



# Longboat Key News

June 30, 2023

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**InsideLook**



*SMH building education wing ...page 14*



*The beauty of Longboat living ...page 9*



*An emphasis on independence ...page 13*



*The limits of GPS are felt ...page 10*

## Exploring the world of Longboat wildlife

*Longboat Key may be little in size, but it is huge in fish, wildlife and outdoor adventure.*

**TRYLA LAESON**  
Guest Writer  
larson@lbknews.com

My husband and I were taking our boat out the other day to do some offshore fishing. When we got to the boat dock, two manatees were under our boat. We had to wait for them to swim away before we could lower the lift. It looked like a mama and her baby. They were absolutely precious. We see manatee back in Harris Bayou by our boat quite often.

### Taking flight

Once we got under way into Longboat Pass, on the North end of the Island, we saw a stingray come flying out of the water. It must have come at least four feet out of the water and soared a distance of at least six to eight feet. It was a fairly big Stingray. We came to the conclusion that something must have been chasing it. We were just guessing of course. This was the very first time either of us had witnessed something like this. The water was like glass that day and very clear.

We made our way through the pass and beyond the channel and stopped the boat. We thought that we might try to catch some baitfish before continuing out to deeper water. Before we knew it, a leopard ray serenely swam under our boat. It was about eight feet under us, but we could see it clear as day. It was huge, almost six feet across. It was supremely beautiful.

### Leaps of joy!

Once we had a few baitfish and one very healthy-looking crab, we started out again for deeper water. On our way we came across a pod of dolphins. We stopped the boat and watched. They were about 30 yards off our starboard side.

It was already afternoon at this point so we thought we best be on our way. As soon as we started the boat engine the dolphins headed toward us. As we propelled forward the dolphins gave chase. They were really having some fun with us. There were around four or five of them total. They were keeping stride with the boat and leaping out of the water next to us. Then they

See Wildlife, page 14



## NewsWorthy

### Six rescued after boat explosion

Sarasota police officers rescued six after a boat explosion near Longboat Key, west of New Pass bridge last week.

Multiple agencies, including the FWC, U.S. Coast Guard, Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and Fire Rescue and Sarasota Police Department arrived at the scene.

Body camera footage from an officer with the police department shows him arriving at the area where two men were seen in a body of water next to other people on a boat.

One of the people in the water told the police officer that the other man had back injuries due to the explosion.

FWC said all six passengers aboard the 24-foot-long Yellowfin boat were accounted for and taken to a nearby hospital. At this time, authorities have not yet revealed the condition of each person.

### New College, Classic Car Museum negotiating eviction

The Sarasota Classic Car Museum is still open and still on Tamiami Trail despite New College of Florida's May order to vacate the property by the end of June in a push to build athletic facilities on campus..

After taking leadership of New College earlier this year as part of a conservative transformation of the school, Interim President Richard Corcoran has asserted that the introduction of an ambitious athletics program would help drive enrollment at New College.

Now, the college is looking to turn the Sarasota Classic Car Museum into an athletic facility. New leadership at the school – appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis – terminated the museum's lease in May.

### Program incentivizing residents to plant mature trees resumes

City of Sarasota single family homeowners have the chance to purchase a mature tree for their property at a significantly reduced price through Phase 3 of the City's Mature Tree Program.

The City will fund up to \$500 of the cost of purchasing and planting an approved mature tree when a homeowner meets a \$100 minimum deposit requirement for the See News, page 14







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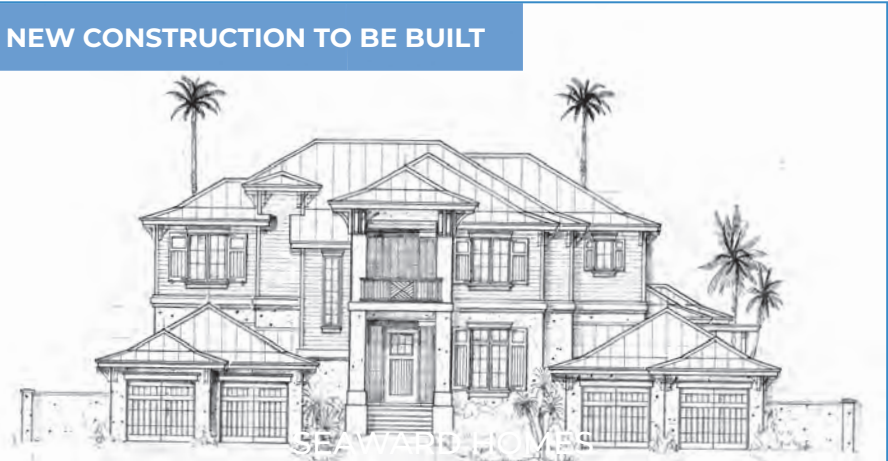
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# THE DIPINTO COLLECTION



**LIDO KEY • 159 TAFT DR., #206** **\$2,699,000**  
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**LIDO SHORES • 1212 CENTER PLACE** **\$6,649,000**  
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**GULF FRONT NEW CONSTRUCTION**



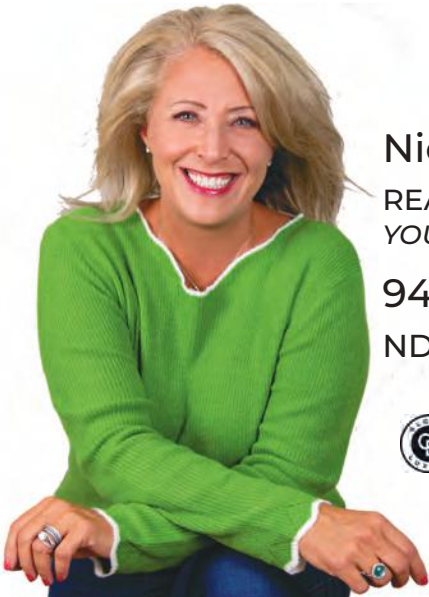
**LONGBOAT KEY • 6489 GULFSIDE DRIVE** **\$16,900,000**  
Fabulous Gulf front lot offering nearly 100 ft. of sandy beach, this gorgeous DSDG Architect designed home is a rare find. Boasting almost 6,000 AC/SF, this spectacular home is custom built with the finest details throughout. Architect designed landscaped exterior and 4-car garage.



**BIRD KEY • 217 BIRD KEY DRIVE** **\$1,765,000**  
An ideal Bird Key lifestyle awaits at this updated, contemporary garden home. Renovated by Ampersana Construction in 2014, with designs by Sawa Design Studio, the 3BR layout encompasses nearly 2,500 SF of living space. Sleek, modern finishes throughout, and private backyard w/ heated pool.



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# EditorLetters

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

## Canal navigability

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier  
 Just to follow up with you on the subject of canal navigability, staff is working over the summer with our consultant to develop an ordinance that will be presented first to Planning and Zoning in the Fall and then to the Board for final consideration.  
 Howard N. Tipton  
 Town Manager  
 Town of Longboat Key

## Restoration projects and vinyl seawalls

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission  
 At our TAC meeting today, we had two main topics to go over. The first one related to the ongoing and planned habitat restoration and stormwater retrofit projects that we plan on implementing with funds allocated to the SBEP via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). As we've pointed out before, our intent was to not use those funds to hire staff, or to fund studies (we've been an NEP for 30 years – we kind of know most of what we need to do now) but instead to use those BIL funds for “shovel ready” projects. Over the past 2 ½ years, Jay and our consultants have worked to get us through the design and permitting stages for our first three priority projects: 1) FISH Preserve Phase IV, 2) GT Bray Park, and 3) reviving the artificial reef program.  
 For those of you who attended the last Policy Board meeting, you'll know that EPA staff from both Region 4 (Atlanta) and Headquarters (Washington, DC) were taken on a tour of the FISH Preserve project site, where that project is already well underway. That is the very

definition of having projects “shovel ready.” As you might imagine, potential restoration sites are located all across our watershed, but having them ready to go for the next three fiscal years means we need three things: 1) clear ownership by a local, regional or state agency or similar, 2) the approval of these landowners to be the applicants for the required permits for such projects, and 3) a commitment from the landowners to maintain these projects for some length of time. To ensure that we are going to be able to have projects that meet these requirements, we worked with our local partners to come up with a list of projects that could be grouped into categories that were spread geographically, and that also would fit within the budget amounts expected over the period of FY24 to FY26.

The table at the bottom of this email lists the potential projects, the estimated costs of such projects, and the timeline for moving forward with them. As you might guess, not everyone gets everything they'd want here, and some projects have more (or less) support than others. But since our local governments are paying the VAST majority of funds required for upgrading wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, they – not the TAC, not the CAC, and not EPA, get to come up with the preliminary project list. Can the TAC and CAC express concerns? Absolutely! But if you don't own the land, and if you can't sign a permit application, then you may have an idea that actually can't become a project. And – as long as I'm the Director – the SBEP will continue to be biased towards action. GT Bray was first identified as the number one priority restoration project more than 5 years ago, but only now is going to be constructed. The proposed project at MLK Park was identified as a project more than a decade ago, but only now have we got folks on board to get us the design and permits for this important project. We've got plenty of input on projects already folks, what we need is more action, not more reports and plans. Can some of these projects be modified as we move forward? Sure, if changes make sense.

The second topic involved the issue of vinyl seawalls. The attached video was shot as Tom Kane (our intern) and myself cruised along a canal in the southern part of our bay. As you can see, there is a distinct difference between the amount of oysters that are attached to concrete seawalls, vs. the vinyl seawall. Tom, myself and Megan visited 32 seawalls, grouped into 16 concrete and 16 vinyl/plastic ones. All 16 concrete seawalls supported oysters – sometimes at fairly substantial amounts. Of the 16 vinyl seawalls, only 6 had any level of oysters, and usually these were so far reduced as to be easy to miss. Based on the statistical tests we did, there is a highly significant difference between the amount of oysters found on concrete vs. vinyl seawalls.

Why is this a problem? Because oysters are an important habitat for fish and crabs and other marine life, and the oysters themselves filter water in these canals and help to reduce the amount of algae in the water. The recent trend seems to be that of replacing oyster-supporting concrete seawalls with vinyl seawalls that appear to not be able to support anything close to the same amount of oysters. This means that at the same time that we are spending hundreds of

See Letters, page 6

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Dennis Girard, Realtor

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\$6,295,000

**5910 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE | LONGBOAT KEY**

Under Construction. This spectacular, 4,210 sq. ft., newly built 4BR/4.5BA, coastal contemporary waterfront home provides easy access to the Intracoastal Waterway, Sarasota Bay and Gulf of Mexico. Located on a three-quarter acre lot with 133 feet of frontage on a 125-foot-wide canal.



\$2,299,000

**793 JUNGLE QUEEN WAY | LONGBOAT KEY**

Two-story custom-built, canal-front 4BR/3BA featuring a private rooftop deck. Spacious open floorplan with 22' soaring ceilings. French doors lead to an expansive back porch and screened patio with a pool and spa.



\$1,995,000

**1211 GULF OF MEXICO DR., #601 | LONGBOAT KEY**

Stunning views of the Gulf of Mexico and Sarasota Bay in this 6th-floor condominium in Promenade. The desirable end unit features 2 bedrooms plus a den, all with full baths, abundant floor-to-ceiling windows and glass sliders to 2 balconies.



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**830 TARAWITT DRIVE | LONGBOAT KEY**

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**524 HALYARD LANE | LONGBOAT KEY**

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Front View



# EditorLetters



Letters, from page 4

millions of dollars on wastewater upgrades and stormwater retrofits, we are actively working against making progress on our water quality by reducing the spatial extent of one of the few oyster habitats we have in many parts of the bay.

So what do we do about this? First off, we need to find out why these differences exist, so that we can come up with strategies to address this problem. The lack of oysters could be due to the vinyl being too hard/smooth, etc. for oysters to attach. In that case, maybe manufacturers could do something to better allow oysters to attach by “roughening them” in some manner. Or it could be that oysters don’t grow very well because there are additives to the vinyl (such as titanium dioxide) that are meant to protect the plastic from UV light that are also toxic to oysters. In that case, perhaps there is a different type of UV protection that would be less harmful?

Or…it could be that the “mangrove panels” that are being tested out along a stretch of vinyl seawall along Longboat Key’s Bayfront Park could be promoted?

Related to this, perhaps you’ve read about concerns with the findings of many researchers, who are finding plastic contamination throughout our environment. Researchers at Mote have found plastics within dolphins studied in Sarasota Bay. It is postulated that the plastics in these dolphins came from the fish they eat. The same fish many of us eat. Vinyl seawalls are popular in part because they last a long time, and because they cost a lot less than concrete seawalls. But there is a cost associated with these seawalls that might need to be considered – fewer filter feeders in the bay, and another source of plastic pollution as well.

We are way early on this topic, and we do not know all that we need to know. But the TAC members today shared the concern that we have, and we would be remiss if we did not mention this as a relevant topic to raise with policy makers and regulators – as well as the general public.

Dave Tomasko  
Executive Director  
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

FDOT Meeting Summary

To: Longboat Key Commission  
Please find attached a summary from Isaac of the meeting with Town staff and FDOT regarding Broadway Roundabout and GMD Complete Streets. Overall, the meeting was constructive as we work together to move these projects forward. I plan to discuss it briefly at the conclusion of Friday’s regular Board meeting.  
Howard N. Tipton  
Town Manager  
Town of Longboat Key

Street cut on Ketch Lane

To: Longboat Key Public Works Director Isaac Brownman  
Isaac the cut has settled and is quite deep at the referenced repair job the crew did a few weeks ago.  
Gary Coffin  
Commissioner  
Longboat Key

Street cut on Ketch Lane

To: Longboat Key Commissioner Gary Coffin  
Thank you Commissioner Coffin, I will forward to our team.

Isaac Brownman  
Public Works Director  
Town of Longboat Key

June 30 Regular Meeting Agenda

To: Longboat Key Commission  
The agenda and items for the 6-30-23 Regular Meeting are now available on your Commission iPads. Due to the employee recognition event tomorrow, the material is being sent out early.  
Savannah Cobb  
Deputy Town Clerk  
Town of Longboat Key

June 30 Regular Meeting Agenda

To: Longboat Key Deputy Clerk Savannah Cobb  
Do we have any physical plans and spec sheets for the AT&T submittal, products, details of the equipment?  
Gary Coffin  
Commissioner  
Longboat Key

June 30 Regular Meeting Agenda

To: Longboat Key Town Clerk Trish Shinkle  
No, not at this time. The products descriptions and equipment specs will be submitted to the Town after the lease is signed and once AT&T is ready to move forward with their implementation plan. We do not have an ETA for that yet. As part of their administrative approval process during permitting, they will need to submit a site development plan exemption and building permit, along with the lease exhibits, all of which will include equipment information and specs.  
Isaac Brownman  
Public Works Director  
Town of Longboat Key

Code Enforcement Activities

To: Longboat Key Commission  
Quick follow-up on two code enforcement activities:  
Placement of two piles of riprap (rocks) placed at the south end of Jewfish Key. Per consultation with FDEP, authorization had been provided by FDEP for construction of a revetment seawall, including temporary storage of the riprap landward of the mean high water (MHW) line. Riprap has been placed landward of the MHW. A permit will be required from the Town for the actual construction of the revetment seawall. This hasn’t been applied for yet.  
Construction silt fencing violations at two properties in the Preserve Subdivision (S. Longboat Dr. & Hibiscus Way). Stop Work Orders & Citations were issued for National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) (i.e., silt into stormwater system) violations. Conditions have now been corrected.  
Howard N. Tipton  
Town Manager  
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 7

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# EditorLetters



**Letters, from page 7**

As you can see, we have made several requests over the years to trim the tree and keep it at bay from damaging the screened lanais and pools, costing the HOA several hundred dollars each time the tree was trimmed, yet not really addressing the problem. The past couple of “close call” storms, Irma & Ian both took a substantial toll on the tree causing large branches to break off and fortunately missing from damaging any personal property, however for these reasons we felt it necessary to take further action. After conversations with board members, along with HOA and personal insurance representatives we took our conversation on May 15, 2023, to City Hall looking for a permit to remove the tree in question and we were greeted by Tate Taylor of the Planning & Zoning department and upon his review of the situation he simply said, “remove the tree, it is encroaching on personal property and no permit is required”. We then left the office, contacted Brightview Tree Care who sent a representative out the same day to give their assessment (see attached) and then 3 days later had the tree removed for roughly the same cost the HOA was paying to trim the tree, additionally, by removing said tree any future trimming expenses and highly possible insurance claims which I am sure given the precarious condition and the direction in which the tree was leaning was sure to happen, and all have been 100% mitigated with no cost to the HOA or neighboring owner.

Now, we agree that we may have not followed exacting proper protocol and we apologize for any inconveniences that we may have caused, but in as much the tree had risk to the properties and no one ever said NOT to remove the tree and with the current year storm season on our heels, action was required. So again, we apologize for acting but at the end of the day after reviewing the assessment report, various photos and given our current HOA financial status, we are certain that the same fiscally responsible conclusion would have been reached.

Tom & Michel Heutel  
Longboat Key

**Call from Kevin Van Ostenbridg**

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

Kevin called at about 5 p.m. with three pieces of news: 1. Manatee Avenue bridge to Anna Maria will need to close one of its two lanes for several weeks due to the collapsed water main that had been suspended from the bridge. Normally one lane in each direction, it remains to be determined whether the bridge will shift direction mid-day or be one way only for the duration of the closure. 2. The Governor signed the Holmes Beach parking garage bill today, so that will happen. 3. KVO has reached agreement with the School Board to move forward with the Whitney Plaza lease. While still subject to completion of an interlocal agreement between them, the plan is for the County to pay for the build out and the lease payments while

the School Board will operate the property. He expects the matter to be on the agenda for the County’s July 25 BOCC meeting (hopefully on the Consent Agenda), which we should plan to attend. He obviously buried the lead.

Ken Schneier  
Mayor  
Longboat Key

**Capital Projects**

To: Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown, Deputy City Manager Pat Robinson

I hope your day is going well. Please see the below email. I asked Sue to ensure our team directs the Commissioners to Sue/Mark or Carly to answer questions pertaining to capital projects for PPTC. Our front desk team can answer questions pertaining to memberships (pass-holders), programming etc. Our front desk team also understands that Parks and Recreation is currently looking into replacing the fencing. They are not as familiar with the details as Sue/Mark and Carly. Sue/Mark and Carly are aware that you have directed Parks and Recreation to develop a plan to replace the fencing at PPTC. Parks and Recreation is currently working on a plan. I will present this to you once we receive a proposal from the City’s continuing services contractor. This is a high priority, and we are working diligently to get this done.

Jerry Fogle  
Parks and Recreation Director  
City of Sarasota

**Capital Projects**

To: Sarasota City Recreation Programs Manager Mark Hamilton

He went over to hit on the wall. Then he came in and said, “I see there are a few fences that need repair.” So I took him on a tour of all the fences. By the time he finished He was saying “We are Sarasota We need to do so much better. And the budget is coming up we need a ton of money here to fix these fences” and he was taking pictures of courts 10, 11, and 12 .

Adam Szejbut  
Recreational Specialist  
City of Sarasota

**Capital Projects**

To: Sarasota City Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Fogle

See Letters, page 11

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Send us your reaction: [letters@lbknews.com](mailto:letters@lbknews.com)



# OnPatrol

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

June 23

Trespass

4:20 p.m.  
Officer Martinez while on patrol southbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive observed two men and a woman fishing on the golf course. Officer Martinez initiated his emergency lights and approached the three individuals and conducted an interview. The three stated they were fishing in the pond at the golf course and Officer Martinez then advised them that the golf course and the ponds are private property with a posted 'No Fishing, Private Property' located throughout the area. Officer Martinez asked the three individuals to cease any further fishing activity and leave the area, to which they all complied. A verbal warning was given to the individuals. Case clear.



Due to numerous issues with said vessel, meeting the criteria for vessel at risk, the owner will be issued a citation. Case clear.

Animal complaint

1:43 p.m.  
Officer Martinez arrived at Hideaway Bay Drive in regards to an animal complaint. Upon arrival, Officer Martinez made contact with the complainant stated that there is an Osprey that appeared to be injured on her dock located at the property stated. Officer Martinez observed the Osprey with what appeared to be an injury to its right leg. Officer Martinez advised the complainant that he would contact Save Our Sea Birds. While on scene, the reported bird flew away heading southbound on Miller Bay. Case clear.

Boat

6:00 p.m.  
While on marine patrol, Officer Connors was dispatched to the area of Greer Island for a report of two personal watercrafts operating in close proximity to shore and anchored in the swim zone. The reporting party advised that she was concerned due to the swimmers in the area. Upon arrival, Officer Connors located two personal watercrafts anchored with no violations observed. Officer Connors spoke to the caller, advised that no violations were observed, that they were anchored property and that Longboat Key does not have designated swim zones. Case clear.

Agency Assistance

7:20 p.m.  
Officer Connors while on marine patrol, a Mayday was reported for a report of a boat explosion, with six people in the water, west of New Pass in the area of North Lido Beach. Upon arrival, with the assistance of numerous good Samaritans, the six occupants were pulled from the water and immediately transported to the Salty Dog Restaurant on City Island where they were off loaded and received attention for unknown injuries. Officer Connors assisted Sarasota Police Department Marine with the extensive debris field and stood by the boat until a commercial salvage removed it as the vessel was a hazard to navigation. Case clear.

June 25

Boat

12:22 p.m.  
Officer Connors while on marine patrol in the area of the 4100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive, and observed a vessel partially submerged resting on the bottom tied to the dock. Water had filled the cabin to the portholes which were missing and exposed to the elements. No fluids, hazards, or debris were visible. Two days prior, Officer Connors was dispatched to the same vessel in regard to the vessel listing to port. The owner notified Officer Connors that the vessel was dewatered and had an issue with the bilge pumps. After numerous attempts to contact the owner via cell phone, a message was left to contact the Longboat Police Marine Officer in regards to the current status of the vessel. A few hours had passed and the owner advised that he was unable to de-water the vessel due to the tide, and would attempt tomorrow.

Citizen dispute

3:03 p.m.  
Officer Montfort responded to the 4000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive when she was flagged down by a pedestrian. Officer Montfort made contact with the pedestrian who appeared to be in a state of distress. The woman stated she was travelling northbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive in her personal vehicle and was being followed by an unknown man riding a motorcycle. The woman then stated, "I pulled into a parking lot and the buy on the bike followed me into the parking lot." The woman then said, "he pulled up beside my passenger window and yelled why did you do that, you bitch?!" The woman then stated the unknown man left the scene at an unknown direction. The woman said the unknown male driver was wearing a black shirt, black pants and a black helmet riding a blue motorcycle. The woman did not report any injuries and advised no damage was made to her vehicle. Officer Montfort advised the woman he would file a police report in regards to the incident. No further identifying information regarding the unknown driver and motorcycle was received. Case clear.

Citizen dispute

4:24 p.m.  
Officer Montfort was dispatched to the 3600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a report of an illegally parked vehicle on private property. While en route to the location, communications advised a disturbance was now occurring requesting law enforcement to expedite. Officer Montfort arrived on scene within a short time and observed two women yelling at each other. Officer Montfort separated the women and began to speak with them. One woman stated that the other woman was illegally parked on private property. Officer Montfort did observe a vehicle parked on private property. The woman further stated that when she confronted the woman she began to get argumentative and stated that she had parked in the same location only a few weeks ago. Officer Montfort then spoke with the second woman who stated that she was at the beach with her daughter and upon returning to the car, was confronted by the first woman. The second woman said she had parked previously at the location and began to show her cell phone with a drop pin with a location. Officer Montfort pointed out that she was 100 yards north of that dropped pin location. The woman apologized for parking in a private location. The woman was sent on her way without any further incident. Case clear.

June 28

Alcohol offense

2:27 p.m.  
Officer Ferrigine while on patrol observed two men on the beach near the 3400 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive with open alcoholic containers. Officer Ferrigine made contact with the parties and advised them there was no alcoholic beverages on the beach. Officer Ferrigine asked the men for their identification at which time they produced their West Virginia driver's licenses. The two were advised they had to dispose of their twisted tea cans and were both issued a civil citation.

June 29

Traffic hazard

6:00 a.m.  
Officer Connors was dispatched to the 2500 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a report of a semi-truck pulled off with the hazards on. Upon arrival, it was determined the driver was awaiting a delivery and left the area shortly after arrival. Case clear.

June 30

Noise complaint

1:46 a.m.  
Officer Tillman responded to Broadway for a reported noise complaint. Upon arrival, Officer Tillman spoke with the moving company who advised they were fishing up the move at the location. The owners advised they would keep the noise to a minimum during the final process. Case clear.

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# Editor Letters



**Letters, from page 7**

Thanks for sharing. I have included the Mayor to ensure he's aware to get with us (management/administration) in the future so that he can be better briefed on the status of any issue than relying on non management staff. That way he will know the true status of any plans in the works with regard to any issue. Thanks again Jerry. Christina, please have the Mayor briefed by Jerry on the status of the fencing at PPT. Thank you.

Mark Hamilton  
Recreation Programs Manager, Parks and Recreation Department  
City of Sarasota

**Parking in Burns Court vicinity**

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Debbie Trice  
Staff copied will look into the ownership. It may belong to Williams Parker but we will verify and share with you.

Marlon Brown  
City Manager  
City of Sarasota

**Parking in Burns Court vicinity**

To: Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown  
Driving down Orange, I noticed an office parking lot at 243 S Orange (just north of Center for Architecture). Wondered whether Burns Court Cinema and other evening/weekend venues could make a deal with business owner for off hours usage. (Trying to identify "underutilized" parking locations where shared usage may be possible.)

Debbie Trice  
Commissioner  
City of Sarasota

**"Missing" Advisory Board application**

To: Sarasota City Clerk Shayla Griggs  
Reading the text of Jeremy Gilbert's application for membership on the Citizen Advisory Council to the MPO, he says "It would be my honor to serve on any of these boards, but especially the Ad Hoc Van Wezel Blue Ribbon (AKA Purple Ribbon Committee)."

I don't see his name on the list of VW Blue Ribbon Committee applicants. I'm bringing this to your attention just in case Mr. Gilbert is under the impression that he has applied for a position (Not sure what other Boards he may have applied for).

Debbie Trice  
City Commissioner  
City of Sarasota

**"Missing" Advisory Board application**

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Debbie Trice  
We received an email from him asking to have his application be withdrawn from that board. Thank you.

Shayla Griggs  
City Clerk  
City of Sarasota

**"Missing" Advisory Board application**

To: Sarasota City Clerk Shayla Griggs  
Never mind, I see that I have interviewed him for Blue Ribbon.

Debbie Trice  
City Commissioner  
City of Sarasota

**Spoonbridge sculpture in Minneapolis**

To: Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown  
Here's a photo of the famous Spoonbridge in the Minneapolis Sculpture Park that I mentioned to you. A little whimsy can grow on the viewer (Although I wonder whether we'd light the golden rays of "It's Always Sunny" during a major windstorm).

Debbie Trice  
Commissioner  
City of Sarasota

**Bobby Jones Golf Course**

To: Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown  
I recently watched the City Commission meeting from 5/15/23. I'm an avid golfer that lives in the City of Sarasota. As you know, the County at large has experienced rapid growth of planned communities that house their own golf course and amenities. That has been the model, yet most of these are private and out East. Options are slim for the public.

So, having a city municipal golf course restored is an exciting development for this area. Secondly, the proposed club house presented at the meeting was inspired. I understand it is an expensive undertaking and that the city is still in the early stages of determining feasibility.

A couple of comments and suggestions for your consideration:  
I was dismayed that Mr. Arroyo thought the one club house rendering called the "Topgolf" option by the presenters was actually a proposal for a Topgolf. We are multiple years into the

See Letters, page 12



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# Editor Letters



**Letters, from page 11**

restoration of this property, yet this council person did not seem to know the project scope or details.

The City Commission should not entertain the idea that the club house could be a banquet space to generate revenue. I do not believe there is market demand for that, and it is a reach to think the community will see Bobby Jones as a facility for such. You have to find ways to make revenue from patrons who visit the site for recreation first and not think the club house itself will become a dining destination.

Golfers and citizens who visit the park for recreation are going to generate the bulk of the food/drink revenue. I've played golf at many of the private golf clubs in this area (e.g, Prestancia, The Founders) and will grab food or a beer after a round of golf at the bar or deck area. However, the "restaurant side" of these club houses for members are often sterile and uninviting. So, it is doubtful the Bobby Jones Club House will be viewed as a destination to dine out by those not using the golf course or park.

Revenue Generating Ideas

I don't know the inner workings of the public-private partnership at play, or how the private management company is going to try to generate revenue. But since the commission meeting spent a great deal on talking about finding revenue opportunities, here are a few suggestions:

Membership. I think there is potential for a public membership where an annual fee offers perks such as: Ability to schedule tee times 5 days in advance if you are a member, whereas the general public has two days. This membership could also grant access to the practice facilities (more on that below)

Tiered pricing. City vs County vs Non-Residents. I think there is an opportunity to have Non-Residents subsidize some of the costs. If City residents get a discount, that would also increase the likelihood they would become members above

Monthly subscription for the golf range. When I first heard Bobby Jones was to be restored, my first hope was that a revamped practice range would include two sides. One side for the public. Another for members. The public would pay for buckets, the members "all you could hit" for a monthly charge. If I want to practice today, I have to drive to Esplanade Azario and pay \$25. I can hit as many balls as I would like, chip, putt, etc. but I have to drive 30 minutes. That stinks and is an obstacle. With Bobby Jones 5-10 minutes away, I could see myself practicing more and paying a monthly fee for the privilege. I can tell you that the average driving range session is 1-2 hours with some chipping and putting. Most city golfers might find the time to do that twice a month. If I'm willing to pay \$25 for a single day, what would I be willing to pay for monthly access? I pay \$45 now for gym a membership. Ideally, the practice range will have grass and not mats.

Food / Drink Cart at the range. Make it easy for people to purchase refreshments before the round, at the turn or even if they are just practicing. Make it easy for people to part with their cash by delivering them a frictionless experience that has value. Golfers don't always want to trudge into the club house to get food and drink.

Cart refreshments. Have a cart person driving the course that accepts credit card payments. Have coolers on the cart that allow patrons to purchase refreshments before the round and place them in the cart. Do not allow people to bring their own food and drink onto the golf course.

Ahearn-Koch was correct when she stated that golfers value a good golf course over a club house. Bobby Jones was a waterlogged mess towards the end, and it was disappointing to see it deteriorate towards the end.

I recently played the public Fort Myers Country Club. At the turn, I was able to just grab a couple hot dogs for \$10 and keep on moving. When I left 18, the club house was alive with people eating and drinking and socializing. It can be done. It just needs to be as frictionless as possible and a great experience. I'm looking forward to it!

Jason Broom  
Sarasota

**Bobby Jones Golf Course**

To: Jason Broom

Thank you for sharing. I have shared your comments and suggestions with the City Commission and relative staff. All the best.

Marlon Brown  
City Manager  
City of Sarasota

**Bobby Jones Golf Course**

To: Sarasota City Commissioner Debbie Trice

We had two Bobby Jones advisory boards in the past; a Bobby Jones Advisory Board and then with the decision to rehab the course a Bobby Jones Ad hoc Committee. The advisory board was disbanded by a previous Commission and the ad hoc has sunset. The responsibility for Bobby Jones now sits with the Parks Recreation and Environmental Protection (PREP)

Advisory Board. They have done a great job with both Bobby Jones and with the Nature Park. With Bobby Jones scheduled to open by late fall or early winter I would not recommend having a term limited ad hoc committee because by the time you schedule a discussion about it with the City Commission (how many, qualifications, responsibilities, etc.), seek applicants and then appoint the course would be open or very near opening. I will make sure that the ideas from Mr. Broom are shared by staff with the PREP for consideration. Thank you.

Marlon Brown  
City Manager  
City of Sarasota

**Bobby Jones Golf Course**

To: Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown

I think this citizen offers some very good ideas. Do we have an Advisory Board specifically earmarked for Bobby Jones? Perhaps this would be useful as a limited term Ad Hoc committee as Bobby Jones comes online.

Debbie Trice  
City Commissioner  
City of Sarasota

**Planning Department Update**

To: Sarasota City Manager Marlon Brown

Here is the summary for this week:

- Attainable Housing- The Rhodes Avenue and 41st Street Habitat for Humanity residence projects are scheduled for the CC Meeting on 7/17/23.
- Bay Runner Trolley- Ridership numbers continue to be strong and exceed last year's numbers for March, April and May.
- BID Appointments- No action will take place until the BID renewal is approved.
- Census Challenge- The City's Census Challenge has been submitted, and we are awaiting the Census Bureau's response.
- District 3 Public Art- Discussed with County and County art representatives the process and next steps for moving this project forward.
- Fruitville Roundabout Public Art- The Public Art Committee's final recommended selection from the three finalists was decided at the PAC Meeting on 5/3/23. The PAC is recommending approval of the piece called "Sun Always Shines". This will be presented to the CC later this year.
- Hammock Place- Attended ribbon cutting for Habitat for Humanity's new home in Hammock Place. It was well attended and a very successful project.
- Legacy Business Recognition Program- This is projected to be presented at the CC Meeting on 8/21/23.
- Live Local- There will be a CC Workshop on 7/10/23 to discuss this recent legislation from the State.
- Newtown Historic District- This is projected to go to later this summer. It will then be sent to the National Register Review Board to be held on 11/2/23 by the State of Florida. It will then go to the Secretary of Interior's Office which will take a minimum of 90 days to process. We should hear back in the Spring of 2024.
- No Kill Shelters- This was discussed at the CC Meeting on 5/1/23. The City Attorney will be presenting on this topic at the CC Meeting on 7/3/23.
- Parking Division- We will run our final package of updates and strategies in the next few weeks, and then present what recommendations are selected to move forward to the CC later this summer.
- Plan and Permit Reviews- Planning staff and I continue to review plans, permits and provide comments at DRC Meetings. We attended meetings this week with applicants on proposed projects.
- Planning Website- Active Comp Plan and Zoning Text Amendments scheduled for hearings for the PB and CC will be posted on our website so that citizens can get the latest on what's being proposed.
- Public Art Plan- The draft plan will be accessible on the City's website by next week, and is projected to be presented at the CC Meeting on 8/21/23.
- Rosemary District Parking- Broxton gave a presentation of new parking suggestions at the Rosemary neighborhood meeting on 6/15/23. The presentation was well received.
- The Bay- Attended the Phase Two Update Event which included the introduction of the new CEO, Stephanie Crockatt.
- Young Presidents Organization Tour-A tour of the City is planned for 1/17/24.

Project Update

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund ZTA- We will be working with the City Attorney's Office to expand the expenditures of funds to rental housing as well.
- Bars, Restaurants and Nightclubs ZTA- The kickoff Public Zoom Input Session on 6/8/23 was held. It was well attended and went well. We also presented those items relating to the Rosemary District at the Rosemary community meeting last night.
- Batch ZTAs- Will be meeting with Lucia next week to discuss the next round of minor ZTA changes.
- Commercial Corridors and Commercial Sites Attainable Housing ZTA- Public outreach is expected to begin in late summer.
- Downtown Attainable Housing ZTA- The 1st Town Hall Meeting was held at 5:30pm on 1/19/23 at City Hall. The 2nd Town Hall Meeting was held on 3/1/23. We presented at the CC Workshop on 3/13/23. This was approved at the PB Meeting on 5/16/23 with some recommended changes made by the PB, and it is scheduled to go to the CC Meeting on 8/7/23.
- Floating Solar Facilities ZTA- This is projected to go to the PB late this year or early next year.
- Historic Preservation and Public Art ZTAs- These two ZTAs were discussed at the CC Meeting on 2/6/23, and staff was authorized to move forward with preparation of the ZTAs. These were recommended for approval at the PB Meeting on 5/10/23 and are projected to go to the CC Meeting on 7/17/23. Have a great weekend!

Steve Cover  
Planning Director  
City of Sarasota

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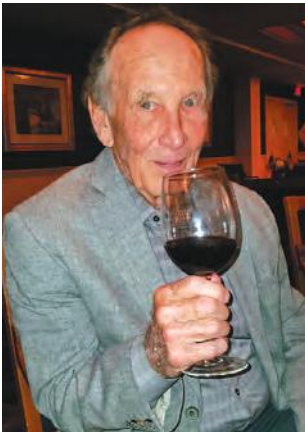
# WineTimes

## Independents in the Wine Industry

*On Independence Day we salute the small, independent vineyards, wineries, importers/distributors, and retail stores that have survived and thrived in an industry dominated by larger and larger corporations.*

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

Independence Day seems a good time to reflect on the struggles of vineyards, wineries, and wine sellers to maintain their independence in a wine industry dominated by large corporations. The initial step in producing wine entails down to earth farming of wine grapes. One would hope that a skilled farmer with prime land for growing wine grapes could focus on farming and selling superior wine grapes to wineries. Holding out against pressure to sell a vineyard to an integrated business that combines wine grape farming with winemaking and marketing takes an abundance of love for the vineyard and resolve to grow grapes good enough to sell to winemakers. The family-owned Arbor Oaks Vineyard in the Paso Robles region of California combines organic farming of classic Bordeaux blend grapes Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Verdot, aided by herds of sheep and goats, and wine tastings.



Small wineries continue to operate alongside wine conglomerates. Some purchase grapes from nearby farms, while others grow a substantial proportion of the grapes that they press. Family members who take on roles in the vineyard and cellar, and help extend their parents' vision, bode well for a small winery. A family vineyard success story, Brown Estates, the only Black-owned vineyard in Napa Valley California, has expanded and thrived. In 1980, parents, physicians Barrett and Marcela Brown from Los Angeles, bought and restored a 450 acre abandoned ranch in the eastern sector of Napa Valley. In 1985, the Brown's planted a relatively small plot of Zinfandel grapes on the property. The emerging vineyard initially sold its Zinfandel fruit to wineries in the area, and, following up on that success, decided to plant other varieties of wine grapes, especially Cabernet Sauvignon. Son David Brown began taking over farming of the Estate's wine grapes during the early 1990's; while working with wineries buying grapes from the Estate, he learned the in's and out's of the winemakers' art and craft. He and his sister Doreen realized that, instead of selling all the grapes they were growing, they could use a "custom crush" service at a nearby winery to produce wines from their grapes. David Brown took on the role of winemaker for the Estate, aided by respected consulting winemakers, and made the initial 1996 Brown Estate vintage. Despite near disasters, David Brown has continued as winemaker for succeeding vintages. In 2002, Brown Estates began building its own wine producing facility on premises, then, in 2004, a wine cave. Doreen and David's sister Coral has added a second brand, House of Brown, featuring a wide array of wines aimed at mass-market wine buyers.

The company has benefitted from a strong presence in wine clubs on the web and social media. 2017 marked the beginning of Brown Downtown in the town of Napa, a wine tasting and special events venue. Today, Brown Estates shows that a small winery with a favorable location, a hands-on and focused staff, and creative energy can succeed as an independent wine producer.

At the opposite end of the wine business, small, independent wine importers and distributors, as well as retail wine sellers, are trying to establish footholds in highly competitive markets. These small businesses employ a wide range of strategies. Much like plants and animals in the Amazon, different survival strategies come and go. One wine importer that we know represents a cooperative of wineries in New Zealand. He presents the Cooperative's wines at wine retailers' and restaurants' trade shows, sets up and participates in wine tastings and events, and sells his clients' wines to restaurants and wine shops. No one member of the New Zealand Cooperative could afford to support a person to represent them, nor would the representative agree to have a portfolio of wines from any one of the vineyards. Representing a cooperative works well for both sides. We also see small, independent importers/distributors that have established personal contacts and handshake deals with small, independent wineries to promote their wines. The survival of these importers/distributors depends on how well they interact with distributors and wine buyers for restaurants and food retailers.

The last links in the retail chain from grapevine to wine buyer, small, independent wine shops, depend on strategies that align the advantages of their locations to lease costs, balance diversity of items for sale with proximity of lower cost competitors, and wine knowledge of the owner and staff. Let's look at the eleven miles from the north end of Longboat Key south to St. Armand's circle near Lido Beach in Florida.

LBK Liquors enjoys a strategic location in the Whitney Beach Shopping complex on Gulf Drive at a point where often crowded and slow automobile traffic from Anna Maria Island to the north to Lido Beach to the south, and back, must pass. Stores selling liquor have special (and expensive) permits, as compared to stores selling beer and wine. As the only store in the immediate vicinity selling liquor, LBK Liquors has a captive audience of buyers of liquor and wine. To give wine buyers many options, the store has bottles of wine stacked to the ceiling. It features wines from California and many international wine producers. Shoppers often select a bottle or two of liquor and then spend time browsing the wine selections.

Closer to the mid-point of LBK on Gulf Drive, Harry's Deli across from Harry's Continental Kitchen has a steady stream of customers looking for sandwiches to take to the beach and salads to take home. Across from the Deli counter, wine bottles on display tempt customers to add a wine or two for a late lunch or dinner. The restaurant and bar across the street have many of the wines on wine lists; excess inventory won't go to waste. If a customer needs more information about the wines, the restaurant and bar staff have the answers. A strategy of offering a diverse selection of wines to customers who may buy one or more on a whim does not cost much and increases sales.

Going south over the bridge where LBK ends and St. Armand's Circle and Lido key begins, two small, independent wine sellers are cautiously increasing inventories of wines. The pandemic made shop owners wary about carrying more inventory than the minimum. Now that customers have resumed in-store shopping, owners are slowly adding to displays, including wine bottles. The Madison Avenue Café and Deli on North Boulevard of the Presidents, St. Armand's Circle, does a brisk business in breakfast and lunch. Their menu includes a limited



selection of wines one can buy to pair with their food or buy to take home. Next door the Ancient Oils Gourmet shop offers an increasingly diverse collection of imported and domestic wines. Some customers obviously prefer to pair wine with their premium olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

On Independence Day we salute the small, independent vineyards, wineries, importers/distributors, and retail stores that have survived and thrived in an industry dominated by larger and larger corporations. We urge you to take a moment to see what they have to offer.

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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News, from page 1

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- gumbo limbo

Palm trees are not included in the program.

Depending upon the species, prices range from \$545 to \$725. Homeowners are responsible for a \$100 deposit plus any balance beyond the City's \$500 contribution.

Program participants will purchase the tree through the City's vendor, Tree Biotics, whose team will work with City staff to determine the best placement of the tree between the front plane of the house and right-of-way. In most cases, planting under utility lines will not be allowed. The homeowner will own the tree and be responsible for care and maintenance.

Contact information

Residents interested in participating in the Mature Tree Program should contact Tree Biotics at 941-480-6387 or by email at MatureTreeProgram@gmail.com

City of Sarasota staff contacts for the program: Donald. Ullom@sarasotafl.gov, Jacqueline.Hartley@sarasotafl.gov, and Kalyn.Ennis@sarasotafl.gov

Sarasota a top location for moves in United States

A recent ranking released by national moving and storage company PODS has ranked Sarasota near the top of its 2023 list of the top 20 cities where people are moving across the country.

Sarasota ranked as the second most moved-to city in the United States, one slot lower than its first-place finish on the 2022 list of cities where people relocated. Based on PODS customer moves in 2022, Sarasota had the highest growth rate in Florida and the entire country, and that trend continued into 2023, the company's data shows.

This year's report analyzed data about consumer movements for a period of 15 months by tracking resident trends and environmental factors such as cost of living, crime rates, and inclement weather.

The cities with the highest number of move-ins according to PODS are:

- Myrtle Beach, SC/Wilmington, NC
- Sarasota
- Orlando
- Ocala
- Houston, TX
- Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
- Knoxville, TN
- Jacksonville
- Tampa Bay

- Greenville - Spartanburg, SC
- Nashville, TN
- Melbourne
- Portland, ME
- San Antonio, TX
- Boise, ID
- Charlotte, NC
- Asheville, NC
- Phoenix, AZ
- Savannah, GA
- Raleigh, NC

Ocean Prime Restaurant Coming to The Quay Sarasota

Ocean Prime has announced it will be opening its first Sarasota location in late 2024, in The Quay Sarasota.

The Sarasota Ocean Prime will be the 19th location for Cameron Mitchell Restaurants (CMR), which already has three existing Florida Ocean Prime restaurants in Tampa, Naples and Orlando. Ocean Prime Sarasota will be the group's sixth Florida restaurant overall. Ocean Prime Sarasota is slated to have more than 9,500 square feet of space spread across two stories, with outdoor terraces on each floor. The restaurant will include over 350 seats, two bars, and two private dining rooms.

Cameron Mitchell, Founder & CEO of Cameron Mitchell Restaurants, said he has vacationed with his family for nearly 20 years in Sarasota.

Wildlife, from page 1

they started diving under the boat and coming back up on the other side, slip streaming in the wake of the boat. They would even get in front of the boat like they knew where we were going and leading us there.

Watching them was the most fun I'd had in a while. The water was so clear we could see everything they were doing.

I wish everyone a chance to see this, as it truly is a wonder.

Fishing for answers

We finally reached our destination. The dolphins had lost interest in us. Now it was just the two of us again. We were in water about one hundred and three feet in depth. We baited our hooks and put our lines in the water. I got a nibble right away and caught a nice size Grouper. We did see a shark, but that was all for the rest of the day. It was very strange. On other days we would at least see schools of mackerel and barracuda. However, that day the Gulf might as well have been empty.

My husband is an avid fresh water fisherman. He can catch bass and trout like there is no tomorrow. However, we have figured out that apparently there is a big learning curve when it comes to saltwater fishing.

Growing up spending summers on Longboat Key my husband watched his father in the water, fishing off the beach for hours. His fishing was bountiful, catching whiting big enough to keep and feed everyone for dinner. He made it look so easy.

Maybe the waters have changed? Maybe there are not as many fish in the area as their used to be? I did hear someone saying something about the sea grass being disturbed. Maybe that is the issue?

Surely our learning curve has not lasted all these years. That would be an extremely long curve. Before we moved here my

husband told me that I would only have to buy vegetables and bread at the grocery store because he would catch enough fish for us to eat. I am really glad I did not hold him to that. Otherwise, we would both be vegetarians by now.

All that being said, we are not losing faith. The struggle is real, but we will keep up the struggle until we finally master the art of saltwater fishing.

Lizards, Peacocks and nesting turtles

Other than the evasive fish, we have experienced so many other beautiful forms of wildlife. I volunteer for Save Our Seabirds. I didn't realize just how many different types of birds there are until I started volunteering there, not to mention the fact that saving seabirds is a very rewarding task.

Note to self: remember when jumping out of the boat to save a pelican, jump away from the boat. That was a rather painful lesson to learn.

We also can't forget about our gorgeous Village peacocks who strut their feathers up and down the streets on the North End of Longboat.

Also, I have to give props to the American Bald Eagle who spends day after day high up in the Australian Pine that overlooks my car. With the exception of diving into the bay every so often to catch a fish, he is a great guard bird. No one has ever messed with my car.

Oh, and we are not even going to talk about the lizards, so, so, so many lizards!

I recommend visiting Mote Marine Aquarium. It is a wonderful aquarium that does so much for our community and environment.

Last, but not least, we must mention our precious sea turtles. If you see sticks with orange tape around them on the beach, please don't go near them. It is turtle season and those are turtle nests that must not be disturbed. It is so important to leave them be that it's the law. The reward for protecting them is plentiful, as they keep returning year after year.

Longboat Key News

Sarasota City News

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