



Longboat Key News

July 5, 2024

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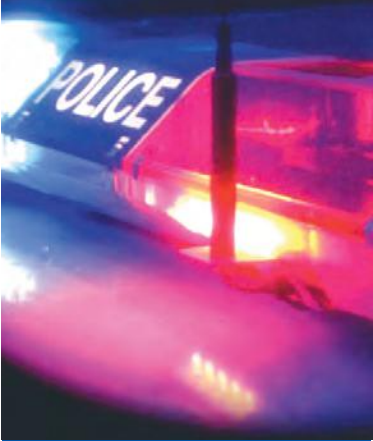
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Waves of Freedom Wash over Longboat Key

The annual Freedom Fest parade and Hot Diggity dog Contest has become something of a rite on Longboat Key to celebrate Fourth of July and to unfurl and honor the principle of freedom — this year was no exception.



The annual Freedom Fest Parade and Hot Diggity Dog Contest has become something of a rite on Longboat Key to celebrate the Fourth of July and to unfurl and honor the principle of freedom. This year was no exception.

Hundreds of residents and onlookers streamed to Bay Isles Parkway to watch what is billed as “the world’s shortest parade.” Town fire trucks, police vehicles, local sponsors, Town Commissioners and several area businesses all participated with some throwing candy, others waving flags and most offering a blend of patriotic zeal, frenzied excitement and a tad of perspiration as the sun started to pierce the morning sky.

After the parade, the action moved to Bicentennial Park beside Town Hall where waffles and food and treats were served up as well as a dog fashion show and contest.

And although the event did not last long, it proved rich in that inexplicable commodity known as community spirit.

After all the participants had cleared and the tables were folded and everyone had headed to the beach or the pool or to barbecue, dozens of flags waved silently along the roadside standing for the day and for something timeless in our culture and in our souls.

Photos by Stephen Reid

Longboat sets max millage for fiscal year 2025

Longboat Key town commissioners voted on June 28 to set the maximum millage for the upcoming fiscal year 2025, which will remain similar to the previous fiscal year. The June 1 estimates showed a combined increase of 9.61% between Sarasota and Manatee counties. Individually, there was expected to be a 7.78% increase in Sarasota County values and a 13.67% increase in Manatee County values. This would have resulted in an additional \$1,481,016 in revenue compared to FY24.

The July 1 certified values showed a greater increase. The numbers showed an increase of 10.39% combined between the counties — an 8.55% increase in Sarasota County and 14.47% increase in Manatee County.

The certified values will result in \$1,580,544 in additional revenue compared to FY24, and an extra \$99,528 that the town hadn't accounted for when estimating the values.

For the upcoming fiscal year, staff recommended setting the maximum millage at 1.9600. The same millage was assessed in the previous fiscal year. The rate can be decreased at the next hearing in September, but not increased.

Other millage rates for facilities and beach projects add to the overall millage for property owners. Both of those rates go toward debt payments on revenue bonds.

The beach millage decreased slightly from FY24 to FY25. For Gulfside residents, the millage went down from 0.6672 to 0.6071. For Bayside residents, the change was 0.1668 to 1.1518.

Sarasota Memorial Ranked in 10 Best Hospitals in Nation

Sarasota Memorial Hospital was ranked among America's 10 Best Hospitals in a 2024 hospital quality study released by Money.

The methodology for Money's 2024 list of the best hospitals in America leans heavily on key quality and safety indicators — including low mortality and hospital readmission rates — as well as patient satisfaction and the experience of the hospitals' doctors.

SMH-Sarasota immediately made the shortlist of safe, high-quality hospitals because of multiple national quality and safety rankings it receives each year, including consistently high 5-star ratings from the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

But when factoring in the experience of its doctors and patients, SMH rose to #7 out of 115 standout hospitals in Money's final list of the best hospitals in the country. Money's quality ranking differs from others in that it scores hospitals not only hospital quality and safety

indicators, but also factors in the experience of more than a million practitioners caring for patients in those hospitals.

"Our selection methodology takes a particularly fair and equitable approach to identifying high-quality hospitals with exceptionally experienced staff... each hospital's ranking score is, in large part, a product of how experienced its physicians are," Money reported with the debut of its 2024 list of best hospitals.

Sarasota boaters urged to keep distance from dolphin calves

Sarasota Bay may be busy this time of year for boaters in the area, but it's also true for the area's resident dolphins.

So far, six dolphin calves have been born and five have survived. For 48 years, Wells has watched as dolphin calves acclimate to their surroundings.

Their environment includes dangers they must learn to live with — danger we often don't realize we are causing.

Researchers said every six minutes there's a boat passing within 100 yards of a dolphin. Wells reminds boaters to give all dolphins, including mothers and their new babies, 50 yards of space to keep them thriving in their home, which we get to visit.

Sarasota city leaders to vote on car noise crackdown

Sarasota city leaders are considering a change to city ordinances surrounding noise on Monday, cracking down on car music and sound.

The new rules repeal the city of Sarasota's ordinance and put the city in line with Florida statute, meaning, if law enforcement can hear noise from a car from 25 feet away, that violator could be cited.

The previous city ordinance said law enforcement must be able to hear your car noise from 50 feet away, making this new rule a stricter rule. That ordinance was in place because the state Supreme Court previously found the Florida statute unconstitutional — but the statute has since been amended.

The new rules that Sarasota City Commissioners will hold a second reading and vote on Monday will also shift how the statute will be adjudicated. Instead of the county court reviewing cases, a special magistrate will do so, and those opinions can be appealed to the county court.



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\$3,600,000 - Anna Maria Island
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109 N WARBLER LANE

\$11,750,000 - Under Construction
4 Beds 5 Baths 5,292 Sq. Ft.
Oversized Deep Water Bayfront Lot



3621 SAN REMO TER

\$9,750,000 - Under Construction
5 Beds 7 Baths 5,328 Sq. Ft.
400' Wide Bay Inlet



1212 CENTER PLACE

\$6,995,000 - New Construction
5 Beds 6 Baths 4,750 Sq. Ft.
Rooftop Terrace and Private Beach



6489 GULFSIDE ROAD

\$16,995,000 - Under Construction
4 Beds 5 Baths 6,614 Sq. Ft.
100' of Beachfront

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.

Follow-up to discussions during Town Commission Meeting

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
I'm sending this along to you to forward to the Commissioners. Sue Smith has reviewed and agrees. Thank you,
Steve Branham
Longboat Key

Follow-up to discussions during Town Commission Meeting

To: Steve Branham
Please see below as a follow up to questions regarding pension liabilities.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Follow-up to discussions during Town Commission Meeting

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Following up on our brief discussion about the consent agenda item 5.c "Pension Update" during the special meeting on Friday, June 28th.
Question: Commissioner Gold asked what would be done with any remaining balance in the Pension Fund once all beneficiaries have been paid what is due to them.
Answer: It is unlikely that there will be any remaining balance in the Fund at that point in time. We expect the Assumed Rate of Return (ARR) will remain less than required to fully fund the annual needs of fund beneficiaries throughout the remaining amortized life of the fund. Therefore, it is expected that there will be a continued need for the Town to provide an Annual Required Contribution (ARC) to help meet benefit requirements. By logic, the Pension fund would be exhausted and the need for an annual ARC would cease at that point. If there happens to be any assets left, those would revert back to the Town.
Question: Commissioner Gold asked what portion of the current annual benefit requirement is funded by the ARC.
Answer: The FY 24 ARC is \$2.5 million. The annual retiree benefit payments for that period is approximately \$4.3 million. For reference, we expect the Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability (UAAL) to decline to about half its current level (approx. \$15 million) by FY2028 and decline by half again by FY2032. This reduction in UAAL will significantly reduce the need for the Town's ARC.
Steve Branham
Longboat Key

Resurfacing GMD

To: Longboat Key Vice Mayor Mike Haycock
I read the excellent exchange between you and Eric Brenner regarding GMD, safety and funding.
Regarding funding, would it add any value to know what percent of GMD traffic is contained within LBK versus used as a pass through? Am always surprised by the number of cars that follow me from Sarasota to the north end of the Key and continue right over the pass to AMI. Maybe we shouldn't be surprised, because the thousands of AMI tourists that want to

go to St Armands, Sarasota, Siesta Key and/or back - will find the quickest and recommended route by Maps is through LBK. Same for any service vehicle serving the Bradenton -Sarasota area.
There is a reason GMD is a state road - and priority safety improvements (the Broadway/ GMD intersection being at the top of my list) should be fully funded and prioritized by FDOT / USDOT. It makes little sense that we would spend hundreds of thousands of LBK dollars to get these designs to 90 percent / shovel ready (twice, in the case of the roundabout) - and not have the DOT follow-through with the investment required.
Thank you for all of the work you are doing, as our LBK Vice Mayor, with the MPO. Am hopeful some of the ideas the Commission and Town Staff are working on, and that Mr. Brenner put forward, will come to fruition. Please let us know if there is anything we can do from the community's standpoint to support this work.
Maureen Merrigan
Longboat Key

Resurfacing GMD

To: Maureen Merrigan
Thanks for your input. We FDOT currently has funding for resurfacing GMD and replacing the multiuse path that is in terrible condition. I missed the last Commission meeting and will catch up with current direction when I return. GMD safety and traffic congestion will remain one of the Commissions high priorities.
Mike Haycock
Vice Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Gulfstream roundabout travel times

To: Longboat Key Vice Mayor Mike Haycock
I wanted to follow up with you after the MPO meeting. Attached you will find the travel times from Ken Thompson parkway to US 301 at Fruitville coming off longboat Key. This also contains traffic volumes. As mentioned in the meeting today, We are seeing a significant increase in volumes. I will work on getting some data to you that shows travel times before the roundabout was ever constructed, so you can compare the roundabout to the true before condition.
Neal Turner, PE.
TSM&O Engineer - Arterials
Florida Department of Transportation

Gulfstream roundabout travel times

To: Florida Department of Transportation Engineer Neil Turner
Neil, thank you for the follow-up. During the season traffic typically backs up 1-2 miles north of Ken Thompson Parkway. Is it possible to pick a point mid key like Bay Isles Parkway. Comparing traffic before and after the Roundabout Construction will allow is to see if further improvements are needed.
When will your dashboard be complete and what will it include.
Thanks again for furnishing this data and analysis during our peak season periods.
Mike Haycock
Vice Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 6

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6609 GULF OF MEXICO DRIVE | LONGBOAT KEY

Coastal-inspired elevated pool home. This North Longboat Key 4 bedroom, 4 bath, 4,132 sf home with private beach access features views of the Gulf of Mexico and sunsets from wide covered decks and the third-level widow's walk. The main level is ideal for family gatherings and entertaining with ample seating in the kitchen, living room, dining area and wet bar. All bedrooms have ensuite baths. The Gulf of Mexico facing glass sliders open to an expansive balcony with a gas grill overlooking the pool, spa and lush array of mature tropical trees and landscaping.



NOW PENDING SALE



\$4,495,000



648 BAYVIEW DRIVE | LONGBOAT KEY

Boater's dream property on oversized (19,994 sf) rarely available cul-de-sac end lot with a brand new 320-foot seawall located in Sleepy Lagoon, on the north end of Longboat Key. This location offers fantastic panoramic views of Bishops Bayou and the ICW. **Watch the video of the first phase of demolition. Removing the 1970s home to make way for the buyer's dream home.** Call Walter Group Real Estate for help connecting with developer/architect/builders to make your dreams come true.





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waltergrouprealestate.com

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5930 EMERALD HARBOR DRIVE | LONGBOAT KEY

Exquisitely remodeled 3BR/3.5BA pool home situated on a .27 acre waterfront lot. The property sits on one of the key's widest canals and boasts a new 72-foot seawall and dock with boat lift. Enjoy community beach access only two blocks away.



NEW PRICE



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370 GULF OF MEXICO DR., #432 | LONGBOAT KEY

Delight in scenic views of Sarasota Bay in this custom-designed 4-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom PENTHOUSE. The spacious condominium features soaring ceilings, great room with gas fireplace, and private gated courtyard. All bedrooms are ensuite. Sliding glass doors in the primary suite and great room open to a terrace. An additional west-facing terrace boasts stunning sunset views.



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2110 HARBOURSIDE DR., #547 | LONGBOAT KEY

Delight in captivating bay vistas in this well-maintained 2,039 sq. ft. condominium in The Atrium, situated in Fairway Bay in the gated community of Bay Isles. This 3-bedroom, 2-bath residence features many updates, and floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors to the southeast-facing terrace, showcasing gorgeous views of Sarasota Bay and the city skyline.





\$2,155,000

2185 GULF OF MEXICO DR., #212 | LONGBOAT KEY

Villa Di Lancia, one of Longboat Key's premier communities. This corner residence boasts 3 bathrooms, and epitomizes tropical Gulf-front living. The covered terrace, connected to the living room provides a spacious year-round haven to immerse yourself in the stunning surroundings. A spiral staircase offers easy access to resort amenities and the beach just outside. Includes 2 parking spaces.



NOW PENDING



\$2,195,000

775 LONGBOAT CLUB RD., #308 | LONGBOAT KEY

Three bedroom, three bath Gulf front, coastal oasis that is rarely offered. Savor expansive beach views and breathtaking sunsets from the glass sliders, windows and spacious terrace. This second-floor end unit unfolds across 2,122 sq ft of well-planned space. Enjoy a life of ease at Beaches on Longboat Key!



NOW SOLD



\$2,995,000

525 NORTON STREET | LONGBOAT KEY

Magnificent Key West-inspired waterfront home with expansive canal views. This exquisite 4-bedroom, 3 1/2-bath residence boasts luxurious features, including roofed decks on all levels. The screened patio area features a heated pool and waterfall spa. Enjoy adventurous excursions from your boat dock offering easy and open access to the Gulf and the Bay.

Editor Letters



Letters, from page 4

Gulfstream roundabout travel times

To: Longboat Key Vice Mayor Mike Haycock
I wanted to follow-up with you on this. I apologize for the delayed response. We are getting several requests for similar data on the travel times in Sarasota through the roundabout on US 41 and Gulfstream Blvd. We have gathered all the data necessary and are working on compiling it into a presentable format and reviewing it in house to make sure all the data points are represented properly (travel times, volumes, crashes, etc). I will reach out to you again with that data in the near future. Thank you for your patience on this and, again, I apologize for the late reply.
Neal Turner, P.E.
TSM&O Engineer - Arterials
Florida Department of Transportation

Gulfstream roundabout travel times

To: Florida Department of Transportation Engineer Neil Turner
I guess better late than never but surprised it took 5 months and a discussion with LK to get a response. As I mentioned in my last note, traffic often backs up 1-2 miles onto LBK during the season so using Ken Thompson Parkway won't accurately reflect the traffic congestion among from LBK.
The travel times shown in the powerpoint show 10-15 minutes to get to downtown during the peak afternoon hours. My experience and that of our citizens is it takes 30 -60 minutes to make this trip during season in the afternoon. I personally think the Gulfstream roundabout has helped traffic flow but look forward to seeing if the numbers prove this out
I look forward to your report.
Mike Haycock
Vice Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Gulfstream roundabout travel times

To: Longboat Key Vice Mayor Mike Haycock
Again, I apologize for the delayed response. Often when we send information out there are multiple people that want to review and understand it in case questions arise. The data displayed is representative of Wednesday over spring break in 2024 vs Wednesday over spring break in 2019. Both volumes and travel times are shown. I changed the limits to show what you requested. This is travel from Bay Isles through the roundabout at Gulfstream. As you can see in the PM peak during the peak of the peak season we are seeing almost a 15 minute reduction in travel times (Blue line is data for 2024). The rest of the day we are seeing similar

travel times in both the before and after condition. That said, if there are other days you'd like to compare please let me know. I can turn around more data much faster than it has taken this go around. Thank you for your patience.
Neal Turner
TSM&O Engineer - Arterials
Florida Department of Transportation

Gulfstream roundabout travel times

To: Florida Department of Transportation Engineer Neil Turner
Thanks so much for this information. It is very detailed and clearly shows the improvement in travel time off LBK on that day. A couple questions:
1. Can a citizen or someone from our staff access this program so we can check different days?
2. I assume the use of 2019 is because this was pre- Covid?
3. Is there a way to compare multiple days, weeks or months versus just 1 day at a time.
4. I am curious as to why the travel time increases significantly from 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. but the cars/15 minutes doesn't change that much. Is there a traffic flow restriction that could be changed during that time to allow a higher traffic flow?
5. Is similar data available for travel times off the North end of LBK.
Thanks again for developing this program and making available to us.
Mike Haycock
Vice Mayor
Town of Longboat Key

Request for Extended Working Hours for Roof Replacement

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton
Wanted to advise that the Temple is needing to replace their roof to meet insurance wind requirements. As they're moving through the process they have found a number of leaks. The Temple has asked for an early start to help expedite the work which I have granted (and as I have done on a number of other projects related to roofs across the island). This is all laid out in the approval letter below.
Just wanted to advise our Buttonwood residents that this work will be starting July 22nd and we're hopeful any noise impacts will be limited. Please let me know if you have any questions.
Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

See Letters, page 7

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FIND OUT MORE

Editor Letters



Letters, from page 6

Temple Beth Israel Request for Extended Working Hours for Roof Replacement

To: Longboat Key Town Manager Howard Tipton

I hope this finds you well. This is Isaac Azerad, Executive Director of Temple Beth Israel at 567 Bay Isles Road. I am writing with a request on behalf of our Board of Trustees. We are currently under contract with Grayhawk Roofing to have our roof replaced. Last week, we have experienced leaks in our ceiling and have spent time and effort to patch said leaks. The project is scheduled to start as soon as we obtain the necessary permits. Our Wind Insurance renewal depends on satisfying our carrier that work on the roof will commence quickly and that the new roof will be installed expeditiously.

We asked Grayhawk Roofing to move up the start date and we are now scheduled to start the reroof project by mid-July to avoid further damage and expenses from leaks.

To accelerate the pace of the reroof, Grayhawk Roofing has asked if they could start the tear off at 6 a.m. each day and work until 5 p.m. M-F. We realize that a start time of 6 a.m. would require approval from the Town of Longboat Key so I am asking if you can assist us in this hardship situation.

Grayhawk is aware of the necessary decorum and the need for discretion so as not to disturb our peaceful neighborhood. We have no closely adjacent neighbors that could be affected, we also have good relations with them. I thank you in advance for your consideration. I am always available if you have any questions.

Isaac Azerad
Executive Director
Temple Beth Israel

Temple Beth Israel Request for Extended Working Hours for Roof Replacement

To: Temple Beth Israel Executive Director Isaac Azaerad

Your request for exception to Town Code Section 130.02 is granted beginning Monday, July 22, through Monday, August 12, 2024 for work between 6 a.m. – 8 a.m. – our Town Code provides approval for this work from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. As a condition of this permit please advise your neighbors adjacent to the building included in this permit. The advance notice seems to help manage expectations and complaints about noise.

This permit is being granted based on your expressed need to complete critical construction elements of roof replacements for buildings at Temple Beth Israel. The onset of hurricane season escalates the need to have the roof structure repaired as quickly as feasible. Your building permit also requires securing building materials on your site when storms are expected to impact the Town. Please make sure to read those permit requirements and adhere to them when storms threaten.

We recognize the critical need for you to maintain project schedule for timely completion. It is also understood that beginning at 6:00 am provides more likelihood for continuous construction product delivery service for site materials, due to increased traffic patterns after 8 am. The reliability of continuous delivery reduces risk of significant delays in completing the roofing project to avoid hurricane and tropical storm impacts as well as the typical Summer rainy season.

We took into consideration the lack of immediate adjacency of homes or other buildings and request that you still seek support from your All Angel’s Episcopal Church neighbors for this construction work to be performed during these hours. As stated above, please let them know this permit was approved for you to work beginning at 6 a.m. Monday-Saturday.

I reserve the right to rescind this permit in the event complaints are received regarding the work being conducted beyond hours expressed in the Town Code.

In the event you seek a similar permit in the future for extended working hours, please note Town Code Section 130.02 (F)(j). “The applicant has not violated the terms of any previously granted special permit.”

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Temple Beth Israel Request for Extended Working Hours for Roof Replacement

To: Temple Beth Israel Executive Director Isaac Azaerad

Wanted to advise that the Temple is needing to replace their roof to meet insurance wind requirements. As they’re moving through the process they have found a number of leaks. The Temple has asked for an early start to help expedite the work which I have granted (and as I have done on a number of other projects related to roofs across the island). This is all laid out in the approval letter below.

Just wanted to advise our Buttonwood residents that this work will be starting July 22nd and we’re hopeful any noise impacts will be limited. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Town of Longboat Key

Senate Bill 1322

To: Longboat Key Commissioner BJ Bishop

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns about Senate Bill 1322: Millage Rates. I will be sure to share your comments with Senator Boyd.

SB 1322, by Senator Ingoglia, died in the Committee on Appropriations. Should the Senator refile this, or a similar bill during the 2025 Legislative Session, you may follow its progress on the Senate website.

Please review the bill’s history. Thank you for contacting Senator Boyd.

James Stockton
Legislative Aide
Senator Jim Boyd
Florida Senate

Senate Bill 1322

To: Florida State Senator Jim Boyd

Dear Senator Boyd: Senate Bill 1322 requiring cities to have a super-majority of the governing body to increase the millage rate violates the most basic premise of home rule and does not

See Letters, page 8

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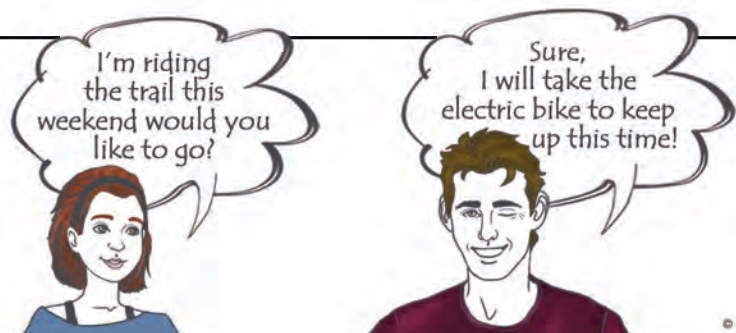
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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 7

serve localities who are solely responsible for meeting the demands of their towns and cities. Please vote no and work to protect home rule for all cities and towns in Florida.
BJ Webb Bishop
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Two weeks later...how’s the bay?

To: Longboat Key Commission, Sarasota City Commission
On June 11th, our region was hit by a substantial rain event, as we discussed in the last Director’s Note. We are now about two weeks after that event, and it’s worth asking “How is the bay doing?” Because in the first days after that rain event, it was not looking good, as described in that last communication. Stormwater runoff and algal blooms and fish kills are not good for the bay’s health, but there’s a difference between an episodic stressor and chronic ones. The large loss of seagrass meadows and fish habitat that occurred in the lower bay between about 2014 and 2018 didn’t happen because of a couple of days or weeks of bad water quality, it was because water quality was bad for years. Literally – years.
So how “normal” was that last big rain event? There are a couple of ways to investigate this. One of them is shown in the first graph, which plots the intensity of rainfall in units of maximum hourly rates. The dataset for this analysis comes from the SRQ airport, with a data set of 52 years (1972 to 2024). According to this data set, the 3.93 inches of rain in one hour recorded on June 11th is the highest value recorded in over 50 years. Note as well that over the past 52 years of data, 9 of the top 10 intense rainfall events have occurred within the past 25 years. This means that intense rainfall events are more likely to have occurred over the past 25 years, vs. the prior 25 years. This is consistent with rainfall expectations with climate change – warmer air can hold more moisture, and more moisture in the atmosphere can lead to more intense rain events.
The epicenter of the rain was right around St. Armands Circle and downtown Sarasota, as shown in the second graphic. Note how the data is presented in units of “return period”. The purple and bright purple areas indicate that rain of that intensity is not expected to occur more than once every 50 to 100 years. However, remember that our ability to predict the intensity of rainfall may be compromised now since 90% of the most intense rainfall events over the past 52 years (first graph) have occurred within the past 25 years.
But now, two weeks later, how is the bay doing? There’s no doubt we had an impact, but a survey of the bay this week suggests that we are recovering along the lines of how we thought we would. Attached here are some photos taken this week along the stretch of the bay where we experience the most intense rainfall. The photo from the 10th Street shoreline is just north of the boat ramp, where a massive amount of stormwater runoff came into the bay, as captured

in the photos in the last Director’s Note. No dead fish were found, and no piles of decomposing macroalgae. Instead, there was about 3 feet of visibility in the water – enough to clearly see the rocks and gravel and shell bottom of this part of the bay. It’s not a pristine part of the bay – at all – but it’s not looking worse than a typical summer day.
The second photo is from Bird Key Park. The water has a greenish tinge, indicating a phytoplankton bloom. But the bay bottom is visible in about 3 to 4 feet of water in this part of the bay. No dead fish, and not much macroalgae either. The seagrass meadows and sandy bay bottom are clearly seen. The final photo is from the boardwalk at City Island’s Bay Walk. It was a very calm day (which is why you can see the reflection boardwalk’s railing in the photo. Visibility was over four feet, and the seagrass meadows and sandy bottom are clearly seen. Again, no dead fish, and no piles of macroalgae.
I’ve got similar photos from Palma Sola Bay, the Bradenton Beach Pier, and the Longboat Key boat ramp. Visibility was lowest in Palma Sola Bay, but no dead fish, and no large-scale piles of macroalgae by the dock on the north side of the causeway. Similar findings, but with better water clarity, at the Bradenton Beach Pier and the Longboat Key boat ramp.
Rain events as intense as we had two weeks ago used to be rare, and are still unusual, it would seem. But it also appears that intense rain events were not as rare during the last two decades as they were in prior decades. When they happen, our stormwater collection, treatment, and distribution systems will be overwhelmed – no question. But as long as we keep the bay as healthy as possible the rest of the time, it seems that our bay should be able to recover from such episodic events.
This past rain event was not without impact – but it did not seem to cause the widespread and severe impacts that occur with much longer-lasting stresses, such as we experienced during the years of 2013 to 2019. Bay-wide, our water quality is better now than it has been at any time over the past 10 to 15 years. Don’t confuse that sentence with us saying nothing more needs to be done, or that we are anything close to pristine. We’re not pristine and being better than the last 10 to 15 years is not the highest of bars to clear. But our goal of achieving the water quality conditions we had during the years 2006 to 2012 is not only reasonable, but it also appears that it was an attainable goal as well. Which is good, because episodic events such as we experienced two weeks ago are not likely to be as rare over the next few decades as they were the past few decades.
David Tomasko
Executive Director
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Two weeks later...how’s the bay?

To: Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Executive Director Dave Tomasko
Dave, since my last report that concerning red rusty orange color has disappeared. The storm
See Letters, page 9

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Editor Letters



Letters, from page 8

runoff did create the plankton Bloom as you mentioned, and an increase in seagrass accumulation. The only clarity issues we have are all the manatees under the boat, stirring the water up, I see is a great sign. My Ambient weather system recorded on that date a rainfall rate of 6.2 in./h. and a total rain accumulation for the day of 10.19 inches. The last time we had a rain like that was July or August of 2003 when our seawall collapsed due to the static pressure it created. Thanks for all the good work you and your folks do for our community. It's greatly appreciated.

Gary Coffin
Commissioner
Town of Longboat Key

Sarasota County numbers

To: Sarasota City Commission, Longboat Key Commission

Greetings and Happy July! A longer length of stay and a smaller travel party size resulted in the decrease in visitors being greater than the decrease in room nights. While we are seeing declines, I will note that our Fiscal YTD visitation from Canada remains elevated when compared to 2023. Another bit of interesting insight from our research firm (Downs & St. Germain) is that 1 in 4 May visitors were visiting Sarasota County for the first time. As we continue to look to diversify the visitor we look to attract, ensuring we are marketing to both new and return visitors remains as important as ever.

Here are all of the numbers comparing May 2024 to May 2023:

Visitors were 121,000 compared to 140,610 in 2023

Visitor direct expenditures were \$ 139,761,100 compared to \$ 156,037,800 in 2023

Lodging occupancy was 62.3% compared to 66.1% in 2023

Lodging average room rate was \$251.37 compared to \$251.17 in 2023

There were 265,200 room nights sold compared to 276,400 in 2023

Also, while we have your attention, we also wanted to share some fun stats on our 19th annual Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week Campaign that ran from June 1 – 14 last month.

I'm attaching a full recap with some gorgeous visuals – but a few high-level stats are:

63 participating restaurants!

Over 350,000 views on SavorSarasota.com from May 1st to June 15th!

Social reach of 1.3M!

Over 1,089 PR clips resulting in a 1.3 billion audience!

Kudos to our VSC team who ran this amazing Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week Campaign. We use this platform each year to tell the various culinary stories of our restaurants and chefs. We cannot wait to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week next year in 2025 and plans are already underway.

Should you have any questions, thoughts, insights – never hesitate to reach out.

We are honored for the opportunity to serve you – our elected officials, municipalities, area

businesses – and more. If we can ever be of service, let us know.

Erin Duggan
President & CEO, Visit Sarasota County

Communication box

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

Please see the pictures below re: the corroded communication box which is hidden behind the pitch apple tree at the south entrance of Sabal Cove.

We are unable to obtain any answers from landscapers and electricians regarding it; what is it for? Is it active or abandoned?

Is there anyone at the town level that might be able to offer some insight into what it is and if it's active, how we can get a new cover for it? The landscape committee would like to remove the pitch apple, but before we do this, we want to understand what this is.

Barbara Teller
Longboat Key

Communication box

To: Longboat Key Town Clerk Trish Shinkle

Guy, checked it out this weekend and found that it was an old communications box (Telephone). It is still in use and he will reach out to see if it can be replaced or abandoned.

Charles “Charlie” Mopps
Program Manager/Assistant Public Works Director , Town of Longboat Key

Communication box

To: Longboat Key Assistant Public Works Director Charlie Mopps

I am meeting with the communication provider this morning and will follow up with answers to your questions. Thank you.

Guy Matricciani
Construction & Facility System Manager
Public Works Department, Town of Longboat Key

Communication box

To: Longboat Key Mayor Ken Schneier

Guy met with Frontier this morning and was advised that the box is not Frontier's equipment, it is a Comcast cable box. After speaking with Comcast, he was advised that if the HOA removes the tree/shrubs from around it, Comcast will come out and replace the cover, but they can't remove the equipment.

Trish Shinkle
Town Clerk. Town of Longboat Key



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BIRD KEY
328 BOB WHITE WAY | SARASOTA, FL
\$2,195,000

Welcome to this impeccably renovated home, fully prepared for you to move right in. With fresh paint, designer wall treatments, and breathtaking new lighting, every detail has been carefully curated to perfection. Inside, the open floor plan allows natural light to pour into the spacious rooms, creating an inviting ambiance throughout. The heart of the home lies in the dreamy white kitchen, boasting quartz countertops, new appliances, and an exquisitely designed island that seamlessly connects to the tile-accented family room. Step outside to discover your own private oasis—the resort-worthy pool area awaits, promising endless relaxation and blissful moments.



SARASOTA HARBOR
765 JOHN RINGLING BLVD. #5 | SARASOTA, FL
\$599,000

Experience breathtaking waterfront vistas from this exquisitely remodeled, light-filled condominium. Situated on the ground floor, this 2-bedroom, 1-bathroom residence offers a welcoming atmosphere from the moment you arrive. Upon entry, you'll be greeted by a well-appointed kitchen and living space bathed in natural light, seamlessly connected to a dining area and a spacious living room boasting stunning Bay views. Meticulously renovated, this unit features brand-new tile flooring throughout, updated kitchen cabinetry and appliances, and a contemporary bathroom vanity. Located in the vibrant 55+ maintenance-free Sarasota Harbor community, residents can enjoy sweeping panoramas of Sarasota Bay.

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 28

Boat

10:50 a.m.

Officer Barrett received information from a concerned citizen that two people were planning to engage in a physical altercation at Sister Keys sand bar at 12 noon on June 29. Officer Barrett located the one man on his boat just north of Jewish Key. Officer Barret asked the man about his involvement in the upcoming altercation. The man advised that he and the other man have been involved in a verbal altercation for the last few weeks over the other man operating at a high rate of speed too close to his boat. He said that this occurred within the City of Bradenton Beach. The man further said that he has not seen the man in a few days and that he is not planning on escalating or continuing this matter and would not engage in an altercation at Sister Keys. Officer Barret then contacted via telephone the other man. The other man advised that the man accused him of driving too fast next to his boat which started an argument so he has been avoiding the man. They both said they were not going to respond to Sister Keys and that he was not going to engage in an altercation with the man. Officer Barret then made contact with Bradenton Beach Police and shared the information with them. Case clear.



Gulf of Mexico Drive. The vehicle was not pulling over so Officer Martinson activated the squad car's siren three separate times in short bursts. The vehicle appeared to be pulling over in the 5600 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive but then swerved back into the northbound lane and continued driving. Officer Martinson then activated the siren again and followed the vehicle until it finally pulled over. Officer Martinson made contact with the woman who was identified by her Brazilian passport and she admitted to not having a valid driver's license. She was given a criminal citation with a court date. She was allowed to park her vehicle on the easement until her friend with a valid driver's license. Case clear.

June 29

Intruder

1:59 a.m.

Officer Nazareno was dispatched to Mistletoe Lane for a suspicious incident call. Upon arrival, Officer Nazareno made contact with the caller who advised that she had a vivid dream and that there was an intruder in her house. The caller and her grandson checked the residence prior to the officer's arrival. No signs of forced entry were reported or observed. Case clear.

Citizen assist

12:41 p.m.

Officer Tillman was dispatched to Emerald Harbour for a complainant who called and said that she had no water to the residence since returning after a couple of months. It was determined that the handyman had turned off the water. Water was restored. Case clear.

Disabled vessel

4:05 p.m.

Officer Barrett while on marine patrol, observed a disabled boat in the narrow portion of the intracoastal waterway just west of Jewfish Key. Officer Barrett approached the vessel and towed it out of the channel to safe waters. Officer Barrett then transported the woman who was not feeling well and two other passengers to the restaurant. The man, the captain and the remaining passengers stayed on the boat and contacted a towing company for assistance.

Boats

3:15 p.m.

Officer Barrett while on marine patrol, observed two men in separate pontoon boats beached inside the boat exclusionary zone at Greer Island. Both men said that they entered the zone to seek shelter from a storm, however numerous people were enjoying the beach in front of their boats. Both men were cited. Case clear.

June 30

Traffic citation

9:55 a.m.

Officer Martinson responded to Bay Isles Parkway which was traveling northbound on Gulf of Mexico Drive and the registered owner had an expired Florida driver's license. Officer Martinson located the vehicle in the 5000 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive. Officer Martinson activated the squad car's emergency lights and got behind the vehicle in the 5400 block of

July 1

Construction

10:11 a.m.

Officer Pescuma was dispatched to Rountree Drive in reference to a civil disturbance involving construction on the complainant's property. Upon arriving on scene, Officer Pescuma was greeted by the complainant in the driveway of Rountree Drive. The man stated that the construction taking place next door is encroaching over his property line. Officer Pescuma observed a contracting company tearing up a seawall. The man stated that the company is tearing up his seawall on his property. Officer Pescuma viewed the permit with the survey and property dimensions, however the property owner believes that their survey is incorrect and that they are encroaching on his property and seawall. Officer Pescuma advised the man that this is a civil matter and to call the company to advise them of your concerns and to obtain an updated property survey. Officer Pescuma witnessed the man call the company and they advised that the construction will stop until they can confirm the property lines. Case clear.

Handicapped parking

7:33 p.m.

Sgt. Montfort while on patrol on North Shore Road, observed a Honda motorcycle parked in front of the handicapped parking sign. Sgt. Montfort exited his patrol vehicle to look at the rear license plate for a handicap designation. Sgt. Montfort did not observe any license plate attached and subsequently wrote down the VIN number. The number was run through FCIC/NCIC with negative results for being stolen. The motorcycle had a Florida license plate and Sgt. Montfort issued a parking citation for the handicapped parking violation. Sgt. Montfort then departed the area to check Broadway Street. After a short period of time, Sgt. Montfort returned to North Shore Road and observed a Hispanic man on the motorcycle attempting to leave. Once the man observed the officer's presence, he attempted to place the motorcycle in gear and revved the motor to leave. Sgt. Montfort hastily exited his patrol vehicle and removed the keys from the motorcycle. The man was identified and was run through the FCIC/NCIC which returned as a valid ID card only. The man was advised not to operate the motorcycle and make arrangements for removal. Sgt. Montfort advised the man that operating without a license in the state of Florida is a criminal offense. Case clear.

July 2

Found phone

10:05 a.m.

Officer Zunz stopped in at Bradenton Beach Police to pick up the mail that had been left with them by Manatee Sheriff's Office. The front desk administrator at Bradenton Beach Police Department and they handed him a black iPhone housed in a green Otterbox case, which she said had been turned into their department by someone who advised they'd found it on the beach in our jurisdiction at Longboat Key. Checking the lock screen on the iPhone, Officer Zunz noted various messages from a particular correspondent written throughout the past 24 hours. Officer Zunz called the cell number from the police telephone and asked the individual to contact the owner of the iPhone and advise that they are holding his phone. She would only offer the owner's name and she has no way of contacting him other than via his lost cellphone. The phone has been placed into a temporary locker. Case clear.

Suspicious person

11:21 p.m.

Officer Ramsaier was dispatched to 3100 block of Gulf of Mexico Drive for a call of suspicious person. The complainant stated he observed several people walking on the beach wearing lights on their head. Officer Ramsaier along with Officer Ferrigine observed four individuals on the beach, which is where the vehicle was parked after hours at the beach access point. Officer Ramsaier and Officer Ferrigine made contact with the four individuals who said they were looking for crabs. Officer Ramsaier advised them that the beach is closed after 11 p.m. and escorted them off the beach. The parking citation was issued for parking violation after hours. Case clear.

July 3

Citizen assist

12:15 p.m.

Officer Miklos was dispatched to Harbourside Drive in reference to a civil disturbance. Upon arrival, Officer Miklos came into contact with the complainant who advised that she had a company come to her residence to fix a water leak. The complainant advised that the south security gate of Bay Isles had denied the company access to the community. The complainant advised that she had her vehicle open the gate and allowed the company to follow in behind her. The complainant was advised that she had her vehicle open the gate and allowed the company to follow in behind her. The complainant was advised that Officer Miklos could not tell a private company to allow access to the community. The complainant requested that Officer Miklos call the management company for her. Officer Miklos advised the man that he could not speak to the management for her in the civil matter. Case clear.

The advertisement for LBK Liqueurs features a large, stylized pink flamingo standing behind the text "LBK Liqueurs". The phone number "941.953.1835" is displayed in the top right corner. Below the main title, the text reads: "The Island's largest selection of Beer, Wine & Spirits", "Come check out our competitive prices!", "Discounts on cases of wine | Special orders welcome", and "Locally owned & operated". At the bottom, the address "Whitney Beach Plaza", "6854 Gulf of Mexico Drive | Longboat Key, FL" is provided. The entire ad is framed by a thin black border. Decorative elements include three colorful bottles (yellow, teal, and pink) on the left and right sides of the bottom section.

WineTimes

Wine in spirits: Adding a light summer touch

Wine in spirits enhances summer drinks. Creative uses of sparkling and still wines adds interesting tastes while reducing in many cases the alcohol content per glass.

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

Many households keep a bottle or box of white or Rosé wine in the fridge during summer months. Unlike red wines, the whites and Rosé stay fresh for a week or more. A light wine helps set the tone for a holiday afternoon or anytime evening outside on a porch or gazebo.



With summer wines close at hand, a creative home bartender will find it easy to follow an old tradition and give a lighter touch to drinks containing neutral spirits such as vodka, gin, white rum, cognac, or Brazilian white Cachaça brandy. The circa 1915 French 75 drink created by bartender Harry MacElhone at the New York Bar in Paris comes to mind. It takes its name from the French 75mm field artillery gun used in World War I. A classic recipe has gin, lemon juice, simple syrup sweetener, and French Champagne. A strong version has the kick of its namesake.



The Wine Spritzer dates back to the 19th Century in Veneto, Italy. The current version adds a spritz (splash) of sparkling water to a Pinot Grigio or similar white wine and a bitter liqueur such as Aperol. This refreshing apéritif usually holds the dosage of alcohol to a minimum.



The exact measures of ingredients added to a wine in spirits seems more a matter of taste than a recipe, or, in some instances a matter of what one has available. An half ounce of 90 proof white rum and fresh blueberries and raspberries converts a Pinot Gris/Grigio to a healthy salute to the Stars and Stripes. A small pour of light spirits and a few sweet garnishes will transform a cheap wine into a festive drink. Don't adulterate a good wine that will stand on its own unless it has overstayed its welcome. Go with ordinary wines that have enough acidity to blend citrus and stone fruit tastes with neutral spirits.

Dashes of sweet and bitter liqueurs such as sweet Triple Sec or bitter Compare offset the sweet tastes of berries and tropical fruit in Sangria and other mixtures of fruit juice and off-dry wine. Drops of intense Angostura or aromatic Peychaud bit-

ters draw on the bartender's secret for adding complex flavors to wines in spirits cocktails. Blends of interesting tastes give the home bartender the opportunity to improvise and innovate.



In our quest to concoct intriguing drinks with lower levels of alcohol and complex flavors, wines with alcohol by volume of around 15% or less substitute for spirits with 80 proof (40% alcohol) or more and add a different set of tastes to a

drink. A satisfying drink that substitutes wine for spirits in a Mimosa (sparkling wine and orange juice), a Bellini (sparkling wine and peach puree), or a Caipirinha with wine and agave nectar (mulled lime slices and Cachaça) offer healthier alternatives to popular cocktails containing 1.5 to 2 ounces of spirits.

Wine in spirits enhances summer drinks. Creative uses of sparkling and still wines adds interesting tastes while reducing in many cases the alcohol content per glass. Try substituting sweet or off-dry wines for sugar or simple syrup, substituting sparkling wine for club soda and part of a pour of spirits, and using bitter liqueurs or bitters to replace a second ounce of spirits. You may find a better tasting and healthier drink.

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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KeyHealth

So you want to live a long time?

American policy makers don't even know the difference between health and health care.

MATTHEW EDLUND
Guest Columnist
Edlundr@lbknews.com

Imagine a magic elixir that's free and grants much longer life (12 years for men, 14 years for women.) Despite benefits radically dwarfing the advantages of all health care, the elixir is almost universally spurned. For to receive this magic elixir individuals must put up with what are commonly regarded as unacceptable intrusions: they must sometimes walk; eat fruits and vegetables; not smoke tobacco; only occasionally drink; and keep their weight down. Such demands are rejected by 92-98% of different American groups.



MATTHEW EDLUND

Yet the "magic elixir" is nothing more than the "Five Healthy Habits" recently reported in a long term Harvard Study of 123,000 people. The numbers are both eyepopping and expected. Lots of other studies produce similar results. So why is public health so desperately unpopular? Why do people resign themselves to early illness and shorter lives? Below are some reasons and potential answers:

Health, Not Health Care

Most Americans like economic growth. They think it's one of the great motives of America – our capacity to innovate, to produce. Yet they don't accept that a healthy economy requires a healthy population or that sick people often can't work and cost a lot of money, a proposition most of the the rest of the world has accepted for a very long time. They don't know the results of many studies, like one in Britain, arguing that over much of the past two centuries 30% of economic growth was due to better health and nutrition.

Notice the word – health. Americans conflate health with health care, a very wrong equation. Notice that none of the Five Healthy Habits necessarily involves health insurance or health care workers. They're about lifestyle – what you can really do to influence the health of you and your family. Universal health care often produces worthy results, but ask your doctor if she can semi-guarantee an extra 12-14 years of life. The basics of public health success remain what they've been for centuries: education, nutrition, sanitation and vaccination. Which is why countries that spend small fractions of what the US does on "health care," like Chile and Costa Rica, have the same longevity statistics.

So here are some immodest proposals to get the population more capable of obtaining each of the Five

Healthy Habits:

1. Physical Activity. Walking works. Walking, gardening, biking, moving 30 minutes a day is not an insuperable obstacle. It's something humans are born to do. We're walking machines.



We grow new brain cells when we move. We get more biologically intelligent.

So it's time to make cities fully walkable, which includes enforcing pedestrian laws – people walk less when they fear becoming roadkill. It's for schools to emphasize ordinary physical activities as healthy, and for national public health programs showing people even tiny bits of exercise count and high intensity ones count more, like walking quickly up the steps of your home or work. We can pay for these programs by properly taxing pharmacy benefit managers for price gouging (why that \$5 dollar antidepressant prescription costs you \$100) or by increases taxes on tobacco:

2. Smoking. When cigarettes cost more people smoke less. And though I and others have advocated ecigarettes as a way station for smokers to quit, there is no excuse addicting teenagers to candy flavored vaping. Tobacco companies recognize vaping as their future, and they're addicting kids. We're letting the merchants of death make their comeback, and it's wrong.

3. Alcohol. The booze industry has a lot to answer for. Recent British studies demonstrating that for a sheaf of diseases there is no clear safe level of alcohol, should get their own national health campaign. The drinks industry has quite consciously gotten away with murder pointing out the small useful effect of alcohol on heart attacks. It's time national education programs portray the many avoidable deaths from heart disease, cancer and dementia alcohol causes. It's not just drunk drivers, folks. Alcohol is a pantoxin.

4. Food. Lots of attention is paid to the bioengineering of addicting kids and adults to tobacco and nicotine, but very little to the decades of similar work performed by the food industry. There are lots of ways to addict people, and junk food researchers have studied lots of them, with fabulous financial results. What could be more profitable than a product that people can't resist, and want to use all the days of their lives?

Though food regulation often gets vilified, there are reasons Mexico is taxing sugary drinks, and why the WHO is considering exogenous sugar as a carcinogen. Humans are built to eat whole foods, but we can be taught to enjoy taste-engineered garbage a whole lot more. This is a place where schools and governments have a big job to do.

5. Weight. Of the five healthy habits, this may be the toughest problem for the general population. Genetics is part of it, but modern American life seems organized – through electronic screens, food choices, and lack of public transport – to make Americans weighty.

Making Americans big does not make America great. There are remedies. We should encourage self transport. It's healthy and often mood enhancing to walk or bike to the store when it's not miles away. We can educate people about food, where it comes from, how its grown and how it's prepared. For the poor, who get hit the hardest, we can subsidize whole foods, especially plant based ones. We need people to keep moving and meeting through their homes and neighborhoods. And we can make public what food companies do to make junk food "irresistible."

Bottom Line:

Personal health and survival depend on public health. Yet American policy makers don't even know the difference between health and health care. Neglecting it means not just lost lives but lost jobs and economic growth. The Five Healthy Habits reportedly reduced cardiovascular death risk by 82%, and cancer death risk by 65%

Have you looked at the Federal debt recently? Getting people healthy may be the cheapest, most effective way to reduce it.

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KeyDining

The joyful adventure of dining by boat

The gentle sway of the water, the savory fresh seafood, the stunning waterfront views and the convenience of docking at the restaurant's doorstep is the perfect way to unwind and makes for a memorable and unique experience.

TRYLA LARSON
Guest Columnist
Tryla@lbknews.com

We have the ability to boat to numerous places to eat on Longboat Key as well as other locations with access to inland waters. Why do we sometimes like to boat to a restaurant rather than arrive by car?

Boating to a restaurant adds an element of adventure to dining out, and arriving at a restaurant by boat adds a unique touch of luxury to your experience. The gentle sway of the water, the savory fresh seafood, the stunning waterfront views and the convenience of docking at the restaurant's doorstep is the perfect way to unwind and makes for a memorable and unique experience. Not to mention, in season you avoid much of the traffic that always seems to occur around dinnertime.

Here are some of the wonderful eating establishments at which we are quite privileged to dine:

Mar Vista has a nice-sized dock and is located on North Longboat Key. They have my very favorite Brussel Sprouts with a Ginger and Teriyaki glaze.



Larson



Next to Mar Vista we have the luxurious Shore on Longboat Key. They have plenty of boat docking space and an oh so divine Kung Pao Calamari Salad. It is delicious!



You can also arrive by boat at the popular Dry Dock Waterfront Grill. Their food and drinks are very appetizing, and you will absolutely want to patronize them again and again.



If you are a member of the Longboat Key Club, you should definitely try Portofino located at the Longboat Key Moorings. It boasts exquisite Italian Dining. Perhaps stop by the Tavern and Whisky Bar at the Longboat Key Moorings for a tasty lunch.



Ventura's Italian Kitchen and Wine Bar is another great food choice. Located on the water in Whitney Plaza on the North end of Longboat Key. I love the Chicken Parisian. There is always enough food for me to make two meals. After dinner you can hop down the sidewalk to Sips & Gelato. You can also stop by Sips for coffee, juice or smoothie and quick bite in the mornings. You must try their Avocado Toast on Gluten Free Bread. I Love-Love-Love it!

If you are starting off your day on the boat, you might want to try the Longbeach Café. They have a wide array of breakfast foods that are scrumptious. My favorite is sitting on the back patio area next to the water watching the kayakers paddle by while I enjoy my eggs and potatoes.

Looking for a super casual flip flops and shorts kind of place? If so, go to the Ole Salty Dog Just off the South end of Longboat Key on City Island. They have great frozen alcohol beverages and basket foods. I find myself craving their shrimp tocos with the pineapple slaw in them. I do suggest getting the bang bang sauce on the side. It is super spicy, and I love it, but a little goes a long way.

Another great place to dine is the Swordfish Grill and Tiki Bar in Cortez, just North of Longboat Key by water. If you want a casual place to dine that has live music, try the Cortez Kitchen or The Bridge Tender Inn Dockside & Tiki Bar. Both can be very lively and provide excellent food and beverages.

Another favorite for lunch can be a Grouper Sandwich and Hush Puppies at the Star Fish Company on Cortez. It's fresh as fresh can be.

Last but not least is Marina Jack and O'Leary's Tiki Bar & Grill. They are just South of Longboat Key on the coast of Downtown Sarasota. They always have something fun going on.

This of course is not every place in the area that you can dine by boat, but it does give you a nice assortment of choices. I suggest trying out all of them one at a time to determine your favorite. I think it would be cool if someone opened up a drive thru restaurant on the water for boaters.

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How can I raise my overall game level?

What, and in which strokes, are the main differences between a 3.5 and 4.5 level club player? What should a 3.5 player focus on to improve?

JACKIE BOHANNON
Guest Columnist
tennis@lbknews.com

For those unfamiliar with ratings the NTRP classifies players by their tennis playing abilities. A 1.5-2.0 is a beginner, and a 7.0 is a touring pro. Therefore a 3.5 is your average tennis player, a strong intermediate, who can for the most part play and fit in with anyone at the club. A 4.5 is an advanced recreational player. They are usually your best players at the club. Typically teaching pros start at 5.0 and higher, so your 4.5 players are usually your top echelon of recreational players.



BOHANNON

As you improve up the ratings it increasingly becomes more difficult to get to the next level. That is because the details of the game start to become more minute. To answer your question, the difference between a 3.5 and a 4.5 is everything. The 4.5 is more well-rounded. The 3.5 may have one or two aspects of their game that are perhaps stronger than the 4.5 but the 4.5 has fewer weaknesses, more diversity, more match tough experience, etc.

If a player rated 3.5 has a goal of reaching 4.5 there are many areas to focus on to improve, so I will focus on the following: footwork, stances, anticipation, reaction, consistency, control, placement, and power.

Footwork- Generally, the better the player the better the footwork. Many 3.5's will split step for their volleys, but not at the baseline. Better players are always on their toes. Try split stepping anytime your opponent hits the ball.

Stance-Work on diversifying your stances. Many 3.5 players still hit with a mainly closed, or semi-closed stance. I highly recommend hitting open stance. Generally, more advanced players (like a 4.5 or higher) hit more balls with an open stance. You need a variety of footwork and stances, but the open stance disguises your shots more, gives you more topspin, and makes your recovery more efficient.

Anticipation — Beginners tend to start moving for the ball once it is already on their side. Intermediates usually start moving when the ball has already been hit by the opponent and is close to clearing the net. However advanced players tend to watch the ball come off their opponent's racquet, so they are able to start reading where the ball might go, and anticipate where they need to move. That is why when you watch advanced players it can look more effortless. A 4.5 will look at their opponent and recognize when they are in trouble and move in to look for a short ball. A 4.5 will recognize when their opponent is going to drop shot them. A 4.5 will see their opponent is going to hit a topspin or slice backhand.

Reaction — A 4.5 has better hands and quicker reaction times. A 3.5 should work on volley volley drills back and forth working on consistency first and then speed. A 3.5 might be able to volley back and forth at the net with a friend 30 times in a row. A 4.5 can do it 100 times and the speed will increase. Also a 3.5 tends to watch their shots, but a 4.5 hits and recovers immediately. A 3.5 gets surprised by their great shots, but a 4.5 expects them. A 3.5 remembers their good shots after a match, a 4.5 dwells on their bad ones.

Consistency — Generally, a 4.5 is more consistent than a 3.5. One of my favorite drills is the 100 Ball Club. Try rallying with a friend or a pro and your goal is to get 100 balls consecutively baseline to baseline. Work on getting a higher first serve percentage. 3.5's still make more mistakes than winners. A 4.5 generally doesn't beat themselves. They make their opponent work for each and every point.

Control — A 3.5 needs to develop many speeds. Every ball can not be hit at the exact same pace. You need to have your consistent rally ball and your put away shot. Work on being able to hit at 25, 50, 75, and 100 percent power levels. You want to be able to hit angles, drop shots, lobs, as well as flat, topspin, and slice.

Placement — Work on hitting targets. Instead of focusing on a general area like hitting your forehand cross court, put targets out and aim for the target. Make the target smaller and smaller. At Bird Key we have a circle target where players can focus on hitting through the circle. This develops excellent placement and control. Always practice and hit with a purpose. Often I find players are thinking about just getting it in. A 4.5 really knows how to develop a point, and place the ball. They always have a plan.

Power — Not only does a 4.5 usually hit harder, but they know when to hit harder. Sometimes you'll have a 3.5 that can hit hard, but they are not consistent. A 4.5 attacks all short balls, and generally puts the ball away everytime they get a short, weak, or soft ball. If a 4.5 gets an overhead the point is done. If in doubles the 4.5 gets a shot at the net the point is done. A 4.5 knows when to pull the trigger and be more aggressive. Oftentimes a 3.5 doesn't put the ball away when they get the chance, or it takes 2 or 3 times to finish the point. Focus on finishing the point and putting the ball away the first time you get the opportunity.

In conclusion, advancing from a 3.5 to a 4.5 brings to mind one of my favorite philosophies called marginal gains. Marginal gains is the process in which small incremental improvements add up to significant improvement when they are all added together. This is a perfect mentality and work ethic for a tennis player looking to improve. Hopefully my few suggestions today will help you reach your goals.

Jackie Bohannon is the Director of Tennis at the Bird Key Yacht Club.

Serve Jackie your best shot!



Long-time tennis pro and recently-named America's Top Coach Jackie Bohannon will answer any question on tennis. Please email question you have on strategy, technique, mental game, fitness, equipment, etc., to: tennis@lbknews.com

KeyCrossword



Lonely Street

- Across**
- 1. Poppy derivative
 - 7. Cheering syllable
 - 10. Folder identifiers
 - 14. One of three Quidditch players
 - 15. Flow's partner
 - 16. Fictional beekeeper
 - 17. Extreme satellite trajectories
 - 20. Kind of gin
 - 21. Brouhaha
 - 22. Curses
 - 23. Smut, of a sort
 - 26. Adam's donation
 - 28. OSS successor
 - 31. Sun Tzu's guide to strategy
 - 37. Lace enders
 - 39. Stand over
 - 40. Plagues
 - 41. Satum or Mercury
 - 42. Riyadh resident
 - 43. Pepsi's Mug
 - 46. Nicaraguan President Daniel
 - 48. "Listen Up!"
 - 50. German article
 - 51. What you need for a hand out?
 - 52. Cher, e.g.
 - 54. Accidental misspellings
 - 58. Wetland
 - 60. Aura, perhaps
 - 64. 1956 Elvis hit, and a hint to the puzzle's theme
 - 68. "Duke of ____"
 - 69. With 24 Down, Cooperstown Giant
 - 70. Masks
 - 71. Kong co-star
 - 72. Director Craven
 - 73. Prescribe valium for

- Down**
- 1. See 2 Down
 - 2. With 1 Down, "Draft Dodger Rag" singer
 - 3. Othello's bane
 - 4. Pyre product
 - 5. Where one might await the driver
 - 6. Big time
 - 7. No longer an empl.
 - 8. Despised
 - 9. TMC rival
 - 10. Big brass
 - 11. Landed
 - 12. ____ Israel
 - 13. Meeting of the H.R.
 - 18. If it's going, it's not fixed
 - 24. See 69 Across
 - 25. Stunned reactions
 - 27. "____ My Party..."
 - 28. Kind of terrier
 - 29. White house?
 - 30. Permit
 - 32. Cut short
 - 33. Campus greeks, informally
 - 34. Hyper
 - 35. Words from the wives?
 - 36. Concrete strengthener
 - 38. Neh. follower
 - 41. Antiseptic
 - 44. King Kong, e.g.
 - 45. Musical sense
 - 46. Furnace fuel
 - 47. They're usually right in front of U
 - 49. Mandlikova of tennis
 - 53. Not quite circular
 - 54. A barbarian's may be brawny
 - 55. Class designation
 - 56. Legal beginning
 - 57. Paris airport
 - 59. Sniggler's targets
 - 61. "____ Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood"
 - 62. Exemplar of redness
 - 63. Otherwise
 - 65. X5 manufacturer
 - 66. Metric weights
 - 67. Ivory or jade

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