

Longboat Honors Military Personnel

Several Longboat Key businesses will mark the three-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks by designating the week of Sept. 11 as Heroes Week, honoring servicemen and women returning home from Iraq.

"War is ugly and this is some way we can say, 'Thanks, we appreciate you're effort; we're behind what you're doing. These guys and gals sacrificed a great deal, whether they're reservists or permanent military people,'" says Joe DiMario, president of the Condominium Owners Association of the Sand Cay Beach Resort.

So far, 19 families from Ft. Benning will be staying on the island. Each family has a member of the military that has just returned from Iraq.

Having donated 22 of its 60 units, Sand Cay is the biggest contributor to the event. Each two-bedroom unit houses families of four to six people and would normally rent for up to \$1,200 weekly. But the cost to the servicemen is a minimal \$65 for cleaning expenses.

"I remember the lashing out of people returning from Viet Nam. They went over there because they were asked to, and in turn we lashed out at them. That doesn't make any sense to me," says DiMario, who served in the Air Force in the late 1950s and early 1960s. "I hope they get a

feeling of relaxation and a sense of appreciation from the atmosphere at Sand Cay and Longboat Key. And I hope they get a feeling that what they've done is acknowledged and appreciated by the people."

We think this is an excellent way to honor our military," says Leann Sapuppo, executive assistant of the Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce. She's personally attached to seeing this project to its fullest fruition. "My boyfriend has spent 13 months on the Iraq/Kuwait border and will not return for another four months. I can tell you personally that projects like this really mean a lot not only to our soldiers but to their families."

Other area participants include the Longboat Bay Club, the Starfish Motel and the Seaside Garden Retreat.

Tom Brennan, owner of the Seaside Garden Retreat, initiated the idea of Heroes Week and worked with the LBK Chamber of Commerce to make it happen.

The chamber of commerce plans on placing 2,998 American flags on Gulf of Mexico Drive. Donations to the chamber's flag replacement fund may be made at the chamber office, 6854 Gulf of Mexico Drive. They are in need of 100 flags.

Erosion

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Currently, the dominant Islander Club issue is identifying who is financially and legally responsible for maintaining the 140-unit condominium, located at 2295 Gulf of Mexico Drive. Town Manager Bruce St. Denis and Brenner continue to write letters back and forth to one another, defending their views.

In a letter written to Brenner, dated Aug. 9, St. Denis said the two hadn't agreed on who was responsible for the costs during their recent phone conversation. He said that "some of the Town's considerations are that the Islander owns the property approximately 20' to the west of the existing seawall and the seawall is private property."

Town Attorney Dave Persson agrees with St. Denis. "The Town's comprehensive plan says the Town will maintain the public portion of the beach," says Persson. If it's private property such as the seawall, then it is the Islander Club's responsibility added Persson.

In a letter to St. Denis dated Aug. 18, Brenner says that believes the project is clearly the Town's responsibility. He also wrote "the public easement through our property to the west of the seawall effectively makes the property's use by the public an obligation of the public to maintain it. He also says, "When the first renourishment took place years ago, we were required by the government to remove the four mini groins to the west of our seawall. We had every reason to believe the Town was assuming obligation to maintain our beach since the Town was taking away our then existing principal means of doing so."

In the latest letter to Brenner, dated Aug. 24, St. Denis says that the decision as to who should pay for the work is up to the Town Commission.

The Problem

The Islander Club's beach erosion problem is nothing new. Historically it has always been an issue, but in recent months the erosion has dramatically worsened.

The beach area at the Islander Club is very vulnerable, it juts out like a small and vulnerable dimple into the Gulf of Mexico. That jutting exposes it to massive erosion. The areas north and south of the Islander both have straight sections of shoreline, but the two don't align, according to Cliff Truitt, technical advisor to the Town Commission. Sand coming from the north reaches the Islander Club, but doesn't pass through. It drops off at the beach and moves offshore, according to Truitt.

Another contributing factor is that the water's wave energy focuses on that area of Longboat Key. "If the building, seawall and rocks weren't there, the shoreline would try to straighten itself out," says Truitt. In return, the sand would stay in the area longer, like most areas on Longboat Key.

As the waves keep interacting with the beach and seawall at the Islander Club, the damage continues. "As time goes on and more damage occurs, the rate of change increases. It's like a raveling effect," says Truitt. He says that the rate of sand loss in past months has been dramatic.

Temporary Fixes

There are different types of temporary fixes for the Islander Club's beach erosion problem. Some have been tried, while others have only been discussed.

Truck hauling is one of the options. However, a few problems come with the process. First, a truck can only haul in a finite amount of sand. "5,000 to 6,000 cubic

yards of sand is not enough sand to protect the area. It would have a short life span," says Truitt. Brenner and St. Denis have discussed the option and agreed it is expensive and not practical.

Another option is adding more rock to protect the seawall. The rock is designed to break the waves and protect the seawall, says Truitt. This idea has not been discarded, but there's the issue of financial responsibility.

The use of groins is yet another option. There has been a groin on the south end of the Islander's property line since 1996. It collapsed three years ago and was replaced.

Truitt says the groin is intended to increase the longevity of sand in the area. He says the groin has helped slow the sand loss. However, Islander Club Property Manager Russ Johansen doesn't think the groin works very well.

Brenner has asked that additional groins be placed on the property, but St. Denis says that the Beach Advisory Committee and the Town Commission has rejected the idea because the cost of adding groins versus bringing in sand are similar. He says additional sand will benefit everyone. St. Denis also says receiving a permit for the additional groins may be a difficult.

The Town is still waiting for permits that will allow them to add sandbags between the existing groin and the rock revetment to prevent any future tearing of the groin, according to St. Denis.

The use of concrete and t-head groins have been suggested in the past, but a majority of the Islander Club residents didn't like the idea, says Truitt. He also says these groins are very expensive and create permitting problems.

A More Permanent Fix

Beach renourishment is one way to restore beach erosion. The first renourishment of Longboat Key's beaches occurred the years of 1992 and 1993, according to Truitt. A mid-key renourishment project was done in 1996, which included hot spots such as the Islander Club property. Federal Emergency Management Association paid for a limited renourishment project that took place in 2000, also including the Islander Club's beach.

The next beach renourishment project is planned for May 2005. It was previously planned for 2003, but was delayed because the Town hadn't received its permits from the state. The permit was finally issued in July, but it was too late to start the work because it wouldn't the project would not have been completed in time for season, according to Truitt.

The Cost

The estimated cost of the 2005 beach renourishment is \$18 million to \$20 million. The primary source of revenue will come from the bond created by the voter's in 2002, according to Longboat Key Town Attorney Dave Persson. Florida's Department of Environmental Protection agency will kick in 21% of the cost, which comes from its erosion trust fund, according to Truitt.

Once Longboat Key's beaches are renourished, the project shouldn't have to be repeated again for eight to 10 years according to Truitt. But, the time frame is different for the Islander Club, where the erosion rate is three to five time higher, says Truitt. "They could need more in four to five years."

No matter what kind of action is taken and who pays for it, the ultimate reality is as Steve Mitchell puts it "mother nature will always prevail."

D.M. Strives to be 'Intentionally Better'



Intentionally Better. That is the philosophy that intertwines with everything Longboat Key resident and businessman D.M. Williams does. From business to pleasure, Williams strongly believes in taking something and making it better. Unsurprisingly, the philosophy pays off.

Longboat Key's Casa del Mar condominiums, managed by Williams, debuted as the cover story in the July issue of the Florida Community Association Journal. The article profiled Williams and Casa Del Mar.

Williams is described as a people lover, who pays great attention to detail. This becomes apparent in his work. He takes pride in the landscaping at Casa Del Mar, which has become one of his specialties. Originally from Texas, Williams came to Longboat Key, without much knowledge of fathering plants. Casa Del Mar's landscape includes 60 varieties of hibiscus, 30 flowering trees, and 600 different types of low-water requiring plants that have won him beautification awards for five consecutive years.

Williams' green thumb doesn't stop there. Williams was recently recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records for growing the world's tallest cotton plant. The *Gossypium hirsutum* measures 25 feet, 5 inches and continues to grow.

Vote, From Page 1

with a margin of only 53% to 47%. Harris' margin, while comfortable, dropped from that which she enjoyed when running for Secretary of State in 1998. She then carried Manatee County with 63% of the vote and Sarasota with 60% while Longboat Key supported her candidacy with 59% to Gievers' 41%.

Harris will have to see quite an increase in her vote to equal the record of Dan Miller. Miller was routinely elected with margins of 64% to 36%. Longboat Key mirrored these margins with Miller gaining 64% or 65% of the vote in 1996, 1998 and 2000.

The most recent Senate race again found Longboat Key, Manatee and Sarasota counties voting Republican in heavier numbers than the State of Florida with 51% to 48%.

Longboat Key gave McCollum 2,008 votes or 54% to Senator Nelson's 1,644 or 46%. McCollum carried Manatee 50% to 46% and Sarasota had McCollum winning 51% to 45%. This race can be instructive. With both candidates new to the race, the 54% that voted for him can be used to calculate the Republican base. If this is accurate, any Republican receiving less than 52% to 54% percent of the vote on Longboat, or 50% in Manatee and Sarasota counties is losing support among the hardcore Republican voters.

Senator Bob Graham and State Rep. Shirley Brown are the two Democrats to actually carry Longboat Key and the counties. Graham won Florida with 63% of the vote in 1998, pretty much in line with his wins in 1986 and 1992. Surprisingly he also carried Sarasota and Manatee counties 56% to 43%, and Longboat Key 55% to 45%. State Rep. Shirley Brown joins Graham as a Democrat who could win in Republican territory. Brown carried Longboat Key 51% to 49% in 1998 and upped her margin to 57% to 43% in 1998.

The Democrats have lost a proven winner and might lose the Florida Senate seat as Graham announced earlier this year he will not seek another term.

Given election results in the last four elections the Republican edge in voter registration should come as no surprise. Republicans hold an edge in Sarasota of 71,587 to 40,662, or 31% to 18%. Manatee County Republicans show a registration of 82,472 or 45%, the Democrats 61,302 or 33% with 22% showing no party affiliation.