

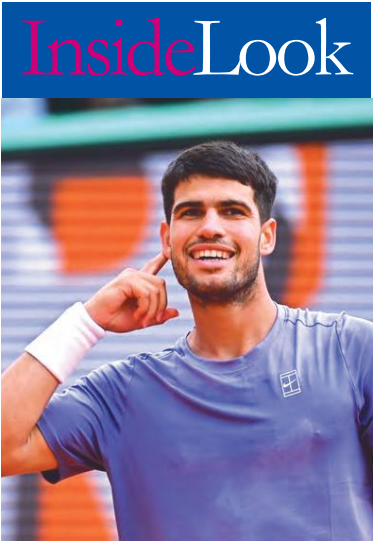


Longboat Key News

September 26, 2025

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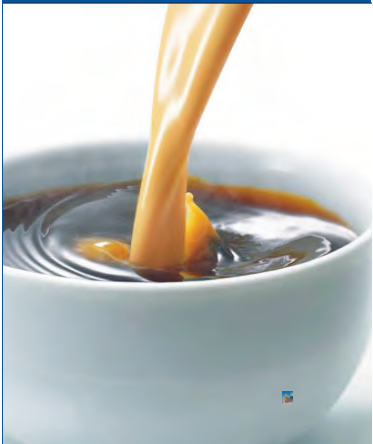


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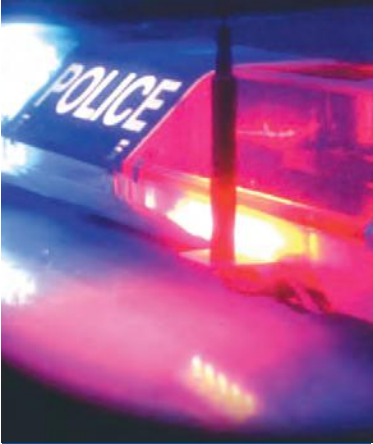
Your guide to the Big Points ...page 15



A Dream Island week on LBK ...page 9



Pour on life's excitement ...page 4



Oops! License plate scanner ...page 10

What's in a name on Longboat Key? Politics, money & google rankings

There is a good bit of irony embedded in the issue of changing the name of Longboat Key's primary thoroughfare that runs the entire length of the 10-mile island.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

After all, the nation has recently entered an era where self-fashioned and desired pronouns are falling to the wayside and the world has suddenly become more binary and less of "What would you like to be called today?"

In this context Longboat Key residents and the Town Commission

on October 20 will have a soul-searching conversation over what we would like to call our defacto Main Street on Longboat Key.

The entire issue leaves Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton in the role of bringing a staff report and possible recommendations to the October meeting.

Will Tipton bring a report on the financial impact? Will he analyze how it could affect our relation-

ship with state government if we do not change the name to Gulf of America Drive? Will he bring alternative names since the Town can name the road anything it wants?

Tipton said on Friday, "Our role is to bring a little of the history of the roadway to the Commission. How it started as "Ringling" and changed in 1947 and then there were different road names as well.

See Name change, page 2

Region endures storm season waiting game

Many are waiting, hoping the collective excitement if we do not get hit by a hurricane will propel the housing market upward and buyers will whittle away at the inventory that currently competes with itself.

STEVE REID
Editor & Publisher
sreid@lbknews.com

Sarasota, Longboat Key, Siesta Key and all of the neighboring communities have been playing a grueling and frustrating waiting game. A game of waiting and watching daily the radar to ensure that we don't get blasted by another series of hurricanes.

Many are waiting, hoping the collective excitement if we do not get hit by a hurricane will propel the housing market upward and buyers will whittle away at the inventory that currently competes with itself.

Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton is no different. Each passing day brings a modicum of relief.

Longboat Key News spoke with Tipton about the state of Longboat Key.

Are you feeling cautiously optimistic that we will not see a hurricane make landfall?

When it is November 30th I will take a breath. The sad fact is the 2024 storms are the most damage to a community that I've ever seen.

How did the Town adapt to the post storm demands and what initiatives worked?

I'm really pleased with the ways the repairs have gone in general on the island. The good news is that while a number of homes are still being rebuilt, the vast majority - more than 90% - of the permitting activity coming in is for typical construction and work that is not

See Tipton talks, page 2

Key Club rewards Town Hall golf prowess



Longboat Key Town leaders held a putting showdown against Longboat Key Club employees last Friday as part of an annual fundraiser. The Key Club and Ocean Properties donated \$20,000 to the Town following the event. On bottom left is Key Club Manager Rick Konsavage trying to mentally direct the ball into the hole. Bottom right is Mayor Ken Schneier sinking a winner. Photos by Steve Reid.

Name Change, from page 1

We will try and lay it out and we will lay out FDOT's position.”

Tipton explained that the new law removes all references in state government to Gulf of Mexico and renames everything to Gulf of America. He added that the State labels Gulf-front roads with numbers and municipalities can additionally adopt local names such as Gulf of Mexico Drive on Longboat or Gulf Drive on Anna Maria.

And from there politics has taken over.

Obviously, it was the edict of Donald Trump and by proxy, Ron DeSantis, which led to the State of Florida adopting Gulf of America as the official name and required all State work and documentation and contracts and designations abide.

Last month, the State FDOT took down the large green road signs on Longboat Key that said Gulf of Mexico Drive. They will be replaced with SR789 signs to comply with the new State law.

In short, the Town will have to decide in October to Keep Gulf of Mexico Drive as the name, or, switch it to Gulf of America Drive, or, pick a third name altogether such as Longboat Key Drive.

A Town Hall poll of Longboat residents was trending 10 to 1 in favor of keeping the name, but the momentum has shifted according to Tipton. Tipton said a recent push to rename the road to Gulf of America Drive has moved the needle to 60% wanting to keep the roadway name as is and an increase to 40% looking to change it to Gulf of America.

As Tipton said, “We have been inundated with emails; now it’s down from 90% to 60% in favor of keeping Gulf of Mexico Drive.”

Enter politics

The issue has been a shape shifter politically.

There is the eternal principle of self-rule and self-governance, which have traditionally been Republican edicts. But in this case, the top-down initiative seems to have Republicans pushing hard for Gulf of America Drive and those against Trump firmly opposed saying, “We don’t need to change anything.”

Perhaps the decision will not be completely pure. Town Manager Tipton alludes to the fact that there’s a \$40 million Gulf of Mexico Drive roadway project that is FDOT-funded coming up and how we are perceived can play a factor. We do not want to have a Disney-sized imbroglio with the State taking umbrage with our naming decision over a roadway.

Tipton waxes pragmatist when it comes to financial repercussions.

“The official answer is that it is possible that our funding partners (the State) could look at funding different. It is possible. We have our Complete Street Project, a \$40 million dollar project, we are relying on state funding to accomplish. This is potentially a sticking point,” said Tipton.

Then there are the pragmatic repercussions: The list of what needs to be changed in resident’s and homeowner’s paperwork, licenses and ownership documents. Tipton says this is not the biggest factor or issue and it is not very difficult — changing some paperwork.

Others in the community want a third path that they say is less politicized but recognizes Longboat Key and makes it central to itself. In other words, these folks would rather have the road renamed Longboat Key Drive or Longboat Key Boulevard. Part of their argument is that in Google searches and in online searches and indexing our Island remains primary in the center of its own universe and not part of a politicized impulse.

Tipton has this perspective on the matter: “For all of us it is the first oceanic name change in our career. We have folks around the state watching. We will do what is right and we will present on October 20.”

Tipton Talks, from page 1

storm repair or related. Not too long ago, 99% of all permits issued were for storm-related repairs.

We waived the permit fees for anything storm related and brought in a bunch of contractors to help with the workload for storm assessments and permitting.

In the midst of all this, we also went to a new permitting system, a new interface that is more efficient.

What is the status of the Longboat Key Library project?

The County is in the final design phase. The only changes are we added some steps to better connect the terrace to Town Center Green. The terrace gives a chance to go from the library and community hall outside and we will have shade areas. This will be a good place to sit and listen to a concert. The terrace will be open all the time and the library will operate six days a week. The goal is to break ground on the Library in spring 2026 and complete by fall 2027.



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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.

Change of Name

To: Longboat Key Town Commission
I am in favor of changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive to Gulf of America Drive. Much better than Route 789!
Sally Rauch
Longboat Key

Name change

To: Longboat Key Town Commission
We would like to see the name Gulf of Mexico changed to gulf of America.
Reina Berman and Bob Krosney
Longboat Key

Want Gulf of America

I want Gulf of America for the name change. Thanks.
Marcie McGovern
Longboat Key

Renaming GMD

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
I am a full-time resident of Longboat Key, residing in Fairway Bay. It is my belief that the re-naming of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America pre-concludes also following suit and applying the new name to the road bisecting Longboat Key. I am strongly in favor of re-naming Gulf of Mexico Drive to Gulf of America Drive, and not Route 789. Thank you for all the good work you do on behalf of our community!
Lynn Wellings
Longboat Key

Please rename SR 789/Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Town Commission
I am a person with a 100% voting record here on Longboat Key since I registered May 1987, and have lived and called Longboat Key and District 5 home since 1969.... 56 years and I am 56 years old born in Sarasota since Longboat Key has no hospital.
Christopher W. Carman
Longboat Key

GMD

To: Jack Daly
Thanks for your input, Jack. We live in interesting times.
Ken Schneider
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

GMD

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneider
The name Gulf of Mexico Drive, like the Commission, has served us very well over the years. I recommend that the Commission, at its October meeting, decide the issue by confirming the

GMD name; thereby enabling it to continue focusing on Longboat’s more important community issues.
Jack Daly
Longboat Key

Removal of signage and possible name change

To: Longboat Key Commission
In my review of Florida HB 549, which you are well aware, the Florida Governor supported President’s executive order renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America for federal use. Both entities, directed name changes for the body of water, and for school boards to update their official “geographic materials”, but did not mandate the name change for road signs. So rather than following any directive, FDOT, with your permission, decided to take down our road signs in what can only be described as a partisan, political action. So much for being impartially served!
Without doing the math, a large portion, numbering in the thousands have Gulf of Mexico Dr, Longboat Key as their address. It’s a separate conversation that we aren’t on a Key, but an Island, perhaps you should spend some time discussing that. You are dictating, for your own political ...what exactly, that we will have to change our address on countless bank, brokerage, utility, credit card, service contracts, accounts, documents, trusts, charities, etc onto just about infinity these days! Then, our condominium association will have the headache and cost of doing the same with every contract and bill and vendor for the commissioner’s personal political benefit, or so you believe.
My parents bought the condominium I now own on Longboat Key in 1973. I knew as a teenager this was a place I could come to escape and rest, and I worked very hard all my adult life to be able to retire here. Please do not destroy the love I have for this beautiful place by dragging it through the vitriol that permeates America now. Can’t we have a safe space?
You are not required to change the name, please leave it alone and keep the signs in storage for saner days.
Mary Schmedeman
Longboat Key

Write Your Representative’ Website

To: Honorable Tobin Rogers “Toby” Overdorf
I serve as the at-large member of the Longboat Key Commission. I read the article by John Kennedy of the FL Capital Bureau for USA Today this morning on your House Select Committee on Property Taxes meetings for the last two days.
I can personally attest that we did drop taxes this year and have held the line on taxes regularly, even during the difficult time we experienced during COVID. Seventy-one percent of our

See Letters, page 5

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KeyHealth

In praise of coffee

MATHEW EDLUND
Contributing Columnist
edlund@lbknews.com

For centuries coffee has been praised and vilified for its health and social benefits. Bach wrote a cantata depicting a young woman willing to give up most things in life for her very expensive, imported brew. That caffeine is addictive has been known for centuries. Yet now coffee is praised for lowering insulin levels and decreasing uric acid levels. It's said to provide the American population perhaps half the anti-oxidants in its diet.



EDLUND

Not very long ago, research on coffee told a different story. In the late 1970's, Dr. Brian MacMahon, chairman of the Epidemiology Department at the Harvard School of Public Health, reported disturbing findings. In his studies, coffee, particularly instant coffee, markedly increased rates of pancreatitis. Far worse, it increased the incidence of pancreatic cancer. Coffee might be causing a four fold increase in one of medicine's most untreatable cancers. Fortunately MacMahon was wrong. His research used as its control group patients with GI disease, an unfair comparison.

Further studies showed no increase in pancreatic cancer, nor pancreatitis, due to coffee. MacMahon's research is a cautionary tale that should be remembered. Ours is a time when "new breakthroughs" are constantly trumpeted by a media obsessed by novelty and scandal. It reminds people of the old adage taught in medical school - half of what we're teaching you is true half is false. The only problem is we don't know which half.

In science, getting to know the truth takes time. When an "outrageous" result is reported, contrary to accepted fact, verify the result before you believe it. Many epidemiologists, as did my old teacher, Professor Olli Miettinen, apply their own "likelihood ratio" to any new data. They apply a probability coefficient from 0 to 1, from complete disbelief to fervent embrace, to any new research result they see.

Home Brew Versus Commercial

Coffee varies a lot. There are different beans from

different regions, different brewing methods, different chemical fixes and additives. What's brewed at home may not resemble what arrives at your table in a restaurant. Italian espresso is different from what's normally served in Finland, the world's coffee drinking champion, where locals supposedly average nine cups a day (enjoy the Finnish climate a while and you may learn why.) Yet when buying coffee, people may inherently respond to two major factors - taste and caffeine content.

Consider what you drink at a store or restaurant. Starbucks is very popular, but beware your waistline. Not only are the caffeine amounts often astronomic, but so are the calories. Some Starbucks' Frappuccino and other concoctions push over 700 calories into a single cup. Think of that sugar while happily remembering headlines about the "insulin lowering" effects of caffeine.

Coffee and Caffeine

Coffee can be caffeine rich or caffeine poor. The difference is clinically important. Many of the "health effects" of coffee may be quite separate from its caffeine content. Decaffeinating coffee means you may lose some health benefits, but at this stage it's hard to know what they are. If coffee really is providing half the anti-oxidants in the American diet, we're in big trouble. Our processed foods are probably far away from any reasonable human design principles of sensible nutrition. Coffee may provide real health benefits.

If it holds up, the data on lowered insulin level should be important. Unfortunately, many drugs work on "risk factors", but do not necessarily aid health. The recent history of the diabetes drug avandia, where clinically "improved" glucose levels are associated with higher heart disease rates, demonstrates the risk of treating risk factors and not real, hard end points, like death and disease. Association is not causality; lowering a risk factor does not mean you prevent a disease.

Caffeine can be used to keep shift workers up, to wake people up in the morning, to allow soldiers to remain sharp. Yet too much caffeine can cause chronic insomnia, even for those who only drink coffee in the morning. Caffeinism with its "speediness" and high levels of anxiety is a common syndrome in corporate life.

Coffee and Cancer

Is coffee tumorigenic, or not? This remains a very



Some data point to coffee lowering colon, rectal, and liver cancer rates.

controversial area. Some data point to coffee lowering colon, rectal, and liver cancer rates. With colon cancer the number two cancer killer in the US, coffee might be providing an overall cancer benefit. However, leukemia rates appear increased by coffee drinking.

Other Coffee Benefits

The social elements of coffee receive too little comment. Coffee houses have been major venues for fomenting and planning social progress and revolutions (including ours) since the seventeenth century. Also neglected are the multiply useful effects of the kaffeklatsch. Recent uses of "coffee groups" include young mothers learning to overcome post-partum depression, while others are taught to become effective parents. Many a social, business, and political meeting turns around people drinking coffee. The centuries old network of coffee production and use will probably continue a long time. Coffee is a great enjoyment to billions of people. If it prevents diabetes and gout, major tumors, and lifts alertness and spirit, so much the better.

Dr. Edlund practices sleep medicine and psychiatry in Sarasota. He can be reached at 365-4308, and by his website, doctoredlund.com.



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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 3

revenue in Longboat comes from property taxes and of that number 64% of that pays for Fire, Rescue, Emergency Services and Police. Which of those services would we eliminate if property taxes are severely reduced or eliminated?

There were comments made about the salaries of elected officials in communities. Our Commission receives no salary as Commissioners. We volunteer our time and resources. Difficult to cut our salaries. There is nothing to cut.

The issue of unaffordable housing rests on developers, insurance rates (my home insurance has gone up 100% in the last three years - and our house was destroyed last year in the hurricanes. We are currently suing our insurance company for the lack of compensation from that damage) and the number of people moving to FL. Demand is high. Inventory not as high and developers and builders are reaping the benefits of this market.

Come spend some time with our staff and understand what it takes to maintain a safe community. We are still reeling from last year’s storms, but our citizens have complimented our Town for the outstanding service as we recover. Sincerely, BJ Bishop

BJ Bishop
Commissioner, Town of Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico name change

To: Longboat Key Commission
I wish to voice my opinion that I strongly oppose the proposed name change to Gulf of Mexico Drive.
Sandra Brut-Christensen
Longboat Key

Do not Change Gulf of Mexico Drive Name

To: Longboat Key Commission
As a resident of Longboat Key, I strongly object to changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico Drive. It will incur an unnecessary cost – financially to both the town as well as to residents who live along Gulf of Mexico Drive and who would have to change their address. There would also be a huge hassle factor cost for residents to have to change their address on all of their accounts. I can’t think of anything more frustrating and irritating and a complete waste of time. This change of name effort is ridiculous and totally unnecessary. Just stop!
Martha Lynne Kenerson
Longboat Key

Name change of Gulf of Mexico Dr.

To: Longboat Key Commission
My wife and I oppose any commission action to change the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive to Gulf of America Drive. Such a legal change would lead to unnecessary work for thousands of Longboat citizens: changes to drivers licenses, passports, wills, house titles, voter registrations, mailing addresses, social security, medicare etc. Please vote not to change. Perhaps a sign at either end of Longboat “You are now proceeding on Gulf of Mexico Drive alongside the Gulf of America. Have a nice day!” would do the trick..whatever that may be.
Janet and Andy Hartman
Longboat Key

GMD name change objection

To: Longboat Key Commission
I would like to register my opposition to renaming Gulf of Mexico Drive. It seems like a silly and pointless gesture. There is no rational reason to change historic name at this point.
Charles Rozier
Longboat Key

GMD

To: Longboat Key Commission
I am writing to ask you to please not change the name of our road from Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America. There are so many legal documents that will have to be changed along changing our address with friends, doctors, and other people/ companies that we use our address for. I’m sure there are other ways to handle this situation. Perhaps just use Rt. 789 or Gulf of America/Mexico on signs?
It’s ridiculous that we have to rearrange all our documents, mail, etc. because someone decided to change the name of the body of water that has been there for so long. I hope you will take these things into consideration. Everyone I know feels the same way.
Thank you in advance for your consideration.
Donna Troendle
Longboat Key

Change of name to Gulf of America

To: Longboat Key Commission
Really? All the hassles this will bring to hundreds of people for no reason! Come to your senses and keep the name “Gulf of Mexico Drive!” Enough is enough!
Thanks for being reasonable thinkers,
Elaine Boyer
Longboat Key

GMD name change

To: Longboat Key Commission
I strongly oppose the name change. A needless waste of taxpayers money to change signs, maps etc, a source of confusion, and an insult to our neighbors to the South.
Helena Rozier
Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico drive

To: Longboat Key Commission

Please keep the name of our beautiful thoroughfare that we have all enjoyed for so long, please leave it!
Irene Vassilaros
Longboat Key

Opposition to GMD name change and new signage

To: Longboat Key Commission
I understand that the FDOT has taken down street signs on the signal masts. I understand that the road is still known at Gulf of Mexico Drive by the US Post Office.
I would like to express my opinion that the Town does nothing in regards to replacing the signs along Gulf of Mexico Drive. It is fine with me if the FDOT wants to put up a sign that says State Road 789.
Julie Hansen
Longboat Key

Do not change name of Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
I must believe that there are far more important issues to discuss and vote on than changing the name of our main road on Longboat Key.
It will be costly, disruptive and terribly inconvenient - especially for many of the elderly who inhabit our fine island. Please do not continue to feed the ego of a president who acts on a whim and pushes his own personal agenda above common sense and the wishes of the general population. Please vote ‘No’ to changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive.
Katie Felicelli
Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico Drive name change

To: Longboat Key Commission
As a resident of Longboat Key, I would like to voice my opposition to any proposals to changing the name of GMD. It would result in significant inconvenience, confusion and expense for the residents with a Gulf of Mexico address. Furthermore, there has not been a groundswell among locals for such an action, but rather has been handed down from above. As a citizen, registered voter and resident of Longboat Key, I am urging the Commission to reject this proposal.
Lemuel Seabrook III
Longboat Key

Change of GMD

To: Longboat Key Commission
Please do not change the name of GMD, I live on that street and it would be a huge burden for me. I assume it would also cost a great amount.
Linda Klein
Longboat Key

GOM change

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
I support changing the name of our main Gulf of Mexico Drive to Gulf of America. I love the name change but if it’s not tolerated by the left, then I support Gulf Drive. It’s neutral, but not as beautiful as Gulf of America.

See Letters, page 6



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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 4

Karin Graham
Longboat Key

GOM Name Change

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Howard, Changing the name from Gulf of Mexico Dr is the dumbest idea I've heard in a long time.
Tom Watson
Longboat Key

No name change

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Please leave it as Gulf of Mexico Drive, do not change the name to Gulf of the America Drive, or State Road 789.
Andrew Vac
Longboat Key

Opposed to Changing of name of Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
We have been on Longboat Key for almost 20 years. We have owned a residence on LBK for more than 10 years. It has come to our attention that the commission is discussing and considering the changing the name of Gulf Of Mexico Drive to Gulf of America Drive.
For the record: We oppose the change because it will create a hardship to us for a variety of reasons. Many of our established personal and business contacts, including clients much printed materials, including checks will require change. That will necessitate a great deal of unneeded and unnecessary effort on our part and many of the accounts we deal with.
We chose Longboat Key as a quiet and uncomplicated place to be at this time in our lives. We prefer to keep things simple and the way they are. Appreciate your considering our feelings. Thank you!
Gary Eisenberg and Barbara Eisenberg
Longboat Key

Street Name

To: Longboat Key Commission
Please keep our street name Gulf of Mexico Drive do not change on a political whim. Honor our town founders and our neighbors to the south the name was well chosen. The

name has served us well for a very long time. we do not need the conflict. Thank you.
Mary Ellen Cawley
Longboat Key

GMD

To: Longboat Key Commission
As a long-time resident of Longboat Key, I would like to encourage you to vote 'No' on changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Considering the cost involved, I am sure that there are more critical improvements to send the money on. Please consider the cascading expenses that will be incurred.
J Veronica Biggins
Longboat Key

GMD Name change

To: Ray Rajewski
By action earlier this year of the federal and Florida governments, the name of the body of water abutting Longboat Key to the west has been renamed, "Gulf of America". No official action has been taken to rename any other feature, natural or manmade. When an LBK resident asked that we explore renaming GMD as Gulf of America Drive, the Town asked the FDOT for their position, as GMD is a State road. FDOT responded that the only name for GMD recognized by the State is S.R. 789 and that any local name for the road is exclusively the right and domain of Longboat Key, meaning the Town Commission. None of the above is disputed.
Since July, we have had several hundred pieces of correspondence and contacts on social media on this issue. As a consequence, we have placed the matter on the 1 pm, Monday, October 20 Town Commission Workshop for discussion. Any interested party is welcome to express their views on this subject at that meeting. Having said that, note that space at Town Hall is limited, the meeting will available to log in live on-line, and every opinion submitted to the Town by the date of the meeting will be a part of the meeting record and considered by the Commission.
Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

GMD Name change

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier
It might be helpful to have someone explain who is responsible and why the change of name

See Letters, page 7

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LEARN MORE

Editor Letters



Letters, from page 6

of GMD is happening
Ray Rajewski
Longboat Key

Status Update: Windward Bay Condos Berm

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop
This is provided as a follow up to questions about the landscaping berm at Windward Bay. Please let me know if you have any questions.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Windward Bay Condos Berm

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Following-up on questions raised at yesterday’s Commission meeting regarding a berm feature along the frontage of Windward Bay Condominiums (4888 GMD). This effort, by the condominium, was brought to staff’s attention initially as a concern for the lack of silt fencing associated with fill being brought in. Staff placed a Stop Work Order on the project & required the installation of silt fencing and the submission of a Minor Work Authorization application to ensure that the replacement of much of the former landscaped hedge, with a raised landscaping bed, met Town requirements for drainage, utilities and retention of emergency access. After review by staff, the Minor Work Authorization was approved on Sept. 19th.
Allen Parsons
Director Planning, Zoning & Building Department
Town of Longboat Key

Change of name

To: Longboat Key Commission
What good does it do changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Dr. to Gulf America Dr. As I see, that is totally nonsense. The only thing that will be accomplished is wasting taxpayer money.
Whether Gulf of Mexico, Gulf of America, or Gulf of Jack Sparrow, it makes no difference.
David J. Vargas
Longboat Key

Permit Fees

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Thanks Tip. That is helpful. I went on-line to see what fees are and had a hard time finding that info easily on our site and info on fee waivers was not easily found easier so perhaps we could take a look at our site. Most individuals (not contractors) are not as familiar with this process as the professional community.
BJ Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Permit Fees

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop

Good morning Commissioner. In response to your questions around how we will handle permits (including sub permits) relating to storm damages as we approach and pass the 12/31 deadline, here is Allen’s response:
We rely on an applicant to identify, with their permit submittal, whether their permit is associated with storm damage. If an applicant does not indicate that on their application a fee is assessed. We have had a number of situations where this information was not included with the initial permit application, but was later identified and we have issued refunds in those cases.
With regard to the 12/31 deadline, the fee waiver will be applicable to permit applications received on or prior to that date. We do have ‘master’ building & alteration permits that include mechanical, electrical & plumbing sub-contractors/trades. That’s probably the best bet for someone who will be applying for a permit that will included those sub-contractors.
The team will work to push this information out to both our contractor community and our residents so that those who are working to repair/rebuild can still take advantage of the fee waivers.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Road Name Change

To: Longboat Key Commission
It seems unnecessary to change the name of the road “Gulf of Mexico Drive” nor to take it off of the road signs. Using road numbers only can be very confusing to drivers as well as being a bland description that Gulf of Mexico Drive has come to reflect. It is not necessary for it to reflect the change of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.
Daniel and Sylvia Hennessy
Longboat Key

See Letters, page 11

Recycling Collection Moves To Wednesdays Beginning October 8



Longboat Key Residents:

Yard Waste and **Recycling** will both be collected on **Wednesdays**.

Trash collection stays the same - Mondays and Thursdays.

Yard Waste Setout Reminder

As required by Manatee and Sarasota counties, yard waste in **plastic bags is no longer accepted**.

To ensure your yard waste is collected:

- Use a reusable can or bin, or a compostable paper lawn/leaf bag.
- Tie branches into bundles (max 4 feet long, branches no thicker than 6 inches).
- Each container or bundle must weigh 40 pounds or less.

Yard waste that doesn’t meet these guidelines won’t be collected.

Have Questions?

Visit the public works page at longboatkey.org or call WM at (941) 753-7591.

Thank you for helping us keep Longboat Key clean and green.



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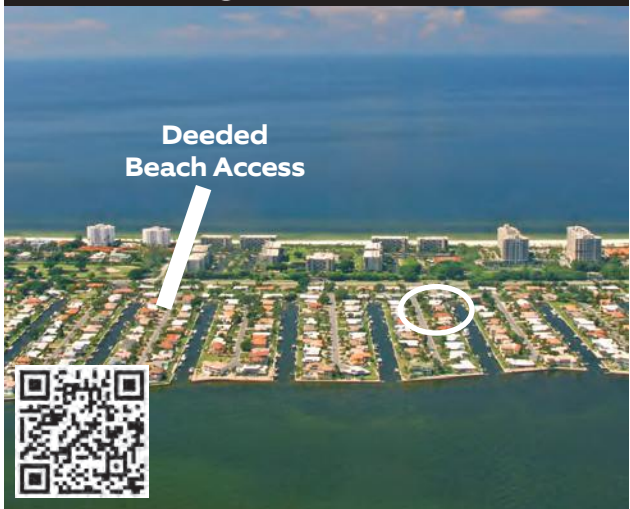
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BeachResidences709.com

Villa di Lancia



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VillaDiLancia114.com

Country Club Shores



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\$1,880,000
521WedgeLn.com

Sanctuary



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\$1,620,000
SanctuaryA303.com

Promenade



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\$999,000 \$899,000
Promenade704.com Promenade105.com

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KeyRealEstate

Bird Key, Lido Key, Longboat Key latest sales

Address	Sq. Ft.	List Price	Bed/Bath/Half Bath			Days On Market	Sale Price
615 DREAM ISLAND PL Unit#304	1,509	\$999,500	2	2	0	39	\$935,000
4235 GULF OF MEXICO DR Unit#G203	666	\$475,000	1	1	0	156	\$430,000



615 DREAM ISLAND PL Unit#304



JEFF
RHINELANDER
941-685-3590
Jeff@jeffrhineland.com



COURTNEY
TARANTINO
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BIRD KEY • 465 E. ROYAL FLAMINGO DRIVE
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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.

Sept. 20 Incident

10:00 a.m.

Officer Miklos and Officer Martinson were dispatched to Bayside Drive in reference to fishermen trespassing on private property. Dispatch advised it was several men fishing. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with the caller and his son. Officer Miklos observed a legally parked Ford F150 in a public parking space. The caller and his son were fishing in the water between the public dock and the restaurant at Broadway. Officer Miklos made contact with the man fishing and his son walking along the property and the water near the property. The man understood that her property did not extend into the water. The caller did not have any surveillance footage of the man or his son on her property however she stated this is an ongoing issue. Officer Miklos returned to speak to the man who said that they did not enter onto her property but remained in the water. Due to a lack of evidence and the man being on public property during the interaction, no trespass warning was completed. Case clear.



Noise

8:01 p.m.

Officer Maple was dispatched to Lands End for a signal of a noise complaint in the vicinity of Jewfish Key on the water. Upon arrival at the location, Officer Maple canvassed the area to investigate the noise complaint. While walking the docks, Officer Maple was able to hear music coming from the vicinity of one boat or a possible house on Jewfish Key. Officer Maple was unable to determine the exact location of the noise from his position at the dock. The Longboat Key Police Department had no marine units in the water at the time of the incident. The limitation prevented Officer Maple from accessing the water area where the noise was originating. Officer Maple contacted dispatch to request assistance and to determine if Manatee County was able to respond with a marine unit to investigate the complaint. Manatee County was unable to respond to assist with the marine investigation. Since officers were unable to respond to the location for the noise complaint due to the lack of available marine units, Officer Maple decided to monitor the situation to see if he could get a response in the event a marine unit comes available. Prior to departing the area, the noise was determined to be coming from a vessel that headed back into shore outside Longboat jurisdiction. Following the noise trail, Officer Maple located the vessel in question being hauled from the water at the Bradenton Beach pier. The vessel was a 1991 white Hydraspo. The boat was being pulled from the water by a Ford F150. Officer Maple spoke to the owner who said she did not realize her radio was that loud. Longboat Key noise ordinance violations were explained to her. Case clear.

Sept. 21
Citizen assist

9:36 a.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to Tarawitt Drive on a call of a citizen assist. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson was met by the homeowner who stated while getting into her car she saw and heard water bubbling up from the manhole cover in the street in front of her driveway. The homeowner said the bubbling water has since stopped but she has never seen that happen in the 40 years she has lived in the house and figured she should report it. Officer Martinson contacted Public Works who stated someone will come out to assess the problem. Case clear.

Citizen assist

3:41 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to North Shore Road to a citizen assist on a complaint about jet skis picking up people from the beach. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson observed the two jet skis floating in water approximately 10 yards off the beach. Neither jet ski was in violation of any laws. Officer Martinson contacted the caller and informed them that jet skis are allowed to drive up on to the beach. Case clear.

Animal

5:26 p.m.

Officer Martinson was dispatched to North Shore Road on a call of an animal problem. Upon arrival, Officer Martinson met with the caller at the beach entrance. The caller said there was a pelican with fishing line wrapped around its wings and it was unable to fly. The caller walked the officer to where the bird was on the beach but as they approached it ran into the water. The caller walked out into the water after the bird and attempted to catch it but the bird snapped at his face with its large beak and swam further out into the water. The Manatee Sheriff's Office Animal Control stated they were not going to respond. Officer Martinson called Save Our Sea Birds two times but their office was

closed and went to voicemail. At this time, the bird is still swimming out in the water and Officer Martinson has no way to catch it to cut the fishing line. Case clear.

Sept. 22
Vehicle

8:26 a.m.

Officer Pescuma while on patrol, received a license plate camera alert for an expired plate aws of Jan. 22, 2025. The vehicle was located and a traffic stop was conducted on a 2003 green Ford pickup truck. Further investigation shows that the tag on the vehicle comes back to a 1997 black Dodge pickup truck and had an expiration date of May 13, 2026. Officer Pescuma made contact with the driver and introduced himself and provided the reason for the traffic stop. Officer Pescuma advised the driver that the tag attached to the vehicle is expired and not assigned to that vehicle. Officer Pescuma asked for the driver's license registration and current proof of insurance. The driver handed the officer a Mexico Electoral ID Card. Upon conducting an FCIC/NCIC check on the driver, it was found he was never issued a driver's license and warrant check yielded negative results. Officer Pescua inquired why he was driving and the driver stated he was working construction on Longboat Key. Driver stated he thinks the tags got switched. Officer Pescuma issued criminal citations for no valid Driver's License, no tag assigned, and no proof of insurance. Case clear.

Incident

6:00 a.m.

Officer Van Dyke responded to Longboat Club Road in reference to a suspicious incident. Upon arrival, Officer Van Dyke spoke to the caller and advised she was a housekeeper. She advised that a half-cut rotting watermelon was wrapped in saran wrap along with miscellaneous trash inside of a cardboard box. The box and items had since been disposed of. It should be noted that the box was discovered in front of the resident's door on Sept. 18, at approximately 11 a.m. Officer Van Dyke spoke to the homeowner who advised that he has several estranged family members that could be involved but he wanted the incident documented out of caution. The caller advised that he conducted his own research on the tracking number, ultimately yielding negative results. No video surveillance was available at the time of the report but the property manager intends to send over whatever evidence is retrieved going forward. Case clear.

Loitering

7:00 p.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to a restaurant in reference to a suspicious person. The complainant reported his daughter told him about a suspicious man loitering inside of the restaurant. The person did not purchase any food and was only sitting there. The man's daughter was wanting to close the restaurant, but was unsure about the man's intentions. The man identified himself as the owner of the restaurant and only wanted the man to leave the restaurant. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer met with the daughter who reported she was working when the man entered. The man didn't order food and only said he was taking a break after running. The daughter didn't mind the man sitting there, but after an hour or so the man still didn't order anything or make any purchases from the business. The daughter asked the man if he needed anything, but the man refused and only continued playing on his cell phone. The daughter felt the man was suspicious and contacted her father for assistance. The daughter also just wanted the man to leave the business. Officer Mathis spoke with the man whom only told Officer Mathis he was taking a break from running and refused to identify himself. The man left the restaurant without any issues, but did tell Officer Mathis he was staying at a relative's home approximately one mile north of the restaurant. Officer Mathis and Officer Troyer stood by the restaurant while the daughter closed and left the area to prevent any further issues. The two were both thankful for police. Case clear.

Sept. 23

Citizen assist

6:18 p.m.

Officer Troyer was dispatched to 3800 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a water main break on the right of way. Upon arrival, Officer Troyer observed a broken sprinkler head flowing over and appeared to belong to the tennis club. Private property issue. Case clear.

Sept. 24 Noise

6:26 p.m.

Officer Nazareno responded to the 300 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive in reference to a noise complaint regarding workers in the parking lot using construction tools to grind stone at the parking lot after 5 p.m. Prior to his arrival, Officer Tillman made contact with the workers who were rinsing their tools and packing up to leave. Officer Tillman advised them of the town noise ordinance for construction noise after 5 p.m. No violation was observed. Case clear.

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EditorLetters



Letters, from page 7

Resiliency of Retail - St Armands

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
This sounds like an interesting meeting, but the notice is too late for me to attend. Maybe someone else could go?
Ken Schneier
Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Resiliency of Retail - St Armands

To: Longboat Key Commission
FYI - please see the two emails below regarding an event tomorrow from 5-7 p.m. at the Sarasota Art Museum. The event appears to be sponsored by the Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and one of the speaker’s topics is “resiliency and retail in St. Armands”.
Chris Goggia
St. Armands Residents Association
Sarasota

Resiliency of Retail - St Armands

To: Philip DiMaria
Thank you very much for reaching out, and I hope to continue to communicate with you. I would like to clarify our Association’s stance on commercial development on St. Armands Circle as follows:
Our positions are based on member feedback in our Annual Member Survey (i.e. they are not just the Association’s positions or the Board’s positions... they are the positions of the residents and residential property owners on St. Armands Key)
A few years ago, as documented on our website, our focus was on preserving the protections of the city’s Coastal Islands Overlay District, and not on resisting commercial development
It is my belief that residents would like to see a successful and revitalized St. Armands Circle, and are interested in exploring options that do not involve the significant loosening of regulations and a resulting increase in density or traffic.
I’d also like to mention that there are many additional St. Armands stakeholders that I believe should be included in any discussion about the future of St. Armands Circle. These include the Lido Key Residents Association (LKRA), the Lido Shores Property Owners Association (LSPOA), the St. Armands Circle (Merchants) Association (SACA), and the Town of Longboat Key.
I am forwarding your email to our 11-person Board of Directors and to representatives of the other stakeholders listed above. It looks like your event is tomorrow, but perhaps some of our board members or the others will be able to attend.
Chris Goggia
President St. Armands Residents Association
Sarasota

Resiliency of Retail - St Armands

To: Board Members of the St. Armands Residents Association
I hope this message finds you well. My name is Philip DiMaria, and I wanted to reach out ahead of an upcoming event: <https://aiagulfcoastchapter.wildapricot.org/event-6038138> where I’ll be speaking on the topic of resiliency and retail in St. Armands, particularly in light of the challenges and lessons from last year’s storm season.
I’ve become aware of the Association’s longstanding and thoughtful stance on resisting commercial development, as outlined on your website. I want to assure you that my approach to this discussion will be intellectually honest, grounded in best practices, and respectful of our

community’s values and history. My intent is not to advocate for any specific agenda, but rather to explore strategies that support the long-term viability and resilience of retail on the Circle.
I simply wanted to provide a heads-up and extend my respect for the work your board continues to do in maintaining the character and integrity of St. Armands. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or thoughts.
Philip DiMaria
Sarasota

Changing name of Gulf of Mexico Dr.

To: Longboat Key Commission
With all due respect, changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Dr. is utterly heartbreaking! I have lived here for 20 years and my parents before me lived here back in the 70’s. I have been coming to Islands West since I was a young woman, and to think coming over the bridge to a road with another name seems very unnecessary and sad. Tradition should take precedent!
Please do not let this happen to Longboat Key. Gulf of Mexico Dr. is Gulf of Mexico Dr. and no one should change that name!
Joyce Hicks
Longboat Key

Renaming Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
I ask as a resident of Longboat Key, that you do not rename Gulf of Mexico Drive to Gulf of America Drive. It would be such a huge inconvenience for the residents that have their current address as Gulf of Mexico Drive. So many items would have to changed such as Drive’s License, mailing address, passports, social security card, voter registration card, to name a few. This seems like a huge undertaking for so many people over something rather insignificant as renaming Gulf of Mexico drive. Thank you for your consideration to this matter.
Sheryl Ruark
Longboat Key

Changing name of Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Town Commission
Like many others, I also strongly support maintaining the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive. I believe the name has been in place since 1957-- 68 years. I have known and loved Longboat Key for over 40 years, and now live here full time since 2016.
This change will be expensive and disruptive to individuals and the business community. Surely, the dollars spent could be utilized in other places, as we still have lingering problems post hurricanes of last year.
I will be in attendance at the Oct. 20 meeting. I hope you will give serious consideration
See Letters, page 12

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 11

to keeping the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive.
Elizabeth LaFrance
Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
Gulf of America Drive seems appropriate to me. Or Longboat Drive.
Warren Wyatt
Longboat Key

Strongly oppose the renaming of State Rd 789 Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
We and I are vehemently against the renaming of Gulf of Mexico Dr. Gulf of Mexico Drive was named in 1957 2 years after the town of Longboat Key was Incorporated. For 68 years. 7,505+ people 3,939 households 9,774 housing units 2,221 live with an address of Gulf of Mexico Drive Homeowners in LBK have a median annual property tax bill of approximately \$9,274 3x higher than the national median. There isn't a bigger waste of time and our tax paying dollars! This is a purposeful pot stirring, distracting change to a peace Haven for all of us that dwell and live and own property there and by the way, pay our taxes.
This is a time burden
This is a money burden
This is just another distraction to what really needs to be done to help our key and keeping the peace on the island.
Argument: "but Google changed the Gulf of Mexico name to the Gulf of America..."
Answer: Like everything this is gonna be temporary. It's just a simple bowing down to the brass above for technology benefits, with Google, a major corporation.
My family, The Roth's have visited and lived in LBK for 51years.
We have proudly owned at the Players Club for 7years
Progressed to homesteaded at Lands End for the last 29years
Currently, my partner and I have purchased land now on North Shore Drive, and plan to also homestead.
I honestly cannot think of a bigger derogation and insult to my father who love this island died, served this island, and whose ashes reside now in the Gulf of Mexico for the last 17.5yrs.
Please, for the peace and good of the island. Keep 789 what was founded to be and remains to always live in all of our hearts as GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE. And get back to real work, real progress, and meaningful debate and change.
Kerry Roth
Longboat Key

Gulf of America Drive” issue

To: Longboat Key Commission
We are Florida residents who live on Gulf of Mexico Drive. We are writing to express our concern about the possible change of our address from “Gulf of Mexico Drive” to “Gulf of America Drive.”
Such a change would entail a great deal of work on the part of every resident to change their address on dozens of records, from Medicare and Social Security to bank accounts, credit cards, legal documents and all avenues of correspondence by mail. Moreover, in addition to causing personal hardship, such a change will cause considerable public expenditure, as well. I would greatly appreciate your consideration of these concerns, as I believe that they suggest that this change cannot be justified.
Donald and Susan Ullmann
Longboat Key

Blocking view of canal

To: Longboat Key Commission
We live at Bogey lane and our neighbors directly to our left if you are facing the canal have remodeled the home and put in new fencing/vegetation. The fence is black and see through, which is fine-many neighbors on both sides of our canal have this type of fencing. The question I have is in regards to planting trees along that fence that are now impeding our view of the canal that we have always enjoyed for 16 years. None of the other fences in our canal have anything planted in front of them so I was wondering if there is any kind of rule in regards to this?
Kimberly Dellosso
Longboat Key

Road name change

To: Longboat Key Commission
This whole situation is absurd. Do not change the name! It is a pain to change personal addresses and not necessary! The Gulf of Mexico will always be the Gulf of Mexico as far as I am concerned. Why does it have to change?
Susan Donn
Longboat Key

Change GOM

To: Longboat Key Commission
Please vote “no” to changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Dr to America. This would cause so much work and inconvenience for many of the citizens on LBK, as well as the expense of changing all the signs. Wouldn't your time and our tax dollars be better spent elsewhere?
Suzanne Snyder
Longboat Key

Temporary Coffee Kiosk at 3172 GMD

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Following-up on questions raised at yesterday's Commission meeting regarding the operation of a mobile coffee kiosk at the site of the former Turtle Coffee Bar (3172 GMD). A Temporary Use Permit (TUP) was approved for the temporary commercial activity of limited food and beverage sales.
The temporary commercial activity was requested by the owners of the commercial building that housed the Turtle Coffee Bar & is associated with hurricane recovery efforts ongoing in the Town. The TUP will be limited to 6-months duration, with renewals required every 90-days, from date of issuance.

The TUP was granted with the following conditions:

The operator is required to maintain applicable licensing and business insurance.
The property owner is required to comply with all ordinances regarding solid waste disposal and must provide the mobile food truck vendor access to solid waste collection on the subject property.
The property owner is required to ensure that the mobile food truck vendor meets all applicable federal, state and local ordinances, rules and codes.
Selling or distributing alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
Placing temporary signs, banners, or other prohibited attention-getting devices in or alongside the public right-of-way or across roadways.
Signs must be permanently affixed to or painted on the mobile food truck.
An A-frame menu board up to nine square feet is permitted to be placed by the mobile operation and within the vending area. An operation is allowed to display this sign only during hours of operations, otherwise the board shall be removed.
Allen Parsons
Director Planning, Zoning & Building Department, Town of Longboat Key

Gulf of America Drive Name Change

To: Longboat Key Commission
Please support the adoption of “Gulf of America”. We need to show pride in our country.
Philip & Nanette Alsop
Longboat Key

Gulf of America Drive Name Change

To: Longboat Key Commission
In my opinion, it is not a good use of the island's financial resources. In addition, it places a burden on people whose address is Gulf of Mexico Drive to change their address... on credit cards, with organizations, on bank accounts and checks, etc. Many of these residents are, most likely, senior citizens who do not need that kind of hassle. I know that I would not be pleased to have to do that. Thank you for listening.
Thalia Dorwick
Longboat Key

Yes to change our street to Gulf of America Drive

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
I vote Yes to change our street to Gulf of America Drive.
Michael Schmidt
Longboat Key

Name change of Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
Please do not change the name of our Gulf of Mexico Drive.
There are many reasons to keep the name.....first and foremost is the cost of making a change.
Thanks for all you do,
John Bradbury
Longboat Key

In opposition to changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
We live at 4125 Gulf of Mexico Drive (La Firenza Condominium Association, Inc.) and are writing this letter in opposition to the potential name change of the roadway.
First, as a practical matter, are we going to change the road's name again if the next president renames the Gulf back to the Gulf of Mexico?
Let's not get into a silly political cycle.
Second, on a more fundamental level, changing the name of the road would result in a massive time requirement and financial expense to those of us who live on Gulf of Mexico Drive. This isn't just a case of changing our address on FPL's next bill nor of changing our driver's license on its renewal.
We would have to redo our legal documents: wills and all estate documentation, health proxies, partnerships, insurance policies – the list goes on. Many of these changes would require the expense of lawyers and accountants to implement.
Apart from the financial costs, we don't even want to think about the hours that would be required.
Further, given the demographics of Longboat, there are a fair number of residents who simply will not be able to make the needed changes at this stage of their lives.
For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Town Commission reject any thought of changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive.
Jonathan and Kristina Berg
Longboat Key

Name Change for Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
I am strongly against changing the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive. We have been residents

Letters, from page 12

since 1997. I hope the voice of the community is heard. Thank you for serving the community.
Arleen Klein
Longboat Key

Name change of Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
My husband and I oppose any commission action to change the name of Gulf of Mexico Drive to Gulf of America Drive. Such a legal change would lead to unnecessary work for thousands of Longboat citizens: changes to driver’s licenses, passports, wills, house titles, voter registrations, mailing addresses, social security, Medicare etc. Please vote not to change.
Lori and Gary Brochin
Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
Here we are on the cusp of celebrating the 70th birthday of the formal establishment of Longboat Key and we have to deal with the divisiveness of our nation that has now crept its way onto our island (I am sorry to say in more ways than one). It threatens to change the name of the very thoroughfare that carries us and all of our visitors to and fro along our beautiful island.
I remember when I first came here as a kid 70 years ago and for all the years since what a pleasure it was to travel up and down Gulf of Mexico Drive and revel in the very sound of its name.
To change it now under the pressures that we now face would be a travesty and an act of total capitulation of which we should not be proud.
Long live Gulf of Mexico Drive and Happy 70th Birthday to Longboat Key!
Richard B. Perlman
Sandhamn Place
Longboat Key

Gulf of Mexico Drive name change

To: Longboat Key Commission
As a permanent resident of Longboat Key, I am vehemently opposed to a permanent name change of Gulf of Mexico Drive. The name change to the body of water previously known as the Gulf of Mexico was a political stunt that could likely be changed again if and when there is a party/administration change in Washington.
If in fact the City of Longboat Key is legally bound by the state of FL to rename “Gulf of Mexico Drive” to something else, I suggest you simply call it State Road 789.
I along with several friends and acquaintances will be compelled to consider relocation out of LBK if our residence has a “Gulf of America” address. Thank you for your consideration.
Russ Madonia
Longboat Key

No name change for Gulf of Mexico Drive

To: Longboat Key Commission
I am deeply opposed to the idea of changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico Drive. Such a shift would create a burden for everyone who lives or does business on GMD, costing precious time and financial resources to change everything, legally and personally, that we have attached to our current address.
Thank you for the hard work you do on our behalf and the careful consideration you give to so many difficult issues.
Frances Fergusson
Longboat Key

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How to play the big points in tennis

Those who play the big points well invariably have learned to picture as clearly and vividly as possible what they want to have happen before each point.

ROBBIE SALUM
Guest Columnist
Salum@lbknews.com

The ultimate winner in most matches is generally determined by the outcome of just a few key points. These big points, or pressure points, establish critical match momentum. Pressure dynamics and feelings of confidence markedly change in response to who wins the big points. Tiebreaker points, game points (especially break points), set points and match points are generally acknowledged as the big ones. Good competitors consistently play the big point situations well, while poor competitors consistently break down.

Of all the questions I've been asked by players, those dealing with problems playing the big points well are the most common. Typical are questions like, "Why do I break down on the big points?"; "Why can't I play the big points well?" or "How can I play great until the big points and then suddenly fall apart?" It's interesting that when I ask players why they play poorly on the big points; they all list the same reasons-poor concentration, no killer instinct or no confidence. Such explanations rarely trans-late into constructive action.

What breaks down?

The fact is that if you played well getting to the game, set or match point and then suddenly proceeded to play badly, something changed for the worse. That's a breakdown. Players break down on the big points in any of five different areas: strokes, playing strategy, emotional response, physical response or mental response. Knowing specifically how you break down under the pressure of big points is the key to correcting it. Once you understand your faulty patterns and competition deficiencies, you can train to correct them. Remember: If you didn't win but should have, some- thing broke down. And for most players, breakdowns follow rather predictable patterns. Rather than responding with all-too-common but rarely productive self-criticism, self-directed anger or guilt, pursue the question: What broke down? Take each of the five areas separately and gradually build a profile of how you typically respond under the pressure of big points.

Which strokes fail?

The first question to ask following your match should be how your strokes held up on the big points. What strokes, if any, broke down on the big points or in pressure situations? Did your forehand, backhand, serve or volley let you down when it was critical? Perhaps your approach shot or over-head smash failed as the pressure mounted. If, for instance, your forehand always seems to evaporate on the big points, in all likelihood it's not your head that needs fixing, it's the mechanics of your forehand. The biomechanics of all your strokes must be sound enough that you can still play reasonably aggressive tennis-even you're nervous-without making too many unforced errors. Nervousness is actually a good test for the soundness of any given stroke. And what about your second serve? If you tend to double-fault often on the big points, there's a red flag. Of all your strokes, your second serve is the most critical from a pres-sure perspective. Without a reliable second serve, one that can be hit with aggressiveness and depth under pressure, being tough on the big points is next to Impossible. Players rarely connect match toughness with second serve quality and consistency and, as a result, rarely practice second serves as a vehicle to improve mental toughness.

The point is simply this: Players often attribute their poor play on the big points to mental factors, when in reality the real culprit is often a poorly designed stroke, where a slight increase in muscle tightness causes the stroke to collapse. If the same stroke consistently breaks down on the big points, make improving the mechanics of the stroke your number one training strategy for playing the big points better.

Where did your strategy go?

Many players believe they must do something very special and different on big points. As a consequence, players often break from the pattern and style of play that got them to the big point. Going for too much too early is a strategy breakdown. Going for the low percentage winner is particularly tempting on the critical points but generally spells failure.

Another common way of breaking down strategy-wise on big points is to suddenly start pushing the ball back, hoping



your opponent will make an error. Shifting to a very conservative, not-aggressive style on the big points in order to keep your errors to an absolute minimum will be about as effective as going for too much too soon. The old cliché, never change a winning game, still holds. Whatever you had been doing to get to the big point, continue doing. As a general rule, you will be most successful if you learn to play offensive, high-percentage tennis on critical points. You become the aggressor and work to get your opponent to make a forced error, without making an error yourself.

To do this, you must know your own game well. Your general strategy for big points should be worked out well in advance of your match. And breaking down is when you don't follow it!

Emotional aftershock

Players rarely have trouble being positive and energized emotionally on the big points. They know this is a critical time so they generally give 100% percent effort and approach the point positively. So how do you break down emotionally on the big points? The breakdown actually oc-curs after the point is over, after the critical point has been lost. Becoming a good pressure-point player means you do not become overly angry, frustrated or negative when you lose a big point. Losing an important break point often breaks the player emotionally too. The player fully realizes how important the particular point was and, from that point on, doesn't try as hard and is not as positive. And in reality this becomes the deciding factor in the match.

And what about choking? Being nervous on big points is not a break down. The fact is that players are likely to be nervous at critical times. The breakdown is determined not by the nervousness but by how the player responds to the nervousness in terms of strokes, strategy, negative emotion and so forth.

How do we break down physically?

What you are looking for here are unproductive changes in your physical presence that may occur before, during or after big points. The following questions reflect such changes:

Do you walk faster or take less' time on big points? If so, that's a physical breakdown. Do your eyes wander more on the big points, or do you keep your eyes riveted on the strings, ground or ball between points? Do you stay with your normal pattern of rituals on the big points, such as bouncing the ball, tucking in your shirt, blowing on your hand before the point starts? How about your breathing pattern? On the crucial points, does the pattern of your breathing change between or during points? Do you project a strong confident, relaxed image on big points, regardless of how you actually feel? And if you lose a big point, do you suddenly look defeated, and let your head, racket and shoulders drag?

Failure to perform consistently in any of these areas will

clearly undermine your efforts to play the big points efficiently. Breakdowns here, as the other areas, follow rather predictable patterns. Deficiencies in these physical areas must be addressed before significant improvement in big points play can occur.

How do you break down mentally?

Players generally break down mentally in one of these three areas:

The first is that because of their poor play on previous big points, they start thinking very negative about the one they're currently playing.

The second breakdown area is negative self-talk. This is simply verbalizing outwardly your negative thought patterns. Verbally criticizing you for playing poorly on big points only make things worse. Such negative self-talk can be a major block to playing big points well.

The third mental breakdown area is negative visualization. Players who have no problems on big points are often the same ones who visualize just before they start the point what they don't want to have happen. They visualizing not double-faulting, not hitting the ball into the net, and not making an unforced error. And what they get is precisely what they feared: double-faults, errors, etc. Those who play the big points well invariably have learned to picture as clearly and vividly as possible what they want to have happen before each point.

Construct your own profile

If you're not playing the big points well, something is breaking down. Understanding HOW you're breaking down is the key to improvement. Begin by developing the most accurate profile you can of what typically happens to you under the pressure of big points. Use all five breakdown areas to complete the profile. Then determine what you're going to do differently in your next match on the big points; create specific match goals. Being tough on the big points simply means eliminating breakdowns. Start working on your profile today and begin to turn breakdowns into breakthroughs!

Robbie Salum is a USPTA - PTR - RPT – Cardio Tennis - USTA Certified Teaching High Performance Professional and Tester with over 44 years of experience. He is also member of the Wilson Advisory staff. Robbie has coached ATP and WTA ranked players, top juniors as well as coaching and lecturing in many countries. He has been a staff member of the Van der Meer Tennis Clinics since the late 70's, he worked at the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy (along Dr. James Loehr, world renowned Sports Psychologist). He was Head Pro & Co-Director at The Colony Beach and Tennis Resort, The Landings Racquet Club, Cedars Tennis Club and Resort, Longboat Key Resort and Wychmere Harbor Beach and Tennis Club in Cape Cod, MA. and a staff member of the Longboat Key Public Tennis Center.

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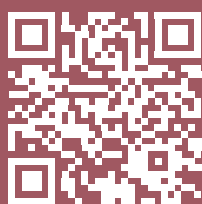
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