar. 1-Anything Goes-The Cole Porter Story
- Mar. 8-POPera-Operatic pop, a genre that puts operatic style to popular favorites
- Mar. 15- Los Rumberos-Sizzling Flamenco dancing and dynamic rhythms

For prices and course descriptions, and to register, visit www.tbieducationcenter.org. For questions, call 941-383-8222 or email Admin@tbieducationcenter.org. The Education Center at Temple Beth Israel is located at 567 Bay Isles Road, Longboat Key, FL 34228. Classes begin



at 9 am, school office hours are 10 am-5 pm. A secure and convenient Drop-Box is located at the entrance with registration cards when the office is closed.

The Education Center at Temple Beth Israel is a not-for-profit lifelong learning and adult enrichment center that offers over 150 non-credit courses for adults in the fine and applied arts, humanities, liberal arts, and natural and social sciences. Also available are recreational classes, performing arts programs, and special events. All adults are welcome regardless of religion or educational background. A desire to participate is the only prerequisite.



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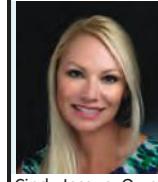
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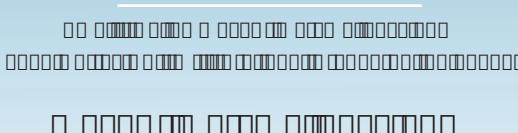


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BreakPoints

Game, Set, Sunshine: Tennis and its Love for Florida

The formula is simple but potent. Florida offers year-round outdoor play, zero state income tax (a massive draw for athletes earning millions in prize money), and three major international airports. But the true magnet is density. In no other place on Earth can a top-ranked player drive 15 minutes to find a hitting partner of equal caliber.

It's 8:30 a.m. in South Florida, and the air is already thick enough to wear. In the manicured enclaves of Boca Raton, the thwack-thwack-thwack of yellow felt against poly strings provides a rhythmic soundtrack to the morning commute.

To the uninitiated, it's just practice. But look closer at the person sweating through a dri-fit shirt on Court 4, and you might just recognize the backhand that won the US Open.

Welcome to Florida, the unofficial locker room of the professional tennis tour.

From the clay courts of the Panhandle to the neon-soaked hard courts of Miami, the Sunshine State has evolved into something far more significant than a mere tax haven for the wealthy. It is the global epicenter of tennis—a peninsula where Grand Slam champions live next door to future stars, where "iron sharpens iron" isn't a cliché but a daily training schedule.

The Ecosystem: Why They All Come Here

"You come for the weather, you stay for the tax breaks, but you win because of the neighbors," says one long-time tour coach based in Delray Beach.

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The state is effectively divided into four "Tennis Kingdoms," each with its own distinct vibe and roster of royalty.

Kingdom 1: The "American Headquarters" (Boca Raton & Delray Beach)

The Vibe: Suburbia meets Superstardom. Training hard, eating clean, and living quietly.

If there is a capital city of American tennis, it is Boca Raton. This is the land where Chris Evert planted her flag decades ago, creating an academy that—along with the legendary Nick Bollettieri (now IMG) in Bradenton—invited the modern tennis factory.

Today, the area is teeming with the current generation of American stars. Coco Gauff, the teenage phenomenon turned Grand Slam champion, is a local hero here. You might spot her grabbing a smoothie at a spot on Glades Road or training at the impeccable facilities of the Delray Beach Tennis Center.

Just up the road, Jessica Pegula, the billionaire heiress and consistent Top 5 player, calls Boca home. She's joined by the "frat house" of American men's tennis: Tommy Paul and Reilly Opelka. Paul recently snapped up a stunning \$2.5 million modern estate in Boca, cementing the city's status as the base for the American resurgence.

The Hangouts:

- **The Food:** Pros are regulars at Pura Vida for açaí bowls and The Hampton Social in Delray for a relaxed dinner.
- **The Scene:** The Boca Raton resort. With its "Racquet Club" featuring courtside bars and a dedicated tennis concierge, it's where the luxury of the sport meets the grind.

Kingdom 2: The Fortress of Solitude (Jupiter & Palm Beach Gardens)

The Vibe: Ultra-private, old money, and gated estates.

Drive 40 minutes north, and the vibe shifts. The courts get private, the hedges get taller, and the names get bigger. This is Williams Sister Territory.

Venus Williams resides in a massive, custom-designed waterfront estate on Jupiter Island, a zip code so exclusive it makes Beverly Hills look accessible. Serena Williams, though she spends time on the West Coast, has held property here for years, using the privacy of Palm Beach Gardens to train away from the prying eyes of paparazzi.

This area is for the veterans who have nothing left to prove and value peace above all else. It's golf cart communities and private docks.

The Insider Spot:

- **The Bears Club:** While known for golf (Michael Jordan is a member), the crossover between elite golfers and tennis stars here is high. It's the ultimate "safe space" for athletes to socialize without being asked for a selfie.

Kingdom 3: The International Glamour (Miami & Fisher Island)

The Vibe: High fashion, humidity, and European flair.

Down south, the energy is electric. Miami is the chosen base for the international jet set. Current World No. 1 contender Aryna Sabalenka has made Miami her home, frequently posting photos from the city's pristine beaches and trendy restaurants like Komodo or Gekko. For her, the humidity isn't a bug; it's a feature that prepares her for the grueling tour conditions.

Then there is Fisher Island. Accessible only by ferry or yacht, this private island is arguably the wealthiest zip code in America. It has its own Grand Slam-surface courts (grass, clay, hard) and has been a refuge for legends like Caroline Wozniacki and past icons like Boris Becker and Steffi Graf. It is the place to be if you want to practice your serve in complete isolation, surrounded by peacocks and billionaires.

Kingdom 4: The Silicon Valley of Tennis (Lake Nona & Orlando)

The Vibe: Futuristic, corporate, and high-tech.



While South Florida relies on history, Central Florida is building the future. The USTA National Campus in Lake Nona is a sprawling, 100-court mega-facility that serves as the "Home of American Tennis."

This isn't just a club; it's a laboratory. It's where Ben Shelton honed the explosive game that took the tour by storm. The campus features "smart courts" with video analytics, dormitories for prospects, and a medical center that rivals NFL facilities. It has turned Orlando into a magnet for players who treat their body like a Formula 1 car.

The Community:

- **Laureate Park:** A neighborhood in Lake Nona where players drive golf carts to the courts and hang out at Boxi Park, an outdoor container park with food trucks and volleyball courts. It's a collegiate atmosphere for pros.

The Verdict

In 2026, you can't tell the story of tennis without telling the story of Florida. It is a state where a Tuesday morning practice session can look like a Grand Slam quarterfinal.

As Tommy Paul told a reporter recently about living in Boca, "One of the hardest parts about tennis is how much time you're away... so when I'm here, I like to keep it simple."

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