

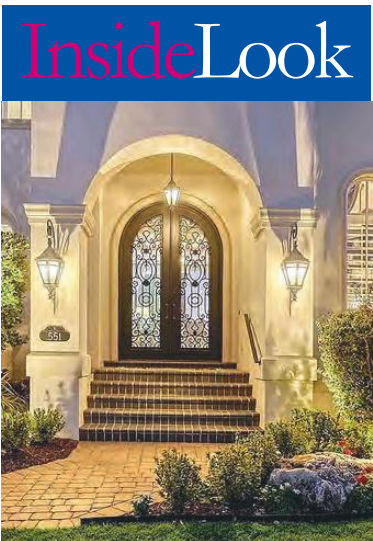


Longboat Key News

June 20, 2025

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InsideLook

Longboat beauty nets \$3.7 million ...page 11



Mote pushes to save seagrass ...page 3



State of business on St. Armands ...page 15



Boat rapidly takes on water ...page 10

Longboat hires Police Chief from Delray Beach to lead force

More than 76 applicants from across the country wanted to work as a Police chief on Longboat Key.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

It's not all hurricanes, library fundraising and road construction on Longboat Key, there is also important police activity that happens on the scenes and behind the scenes, all led by the Chief of Police.

And Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton excitedly announced that Russ Mager, who recently served as Chief of Police of Delray Beach, is taking the helm at the top spot in the Longboat Key police department on August 4.



Longboat holds a certain cachet as a pinnacle endnote for police leaders nationwide desirous to bring their skill sets for a final act to our toney shores.

There were more than 76 applicants from across the country who wanted to work as a chief on Longboat Key. Frank Rubino, one of the applicants, has been serving as Longboat's Interim Chief since George Turner resigned as Chief earlier this year.

Tipton said Rubino was an extremely strong candidate, but that Mager's experience running Delray Beach brought a perfect skill set of community policing, storm preparedness and next generation practices that he wants to

see expanded and implemented on Longboat.

"I wanted someone who had a 21st-century policing attitude. Delray gave him a background in storm events, and Delray is also an accredited department, which is important. Chief Mager has an impressive set of skills, leadership

See New Chief, page 2

Signs of success, progress on St. Armands

St. Armands Residents Association President Chris Goglia released an update this week in which he enumerates "a few reasons to be hopeful about St. Armands Key."

Contextually. Goglia is the tip of the spear when it comes to advocating homeowners concerns to the City of Sarasota whether the issue be airbnb proliferation, storm flooding, traffic or anything causing concern. Here is his report:

St. Armands Resiliency & Flood Mitigation Project

The City of Sarasota has asked the County to apply federal funds to four different stormwater and flooding-related projects within city

See St. Armands, page 2

Baltimore Orioles minor league player dies in Jet Ski crash off Lido Key

The Baltimore Orioles are mourning the loss of one of their minor league players after he died in a Jet Ski accident Sunday off Lido Key in Sarasota County, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC).

FWC confirmed 19-year-old Luis Guevara, a player in the Orioles minor league system, died Sunday after the Jet Ski accident on June 15.

Investigators said two personal watercraft collided in the water off Lido Key. Four people were thrown into the water and rescued by good Samaritans. Two people on the first Jet Ski sustained minor injuries, and two others, including Guevara, were taken to the hospital for treatment.

Guevara later died of his injuries, according to FWC investigators.

"Luis was a beloved member of our organization, and we are devastated following his tragic passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with

See Jet Ski, page 2

Cirque showcases Artist on Lido Key



"Solo the Artist" Kirkwood talks about his art at the first stop of his Discoveries Along The Way Pop-Up Tour at Cirque St. Armands Beachside that happened last week. Learn more about Solo and his work at www.solotheartist.com

New Chief, from page 1

and a track record as a team player,” Said Tipton

Rubino will return to his role as Deputy Chief when major starts in August and Tipton went out of his way to complement Rubino for stepping up as needed.

“Rubino was a strong finalist. He did a good job bridging the gap and provided consistency and strong management and service levels went on interrupted,” Said Tipton.

Russ Mager spent 29 years with the Delray Beach Police Department – his entire policing career. He was appointed as chief in August 2022.

Mager’s resignation came after about a year of contract negotiations between city officials and the Palm Beach County Police Benevolent Association. The union declared an impasse in February; a day after the city’s commission did not reach an agreement with the group on matters such as wages, retirement benefits and take-home vehicles.

In a May 15 letter to city officials, Mager warned that the city’s failure to approve a new union contract was fueling critical staffing shortages.

“As you all are aware we are presently losing officers,” the letter stated — 15 to be exact. “With our current shortages, I have been forced to temporarily reassign officers from specialty units to include pulling from the Detective Bureau, Criminal Intelligence Unit, Motors/Traffic Unit, Problem Oriented Policing Unit and Community Policing Unit.”

Mager was appointed as the city’s police chief in 2022. He replaced Chief Javaro Sims, who retired after serving for 30 years.

Mager, born in Tallahassee, grew up in South Florida. He was raised in Pompano Beach and Coconut Creek, before leaving for Florida State University in 1987.

As an officer, Mager served on the TACT Team, as an auto theft detective, SWAT Team member and Community Patrol Division member.

In 2015, Mager was promoted to lieutenant of the Community Patrol Division. He later became the special operations lieutenant of the Community Response Division. And, in 2019, he was promoted to captain as the Investigative Division commander — a role he held until December 2020, when he became assistant chief.

St. Armands, from page 1

limits. With St. Armands being one of the county’s top tourist destinations, the gateway to the city’s only beach and the only way to reach the Town of Longboat Key from mainland Sarasota, we look to the county to approve the St. Armands Resiliency & Flood Mitigation Project to make us more resilient and able to more quickly bounce back from future storm events.

St. Armands Circle Park and Adjacent Medians

The St. Armands Circle Merchants Association (SACA) is reporting that the city has been planning a landscape refresh project for St. Armands Circle Park and the adjacent medians which is now approved and the work has already begun. All compromised vegetation and trees have been removed. Electrical contractors have been repairing and replacing lighting. And in the next week or two, irrigation work will begin in anticipation of the new plants and trees. There are drawings which show plans for new, lush, and full plantings throughout. By August, there should be a transformation underway. One caveat: the area between storefronts and the curb remains the responsibility of the commercial landowners and/or their merchant tenants.

Overhead Lines Taken Down Between Ringling Bridge and St. Armands

The power lines and poles have been removed from the medians along John Ringling Boulevard. This project was announced during planning to build the St. Armands Parking Garage (pre-2018), and has finally been completed. Goglia reports that he was told that landscape updates to these medians are not immediately planned, but are a conversation within the City Parks and Recreation Department.

Jet Ski, from page 1

his family, friends, and teammates, and we ask for their continued privacy during this difficult time,” Orioles Executive Vice President and General Manager Mike Elias said.

Guevara was signed by the Orioles as an international free agent out of Tinaco, Venezuela, in January 2023. He appeared in 30 games this year, his first season in the United States, playing in 24 games with Single-A Delmarva, four with the FCL Orioles, and two with Double-A Chesapeake. He spent his first two professional seasons from 2023-24 with the DSL Orioles.

The crash remains under active investigation, FWC said in a statement, adding that a full crash report may be issued upon the conclusion of the investigation. The Orioles have postponed two Florida Complex League games this week in honor of Guevara.



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Mote Leads Seagrass Restoration plan makes critical impact

Seagrasses play a crucial role in the health and resilience of Florida’s coastal ecosystems. They provide nursery habitats for keystone species and stabilize shorelines and sediments. Seagrasses contribute significantly to environmental health by filtering excess nutrients from the water (which improves water quality and reduces harmful algal blooms), capturing and storing carbon dioxide (a process known as carbon sequestration that helps mitigate climate threats), and stabilizing coastal ecosystems (enhancing overall resilience to storms and erosion). Yet, these underwater meadows are vanishing at an alarming rate—approximately 7% per year—due to human activities, natural stressors, and impacts of a changing climate.

Recognizing the urgency for innovative solutions to seagrass meadows depleting globally at alarming rates, the Florida Legislature and Governor established the Seagrass Restoration Technology Development Initiative in 2023 through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), with Mote Marine Laboratory leading this effort.

The goal of this Initiative is to develop, test and implement innovative, effective, cost-efficient, and environmentally sustainable technologies and approaches for restoring coastal seagrass ecosystems. The Initiative is a partnership between Mote, the DEP Aquatic Preserve Program, and the University of Florida. Mote serves as the lead administrative component to achieve the goals of the Initiative and create a 10-year Florida Seagrass Restoration Plan.

The Seagrass Restoration Technology Development Initiative is a collaborative and coordinated effort among public and private research entities to develop restoration technologies. It aims to address the loss of seagrass and the cascading ecological and economic impacts of that loss on communities across Florida. As part of this effort, Mote is constructing and managing Florida’s primary seagrass genetic library, serving as a hub for statewide collaboration.

In 2024, Mote completed construction on a state-of-the-art greenhouse, which will serve as a cornerstone for seagrass

research efforts, enabling scientists, from across florida and around the world, to conduct experiments that replicate real-world stressors such as warming temperatures, reduced salinity, turbidity, grazing, and sulfides. By identifying and cultivating seagrass genotypes resilient to these challenges, Mote is laying the groundwork for long-term restoration success.

Mote postdoctoral research fellow, Dr. Dominique Gallery, is playing a lead role in Mote’s Seagrass Ecosystem Restoration Research Program (SERRP), which is designed to tackle these challenges head-on by blending advanced genetic science with practical restoration techniques, a similar approach to Mote’s groundbreaking coral restoration strategies.

Dr. Gallery is a researcher specializing in genetic and genomic approaches to marine conservation, will generate genetically resilient seagrass capable of natural reproduction in land-based nurseries, in-water nurseries, and large-scale gene

banks. Dr. Gallery brings expertise in applying population genetics techniques—previously utilized in coral research—to the emerging field of seagrass restoration.

Since the Initiative’s inception, Mote has successfully leveraged funding from federal grants and philanthropic support to drive critical advancements in seagrass restoration. Mote contracted eight groundbreaking projects in summer 2024 and released a second competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) in December

Mote Aquarium preparing for a big move to its new facility

Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium says it is getting closer to the move from its current location to the new Mote Science Education Aquarium at Nathan Benderson Park.

According to the current timeline, the aquarium on City Island is set to close to visitors on July 6 as staff prepare to move to the new facility.

An opening date for the new facility, Mote says, is dependent on two critical factors: getting water chemistry and essential life support dynamics of the exhibits just right, as well as the quarantine, transfer and acclimation of the animals to the new facility.

According to Mote’s website, the artificial aquatic environment in the new aquarium must maintain a delicate balance. “Part of this exercise is simply waiting for the water chemistry to stabilize,” the website says.

“Once that occurs, critical life support microbial communities are inoculated into exhibit life support systems and must become stabilized before multi-cellular animal inhabitants of the exhibits are introduced.”

Once the animals’ new home is ready, the animals themselves must go through quarantine, then be moved to the new aquarium, and acclimation.

Mote SEA will open only after all animals have fully acclimated to their new habitats, Mote said.



Thirty Three members of Christ Church of Longboat Key joined together at The Beach House on Wednesday, July 11, for a time of good food and fellowship with a spectacular view of the Gulf of Mexico. Their next gathering will be on July 16 at Lo Key.

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EditorLetters



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

Police Chief Selection

To: Longboat Key Commission
 This was shared with our Police Department employees this afternoon. Again, I want to thank and recognize Chief Rubino for stepping up during this interim period. Please let me know if you have any questions.
 Howard N. Tipton
 Town Manager
 Town of Longboat Key

Police Chief Selection

To: Longboat Key Commission
 As you know, we completed the Police Chief interviews on Tuesday. Before I share my decision with you, I want to share my sincere appreciation to Interim Chief Frank Rubino for his steady management during this period of transition. His professionalism and the continued dedication of the Department's personnel have ensured consistent service and stability during this time. Together, you've made it work!
 With that said, and after a national search and careful consideration of the qualities of the three finalists, I am pleased to announce that Russ Mager has been selected to be the next Chief of Police for the Town of Longboat Key. I would expect (for Police Department employees especially) that you have already researched the candidates and so you know that Russ is the retiring Police Chief from the City of Delray Beach, having served that community as their Chief since August of 2022. Prior to that he served in Delray Beach as the Assistant Chief for Field Operations, as a Captain, a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, a Detective, and a Patrol Officer. Although he has a degree from Florida State (nobody's perfect), his vision for our future, approach to team work and major community policing efforts, his participation in state and national leadership programs, along with staff development and a commitment to re-accreditation was the leadership we were seeking as we began this search.
 I am hopeful to introduce Russ to the Town Commission on June 27th before they take their summer break. It is our goal to have him start his new job with us by early August. Until that time, Chief Rubino continues just as he has been as the Interim Chief and my expectations for this are that we will have a smooth transition with everyone's support.
 Thank you again to Frank for his strong management and we remain hopeful that he will continue to be a valuable part of our organization. To the Department, thank you all for your patience and support as we've moved through this hiring process. I also want to thank Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman, Fire Chief Paul Dezzi, Town Clerk Trish Shinkle, and HR Manager Lisa Silvertooth for all of their efforts throughout this process. It was a team effort! Please let me know if you have any questions.
 Howard N. Tipton
 Town Manager
 Town of Longboat Key

Town of Longboat Key Announces New Police Chief

To: Longboat Key Commission
 Following a comprehensive national search and careful deliberation, the Town of Longboat Key is pleased to announce the appointment of Russ Mager as its next Chief of Police.
 Chief Mager brings with him nearly three decades of law enforcement experience, having served with distinction for 29 years at the City of Delray Beach Police Department. His leadership of a substantially larger department, overseeing multiple bureaus and implementing complex citywide initiative, demonstrates the breadth of experience and strategic insight that

align with the Town's long-term vision for public safety. As a sitting Chief, Mr. Mager has a proven record in areas including strategic planning, labor relations, budget management, and community policing. His expertise also encompasses managing a wide range of operational demands, including emergency and storm response efforts. His professional background and leadership philosophy are well-matched with the evolving needs of the Longboat Key Police Department and the community it serves.
 Chief Mager will be formally introduced to the Town Commission on June 27 and will plan to assume command on August 4. The Town would also like to extend sincere appreciation to Interim Chief Frank Rubino for his steady management during this period of transition. His professionalism and the continued dedication of the Department's personnel have ensured consistent service and stability during this time.
 Howard N. Tipton
 Town Manager
 Town of Longboat Key

Announcement: Longboat Key Appoints New Police Chief

The Town of Longboat Key is pleased to announce the appointment of Russ Mager as our next Chief of Police. Chief Mager brings nearly 30 years of law enforcement experience and a proven track record in leading complex public safety operations. He will be formally introduced to the Town Commission on June 27 and officially assume command on August 4. We are also grateful to Interim Chief Frank Rubino for his steady management during this transition. Please see the attached press release for additional details.
 Tina Adams
 Fire Administration & Communications Manager/PIO
 Town of Longboat Key
 Longboat Key Fire Rescue Department

Firefighter staffing

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
 I've reviewed the department's request. And I have a couple of questions. I'd like to follow up on our brief discussion this morning. At your convenience.
 Steve Branham
 Commissioner
 Town of Longboat Key

Let's Talk LBK

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin
 This is Miles Dunlap with Salty LLC. I am the contractor for the rebuild project at 380 N Shore Rd. Just wanted to reach out and say thank you for taking the time to talk to me yesterday at the meeting.
 I would love to receive any recommendations for the private adjustor you mentioned. My hope though is that we will not need to make any further estimates. After talking to Allen Parsons, I am under the impression that the assessment LBK gave is not binding and we can present numbers for the construction that fall under the 50% threshold.
 I am setting up a meeting with Allen, Neil, the Longboat Pass owners association, and myself to confirm our next steps. We would like to file for permits as soon as possible as my clients have and continue to lose funds the longer this project sits.

See Letters, page 5

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Letters, from page 4

Again, thank you for your time and interest in our concerns and if there is ever anything I can help you with feel free to reach out anytime.
Miles Dunlap
Salty LLC

Sea Turtle photos

To: Longboat Key Commission
This is the first I am hearing of these issues since I am off Sun/Mon. If you have these photos without mark-ups Cyndi I will send to FWC/FDEP and Code Enforcement as I do for all other areas we survey so that it is consistent and all of those entities can talk about the best solutions. We have many areas where these types of issues are occurring.
Additionally, the address of the two properties to the north with silt fencing issues and photos would be greatly appreciated so I can send those as well. Terri, I believe you are there tomorrow, can you send me some additional photos of this area, and the nest that Mike sent that does not have an unobstructed path back to the water (6547 GSR)?
Alexis Krummick (Ferrera)
Senior Biologist and Nesting Survey Supervisor
Sea Turtle Conservation and Research Program (STCRP)
Mote Marine Laboratory

Sea turtle photos

To: Longboat Key Commission
Wanted to share some sunny day photos of this dangerous situation. Mike Herron sent photos last week but they were a bit fuzzy. The turtle nested less than 50’ from this empty pool.
In recent weeks we are documenting turtles crawling over 150’ upland from Gulf. When this beach had dunes and vegetation they would only crawl to the edge of that barrier.
The next two properties to the north installed silt fencing during their demolition of the homes. As we all know the silt fences need maintaining. One of the fences is now a hazard for a 200 lb turtle.
Should we send the photo to the listing agent and ask for assistance? Should we report to Code Enforcement? If fence is not required should it be removed if they cannot maintain it from May to Oct?
Cyndi Seamon
Longboat Key Turtle Watch

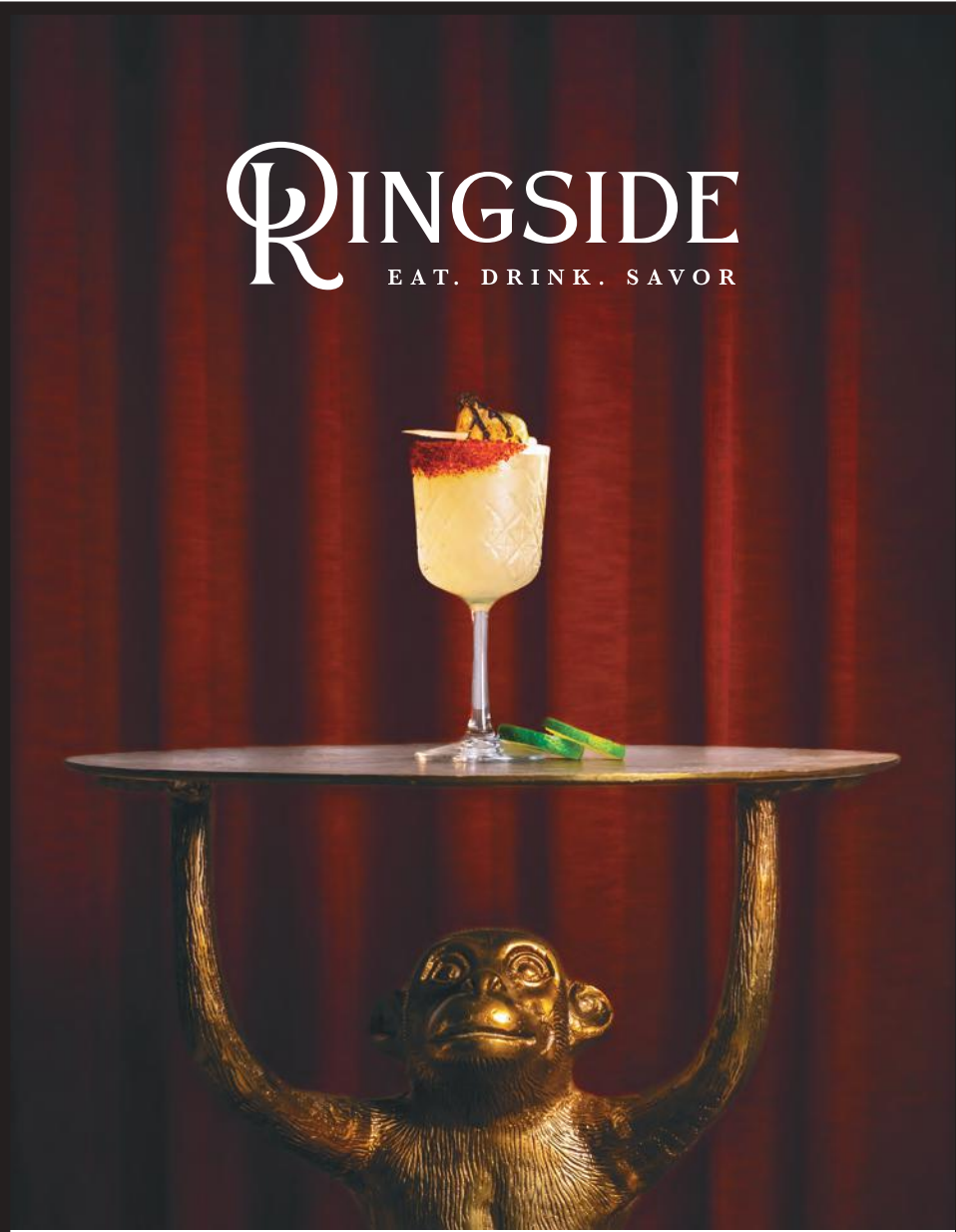
LBK - Budget Conference Report

To: Longboat Key Town Attorney Maggie Mooney
This isn’t a surprise, as Fiona wanted to know why we couldn’t use ladders for the control panels. Let’s hope the subaqueous line grant sticks.
Ken Schneider
Mayor, Town of Longboat Key

LBK - Budget Conference Report

To: Longboat Key Town Commission
Attached please find the Budget Conference Legislative Report from your lobbyists at Ramba Consulting for the 2025 Legislative Session.
The good news is that LBK’s Subaqueous Force Main (SF 1377) (HF 1650) received funding of \$1,500,000 nonrecurring General Revenue in Line 1555 (See pg. 310 of the GAA).
Unfortunately, LBK’s other (smaller) appropriation request, for resilient Control Panel Upgrade (HF 2482) (SF 1665) did not make it into the final conference report.
Given the political tensions and disputes during this Legislative Session, LBK was fortunate to have the subaqueous appropriation included in the budget. However, we cannot celebrate yet. We still need to wait to make sure that the \$1.5 million appropriation is approved by Governor DeSantis. David Ramba and the lobbyists at Ramba Consulting will continue to monitor this for LBK. We will keep you posted on any developments in this regard.
I want to acknowledge all the work and effort by the Commissioners who advocated to our local delegation members in both counties on the importance of the Town’s appropriation requests. Your individual relationships with our local delegation members make a difference. The Commissioners’ efforts along with David Ramba and his team’s advocacy helped ensure that LBK’s critical project and infrastructure made it into the proposed budget. Great work

See Letters, page 6



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Letters, from page 5
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Maggie D. Mooney
Town Attorney
Town of Longboat Key

LBK - Budget Conference Report
To: Longboat Key Commission

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Maggie D. Mooney
Town Attorney
Town of Longboat Key

Suncoast Waterkeeper Weekly Review

To: Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Executive Director Dave Tomasko

Do you have any thoughts about what might have caused this distressing increase in the numbers?

Penny Gold
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Suncoast Waterkeeper Weekly Review

To: Suncoast Waterkeeper Peyton Faulk

Some high values in there. Do you have any pictures of sites that were visited?

Unusual, in that most of the elevated values were along the barrier island (LBK boat ramp, LBK bayfront park, SRQ Sailing squadron) rather than along the mainland shoreline. The mainland shoreline has a much bigger watershed, and more wastewater infrastructure (no WWTPs on the barrier islands anymore) and the barrier island sites are closer to passes, with higher salinity and greater flushing. So a bit odd. Was wind out of the east?

Dave Tomasko
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneider

A very brief but enthusiastic "shout out" of thanks to you and the commissioners, including Debra Williams, for working discussions toward a reasonable and fair disposition of the

See Letters, page 8

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EditorLetters



Letters, from page 6

“Canal Dredging Issue.” Going forward, this is model that we, both east and west of GMD, should support.
Craig Wright
Professor Emeritus, Yale University

How common are the results from Sarasota Bay

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission
As you are (hopefully) aware, we have seen some really good news about the bay’s health the last few years. Dating back to 2023, we’d been informing our stakeholders about the accumulating evidence that our bay’s water quality was starting to turn around - Director’s Note: Report card update & meetings in Washington, DC.
By the fall of 2023, FDEP staff in Tallahassee came down to meet with us to confirm and convey the good news that water quality had improved sufficiently in Sarasota Bay that none of the open waters of the bay were out of compliance with the SBEP-developed Numeric Nutrient Concentration (NNC) criteria - Director’s Note: FDEP determinations of water quality trends/.
We were fairly certain that the improvements were going to result in a substantial increase in seagrass coverage, which we discussed in both 2023 - Director’s Note: Good news on bay recovery, and also in 2024 - Director’s Note: Reasons for optimism - with a few caveats
The basis for the water quality improvements was covered in depth in prior Director’s Notes, and also is used in great detail in the development of the SBEP-led Water Quality Protection Plan, which is due to be completed this summer - Director’s Note: Honing in on the basis for recent trends.... And the improving condition in the bay are not just something that a statistician and/or chemist would be able to determine, my regular communications with recreational fishing guides has led to me being more confident that our findings are reflecting the reality of a cleaner bay - Director’s Note: Recreational fishing guide feedback on bay health.
And then, earlier this year, the culmination of all our hard work came about: the wastewater upgrades and large regional stormwater retrofit projects and public education about living a more bay-friendly lifestyle seem to have paid off by us having a 19% increase in seagrass coverage the last two years, an increase likely large enough to provide habitat for over 70 million fish, and providing more food for manatees and sea turtles - Director’s Note: 2024 Seagrass results - further good news on the bay’s recovery.
There is a lot to be proud of – our local elected officials and partners have funded over \$300 million worth of efforts that have turned this bay around. To be sure, this recovery could slip away from us, like it did before. And the threats of climate change – higher rates of sea level rise, warmer air and water temperatures, the risk of more dangerous hurricanes – all these could set us back again. But for now, let’s just enjoy the moment, maybe?
And let’s take pride in the uniqueness of our recovery. Just last year, FDEP released its “Integrated Water Quality Assessment for Florida: Sections 303(d), 305(b) and 314 Report and Listing Update”. In that report, there is a summary of results from monitoring sites located across the state, where data were analyzed to look for any trends over time in water quality. Of those sites, only 32% showed evidence of improving conditions for Total Nitrogen (TN) and only 15% showed evidence of declining levels of chlorophyll a, the indicator of phytoplankton biomass that FDEP and the US EPA use. While many locations showed lots of variability but no trends, 46% of those stations had a trend of increasing chlorophyll-a.
Basically, in a state where it is much more likely that water quality (as far as nutrients) is

getting worse, not better, we are an outlier – and in a good way. Oh yeah, none of those sites showed a decrease in water temperature, but half showed an increase. Climate change is happening, folks, the data are clear and accumulating.
But this begs the question: Is the success of Sarasota Bay only possible because our watershed is so small? Well, I don’t think so. And the reason why is because of what the stakeholders have pulled off in the Chesapeake Bay, where the Chesapeake Bay Program is the example upon which the National Estuary Program was designed.
This plot shows “flow-adjusted” trends over a 30-to-40-year period (varies depending on location) of the concentration of nitrogen in the bay itself, and also in its main tributaries, rivers as large as the Susquehanna, whose watershed includes much of Pennsylvania and even a bit of New York, to the Potomac (where I grew up), and then down to the James. The symbols with a downward-facing green triangle represent statistically significant downward trends (which is good) in the amount of nitrogen in the water column, after adjusting for the influence of wet and/or dry conditions.
Of the dozens of stations shown, well over 95% of them had decreasing TN concentrations. In Florida’s latest 305(b) report, the number of monitored stations with decreasing TN values was about 32%. But you know what’s really interesting here? The Chesapeake Bay’s watershed is almost exactly the same size as the entire state of Florida! Which means, a bay which drains a landmass almost as large as the entire state of Florida (and which houses over 18 million people) has been able to implement a pollutant load reduction strategy that has been able to improve water quality at more than 95% of its stations. That’s proof that you don’t have to be small to pull off water quality recovery.
One of the reasons why the Chesapeake Bay focused so much on reducing TN values was (similar to us) their desire to increase the amount of underwater grass beds (aka seagrass, or submerged aquatic vegetation). This graph, also from the Chesapeake Bay Program (and using data from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science), shows the plot of seagrass over the past 20 years.
After large rain events, seagrass coverage across the bay drops, but it doesn’t collapse the way it did in much of the Indian River Lagoon about a decade ago. And then it starts to increase again in a year or two. That’s what resilience is about – not a system that never changes, but a system that can bounce back quickly. That’s what we now have in Sarasota Bay, I believe, and that’s what the Chesapeake Bay has become. Also, check out the lower yellow line; that’s evidence that not only is the Chesapeake Bay cleaner than it was 30 to 40 years ago, but it also has a lot more seagrass habitat than it had 30 to 40 years ago.
Just like us. And maybe, one day in the future, the state as a whole might be able to see the trends we now have in both Sarasota and Chesapeake Bays.
David Tomasko
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Suncoast Waterkeeper Weekly Review

To: Longboat Key Commission
Could be. The important thing about these “fecal indicator bacteria” is that they are not specific to humans, mammals or even animals as a source. You can get high levels of these bacteria from sewage or dog poop or rain washing bird poop off of docks.
But you can also get high levels of these “fecal” bacteria from decomposing grass blades from a neighborhood that blows grass clippings into the storm drain system, or from decomposing seaweed, or from the sloughed off seagrass blades. All those 12,000 acres of seagrass – those blades are replaced every month or so in the summertime, and when they decay/decompose, they can be the source of the bacteria as well as sewage.
David Tomasko
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Suncoast Waterkeeper Weekly Review

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Penny Gold
Our experience is that it is almost always a sea grass accumulation, usually as a result of some stronger winds (which the rain storms can bring). It is an odd reading as Dave T. pointed out and so we’ll continue to monitor.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 12

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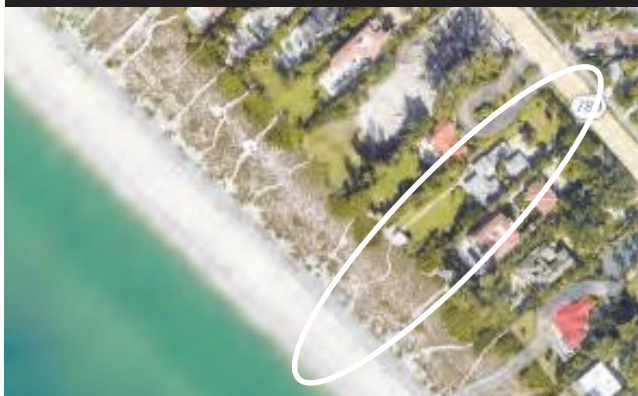
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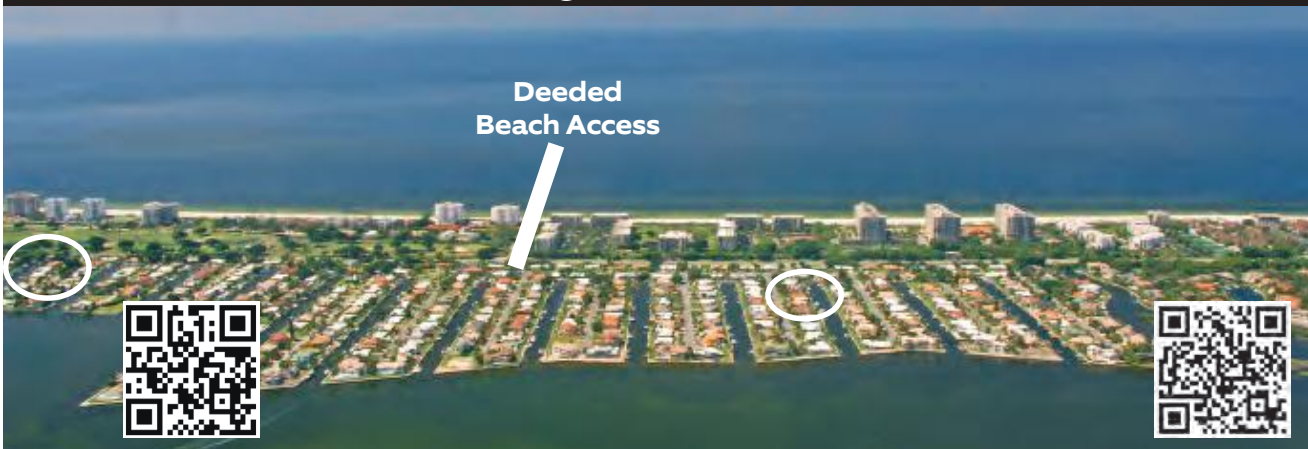
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OnPatrol



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

June 13

Missing property

10:33 p.m.

Officer Miklos was dispatched to Broadway in reference to a report of a theft of a kayak and oar. Sarasota Sheriff's Dispatch advised that the caller says it's an ongoing issue. Furthermore, a time frame of approximately 9:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. was given. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with the caller who stated that she found the kayak and oar tied off at Broadway. The caller advised she spoke to a group of people fishing who advised they did not touch the kayak. The caller was able to retrieve the items without incident. While speaking to the caller, she advised she was missing additional items that occurred on May 24. The caller said two double sided oars and a paddleboard were missing. The caller said she was unable to confirm if the items were stolen, pushed into the water by someone, or if the items washed away. The caller believed the paddleboard was tied off far enough away from the water where the tide would not have affected the paddleboard. The caller said she did not wish to prosecute at this time and only wished to document the missing items. The caller advised that a lost property report was sufficient. The caller was unable to provide any serial numbers for the missing items. It should be noted that a newly installed camera appears to be pointed at the boat dock area. The caller was provided a business card with a case number. Case clear.



tie it back to the remaining line without further incident. Case clear.

June 14

Citizen assist

10:21 a.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to the 6400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The call was a public service call. An employee at the Church called in the complaint of a black Ford F-250 was seen in the parking lot in an area of damage to the parking area. Pictures of the truck, the damage, and the license plate were taken by an employee and provided to the officer. The license plate was a Florida plate with the owner on Longboat Key. The complainant said to Officer Maple that the driver was a woman. The woman matched the driver's spouse. The woman resides at the same address as the driver and owner of the truck. Officer Maple spoke to the owner of the truck on his phone. The owner stated that his wife was out working with the turtles on the beach and got the truck stuck in the mud and gravel parking lot. The owner explained she was unable to put the truck in four wheel drive and reverse. She went over the curb and accelerated, causing four divots in the parking lot. The owner stated he would be happy to apologize for his wife and fix the damage to the parking lot. The observed damage is only superficial. Officer Maple spoke to the complainant and asked him if he was happy with the resolution. The complainant agreed to the resolution. The owner will fix the parking lot. Officer Maple determined there was no criminal intent. Officer Maple closed the case. Case clear.

Citizen assist

5:20 p.m.

Officer Troyer while on marine patrol, was flagged down by a good Samaritan informing the officer of a nearby yacht that lost their dinghy while underway. Officer Troyer spoke with the occupants of the yacht, whom informed the officer they were attempting to get their passengers whom fell overboard, but their dinghy was not functioning. The occupants asked Officer Troyer to assist with getting their passengers back, whom were on another boat as another good Samaritan took them on board due to the strong currents off of Jewfish Key. Officer Troyer assisted with picking the passengers up from the nearby other yacht, and transporting them back to the original yacht. Case clear.

Marine Rescue

12:20 p.m.

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Officer Barrett while on patrol, observed a personal watercraft in distress at the Longboat Key Bridge. Upon approaching the personal watercraft, the operator advised that he was taking on water and could not start the PWC. Due to the strong current, the man was quickly swept under the bridge and drifting in an eastbound direction. The Personal Watercraft capsized and began to sink. Officer Barrett gave the man a line and had him secure it to the bow of the watercraft. Officer Barrett then pulled him out of harm's way to the shallow sand bar on the west side of Jewfish Key where he could stand and the PWC could only sink to a couple of feet of water. While dealing with the man and his sinking Watercraft, the strong current and shallow water. Officer Barrett entangled the anchor line of a vessel the owner was able to retrieve his anchor and

Boat

12:33 p.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to the 3400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a reckless boat call. Officer Maple arrived on scene and observed one aqua and white jet ski anchored approximately 50 yards off the beach with numerous personnel around. Officer Maple spoke to the complainant on the phone to confirm that was the jet ski in question. The caller said that the jet ski earlier had been operating north and southbound close to the beach at a high rate of speed. Officer Maple spoke to the jet ski owner who was from Venezuela. The caller stated he did not know the rules. Officer Maple explained the course of action to the complainant who was satisfied with actions by Longboat Key Police Department. Case clear.

Parking

8:09 p.m.

Officer Miklos was dispatched to Gulfside Road in reference to an illegally parked vehicle in a private empty lot. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with the complainant who advised the lot is her friend's lot who is out of town. The complainant advised this is an ongoing issue with vehicles parking in the lot and walking to the beach. Officer Miklos advised the complainant that the vehicle was on private property and the police could not remove or cite the vehicle. Officer Miklos advised the complainant that the homeowner could have the vehicle towed. The complainant advised she would like the vehicle moved, however, was more concerned with the groups trekking through the dunes with equipment like wagons and tents ruining the aesthetic of the dunes. Officer Miklos suggested that the complainant and the owner of the lot, rope off the driveway or put signs out preventing a future issue. Officer Miklos located a group fishing on the beach and advised them that their vehicle was parked in someone's yard. The group advised they would move the vehicle without further incident. Case clear.

June 16

Found property

4:22 p.m.

Officer Mathis while on patrol in the 4000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive, observed a red igloo cooler in the roadway. Officer Mathis retrieved the cooler from the roadway. While checking the contents, he located a black wallet containing a Florida Driver's License, credit cards and cash. Officer Mathis then made contact with the driver, and he said he would come to the police department to retrieve his lost property. Case clear.

Flag

4:30 p.m.

Officer Ericsson while on patrol was dispatched to Sable Cove Place on criminal mischief. Upon arrival, Officer Ericsson contacted the complainant who said while he was out of town, he had a U.S. flag mounted to the front of his residence by a contractor. The flag was mounted into the stucco on the east side of his house at the top of the staircase. When the homeowner returned home, he noticed his flag on the ground below where it was mounted and the bracket holding the flag, laying on the front porch. The man believed the flag was torn down by someone and wanted to report the damage. Officer Ericsson observed the bracket and flag on the front porch of the residence. He observed the bracket to have three short screws still intact with three plastic anchors. All appeared to have been stripped out of the wall. There was minimal damage to the exterior wall where three perfectly cylindrical holes were observed to have held the bracket. The flag was made with a wood pole and heavy cloth. It appeared to me that the flag was not ripped from the wall by someone, but rather, stripped from the wall from the wind due to the weak anchors and short screws. Officer Ericsson advised the owner, and he agreed that the lack of proper bracing and the weight of the flag could have caused the flag bracket to dislodge. Officer Ericsson observed no damage to the flag itself or any other damage to the surrounding area. Case clear.

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5444 GULF OF MEXICO DR	4,828	\$4,850,000	4	5	0	305	\$2,300,000
1241 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#105	2,585	\$2,150,000	3	2	1	0	\$1,950,000
603 LONGBOAT CLUB RD Unit#1102N	1,458	\$1,595,000	2	2	0	84	\$1,500,000
523 BAYPORT WAY Unit#523	1,685	\$865,000	2	2	0	52	\$845,000
1928 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#1404	2,565	\$885,000	2	2	0	26	\$840,000
3080 GRAND BAY BLVD Unit#533	1,413	\$819,000	2	2	0	10	\$800,000
1945 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#M2-313	1,265	\$739,000	2	2	0	1	\$739,000
4310 FALMOUTH DR Unit#301	1,316	\$725,000	2	2	0	12	\$675,000
710 FOX ST	1,130	\$495,000	3	2	0	51	\$440,000



551 RANGER LN



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Editor Letters

Letters, from page 8

P&Z Board meeting

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon

I have not forgotten your expressed interest in attending a meeting of the P&Z Board sometime, and to which I have promised to invite you. After a long hiatus - last meeting was in January - on short notice the Board has been called into session for a workshop tomorrow, Tuesday, June 17. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend - I am committed to a conference of the federal judiciary for this coming week out of state at which I am a scheduled speaker (the subject is the effect of recent Supreme Court decisions on the Administrative State, an interesting issue indeed).

This is the first Board meeting I can remember missing. In any event, this Board meeting is basically a workshop for us to get caught up on the pending tree business, of which you are well acquainted, and regarding which I just sent the Board members a lengthy memo (which I will be glad to share with you though you might do just as well to wait until we get something official to the Commission). I will keep you in mind for our next regular meeting if you decide not to go to this one.

Jay Plager
Longboat Key

Budget File for Commission

To: Longboat Key Commission

In accordance with our Town Charter, Art. V, Sections 3 and 6, the Town Manager shall submit to the Town Commission, on or before the fifteenth day of June of each year, a Preliminary Budget and Capital Program for the ensuing fiscal year.

This memorandum and PowerPoint fulfill this Charter requirement. I want to thank Sue Smith and Sandi Henley, as well as our Department Directors, for their work and collaboration in developing this document for your review and discussion on June 23rd.

Howard Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Gulfside Solution

To: Steve Weyl

I can see your point, but from my perspective it's best for the Town to look at our beaches and canals in their entirety rather than highlighting specific locations. Gulfside Road is an erosion hotspot that threatens to spread, so the groins will benefit the entire shoreline even as the local residents have the most to gain. I think that's the direction the Town is leaning in terms of the entire circumference of shoreline, Gulf to Bay

— that it is one beneficial (drainage, habitat), traversable (by foot or on water), enjoyable waterway and ecosystem and as stewards we are tasked with maintaining it as such. That said, I will definitely keep your thoughts in mind as the dialogue continues!

Sarah Karon
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Gulfside Solution

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon

Thanks for being on the LBK North call this afternoon. You mentioned Gulfside today, and I just read about the canal dredging project and the 80/20 split for the cost – which is nothing more than shouldering most of the cost on the property owners who will benefit the most. I own two canal front properties – and I agree with this approach 100% - it really is an equitable way to pay for this.

Why wouldn't the same concept apply to the 16 property owners on Gulfside? The property values on Gulfside will arguably be worth significantly more if groins are installed. (Gulfside is currently vulnerable to storms. I have to believe any real estate appraisal/professional would substantiate and monetize the increase in value). I bet if you take the increase in value divided by the cost of the groins – the value increase would outrun the total project cost! That said, I'm not sure why the 80/20 rule wouldn't be apply here. Thoughts?

Steve Weyl
Longboat Key

Gulfside Solution

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon

Congratulations on becoming a commissioner for District 5. I'd like to share a recent email sent to all the commissioners in November 2023. In full disclosure, I had the gulf front property at 6489 Gulfside in contract last year and chose to bail from the contract as I felt it would be irresponsible to build on the highest erosion location on LBK. Now there is a \$17 million spec home that is under construction and for sale at 6489 Gulfside. I am sure that the developer is hoping that the LBK taxpayers will insure their profit. Thank you in advance for your consideration and representation of the majority.

Hello LBK Leadership – As a resident of LBK, I'd like to share my thoughts on Gulfside Road and perhaps a reasonable path forward for this troublesome area. Hurricane Idalia certainly affected this strip of 16.

Steve Weyl
Longboat Key

Gulfside Solution

To: Longboat Key Commission

As a resident of LBK, I'd like to share my thoughts on Gulfside Road and perhaps a reasonable path forward for this troublesome area. Hurricane Idalia certainly affected this strip of 16 properties, exposing continuous rows of old seawalls, but this should not be viewed as a new problem. These seawalls date back a half century - well before sea rise concern and put in place for a reason. (see enclosed power point and dating of Ohanna seawall) My fear is that taxpayers are going to be asked to bail out 16 owners of multi-million-dollar properties who made a choice to live/build in an area that has historically endured erosions.

Here are some bullet points that may help guide your future decisions on what to do with Gulfside Road as well as Ohanna...

In a public meeting held June of 2022, one of the LBK commissioners expressed my exact concerns regarding potential unfairness of taxpayer funding for the 16 properties. I know there is some support for this sentiment already.

The Ohanna seawall roadblock is unfortunate from a beach walker standpoint, but I believe this affects very few people, which includes me. Yes, I'd like to continue walking south of

See Letters, page 13

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 12

Ohanna like I used to, but there is still a very good amount of beach to walk north of Ohanna and I think the vocal minority has gone through their “grieving process” and unhappily accepts the laws regarding beachfront property ownership.

In a candid conversation with the coastal engineer who had input on the enclosed Power Point, he mentioned on a phone call that he did not know how successful the groins would be in holding the sand. He was confident that this area would be a challenge given how far the groins would jet out from Ohanna wall (200’ ++) creating a very unnatural peninsula. He also questioned whether FDEP would actually allow such a project that would extend out that far into the gulf.

If the groins are installed taxpayers will be strapped with maintaining the renourishment at a potentially steep and unknown cost. Note – All of the cost estimates were done prior to recent inflation spikes.

Now that Hurricane Idalia has exposed seawalls and other hard structure – I believe LBK code requires property owners to maintain seawalls (Seawalls shall be maintained plumb and in good repair, without visible deterioration, spalling of concrete, exposed reinforcements, ground holes, or other damage). Why not enforce current municipal code? This would also give property owners an opportunity to protect their properties and exhibit their willingness to do so without relying on others (taxpayers) to bail them out.

Casey Key Example:
Use Casey Key as a guideline. Very exclusive beachfront homes protected by natural rocks at homeowner expense. It does not seem to influence property values nor a desire to build beachfront. In fact, new home construction is built to withstand sea rise and as time goes on, people will build with the expectation of erosion and storm surge. I believe that LBK can make an investment and effort to help the 16 property owners with getting the necessary clearance to reinforce their properties. This might not be a perfect solution, but it does not strap taxpayers to a very questionable and expensive project. Here is an example of a Casey Key home:

In summary – Gulfside erosion is not a new problem as is evident with half century old seawalls. The owners of these properties are/were aware of the challenges in this area (or at least should have been aware with some due diligence) and LBK can empower these homeowners by getting the necessary clearance to reinforce their properties, enhance the aesthetics, and help maintain property values. Taxpayers should not be asked to bail out 16 homeowners that have current property values of \$4 million (land only) to as much as \$17 million (i.e. spec home currently being built at 6489 Gulfside Rd) for an expensive experimental project that will require constant funding. In the best interest of the majority of LBK homeowners, wouldn’t it make sense to at least explore and try this approach first before committing to such a large investment – what do we have to lose? Thank You for reading this.

Steve Weyl
Longboat Key

TDC

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin
Thank you for the support and kind words. We have a great team at VSC. I was able to go to Michael’s on East last night with my husband to get the Savor Sarasota menu and it was phenomenal, as usual. Still planning to try to get to a few more spots next week, so definitely will have to try to get out to the lazy lobster. Thanks for sharing the Intel!
Erin Duggan
Executive Director
Visit Sarasota County

TDC

To: Visit Sarasota Executive Director Erin Duggan
Erin, just a note to say thank you for you for your descriptive update yesterday, as usual, very informative. Wanted to say we had a meal at one of the Saver Sarasota establishments The lazy lobster and had an excellent meal with excellent feedback from the owner, Michael Garey regarding the response to this program. Thanks again.
Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Beautiful oak tree cut down at S. School Ave.

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Jen Ahearn-Koch

I am writing regarding my beautiful oak tree that was cut down on October 10, 2025. It is within the 6-foot area from the road.

In October 7, 2024, I had left Sarasota due to Hurricane Milton and was out of state. On October 10, there was a small water leak from a pipe next to the tree that alerted my neighbors to contact me.

My neighbors called the City and someone showed up to address the pipe’s water leak. Since I wasn’t there, I do not know who specifically decided to cut down my gorgeous oak tree, home to woodpeckers, cardinals, blue jays, etc., but they cut it down.

I need your help to please remove the stump that is still in my yard, replace the area with sod, and also plant a new tree.

I have attached photographs for your view. The diameter of the stump is approximately 17 inches. I think the trees across the street were planted at the same time.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.
Linda Wolfe
Sarasota

Beautiful oak tree cut down at S. School Ave.

To: Linda Wolfe
Thank you for your email. I am so sorry about the oak tree and I have copied the Interim City Manager and City Arborist on this email to respond accordingly. So sorry the beautiful Oak is gone!
Jen Ahearn-Koch
City Commissioner
City of Sarasota

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WineTimes

St Armands – Lido Key Food & Beverage Sector Resilience Part 2

While far from complete, the recovery of the St. Armand’s Circle and Lido Key area has moved beyond its critical first stages.

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

Last week’s Wine Times column surveyed the St. Armand’s – Lido Key food and beverage sector beginning on City Island and moving south on Boulevard of the Presidents along the west side of the circle to Lido Beach and back north toward the Circle.

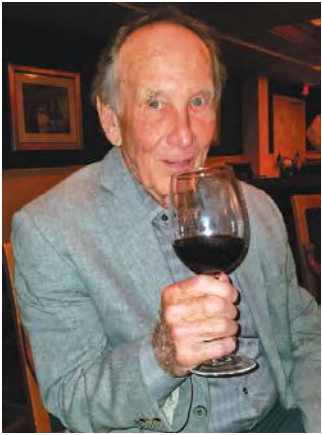
Continuing the survey past Kilwin’s and River Street Sweets on John Ringling approaching the Circle, we see Rico’s Pizzeria and Le Macaron open to walk in customers. Many of the stores on the south side of the Circle have closed. Ben & Jerry’s has opened and serves ice cream until 10PM. Big Olaf’s Creamery (serving Yoder’s Ice Cream) on west Washington Street stays open to 10PM as well. Two locations of Ephesus Mediterranean Delights have reopened on the Circle. Settimi’s Gelato, as one would expect, serves tasty gelato.

The Meaney’s Mini-Donut shop at the intersection of the Circle and Boulevard of the Presidents has closed. Going south away from the Circle along the hard-hit area on the right side of Boulevard of the Presidents, all food venues have closed. The Italian ristorante Le Colonne, famous for Mama Graziella’s handmade pasta, has a “temporarily closed” sign out front. We are hoping that this landmark restaurant makes a comeback soon.

Across the Boulevard of the Presidents from Le Colonne, the trattoria 15 South by Napulè, offers a full bar, a wood-fired Neopolitan pizzas, and handmade pasta. Continuing north and east on the Circle, the Crab and Fin restaurant (craft cocktails and fresh shell and fin fish dishes) is serving a steady stream of customers. Going east on John Ringling toward the Ringling Bridge, a new I Love Candy and Ice Cream location is opening just before the large Alvin’s Alley store. In the middle of that block, the Blue Dolphin Café opens early for coffee and breakfast. Past the Blue Dolphin, the Green Zebra (vegetarian) has opened for takeout orders.

Continuing north across John Ringling and circling back west toward the Circle, Tommy Bahamas Restaurant has staked out an expanse of storefronts below the former location of the Shore Restaurant on the level above. Tommy Bahamas plans to open both the lower and upper levels of restaurant space this summer.

Starbucks on the Circle has closed temporarily. The Café at Soliel nearby has stepped in to serve cappuccino and other brunch specialties. The adjoining Café at St. Armands serves drinks and Mediterranean lunch and dinner selections. The Cha Cha Coconuts tropical bar and café, owned by the Columbia restaurant group, occupies a space between the Café on St. Armand and the Columbia. The Cilantro Café on the level above the Columbia opened shortly after the Circle opened shortly after Hurricane Milton.



In the area immediately west and north of the Columbia, the Madison Café has closed. That block of N Boulevard of the Presidents remains open for development.

While far from complete, the recovery of the St. Armand’s Circle and Lido Key area has moved beyond its critical first stages. The commercial and residential tax base of the area has inspired federal, state, county, and city agencies to help improve resiliency to storm surges in particular and flooding in general. The future of St. Armand’s Circle and Lido Key depends on public and private efforts that rely on one another: so far, so good, but still uncertain.

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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