

# Opinion



## Final Thoughts on What Else? ..Water

### GreenReport

By Al Green

Recently the problem of our overly-salted wells has come front and center in the local media. It is an important problem but I think we have been to a great extent, chasing our tail. The issue was brought front and center when Michael Welly, Manager of the Longboat Key Club, gave an interview to a reporter that created the impression that in the very near future they would be turning on the spigot and seeing clean, salt-free water pouring out onto a bright, green tomorrow.

Whatever Mr. Welly did or did not say depending upon whose story you believe, the end result is going to be a big zero. I hate to be so negative, especially since I have been a critic of the Club in the past and it will probably come across as sour grapes. This is not the case. I really wish it were going to be that simple. The deep-down ultimate secret is that reverse osmosis in our specific area is just too complicated to put something together in the immediate future. I have listed some of the problems the project is facing in past reports and I will not repeat myself, except to say that for a whole list of reasons, we will not be seeing desalinization as the cure for the Club's dry pasture.

Based entirely upon my own research, I would now state unequivocally that the possibility of a reverse osmosis operation being approved for this site is not an option. Engineers never say never, but columnists do — so trust me on this one, "It aint gonna happen."

I have a suggestion for Mr. Welly and his principals in New York. Why not come to the Longboat Key Town Commission and make a deal? Offer to make a substantial contribution towards construction if the Town will build a reclaimed water system and guarantee the Club a sufficient supply of water at a reasonable negotiated price.

With this deal in hand, it is my belief that the commissioners would authorize a referendum and with the annual cost discounted because of the front money given by the Club and the contract for the assured supply, it would pass muster with the voters. I think that this is the best hope to remove the cloud of uncertainty that has been hanging over us. It will insure that Longboat Key remains a green paradise and it will help to restore the Longboat Key Club to its former glory. We have a \$6 billion investment in our homes, and if handled correctly we will double that in 10 years. This is not time to be dreaming of pie in the sky, but to be focused on a practical solution.



#### Save the Budget – Drink Coke

Every week, Commissioner Bob Dawson meets with his little coterie and like the Oracle at Delphi, he sends out little messages, which the Longboat Key News treats like a presidential news conference. This week he has thru his

regal pronouncements raised the normally pro forma budget approval process to a level worthy of the Congress of Vienna. He even has raised the specter of people fleeing Longboat Key like Oakies in The Grapes of Wrath, driven out by high taxes. He doesn't mention that if these economically-challenged victims move to Sarasota, they will see even higher taxes. He even used his own situation, admitting to an annual tax of \$12,000. He vowed that he and he alone will stand in front of the onrushing locomotive of his high-spending colleagues and reduce the tax burden on our benighted citizens by .18 mills, thereby lowering his personal burden from \$12,000 a year to \$11,900 and thereby saving civilization as we know it. Is it conceivable that if such a mind boggling change could be effected, we could reverse the tide? Would this cause Bob to change his mind and stay here?

What puzzles me is why Commissioner Dawson hasn't taken on what is truly a major attack on the taxpayers. If you buy a can of soda from one of these big soda machines, assuming the damn thing doesn't eat your dollar anyplace other than Town Hall, you will get very little if any change for your buck. Not here on Longboat Key. Here we only charge 35 cents. Without even as much as a hint of a discussion, the crafty Town Manager who is probably a secret soda imbiber, has set our machine to give up its treasures for a measly quarter and a dime when, if he had any consideration for the tax-paying public, he would be charging at least 80 cents. Think of what that change would do to Mr. Dawson's ability to make ends meet. I'm sure if his little band of brothers drank a coke with their bagel, this rip off of our treasury would not have gone unnoticed.

## All Hail the Republic of Longboat Key!

Richard L. Hershatter  
Contributing Columnist

*In early childhood we are taught  
The wish is father to the thought.  
The thought is father to the dream,  
But dreams beget intrigue;  
And when the dreamer wakes from sleep,  
His dream begets fatigue.*

(Hershatter, August, 2005)

Take notice of the verse, please, and try to devise its deeper meaning. If you are successful, please notify the author, who has no idea what the words signify, having penned them at 3:00 a.m. after waking tired from a deep, disturbing nightmare.

And it was all the fault of Al Green.

Readers of this column are aware that we have consistently deplored the fiscal exploitation of Longboat Key by the two counties sharing jurisdiction over it.

Secession has been suggested as an alliterative method of resolving the problem, either through act of the legislature in Tallahassee or by means of a petitioned amendment to the State Constitution.

Fellow columnist Green, a seasoned politician and former Town Commissioner, has pointed out — quite correctly — that our state representatives owe their successes to the counties from which they come, and introducing enabling legislation would result in their political demises, without 72 virgins awaiting their self-destruction.

On the theory that if nothing is ventured, nothing is gained (just a theory, neither Darwinian nor Intelligent Design), we suggested a Blue Ribbon Study Committee, funded by an allocation of \$50,000 for legal research.

The Town Commission adopted the concept as one of its goals, but has not yet either appointed members, or established a budget. Possibly there may be some concern as to where the \$50,000 is to be found, but if so, we would recommend that it be taken from the \$200,000 the Commission has authorized for legal research into beach sand.

In so doing, the Commission would preserve its consistent record of trying to solve a problem by throwing money at it.

In a recent column on "myths vs. reality," Mr. Green

quotes an anonymous source to the effect that "it would be easier to try to become a separate country." The idea had never occurred to this writer and is what gave rise to the nightmare and subsequent sleepless night.

We dreamt that Longboat's citizens, in a spirited turnout of 9% of the eligible voters, had decided to split from the United States and took a first step by electing both a U.S. Senator and a Representative from Longboat Key.

Improbable as that may sound, it happened in the dream, and both solons proceeded to introduce an amendment to the United States Constitution that made it a crime to desecrate the flag and established the Republic of Longboat Key as a sovereign country.

The President endorsed the idea, stating that it would help spread the concept of democracy in the countries bordering the Gulf of Mexico, but insisted that the amendment include clauses prohibiting weapons of mass destruction and stem cell research.

Unfortunately, Florida's other Senator campaigned against the idea, fearing that it would interfere with his plans to make Cuba a part of Dade County. The amendment failed.

Furious, the Mayor called the Commission into emergency session, with invitations to the media, and he then proceeded to publicly excoriate the Congress, the President, the Supreme Court, and Commissioner Dawson (the latter out of force of habit).

"There was a Republican President in the White House the last time political entities tried to split off from the union," he thundered, "and it resulted in a Civil War. This time it will be different."

In short order, the Commission voted to secede, designated the police force as the Army of Longboat Key and created a navy consisting of six jet skis.

There being no bald eagles on Longboat Key, the pelican was designated as the national bird. A flag was adopted, showing two loggerhead turtles against a background of red tide, with the legend across the bottom in white italic script, spelling out "Follow the Light."

Police cruisers were dispatched to both ends of the

new republic, with orders to force the raising of the drawbridges, at gunpoint if necessary, to deny any invasion forces easy access to Gulf of Mexico Drive, which was renamed "Freedom Boulevard."

Money was appropriated to repaint the fire engines and ambulances a desert camouflage tan, on the theory that Swiftmud would soon cut off our water, and all the vegetation would dry up and turn that color.

An LBI (Longboat Bureau of Investigation) and LIA (Longboat Intelligence Agency) were formed, and the only Commissioner with a Harvard education was appointed to head both.

The Mayor appointed an ad hoc committee, which within five minutes had composed a national anthem:

*"My country – t'is a Key; we snatched our liberty  
From County reach.*

*Our taxes we will save from cradle to the grave;  
Let freedom's banner wave over Longboat's beach."*

Before adjourning, the Commission designated the Mayor and Vice-Mayor as President-for-Life and Vice-President-in-Waiting and then dissolved itself.

It turned out to be a very short war. The last thing remembered before awakening was a vision of three aircrafts approaching the island.

The first was a World War II B-29, and through binoculars could be seen, imprinted on its nose, the words: "Enola Gay."

The bomber was followed by two propeller-driven Cessna's; the first trailing a banner which read: "Beware of wake turbulence," and the second with a banner bearing the legend: "Mission Accomplished."

*To sleep -- perchance to dream;*

*To dream, perhaps to scheme;*

*To wake, with a better tomorrow –*

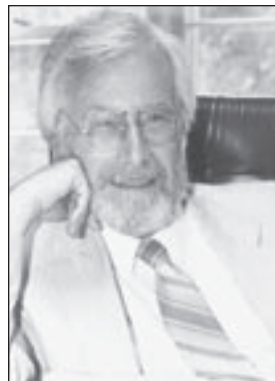
*That is the goal; that is the theme.*

*A man needs his rest*

*To work at his best,*

*It's best not to dream.*

(deep thoughts by Hershatter, 2005)



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