

Longboat Key News

January 12, 2007

Serving St. Armands, Longboat Key, Anna Maria and Downtown Sarasota

FREE

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SOLD!

Britney coming to Art's Day?

It's been a tough year for **Britney Spears**. She lost husband **Kevin Federline** and most public acclaim during an annus horribilis that never seemed to stop. The star finished 2006 falling asleep in a Las Vegas nightclub. Britney clearly needs a rest.



Britney Spears

Though rumors swirl that her latest hotel "vacation" is really a stop in rehab, **Sold!** has learned that Britney remains fond of Sarasota, where her name was the most popular of new Sarasota

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Residents Voice Concerns on County Buying Albritton Land

Lia Martin
Associate Editor

A possible gift of land from Sarasota County has some residents on Longboat Key quaking in their flip-flops.

David Bullock, Sarasota County deputy administrator, came to Town for a special commission meeting to present his idea of offering the \$7.95 mil-

lion Albritton property to the Town under the umbrella of the Neighborhood Parkland Project on Dec. 20.

The Parkland project was offered to the Key because Town Manager Bruce St. Denis had approached the County last March to find some help in acquiring land for the Town.

Bullock said the Albritton property met the criteria per-

fectly.

He was joined that day by John McCarthy, who is the general manager for Sarasota County Park and Recreation, and who explained the situation with the land and its possible uses.

So it's not surprising that Beverly Shapiro, who sits on the PIC board and is a roving reporter for *The Voice* publication, and

Mayor, Page 4A

Manatee Yanks Water Contract

Revisions Stall Town's Drinking Water Agreement with County.

Lia Martin
Associate Editor

Water is surfacing again as a hot topic in Florida.

Years ago, when a real estate tycoon decided to build in the Everglades, his grand developing of the south toyed with the water tables in the northern half of Florida.

Residents and tourists alike see the seaside waters and rivers and lakes and think that Florida has many natural resources which will provide water for its residents no matter how many people flood this little peninsula we call home.

But, according to different regional water organizations, Florida stands at the precipice of another water shortage.

If nothing else, water could command higher prices down the road.

So it was a disappointment when Town Manager Bruce St. Denis brought his nearly-closed wholesale potable water contract to Town commissioners Monday night, only to have the contract yanked by Manatee County commissioners on Tuesday.

It wasn't a big deal.

Not the Town's fault. In fact, it was yanked because of adhering to a state of caution.

Town commissioners found a potential ambiguity in the document concerning the retail connection fee, which Town staff felt should be clarified.

The document must correctly stress that the Town of Longboat Key is a wholesale customer, and not a residential customer, according to St. Denis, to get the best deal. The new contract has nearly been driven to completion by St. Denis.

The Town has a current potable water and wastewater contract with Manatee County now providing 2.5 million gallons of water a day to Key residents. St. Denis has been working hard to sew up the 30-year contract, which would guarantee water to Longboat Key residents through 2031, instead of the original contract ending date of 2011.

St. Denis assured the Commission he would represent

Water, Page 4A

Study Wears Cloak of Impartiality



Consultant **Herb Marlowe**, department head **Monica Daigle**, and Commissioner **Bob Siekmann** tackle Longboat Key's "Community Input Study" with other committee members.

Lia Martin
Associate Editor

It's been 20 years since the Town of Longboat Key has engineered a vision for the future on paper. That's a long time when you measure success in a community by the yardstick of the modern day.

Town commissioners are learning that a survey can be a tricky way to assess what a community wants.

Half the year, more than half

of its residents return to their homes up north, or even as far away as Europe. So, surveying the residency of the Key can be hard at the best of times.

Town commissioners, prodded by planning board members last year, decided it was time to survey the Island. Begun last year, it ended with a poof rather than a bang when commissioners decided the survey questionnaire was too ponderous and too complex for residents to use.

Wanting to cull the gathered

data from that survey, a sub-committee was formed by two commissioners and two planning board members, who would be joined by Monica Daigle, the Town planning, building, zoning director and consultant Herb Marlowe.

A week ago, they decided to rechristen their surveying tool, and name it the "Community Input Study."

They will roll the 38-item questionnaire into a document

Study, Page 4A

Snowbirds Soon to Flock South

Jeff Berlinicke
Staff Writer

Last Saturday, the high temperature in Baltimore was 72. The high in Manhattan was 70.

On Longboat Key, the high temperature was 69. It's as if the snowbirds are heading the wrong way.

January is the time of year that folks in the winter climates pack up for their annual respite in Florida. The license plates are different, the golf courses are more crowded, and the roads are much more congested.

There hasn't been much of a

change so far this year, but the weather is keeping people back home for at least a few more weeks.

The weather is a factor in predicting how the **Snowbird** season will carry out, according to Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce Director **Gail Loefgren**.

"It's too early to tell how the season is going," Loefgren said. "We won't know anything



Loefgren

until the end of January or early February, but I do know that traffic is starting to pile up and people are starting to trickle in."

Loefgren said the weather is a factor. She monitors the weather up north every day hoping for a cold spell that might bring more visitors, but knows that the weather can't remain warm in the north forever.

"Warm weather is never a good thing for us," Loefgren said. "It's supposed to be cold up north this time of year. We expect it to be cold."

Hotel rooms are easy to

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