

Longboat Key News

October 20, 2006

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

FREE



Spectacular Getaway
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Army to Dredge Longboat Pass.

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Diner for Sale on St. Armands ...Page 2B

LBK's Band-aid for Business

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Managing Paradise

Behind the Scenes with Longboat's Property Managers

Karen O'Dowd
Contributing Writer

As you drive north or south on Gulf of Mexico Drive on Longboat Key, don't you often wonder about the myriad of serene, well-groomed buildings and pristine landscapes that you see far off beyond the golf courses, or nestled just beyond a gate with a guard? We see condos and high rises, all so perfectly groomed — window after window, balcony after balcony, palm tree after palm tree, exotic plantings all so neatly trimmed and lawns so perfectly manicured. We just take it for granted that "this is Longboat Key, and what do you expect in this tropical paradise we know and love?"

Behind all those windows live our friends, neighbors and visitors, but who orchestrates all this perfection, and watches over the landscape? And when do they do it, since it always looks so...finished and serene? Who schedules the lawn ser-

Managers, Page 8A

Longboat Looks to Go Underground

Jeff Berlinicke
Staff Writer

The project of beautifying Longboat Key by taking existing overhead utility lines and burying them underground took another step forward on Thursday when the Town Commission recommended to send the concept to Town Manager Bruce St. Dennis for further review.

In a workshop meeting in February, the Town Commission explored the con-

cept of burying the existing power lines underground, partly for aesthetic reasons, and partly because of constant power outages from storms. The county heard from representatives of Florida power and Light on technical issues, and financial issues were debated.

St. Denis said that the cost would be less than expected, although the tag might rise further on down the road.

Power, Page 4A

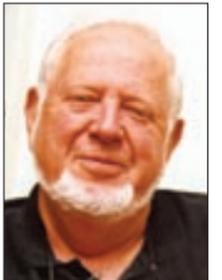
Spoll Talks Tourism

Spoll says there is still an untouched market the Key should exploit.

Jeff Berlinicke
Staff Writer

It's not that there isn't any commercial on Longboat Key. But what's wrong with encouraging more?

At Thursday's Longboat Key Town Commission workshop, Commissioner George Spoll indicated that he had been involved with conversations with community members as well as members of the Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce about establishing an economic development



Spoll

committee. He addressed the commissioners, telling them that Longboat Key needs to take some aggressive steps in promoting itself on a commercial level.

"There is a need for a forum for the community to come together," Spoll said. "We need people with different points of view to come together."

Spoll pointed out that Longboat Key caters to tourism and the restaurant business, but there is still an untouched market that the Key should be exploiting.

He said there was a limited role as to what the Commission could do by itself since it is a political body, but he said someone needs to promote tourism and the retention of restaurants and other facilities that make Longboat Key attractive to tourism money.

Dave Brenner of the Planning and Zoning Board said his board unanimously approves of such a group to promote economic development. He pointed out that Longboat Key has to battle competition from nature, such as red tide, hurricanes and seasonality.

"The commission should be proactive, not reactive," Brenner said. "We need to promote retail, tourism and promote development on the Key."

Spoll said the issue is in its initial phase, but he thinks the mechanism is in place to make it workable.

Commissioner Lee Rothenberg asked Spoll if it wasn't a conflict of interest for a commissioner to be involved in such a project, and Mayor Joan Webster gave her support with a deal of concern.

"I support the concept," Webster said. "But Town officials cannot be involved."

Spoll, Page 4A



The Vida Longboat

Michelle Arias, 6, performs a Venezuelan dance at the Fourth Latin American Art Exposition at the Longboat Key Center for the Arts on Oct. 14, sponsored by the Alianza Colombiana del Golfo (Gulf Colombian Alliance). The evening featured dances by the Texcalli and Jalisco dance groups, vocal performances by sopranos Marissa Helena Ortiz and Dora Ines Cardona and musical performances by pianist Roberto Curci and Voces Libres. The alliance presented its First Annual Award of Excellence to Colombian artist Maestro Luis Biava of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Cindy Lane

Longboat Staff Decries 'Weak' Tree Ordinance

Jeff Berlinicke
Staff Writer

Steve Schield, environmental planner for the Planning and Zoning Board, encouraged the Longboat Key Town Commission to review tree ordinances, which have been a subject of controversy regarding tree removal.

Schild's said the ordinances currently in place are insufficient and often ignored by residents who aren't even aware of them.

Schild's has been enforcing the tree protection ordinance in Longboat Key for 17 years. He said the ordinances were passed to protect trees native to the island and to ensure a future tree canopy. One of the most important natives of the island, he said, was the Sabal Palm, also

known as the Cabbage Palm. It is a tree that can survive drought, salt and wind conditions on the island.

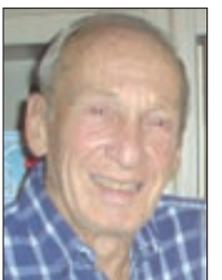
Trees planted by residents of the Emerald Harbour Association were not approved by Schield for aesthetic reasons. He offered several solutions to address the trees at the entrance to Emerald Harbor.

"We have one of the weakest tree ordinances anywhere and we need to do something," Schield said.

He suggested leaving the palms located along the edge of the street median islands and that there was ample room to plant the Black Olives in the middle of the wide median island.

The association balked at what it con-

Trees, Page 4A



Rothenberg