



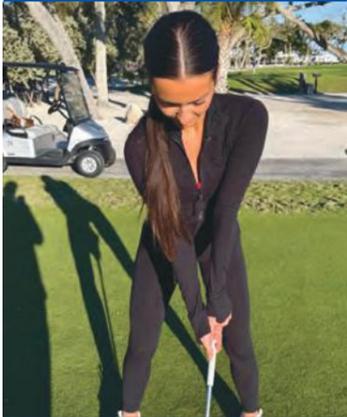
Longboat Key News

February 27, 2026

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InsideLook



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Longboat sale tops \$8.6 million ...page 7



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Gag Order on the Gulf: Longboat Key Prepares for Legal War Over 'Half Moon House' Demolition

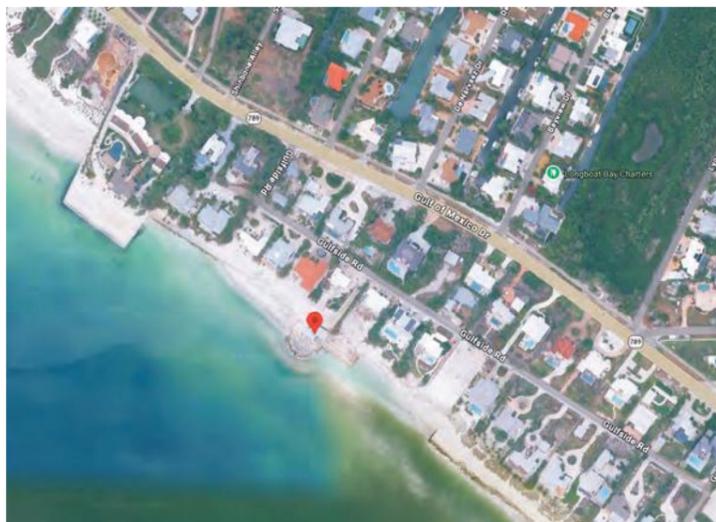
The Town of Longboat Key is stepping in, preparing to use a precarious and rarely invoked legal rule to wipe the property off the map

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Drive down Gulfside Road today, and you will see a barrier island that has fought its way back to life. A year and a half after Hurricanes Helene and Milton delivered a catastrophic one-two punch in the fall of 2024, Longboat Key is gleaming once more. Homes have been rebuilt, fresh sand has been meticulously graded, and the lush, tropical landscaping is finally growing back over the storm scars.

But at 6541 Gulfside Road, the recovery stops dead.

Sitting behind a chain-link fence is the "Half Moon House," a property that once boasted million-dollar Gulf views but is now a rotting, structural carcass. Its battered pilings and fractured frame serve as a grim, daily reminder of the storms' fury.



Now, the Town of Longboat Key is stepping in, preparing to use a precarious and rarely invoked legal rule to wipe the property off the map—and the Town Attorney is warning commissioners to keep their mouths shut.

The Nuclear Option: Section 150.21

This week, the Town's Building Official slapped the Half Moon House with an official "Unsafe and Unfit" notice, adorning the prop-
See Demolition, page 3

How Longboat's Alan Spoon Rode the Waves of Disruption to Shape our Digital Future

When former Washington Post Company President Alan Spoon started his career in the heyday of print journalism, newspapers blanketed every corner, information was devoured over morning coffee, and the world moved at what now looks like a snail chasing a turtle.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

We have all witnessed how information technology has evolved in our lifetimes, surpassing perhaps any past achievement in human history. It is incomprehensible that today, people can find 50 dates in 10 minutes or read any newspaper across the globe instantly. When someone wants to buy or sell a car, they no longer call a classified ad department; the listing is blasted across multiple platforms.

But it wasn't always like this. When former Washington Post Company President Alan Spoon started his career in the heyday of

See Alan Spoon, page 15



Alan Spoon and Speaker Series host Mel Rhinelander

Perfect Match: Mother-Son Duo Serves Up Inspiration at Longboat Key

Occasionally, a story unfolds on the courts that transcends the scorecard—a story that crafts a lasting memory.

STEVE REID & MEL RHINELANDER
News@lbknews.com

Club championships take many forms. Some players enter for a weekend of fun, while others chase the ghosts of past glories. For most, the competition sits somewhere on the spectrum between lighthearted recreation and serious athleticism. Often, a year later, the only people who really remember who won are the victors themselves.

But occasionally, a story unfolds on the courts that transcends the scorecard—a story that crafts a lasting memory.

Last weekend, the Longboat Key tennis community was treated to exactly that kind of narrative. Defying the odds, the elements, and even the painful hurdle of a

See Tennis Match, page 4

Museum Releases Rehabbed Manatees

Just a short drive from Longboat Key, Bradenton's Bishop Museum of Science and Nature is celebrating a major conservation victory this week.

Following months of intensive care, three manatees—Crane, Kyber, and Mandalore—have successfully completed their rehabilitation at the Parker Manatee Rehabilitation Habitat and returned to Florida's winter waters.

Unique Journey to Recovery

While The Bishop typically serves as a "second-stage" rehabilitation facility—taking in manatees after they have been stabilized elsewhere—this trio's recovery story is a bit different.

"Last winter, The Bishop was able to operate a temporary critical
See Manatees, page 11

The Eagles of the Keys: A Photographer's Local Safari

A tip led to Longboat Key. For Bird Key resident Erik Abrahamson, an ordinary day turned into an ongoing wildlife adventure thanks to a casual conversation.

While at Tommy Bahamas, an employee tipped Erik off about a family of American Bald Eagles residing on Longboat Key. Following the lead to Dream Island Road, Erik struck gold. He not only located the eagles but has since made repeated trips, carefully photographing the majestic family as they thrive in their coastal habitat.

The Veterans of North Lido

The eagle-spotting didn't stop there. Armed with a rough description of another location, Erik headed into the trails of North Lido Park. Tucked back in the woods, he successfully tracked down a second nest. A nearby sign confirms what local birders and park-goers have known for a while: eagles have been nesting in this exact spot for years, making them true, long-standing Lido Key locals.

Bird Key Flyovers and the Osprey Illusion

While Erik has spotted eagles soaring high above his home turf of Bird Key, he hasn't found any active nests on the island just yet. Keeping an eye out for them, however, requires a



bit of birding savvy, as it is incredibly common for casual observers to confuse them with Florida's abundant osprey population.

• Spotting the Difference: Both are impressive, fish-hunting

birds of prey, but they have distinct uniforms. Ospreys are slightly smaller, featuring stark white underparts and a distinct dark "bandit mask" across their eyes. A mature bald eagle, on the other hand, sports the unmistakable solid white head and tail, contrasting sharply with a heavy, dark brown body. (Juvenile eagles are mostly brown, making them even trickier to identify until they get their white feathers at around 4 to 5 years old!)

The American Eagle: By the Numbers

To put Erik's discoveries into perspective, here is a look at the reality of bald eagles in the Sunshine State:

• A Thriving Population: Florida is an absolute haven for these birds. The state boasts one of the densest breeding populations of bald eagles in the lower 48 states, with well over 1,500 active nesting pairs. In fact, Florida is home to the vast majority of the entire southeastern United States' eagle population.

• Nesting Habits & Real Estate: Florida's official eagle nesting season runs from October 1st through May 15th. Eagles mate for life and are notoriously loyal to their real estate. They return to the exact same nest year after year, continually adding new sticks, moss, and grass. Because of this, their nests—usually built high up in old-growth pine trees near the water—can become architectural marvels, sometimes reaching 8 feet across and weighing several hundred pounds!

• Living with Humans: While they prefer quiet, secluded woods (like the trails at North Lido), Florida's eagles have shown incredible adaptability. As development has expanded, they have learned to build nests in suburban neighborhoods or even on man-made structures like cell towers.



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Demolition, from page 1

erty with bright red “Danger” placards. Citing severe, unrepaired damage to the home’s structural integrity, the town is moving swiftly toward a forced condemnation and demolition order. The Town’s Fire Marshal has backed the play, declaring the site “unsafe and uninhabitable” and barring any town personnel from stepping foot inside.

But forcing the demolition of private property is one of the most extreme—and legally perilous—powers a local government can wield. Under Section 150.21 of the Town Code, the government can effectively order a bulldozer to a private citizen’s doorstep if the owner fails to abate “unsafe” conditions. It is a precarious high-wire act that pits the absolute power of municipal government against fundamental private property rights.

The Gag Order

The stakes are so high that Town Attorney Maggie Mooney has effectively issued a gag order to the Longboat Key Commission ahead of their March 2, 2026 meeting.

On Monday’s Consent Agenda is Item #5F, a request to hire outside special litigation counsel specifically to handle the Half Moon House dispute. But in a sharply worded email to the Commission, Mooney warned leaders not to use the agenda item to publicly debate the condition of the house or the ramifications of tearing it down.

“In my opinion, such a public discussion at this time would be inappropriate and potentially create issues for the Town,” Mooney wrote.

The legal peril comes down to how the property owner decides to fight back. Under the Town Code, there are two distinct pathways for an appeal:

1. The Quasi-Judicial Route (Subsection H): The property owner can appeal the demolition to the Town Commission itself. If this happens, the Commission essentially acts as a judge and jury. Because they would be presiding over a quasi-judicial hearing, the property owner is legally entitled to strict due process. Any public comments or behind-the-scenes conversations (ex parte communications) by commissioners right now could be viewed as bias, potentially handing the property owner a massive legal victory.

2. The Emergency Route (Subsection J): If the Building Official and Fire Marshal bypass the Commission and declare an “Emergency Demolition,” the appeal skips the town entirely and goes straight to a Circuit Court judge.

Because it is not yet clear which legal pathway will be triggered, Mooney strongly discouraged the Commission from engaging with residents or community groups about the property, instead offering to brief commissioners behind closed doors in one-on-one calls.

Echoes of The Colony

The Town of Longboat Key knows exactly how bruising this fight can be, and they are hiring a familiar mercenary to fight it.

The last time officials deployed this nuclear option was in June 2018, and the target was legendary: The Colony Beach and Tennis Resort. Once a world-renowned, glamorous vacation destination that hosted presidents and celebrities, The Colony spiraled into bankruptcy and closed in 2010. For nearly a decade, the resort sat vacant—a sprawling, decaying ghost town in the middle of one of Florida’s most exclusive zip codes.

When the town finally moved to condemn and demolish The Colony under the emergency provisions of Subsection J, it ignited a fierce legal battle. The fight ultimately dragged into the Circuit Court, where a judge upheld the town’s right to tear down the hazard, paving the way for a new era of development.

To ensure history repeats itself at the Half Moon House, the town is looking to authorize the hiring of Attorney Martin Garcia of the law firm Garcia Dell—the exact special counsel who successfully defended the town during the bitter Colony condemnation litigation. At a taxpayer-funded rate of \$375 an hour, Garcia is being brought back to shield the town from the inevitable lawsuits that arise when a city decides to forcibly bulldoze real estate.

For now, the Half Moon House remains standing, a fenced-off monument to the fall of 2024. But with the legal machinery now grinding into motion—and town leaders bound by strategic silence—the message is clear: the grace period for hurricane recovery is over, and the bulldozers are standing by.

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2026 Mixed Doubles 7.0 Tennis Club Champions Max Kalikow and Carol Kalikow

Tennis Match, from page 1

broken toe, a mother and son fought their way to victory, ultimately raising the 7.0 Mixed Doubles Championship trophy together.

A Clash of Styles and Tennis Idols

The decision for Carol Kalikow and her 31-year-old son, Max, to enter the Longboat Key Club tournament was a special one, though Max admits it wasn't exactly his master plan.

"It was her idea," said Max, who currently resides in Manhattan.

The pairing brought together a fascinating contrast in both experience and tennis philosophies. Carol, a former marketing director in the fashion industry for Oscar de la Renta, carries herself on the court with a sharp tactical mind and an appreciation for elegance. It's no surprise that her tennis idol reflects that.

"Federer was always my favorite," Carol noted. "He is the epitome of class."

Max's tennis journey, however, was born from a different kind of inspiration. He first picked up a racquet at age five, heavily influenced by the grueling, physical baseline play of Rafael Nadal. "I looked up to Nadal," Max recalled. "I think part of the reason I started swinging with a big whip motion... I had his racquets and I had his shoes. When younger, Nadal was very fast. He was the most animated when playing. Such a physical player."

Trying to match that physical intensity, unfortunately, took a toll. At 15, while attending a demanding Nike tennis camp that required eight hours of nonstop play a day, Max suffered a stress fracture in his wrist. The injury sidelined him and derailed his confidence for nearly 15 years. "Even when it felt better, any swing makes you nervous," he admitted.

It wasn't until recently back in Manhattan, when a friend convinced him to hit around, that Max realized his wrist no longer hurt. The mental blocks faded, paving the way for his return to the court alongside his mother. "I felt good at the Key Club playing," he said.

Strategizing Their Strengths

Entering a 16-team tournament packed with past champions and seasoned veterans, the duo knew they had a tough road ahead—especially since Max is not traditionally a doubles player. But what they lacked in established doubles rhythm, they made up for in raw talent and synergy.

A fixture in the local tennis scene, Carol brought the veteran know-how. "I'm on three teams here," she explained. "I'm pretty good, but Max is fast as lightning."

To counter their highly experienced opponents, the Kalikows had to be smart. "We strat-



2026 Mixed Doubles 7.5-8.0 Tennis Club Champions Tim Ruark and Andrea Benza



2026 Mixed Doubles 6.5 Tennis Club Champions Marcia Gutridge and David Gutridge

egized each strength," Carol said.

Max, armed with plenty of speed and power, quickly realized the key to success was to neutralize their opponents' net game. Battling intense, swirling winds, the younger Kalikow executed a relentless series of high, looping lobs deep to the baseline. It was a masterstroke that used the wind to their advantage, forcing one opponent into an exhausting sprint while effectively stranding the other at the net.

Meanwhile, Carol anchored the team with the poise of a grandmaster playing a high-stakes game of chess. Patient and calculating, she kept her groundstrokes remarkably consistent, waiting for her opponents to leave a sliver of an opening before striking with brilliant, wide-angled shots.

The Final Showdown

The championship match proved to be an uphill battle. While they had cruised through the semi-finals against opponents who gave away free points, the finals were a different story.

"The match before, they made a lot of unforced errors," Carol observed. "I think in the final match, they were not making as many."

After a strong start, the Kalikows found themselves on the back foot as their opponents rallied to take the second set. "They won the second set and we let it go," Carol admitted.

With the championship hinging on a high-pressure tiebreak, it was the 31-year-old who delivered the crucial tactical adjustment. Max recognized that his baseline lobs needed the perfect complement at the net.

"Max was 100 percent right," Carol recalled. "After the second set, he said, 'Mom, stay up to the front of the court.'"

The adjustment worked flawlessly. With Carol commanding the net and Max utilizing his lightning speed to cover the backcourt, the mother-son duo dominated the final stretch, storming away to win the tiebreak 10-3.

As the final ball was struck, the tactical brilliance took a backseat to the heart of the moment. Considering Max's 15-year journey to trust his swing again, and the beautiful partnership they displayed, it was a wonderful match to watch.

"I'm so proud," Carol said, aglow after the victory. "I am very happy."

It was a hard-fought title, but more importantly, it was a shared family triumph—a lasting memory that will undoubtedly outshine the engraving on their trophy.



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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.

Garbage pickup

To: Jim Haft

The current contract with Waste Management expires on June 30, 2027. The cost savings in this particular contract to go to one day a week is minimal. When this was brought several years ago, we heard from many constituents and commissioners that they were not interested, so it has not been changed.

Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Garbage pickup

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Is there any reason that we can't reduce garbage pick-up to once/week? That's what most every town I know of does, including Sarasota. Once a week is plenty. It would likely save the town some money and reduce traffic backups on GMD.

James G. Haft
Longboat Key

Water pressure

To: Maureen Merrigan

Maureen, I included Jessie on this to fill any gaps, if necessary. As for water pressure, we have been monitoring and working with Manatee County on the pressures. At the start of the project at the Cortez Bridge Booster Station there was a drop in pressure and both Manatee County and Town Utilities have been in constant communication to increase those pressures, which Manatee County has. Pressures are now flowing at a about 50 PSI and historically (when the booster is operational) they range from the mid to upper 50s. The Manatee County Booster Station Project is scheduled to be complete in April. As for Fire Pressures, they are adequate for fire fighting and again we are in communication with them to ensure they continue to be so.

As for the Water restriction:

They are multi county, including Manatee and Sarasota. Reminder that we get all of our palatable water from Manatee. In addition these restrictions apply to wells. Phase II water restriction went into effect on February 8th and are projected to continue through July 1, 2026.

Charles Mopps
Public Works Director
Town of Longboat Key Public Works

H2O questions

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Charlie Mopps

Hi Charlie & Sarah Just a quick follow-up from our LBK North Meeting today. There was a question about water pressure being down on the North end of the Key. We understand it is from County construction. Is this a consistent loss of pressure (24x7)? Is there any way to solve this short of waiting it out (e.g. better pumps)? Also does this impact our ability to fight fires? Relatedly - can we get a synopsis of the drought, water restrictions? There were several questions we could not completely answer - is this multi county wide (Manatee, Sarasota)? what is the fine? does this apply to both city and well water? When will we know when restrictions are lifted? If you have something we can include in the minutes that go out Friday we will add it - if not, we can send out separately next week. Thanks for your help with this.

Maureen Merrigan
Longboat Key

St. Regis Groin Sign ZTA/Sign Code Amendment Status Update

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman

Isaac- Providing a status update & public hearing timing look ahead re: proposed code amendments associated with the unpermitted structure/sign installed on the St. Regis groin: Zoning Text Amendment application applied for by applicant on Jan. 28, 2026.

P&Z Board public hearing on Zoning Text Amendment & commission-directed companion Sign Code amendment to be held on Mar. 17, 2026. Town Commission 1st Reading/Public Hearing to be held May 4, 2026.

Allen Parsons
Director Planning, Zoning & Building Department,
Town of Longboat Key

Request for Brief Meeting: Supporting Long-Term Hurricane Recovery Efforts

To: Longboat Key Director of Planning and Zoning Director Allen Parsons

I see. Thanks. I have never heard of Ms. Bonney's organizations but have no problem in forwarding Allen's responses.

Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Request for Brief Meeting: Supporting Long-Term Hurricane Recovery Efforts

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

I'm writing on behalf of Hope Pathways Long Term Recovery Group, a program with the national nonprofit - Hope Pathways Inc. In partnership with World Renew and Rebuilding Together, we are bringing more than 2 million in recovery support to impacted communities. The Hope Pathways LTRG has assisted over 300 hurricane survivors to date, with more fully vetted clients currently in process.

We strive to operate with full compliance and integrity and would appreciate a brief meeting with you to better understand Longboat Key's permit policies related to disaster recovery work.

Specifically, we would like guidance on:

What recovery work requires permits – All work that is removing/ replacing interior altering any nonstructural and/or structural members, Electrical, Plumbing and/or Mechanical per FBC 2023 – Building - sec 105. No Permit required for Cosmetic work – minor work – painting, trim, repairing drywall – a “Minor Work” form is required for these type repairs.

Best protocols when multiple partners are working at one address (e.g., one permit per property, sequencing of roof work versus follow-on repairs) – Master Permit obtained listing all their subcontractors and list all the scope of work items at the time of permit application.

Whether a streamlined or expedited permit process exists for disaster survivors – Yes however, we routinely review all permits within in seven days for those permits when all the required submittals were submitted at the time of application.

Any additional protocols we should be aware of – This is a Barrier Island – most properties are in a flood zone – Many gulf-fronting properties are located where a state permit is required as well. Currently, we are in 150 mph wind zone, Exposure D design criteria. Many older properties are subject to the FEMA 50% rule. Towns Flood Ordinance and Turtle Code and their amendments.

Appropriate points of contact for permit coordination – Building Official, Patti Fige or Department Director, Allen Parsons – 941-316-1966.

We value the Town's leadership and want to ensure our work aligns fully with Longboat Key's expectations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sharon Bonney
Hope Pathway

See Letters, page 6

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 5

Longboat Key North meeting

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon
Agenda will go out to all later today for the Thursday meeting 11:30-1, Paradise Center
Tal office has not responded so assuming he will not make it, but Ken will be there (we wanted to thank him for all of his work over the years - and get his perspective on issues moving forward). Of course attend (assuming you would, unless there was a conflict).
Maureen Merrigan
Longboat Key

Longboat Key North meeting

To: Maureen Merrigan
I somehow missed the info for this Thursday's LBKN meeting, Paul H tells me it will be held in person at Paradise Center, with the mayor and Tal attending? OK with you if I sit in the corner?
Sarah Karon
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Structure Fire

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Sarah Karon
Appreciate your words. The firefighters did an outstanding job!
Paul B. Dezzi
Fire Chief
Town of Longboat Key

Structure Fire

To: Longboat Key Fire Chief Paul Dezzi
Such an impressive response and, thankfully, no one was harmed. Thank you, Chief!
Sarah Karon
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Structure Fire

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman
I wanted to share that just before 10am this morning the fire department responded to a report of a structure fire at 660 Lands End. The first arriving truck reported smoke showing from the roof. Upon further examination, the structure was a three-story wood frame duplex

with smoke coming from the eaves of both duplexes.

Fire departments from Longboat Key, Sarasota County, West Manatee, Cedar Hammock, and Manatee County EMS assisted in the extinguishment of the fire. Both structures were completely destroyed. There were no reported injuries. Note: There was a cleaning lady in the one duplex where the fire began but she was outside upon arrival of the fire department.
The state fire marshal's office has been called and will be investigating.
Paul B. Dezzi
Fire Chief
Town of Longboat Key

Sarasota County Value Adjustment Board

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
I believe we knew in advance of at least some of these hearings. It would be good policy to have someone from LBK listen in, at least with respect to high value challenges. Do we have any information on the results?
Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Sarasota County Value Adjustment Board

To: Longboat Key Commission
The attached list identifies parcel owners who have filed an appeal with the Sarasota County Value Adjustment Board (VAB) challenging their property tax assessments/determinations made by the Property Appraiser.
The deadline to file a petition—25 days from the mailing of the TRIM notice—has now passed, so no additional properties will be added to the hearing schedule at this point. Unfortunately, the Clerk's office just received this mailing, and 9 of the appeals have already been heard, with 1 scheduled for today.
Below is some background information regarding the VAB:
The Value Adjustment Board (VAB) consists of two members of the Board of County Commissioners, one member of the County School Board, and two Citizen Members. The VAB appoints Special Magistrates to conduct hearings on petitions filed.
Members: County Commissioners Ron Cutsinger and Teresa Mast, School Board Member Robyn Marinelli, Citizen representative Joe Hembree (only one listed on the website).
All VAB hearings are open to the public and may be viewed electronically. Public access is provided through Microsoft Teams. This access is for viewing only; members of the public are not permitted to speak or otherwise participate in the hearing.
Once petitions are heard by the VAB Special Magistrates, recommendations are forwarded

See Letters, page 12

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Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath	Days On Market	Sale Price
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188 GOLDEN GATE POINT Unit#101	3,034	\$4,750,000	3 3 1	5	\$4,400,000
988 BLVD OF THE ARTS Unit#1814	3,284	\$3,350,000	3 3 0	68	\$3,175,000
401 S PALM AVE Unit#801	3,172	\$2,995,000	3 3 1	87	\$2,800,000
990 BLVD OF THE ARTS Unit#801	3,100	\$2,850,000	3 3 1	215	\$2,687,500
50 CENTRAL AVE Unit#14D	1,697	\$1,595,000	2 2 0	46	\$1,450,000
1622 BAY POINT CT	2,733	\$1,249,000	4 3 0	3	\$1,225,000
213 COSMOPOLITAN CT	2,588	\$1,395,000	3 3 1	136	\$1,200,000
800 N TAMIAMI TRL Unit#808	1,484	\$599,000	2 2 0	76	\$580,000
1064 N TAMIAMI TRL Unit#1219	1,447	\$485,000	3 2 0	791	\$450,000
600 WEDGE LN	4,338	\$9,875,000	4 4 1	65	\$8,625,000
520 HARBOR CAY DR	3,828	\$3,475,000	4 4 1	319	\$3,300,000
2105 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#3303	1,463	\$1,550,000	2 2 0	75	\$1,350,000
747 MARBURY LN	2,353	\$1,369,000	3 2 0	72	\$1,175,000
2721 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#208	884	\$1,100,000	2 2 0	3	\$1,100,000
6701 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#330	1,456	\$1,050,000	2 2 0	22	\$1,025,000
3543 MISTLETOE LN	3,239	\$1,295,000	3 3 1	89	\$1,000,000
2301 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#36N	1,235	\$849,000	2 2 0	241	\$825,000
6701 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#311	936	\$699,900	1 1 0	417	\$620,000
4370 CHATHAM DR Unit#204	928	\$495,000	2 2 0	37	\$465,000
1904 HARBOURSIDE DR Unit#202	1,590	\$449,000	2 2 1	141	\$419,500
657 CEDARS CT	1,244	\$475,000	1 2 0	52	\$415,000
3810 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#F302	1,007	\$355,000	2 2 0	315	\$316,000



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BeachResidences303.com

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New On The Market

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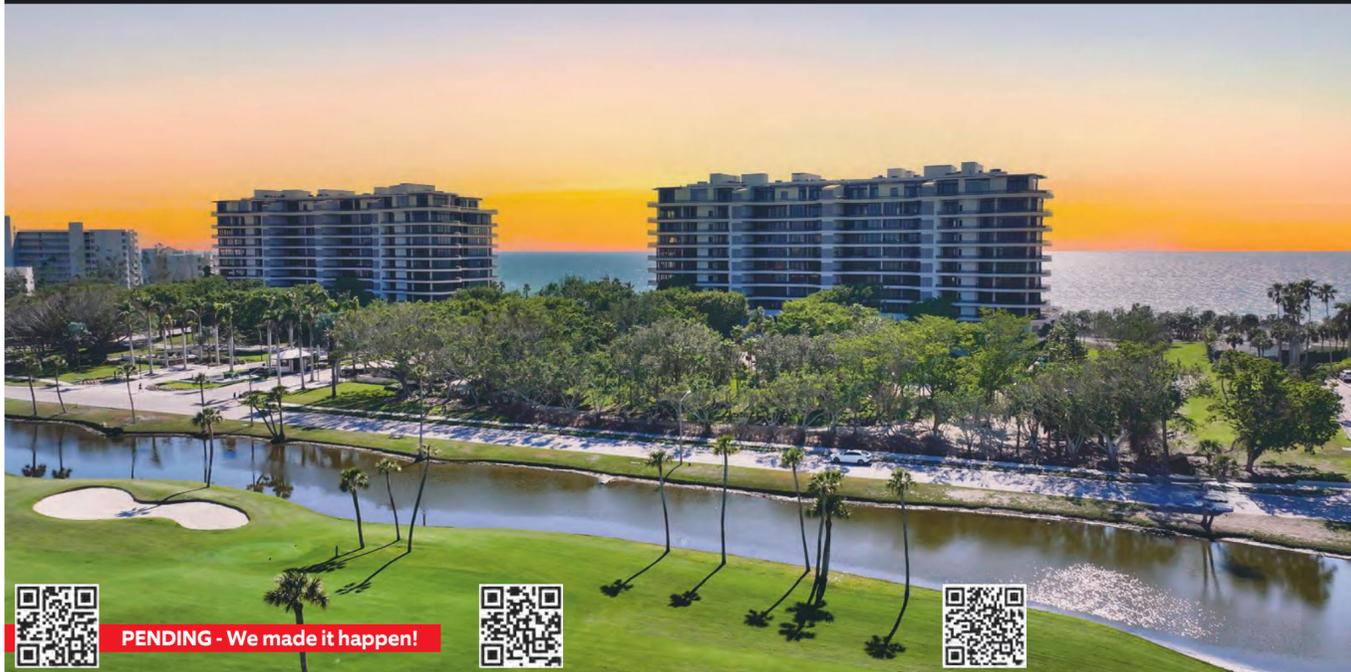


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Privateer



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OnPatrol



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

Feb. 20 Parking

12:25 p.m.

Officer Miklos responded to Palm Drive and Broadway Street in reference to an illegal parking complaint. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos observed seven illegally parked vehicles on Palm Drive near Whitney's restaurant. Officer Miklos made contact with the restaurant manager who had all the guests move their vehicles. All the vehicles were moved to the parking lot without incident. Case clear.



he said he had not. Officer Martinson then drove up to the resort and spoke with an employee who provided the officer with a town email which was dated on Feb. 20 at 8:30 a.m. stating that the resort had approval from the town to do construction and was exempt from the noise ordinance. Case clear.

Feb. 23 Driver

10:55 p.m.

Officer Troyer and Sgt. Montfort conducted a traffic stop on a black Kia that was traveling southbound in the north-

bound lane and failing to dim to oncoming traffic. Once Sgt. Montfort activated his emergency lights, the vehicle was driving slow and splitting on both north and southbound lanes. Sgt. Montfort made contact with the driver and observed the odor of alcoholic beverage emitting from the vehicle and the driver was unable to find the vehicle registration. Officer Troyer made contact with the driver and was able to get his Texas Drivers license. Officer Troyer asked if the man had a copy of the vehicle's rental agreement as the vehicle was a rental. The man took some time and located his rental agreement in his backpack, but had a hard time finding the document. When speaking with the driver, Officer Troyer observed the strong odor of an air freshener emitting from the vehicle. Officer Troyer also observed the man had glassy eyes. Officer Troyer then asked about his travel plans, to which he originally said he was on his way in from Mexico and the vehicle was rented by his friend. The driver later told Officer Troyer he was coming from Anna Maria Island. Officer Troyer also observed there was damage to the passenger side mirror to the vehicle. Officer Troyer asked the man if he had hit anything, which he denied. The man also said he checked the vehicle prior to renting the vehicle and there was no damage. Based upon the circumstances at hand, Officer Troyer had the man exit the vehicle, when he exited, Officer Troyer observed the man had urinated on himself. Officer Troyer also observed the odor of an alcoholic beverage emitting from the man. Officer Troyer asked the man how much he had to drink which he replied, "a couple." Officer Troyer asked him how many was a couple and he said "three or four beers." Officer Troyer asked the man if he would be willing to submit to voluntary Standardized Field Sobriety Tests which he agreed to. Officer Troyer administered the tests, which he did not complete as compared to a sober person. Based on his investigation, Officer Troyer placed the man under arrest for suspicion of driving while under the influence of alcohol. Officer Troyer transported the man to Holmes Beach Police Department to conduct a breath alcohol test. Once they arrived, Officer Troyer asked the driver if he would be willing to voluntarily provide a sample of his breath for the purpose of determining its alcohol content. The man agreed to provide a sample of his breath. Officer Troyer provided the driver with a twenty-minute deprivation period then Officer Troyer conducted the breath alcohol test which resulted in a reading of 0.188 G/210L. Officer Troyer transported the man to the Manatee County Sheriff's Office. Based upon the investigation, Officer Troyer found probable cause to arrest the man for Driving While Under the Influence. A tow was requested to take possession of the rental vehicle. Case clear.

Assist agency

7:12 p.m.

Officer Nazareno was dispatched to the 3100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for an assist agency call for a report of a strong odor of smoke at the beach area. Upon arrival, Longboat Key Fire Department advised that the smoke was coming from a grill that was recently used by the beach area. No violations observed, case clear.

Feb. 21 Parking

6:19 a.m.

Officer Miklos was dispatched to Bay Isles Parkway in reference to a disturbance over parking. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with the caller who advised she had a verbal argument with a security guard from Bay Isles due to the guard parking inside the art show. The caller said the entrances were all barricaded off and the guard moved them to park inside near the art tents. The caller advised that the art show has a night time security guard that will be returning on Feb. 21. Officer Miklos advised the caller to have the on duty security guard to call Sheriff's Office Dispatch if an incident arises. Officer Miklos spoke to the on duty security guard at the gate shack for Bay Isles. Officer Miklos advised the guard to contact his coworker and advise him to park in an empty spot near the bank or grocery store to prevent any further incidents. Officer Miklos was unable to speak to the security guard in the verbal argument due to him leaving the scene before the officer arrived. Case clear.

Property

1:55 p.m.

Officer Tillman responded to a report of damage property at the 2200 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Upon arrival, Officer Tillman spoke with the driver who stated that he was travelling north on Gulf of Mexico Drive when he heard a loud crashing sound in the vehicle. Upon further inspection of the vehicle, a golf ball was found lodged inside the shattered sun-roof of the rented vehicle. The driver was unable to locate the owner of the golf ball. The driver contacted the rental company and was given the case number. Case clear.

Found property

3:12 p.m.

Officer Miklos received a dispatch for a lost wallet. Officer Miklos spoke to the caller and was informed that she lost a checkbook and wallet and was not sure where the last place she had them was. The caller advised she was traveling to New Pass restaurant to check if her belongings fell out of her purse while eating at the restaurant. The caller described the items as a hot pink wallet. Officer Miklos advised the woman he would complete the lost property report in case any one turns in a lost wallet. Case clear.

Feb. 22 Noise

3:58 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to a resort located at the 3400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive on a call of a noise complaint. Officer Martinson met the complainant in the parking lot of Publix per his request. The complainant stated he is a guest at the resort and wanted to report there had been construction with noise going on at the property the whole day. Officer Martinson asked if he had spoke to staff or management about the construction noise and

Feb. 24

Found property

12:00 p.m.

Officer Van Dyke responded to the 5300 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to lost property. The caller said that his wife may have dropped a brown purse only containing her glasses valued at \$40. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke spoke to the restaurant staff and they advised that after reviewing the video, the subjects left the restaurant with the purse hanging on their walker. Officer Van Dyke then canvassed the parking lot yielding negative results. The caller also advised that he contacted the Publix which he visited after departing the restaurant, with negative results. Officer Van Dyke then spoke with the caller and advised him of the findings. Case clear.

Incident

11:00 a.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to Schooner Lane in reference to a possible attempted burglary that was observed through Ring camera footage. Upon arrival, Sgt. Butler and Officer Van Dyke made contact with the homeowner who stated that earlier in the day. They received a Ring notification showing an unknown man approaching the front door. The complainant advised the subject appeared to have briefly manipulated items near the front entry area, causing concern that the individual was attempting to unlawfully enter the residence. The reporting party provided access to the video footage for review. Officer Pescuma reviewed the video which showed a Hispanic man approximately 40 years old, wearing a black and red color shirt and white pants, approaching the front door. The subject was observed approaching the front door with a business card in his right hand. The subject then placed it at the front door before departing the area on foot. There was no attempt observed for forced entry, to manipulate the door handle, or access windows or other entry points. The business card was located in the door frame and was for a power wash company. A canvass of the area was conducted with negative results. Contact was later made to the solicitor's wife by calling the number on the business card, who said her husband was conducting door to door marketing in the neighborhood and leaving business cards at residences where no one answered the door. The business card left at the scene was consistent with the solicitor's company information. Officer Pescuma informed the man that soliciting is prohibited on Longboat Key. Based on the investigation and review of the video footage, no evidence was found to support an attempted burglary. The incident was determined to be a solicitor leaving a business card. The complainant was advised of the findings. Ring camera recording uploaded to file. Case clear.



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TeeTime



So You Want to Take Up Golf? Here's What to Expect!

Where else can you spend four hours with your friends, be outside in great weather, see the best of nature, and challenge yourself to be your best?

TERRY O'HARA
Columnist
News@lbknews.com

I hear this question over and over from people interested in taking up golf. As a PGA Golf Professional running an extremely busy club, I usually hear this from the lifelong tennis player who has just received bad news from their orthopedic surgeon: your rotator cuff is shot, your knees are bone-on-bone, and your elbow is acting up. They then realize that golf would be a great alternative where they can still be active, be outside, and hang around with friends.



TERRY O'HARA

Testing the Waters Before Buying the Gear

Let's get started! What's it going to take? I always suggest that before you go full bore into buying clubs and attire (though that's a fun part of it), you want to make sure you're going to like the game. My suggestion is to take a minimum of three lessons to learn the proper positions, and have the professional provide equipment so you know you're using the right clubs.

What are the right clubs? For seniors or ladies, the first thing you want is something forgiving when you hit it. You also want something light. Why light? Because if the club is lighter, you can create more speed in the swing. Speed, combined with proper mechanics, means more distance.

The Mechanics of a Good Practice Session

During your lessons, the key pieces you need to pay close attention to are your grip, your posture, and how the swing works from start to finish. Most good teachers these days provide video with their instruction, which is extremely helpful for understanding what you are doing as a student. I recommend asking for these videos to help you during your non-lesson time when you are practicing and, hopefully, seeing improvement.

Many new students ask, "How much time do I need to



practice?" The answer is that all it takes is 20 to 30 minutes, three to four times a week.

What does practicing by yourself look like? It means focusing on the key parts of the swing. Number one is how you hold the club. I can't tell you how many students (new and old) struggle with the correct grip. You have one chance to get it right, and how you hold it is incredibly critical to your success. As a new player, re-grip your club each time you address the ball, and have your PGA instructor mark your glove so that you know you are positioning it correctly.

Don't rush through your practice; focus on the swing and positions so that you can swing the club correctly. I always tell my students that rushing is not going to help you. I'm a Type A personality, but I learned at a young age (I started at age 6) that being relaxed—almost in a zen state with relaxed arms and hands—gives you the best chance to be successful. With

newer players, it is amazing to see their reactions when they finally see the ball go up in the air. Once that happens, the game becomes very addicting, and the student gets genuinely excited to hit it further and more consistently.

Taking It From the Range to the Course

Now, let's assume you have taken a few lessons and are excited to continue your golfing journey. It's very important that you commit time to both practice and play. If you have never stepped foot on a golf course, there are a lot of benefits to taking a playing lesson with a pro who can take you out and explain all the etiquette and rules of the game.

This is extremely helpful and highly beneficial to your journey. Plus, out on the course, you will learn all types of shots that you would never experience on the range: uphill or downhill shots, uneven lies, bunker shots, and many more situations that don't always get practiced on the driving range. You'll also learn about reading greens, pitch shots, bump-and-runs, and many other techniques that, when performed correctly, help you get the ball in the hole in the fewest number of strokes.

A Game for a Lifetime

If you are lucky enough to have played this wonderful game since you were a kid, consider yourself very fortunate. Where else can you spend four hours with your friends, be outside in great weather, see the best of nature, and challenge yourself to be your best?

Golf has so many benefits, and if you have never tried it, I highly recommend you give it a swing. I see kids as young as four or five getting lessons, and we have many players in their late 80s and early 90s who play multiple times a week!

Terry O'Hara is entering his 17th year as Director of Golf at the Longboat Key Club. A 28-year member of the PGA of America, Terry is originally from Worcester, Massachusetts, and now lives in Sarasota. Terry and his wife, Lisa, have two children, Jack and Ava. His son, Jack, is also a teaching professional at the club. Terry is a diehard Boston sports fan and loves supporting all of his hometown teams.

Manatees, from page 1

care facility through a grant from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission," said Virginia Edmonds, Director of Animal Care at The Bishop. "These three manatees were unique to The Bishop in that we performed both the critical care and the secondary rehabilitation for them, leading to their release today."

All three manatees arrived severely underweight and in need of life-saving intervention. Thanks to the dedicated animal care team, they packed on hundreds of pounds before their respective releases:

- Crane: Arrived weighing 450 lbs. Released at the Apollo Beach Manatee Viewing Center at TECO on December 23, 2025, weighing a healthy 665 lbs and measuring 7.5 feet long.

- Kyber: Arrived weighing just 310 lbs. Released in King's Spring off Crystal River on February 17, 2026, weighing 575 lbs and measuring 7 feet long.

- Mandalore: Arrived at 320 lbs. Released at Blue Springs in Orange City on February 18, 2026, weighing 645 lbs and measuring just over 7 feet in length.

The Science of the Release

Releasing a manatee is a highly coordinated effort that relies heavily on timing and geography. The Bishop's Animal Care team worked closely with the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP), a consortium that includes local partners like Sarasota's



Mote Marine Laboratory, alongside the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute, and federal wildlife agencies.

Release sites are meticulously selected based on two main factors: proximity to the animal's original rescue location and seasonal conditions. Because manatees are highly susceptible to cold stress in water temperatures below 68 degrees Fahrenheit, winter releases like these must occur at known warm-water refuges, such as natural springs or the outflow of power plants, to give them the strongest chance of survival.

What's Next for The Bishop?

With Florida manatees continuing to face environmental threats ranging from boat strikes to red tide and habitat loss, the turnover at rehabilitation centers is constant. With the Parker Habitat's pools now open, the museum is already preparing to welcome its next patients.

"It's always a big day at The Bishop when we're able to return manatees back to the wild," said Andrew Sandall, Chief Executive Officer of The Bishop. "While we'll miss Kyber, Mandalore, and Crane, we know that getting them back home means a job well done by our Animal Care team. We look forward to welcoming new manatees to Bradenton soon and playing a vital role in their rehabilitation."

Longboat Key News Sarasota City News

PO Box 8001
Longboat Key, FL 34228
941-387-2200

www.lbknews.com

Steve Reid, Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Associate Publisher
Melissa Reid

Sales
Lillian Sands
Steve Reid
ads@lbknews.com

Graphic Production
Dottie Rutledge

Letters to the Editor
letters@lbknews.com

letters@lbknews.com

Editor Letters



Letters, from page 6

to the VAB for final action (to approve the appeal and adjust the valuation, or to deny the appeal). There are currently no meetings scheduled for the VAB on the County website. Please advise if you have any questions.

Trish Shinkle
Town Clerk
Town of Longboat Key

Tunnel Question

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman
Thank you Isaac. The mirrors are an important element; I hope they will help.
Penny Gold
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Tunnel Question

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Penny Gold
Thank you Commissioner. Actually, we cannot as it is still under private ownership and control. What we can do is forward to the Bay Isles Association who is still responsible for it. I will personally send it their way and send any response I get back to this group. Thank you!
Isaac Brownman
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Tunnel Question

To: Longboat Key Assistant Town Manager Isaac Brownman
I received the following note from a constituent and wonder if our Public Works team can assist with a repair. I know we are currently processing the legal documents needed to transfer tunnel ownership, but hope you can help determine which organization will be able to help with a repair during the interim. Thank you for your guidance on this.
Penny Gold
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Tunnel Question

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Penny Gold
I'm not sure you can help here, but I found that the mirror in the tunnel under GMD going West from Sea Place has been broken for a while. There's no glass, just a broken frame. Can you help?
Thomas M. Morgan
Longboat Key

Canal Dredging

To: Bob White
Bob, Thank you for your input and feelings on this important matter. That will surely part of our discussions.
Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Canal Dredging

To: Longboat Key Town Commission
I commend the Town for addressing the overdue dredging and maintenance of the canals. However, the proposed 80/20 funding ratio is not equitable and should be reconsidered. The ratio appears to equate the benefits received by canal-front property owners with those received by non-beachfront property owners under the Town's longstanding beach maintenance funding policy. Non-beachfront properties receive substantial and ongoing benefit from the Town's beach renourishment program, including full access and use through the 12 public beach access points on Longboat Key. By contrast, non-canal-front properties receive little to no meaningful access or benefit from canals that function, in practice, as private waterways serving only the adjacent properties. Given the significant difference in public accessibility and benefit, there is no justification for applying the same funding ratio to canal dredging as is applied to beach maintenance. I respectfully request that the Commission reconsider the proposed allocation and adopt a funding plan that more accurately reflects the distribution of direct benefit.
Bob White
Longboat Key

Applicants for the P&Z Board Vacancies

To: Longboat Key Commission
Per a request, attached are the current applicants for the vacancies on the P&Z Board. Please note that the application deadline is today at noon; any additional applications received before that time will be forwarded to you afterward. Please let me know if you have any concerns about making the appointments at the March 2 regular meeting so that I may pass that information on to the Asst. Town Manager. If preferred, we can defer the appointments until April, after Commissioner-Elect Gladding is seated, so he has the opportunity to make nominations and vote. The Town Attorney has advised that Mr. Gladding may remain on the P&Z Board as a member through March 22, 2026. The following individuals have applied:
Mr. Kevin Giordana (District 3 resident)
Mr. Michael Lesburg (District 3 resident) – has previously applied for the P&Z Board, but not been selected. I would presume that is because he is gone over the summer and into fall (June – October)
Mr. Mark Marcantano (District 2 resident) - has also applied for a seat on the Pension Board and/or the MPO Citizens Advisory Committee
Ms. Doreen Mitchell (District 5 resident)
Ms. Carolyn "Laney" Pitt (District 3 resident)
Also attached is the current list of Board members. The term for Commissioner-Elect Gladding's seat will be effective from March 23, 2026, plus a full 3-year term to May 9, 2029. The vacant seat will be filled for a partial term through May 12, 2027.
Trish Shinkle
Town Clerk
Town of Longboat Key

Resident feedback

To: Sarasota City Mayor Debbie Trice
Thank you for passing this along. I appreciate the feedback from the Avondale resident. As a general practice, Public Works vehicles are not intended to idle for extended periods unless operationally necessary (e.g., powering equipment, maintaining communications systems, or supporting active field operations). Extended idling solely for cabin comfort would not align with our expectations for fuel efficiency, environmental stewardship, and neighborhood sensitivity. That said, there are circumstances where trucks must remain running to:
Power hydraulic or auxiliary equipment
Maintain battery load for lighting, message boards, or tools
Support short-duration stop-and-go field work

I will follow up with Public Works Division to:

Reinforce existing idling expectations.
Confirm whether this was operationally necessary in the reported instance.
Evaluate whether additional guidance or clarification to staff is warranted.
We are mindful of noise, emissions, and neighborhood impacts, particularly in residential areas such as Avondale. Thank you again for bringing this forward and we will address internally.
Nikesh Patel
Public Works Director
City of Sarasota

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WineTimes

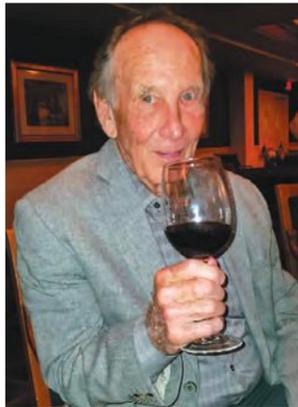


Glassware at Bars and Home

The topic of glassware in restaurant bars and bars at home usually serves as a prelude to commercials for expensive sets of wine stemware, crystal Bourbon or Scotch mini-tumblers, and martini coupes. Not here.

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

We must begin with a correction. In the Spirited Cocktails article a couple of weeks ago, the master bartender in our team (Rich) tried to correct the description of the garnishes in an Old Fashioned. The correction did not arrive before press time. As bartenders know, "Garnishes in classic cocktails serve a purpose. The bartender muddles an orange slice and cherry in an Old Fashioned glass with Angostora bitters and adds Bourbon or Rye whiskey to blend the flavors". We strive for accuracy in our little niche of a sprawling media largely bereft of any concern for veracity. More to follow on omissions....



The topic of glassware in restaurant bars and bars at home usually serves as a prelude to commercials for expensive sets of wine stemware, crystal Bourbon or Scotch mini-tumblers, and martini coupes. Not here. We prefer and expect high quality glassware in craft cocktail bars and at home, yet we would rather have glassware appropriate for a drink rather than a fancy glass. So what seems essential in glassware?

A Martini promises a hefty dose of Gin or Vodka. A shallow saucer of a coupe invites small sips of a potent drink. A Gin or Vodka tonic in a highball glass with a wedge of lime on the rim encourages thirst-quenching gulps of a diluted spirit on warm day. A squat or shot glass of neat Bourbon, Scotch, or Rye, best diluted with a touch of cool water, helps bring out the flavors of Whiskey. We must not neglect the allure of a globular Snifter of Cognac, Brandy, or a liqueur at the end of an evening. The globe glass concentrates the aromas of food and wine.

The glassware at bars in restaurants or in homes ideally fits the drinks they hold. A Manhattan served straight up required a tapered cocktail coupe with a stem, and a Negroni a shorter, stemless glass with a heavier base. Wine glasses have tripled in size during the past century; the shape of wine glasses has remained much the same with globes for Pinot Noir and other light reds and narrower cylinders for Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. Beer drinkers prefer mugs with handles.

We often find cocktail and wine glasses at Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, and other thrift stores. When a fine piece of glassware breaks, replacing it seems less painful.

Due to concerns about image quality, our article on Spirited Cocktails did not include photographs of specialty drinks. We show them now. Cheers,



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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Alan Spoon, from page 1

print journalism, newspapers blanketed every corner, information was devoured over morning coffee, and the world moved at what now looks like a snail chasing a turtle.

Today, the intersection of education, news delivery, political discourse, dating, and financial investment all come together in our hands as we stare at our screens. Is the wave of technology that moved us away from daily newspapers 30 years ago the crest, the trough, or simply the beginning of a new tsunami?

For Spoon, who sat in front of a rapt audience of mostly-former business executives in the tennis center of the Longboat Key Club this past week, the narrative of his life came into clear focus. It is a story of continuous adaptation. Alan Spoon is a man who didn't just witness the digital revolution; he architected major pillars of it—from the fraught, transitional boardroom of the Washington Post Company to the high-stakes world of venture capital, and ultimately to the highest governance levels of the Smithsonian Institution and MIT.

The Sailboat and Early Currents

Long before the words “venture capitalist” were ever uttered, a young Alan Spoon looked at an MIT course catalog. On the cover was a picture of a racing sailboat. That single image attracted him to the school, where he earned degrees in science and management and eventually became captain of the MIT sailing team.

The sailboat cutting deftly through the sunlit waves is an apt metaphor for Spoon. He is a man who navigates swift currents and winds he cannot control, but always with a sail, a rudder, a clear direction, and a relentless strategy.

“I've had a career that is long and meandering, but you can pull a thread through it,” said Spoon.

Lean at 74, Spoon possesses an intense gaze that occasionally surveils the room before fixing its attention sharply on his listeners. His early trajectory was anything but conventional. “I never went to law school to be a lawyer,” remarked Spoon, who earned his J.D. with honors from Harvard Law in 1976 and once sat beside Mitt Romney in a constitutional law class. Instead, he took his analytical gifts to The Boston Consulting Group (BCG). Utilizing early computing tools for data-driven strategy, he rose to become a remarkably young partner by age 29.

The First Command: The Washington Post and the Oracle

Spoon's trajectory shifted globally in 1982 when he was recruited to join The Washington Post Company as vice president for new business development. Upon his arrival, he recalled how legendary publisher Katharine “Kay” Graham had a large round table in her dining room—a deliberate choice to foster collaborative discussion rather than the implied optics of a long rectangular table with a throne at the end.

Spoon was seated, and next to him was Warren Buffett.

“I could tell he was from another galaxy,” Spoon quickly realized, noting Buffett's unparalleled judgment and clarity. He would later call Buffett the most important business influence in his life.

Spoon rose rapidly. As President of Newsweek from 1989 to 1991, he led the magazine to its strongest financial year on record. Eventually, as President and COO of the entire Post corporation, he oversaw newspapers, broadcasting, and education services like Kaplan. At the time, print media was a cash cow.

“Newspapers were making a ton of money,” Spoon noted, recalling an era of massive print optics—Gulf War, Princess Di, Monica Lewinsky, etc.

But Spoon, ever looking at the horizon, had a “eureka” moment. Drawing on his early tech exposure at MIT and his bold corporate investments in early cellular telephone networks, he realized the days of analog print media were rapidly nearing their end. He was agonizingly aware of the tectonic shift before most of his peers.

Spoon recalled of the early 1990s that as AOL was coming on, he would go to the movies and see films like *Sleepless in Seattle* where email was going back and forth. He remembered that while everybody else was laughing, he was suffering.

Cannibalizing the Core: The Pain of Transition

Traditional media executives and many journalists at the time viewed the emerging internet as a cannibalizing threat. Spoon's instincts were the exact opposite.

“I want us to be the ones to cannibalize ourselves,” Spoon reacted.

He knew the financial pillars of the newspaper industry were beginning to crumble. The numbers would soon become staggering: newspaper industry revenue was destined to slide from a record \$49.4 billion in 2005 to just \$22.3 billion by 2012. The Post's own print circulation would tumble from a 1993 peak of 832,332 down to 447,000.

Looking at the business outlook, Spoon famously compared the newspaper industry's trajectory to looking down a staircase at a landing, trying to decide what condition the paper should be in to arrive there in good shape. He mused at the time about what would happen if the staircase was actually a spiral one without any landing.

To survive the spiral, Spoon and CEO Donald Graham changed gears in 1995, pivoting hard to an ad-supported Web model. Spoon noted back then that while the Post was winning the county track meet, the Olympics lay ahead.

He worked aggressively to push the Post's online platform. Recognizing the necessary cultural separation between old-guard print journalism and the rapidly emerging digital future, he moved the internet operation out to Virginia, architecting the launch of [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).

Spoon knew that classified ads were a massive driver of newspaper profits—sometimes up to 75% of the bottom line. Anticipating the cliff, in partnership with other major newspaper companies, he spearheaded the creation of [Cars.com](http://www.cars.com) and [Apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com) long before [Craigslist](http://www.craigslist.com) or [Facebook Marketplace](http://www.facebook.com) could siphon off the industry's lifeblood.

Reflecting on those grueling transition years, Spoon previously stated that the Post was early, noting that the board gave him and Don license to build for the Internet. He acknowledged that they lost a lot of money on the way, but was thankful they did because it allowed them to build a platform early.

The Unthinkable Call

Years after Spoon had left to pursue venture capital, Donald Graham reached a breaking point with the spiral staircase. The Post was losing its local advertising monopoly, and Graham quietly began shopping the paper to billionaires.

Before the public knew anything, Graham picked up the phone and called his trusted former president.

Graham asked Spoon if he was sitting down before confessing he was thinking the unthinkable: selling the family's crown jewel.

When Jeff Bezos ultimately purchased The Washington Post for \$250 million, he didn't just buy a print newspaper. He bought the digital runway Spoon had fought so hard to build.

“By the time I left the Post, it was a central part of the business, and that is what Bezos bought,” Spoon told the Longboat Key audience, noting that today, in an interesting contrast, a massive portion of the New York Times digital subscribers are paying for recipes and games, not just news.

Spoon's prediction of a fragmented digital future had come entirely true.

Many years ago, Spoon prophesied about the modern media landscape, noting that when the tiles came back together, it wasn't going to look like a painting with just three colors inside a given frame; rather, it was going to be different for every person.

The Second Command: Venture Capital and Global Scaling

In 2000, Spoon had left his media post to become Managing General Partner at Polaris Partners, entering his second leadership chapter as a venture capitalist. He was highly sought after in the marketplace precisely because of his digital foresight.

At Polaris, together with his VC partners, he began funding the very companies that would disrupt legacy industries across tech, healthcare, and life sciences. Polaris' track record was very strong—with scores of exits and dozens of IPOs. Among his investments, Spoon backed Phreesia, which revolutionized patient intake before going public. He also invested heavily in LegalZoom, a company that fundamentally altered how everyday people create legal documents, effectively putting immense pressure on traditional law firms.

“LegalZoom was like a PT boat attacking an aircraft carrier,” Spoon said with a smile.

Along the way, Spoon served on outside company boards such as Match Group (changing the way the world dates), Danaher (global diagnostics and drug discovery tools), and Fortive (precision test, measurement and sterilization tools).

Guarding the Past: The Battle for the Smithsonian

Today, Spoon remains as busy as ever, balancing a deep passion for history with a front-row seat to the future. A self-described “museum rat,” his impact on American culture is profound. Having served as Regent and former Vice Chairman of the Smithsonian Institution's Board of Regents, Spoon co-chaired an inaugural capital campaign that raised a staggering \$1.88 billion to preserve the nation's artifacts.

But when speaking of the Smithsonian in that small room at the Tennis Gardens, Spoon's eyes lit up, and his usual intensity took on a fierce concern. He spoke passionately of his love for unaltered history, free from transient political agendas—and the very real, modern threats to that preservation.

Spoon pointed specifically to today's fraught dynamics on the Smithsonian's Board of Regents, whose statutory members include the Chief Justice of the United States. He highlighted the inherent tensions faced by the Regents—whether it's navigating personnel decisions, deciding whether to display a politically tinged painting, or managing international dust-ups related to the National Zoo's role in foreign policy, the world's largest museum complex is increasingly impacted by executive branch directives.

This modern political landscape is exactly why Spoon alluded to the fear many hold of the intentional rewriting of museum captions in an attempt to sanitize or optimize history for a specific interpretive view. He noted that concerned historians have even begun photographing captions before they can be altered. True history, he argued, must include the darkest hours—like Thomas Jefferson owning slaves and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan—alongside the points of light.

“It fails a logical test,” Spoon said of the attempts to sanitize the past. “You can't talk about progress if you don't know where you're coming from.”

Embracing the Billion-Dollar Future

Yet, even as he guards the past, his eyes are locked on tomorrow. As a Life Member of the MIT Corporation, he helped launch edX to bring elite education to the masses and established the MIT Sandbox Innovation Fund for student entrepreneurs. But his focus has increasingly zeroed in on the next great technological frontier.

Spoon is deeply embedded in MIT's staggering \$1 billion commitment to address the global opportunities and challenges presented by the rise of artificial intelligence. It marks the single largest investment in computing and AI by any American academic institution. At the heart of this endeavor is the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing, made possible by a \$350 million foundational gift from Schwarzman, the chairman, CEO, and co-founder of Blackstone. Spoon, who serves on the board for the College, pointed out how AI is front and center on the minds of MIT faculty and administration in thinking about future education and basic research.

He is heavily involved in the cutting edge of science that this technology accelerates. He spoke of the rapid evolution of, for example, digital pathology, where diagnoses that once took weeks can now be done instantly and more accurately.

But the room grew entirely still when he spoke of the profound human impact of these investments: the gene-editing breakthroughs of CRISPR.

Billion-Dollar Tech at the Human Scale

Spoon spoke of a little boy named Kieran Joseph Muldoon—Baby KJ. Born in August 2024 with a rare, fatal metabolic disorder called CPS1 deficiency, the infant's liver was unable to break down toxic ammonia. It was effectively a death sentence. Yet, in under seven months, scientists developed a bespoke, customized CRISPR base-editing therapy. Administered via lipid nanoparticles when KJ was just seven and eight months old, the treatment rewrote his genetic destiny.

By early 2025, Baby KJ was showing promising recovery, tolerating protein, and surviving common childhood illnesses—a historic landmark for “on-demand” personalized medicine. The connection to Spoon's world is undeniable: the underlying base-editing technology that made this miracle possible was developed by researchers at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. Polaris was an originating investor in CRISPR technology. Danaher, where Spoon is a board member, was a crucial part of the Baby KJ team providing timely diagnostics, logistics, and treatments.

“What's most on my mind is AI,” Spoon told the quiet, attentive Longboat Key room. “Every board I'm involved in is adopting tech. It's like flooding water. You can't stop it. AI is amoral, not immoral. I hope the better angels will direct it and use it rather than the bad angels.”

Looking back at the doors that opened in his long, intense career—from anticipating the digital cliff at The Washington Post to funding climate architecture research and life-saving genetics—Spoon offered a final piece of familiar wisdom to the crowd:

“Luck is when preparation and purpose meet opportunity.”

As he spoke, looking a bit younger than his 74 years, his eyes darted excitedly. He looked like a man who doesn't just wake up at the top of a curve, but one who is perpetually trying to see over the horizon, always looking into the distance, positioning like a sailing captain with an instinct to capture the wind.

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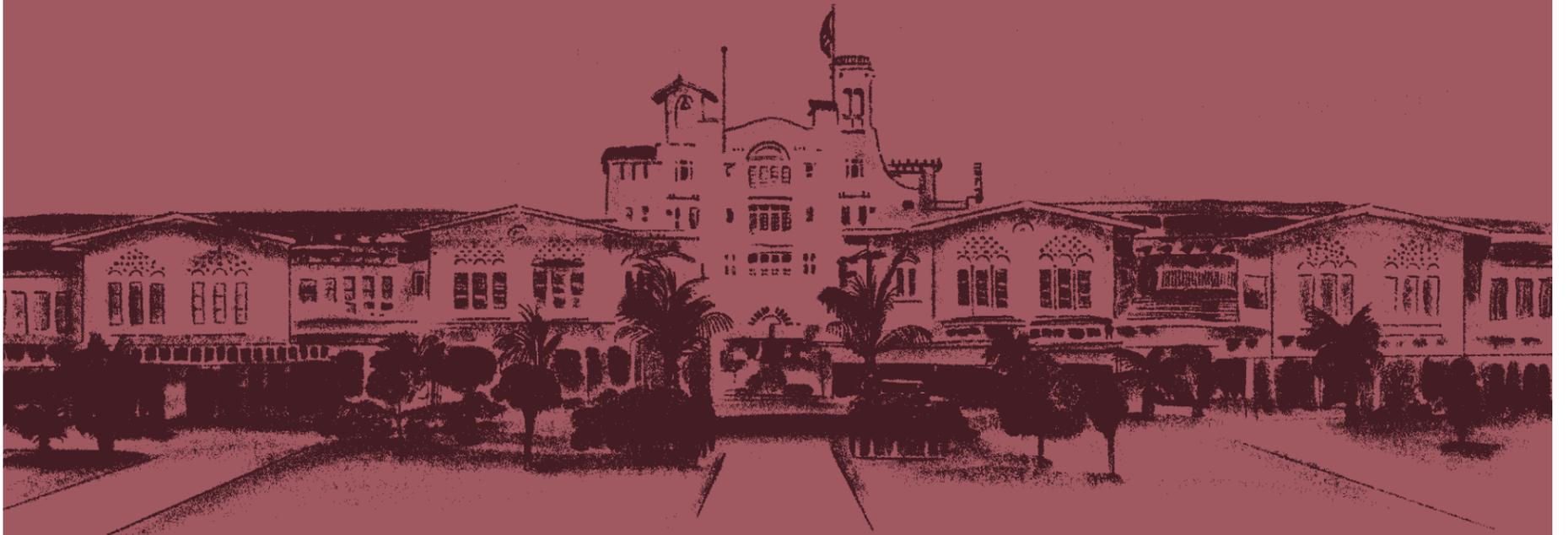
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