

The Observer **LONGBOAT** Observer



AT THE NET GRAND SLAM

All-Star Children's Foundation scores with fourth annual fundraiser. **1C.**



BLACK TIE: TOGA! TOGA!

In this issue
It's 'veni, vidi, vici' for Wellness' Flight of Hope. **PAGE 1B**



KEY LIFE + 1D They have all the luck

Longboat Key gets streaked with green for the Irish holiday.

You. Your neighbors. Your neighborhood.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2008

OUR TOWN

PEOPLE,
PICS & PLACES

+ Hot-off-the-press coffee break

Season has flown by, and in honor of its last few weeks, *The Longboat Observer* will once again offer hot coffee and fresh muffins with a hot-off-the-press newspaper from 9 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 26. Stop by the office at 5570 Gulf of Mexico Drive for breakfast and conversation with our staff and other residents. And don't forget to take a peek at our newly freshened office. The red stripe across our walls is covered with all of your "It's Read Everywhere" photos from years past.



+ Mimi's challenge

Each week we will be running the total amount donated to Mimi's Challenge, which is a \$25,000 challenge grant from Longboat Key resident **Mimi Edlin** to the Longboat Key Center for the Arts. Deadline for donations is May 31. Send your contributions to: Longboat Key Center for the Arts, c/o Mimi's Challenge, 6860 Longboat Drive S., Longboat Key, Fla. 34228.



THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS:

- Irwin and Mina Leibowitz
 - Rita G. Wolfson
 - Phoebe Jo Shaw
 - Kip and Elizabeth Cohen
- TOTAL TO GO:** \$20,605

See **OUR TOWN** page 2A

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election results by Kurt Schultheis | City Editor

Siekmann sails Amendments pass

Bob Siekmann and all three charter amendments win in landslides.



Jessica Luck

Commissioner **Bob Siekmann** and charter amendment proponent **David Brenner** celebrate after finding out they were both winners Tuesday night.

Siekmann won 72.6% of the vote against Gene Jaleski.

Newly elected Longboat Key District 5 Commissioner Robert Siekmann celebrated Tuesday night his second-term and 1,185-vote victory over first-time candidate Gene Jaleski by sharing a victory party.

In sharp contrast to his 2006 election, when he held his own victory party at The Market and squeaked out a slim 201-vote win over Miles Leavitt, Siekmann opted to share his landslide of 72.6% of the vote with what he perceives as a bigger win for Longboat Key: the approval of two charter amend-

ment questions that he hopes will spur Key modernization and boost island tourism.

"I was nervous this time because I wanted it that much more," Siekmann said. "I want to be on this commission to get an opportunity to shape Longboat's future."

In Manatee County, Siekmann received 62.7% of the vote, or 591 votes, compared to Jaleski's 37.3%, or 351 votes. In Sarasota County, the commissioner received 78.1% of the vote, or 1,312 votes, compared to Jaleski's 21.9%, or 367 votes.

"It's not about how many votes, though," Siekmann said.

See **SIKMANN** page 4A

All three amendments won more than 80% of the vote.

Longboat Key voters overwhelmingly approved two charter amendments Tuesday, putting an exclamation mark of approval on two measures that are expected to help spur redevelopment and increase tourism.

When Longboat Key, Lido Key, St. Armands Key Chamber of Commerce President Gail Loeffgren read the results to a crowd of about 50 people Tuesday night at the chamber headquarters, she was overwhelmed that charter amendments one and two received 89.6% and

ELECTION TOTALS

✓ Denotes winner

	Total	%
✓ Siekmann	1,903	72.6
Jaleski	718	27.4

SARASOTA

✓ Siekmann	1,312	78.1
Jaleski	367	21.9

MANATEE

✓ Siekmann	591	62.7
Jaleski	351	37.3

AMENDMENT 1

(redevelops existing properties at current levels)

✓ Yes	2,419	89.6
No	280	10.4

SARASOTA

✓ Yes	1,569	90.2
No	170	9.8

MANATEE

✓ Yes	850	88.5
No	110	11.5

AMENDMENT 2

(permits and allocates a 250 tourism unit pool)

✓ Yes	2,193	81.3
No	503	18.7

SARASOTA

✓ Yes	1,411	81.1
No	329	18.9

MANATEE

✓ Yes	782	85.4
No	134	14.6

AMENDMENT 3

(housekeeping amendment that keeps the town's elections in compliance with state law)

✓ Yes	2,479	93.0
No	187	7.0

SARASOTA

✓ Yes	1,607	93.7
No	109	6.3

MANATEE

✓ Yes	872	91.8
No	78	8.2

81.3% of the vote, respectively. The first two amendments allow existing grandfathered tourism and condominium units to be converted to legal units at their current density and create a pool of 250 tourism units that could be added to the Key's existing hotel and resort rooms. The 250 units was said to be the difference between the number of units on the Key in 2000 — the year the Holiday Inn shut

See **CHARTER** page 5A

Vol. 29, No. 34

The Observer

You. Your Neighbors. Your Neighborhood.



The Longboat Observer was founded in July 1978 by Ralph and Claire Hunter and daughter Janet in a one-room office with two typewriters. Since then, and through today, The Longboat Observer has served as the leading source of community and neighborhood

news and information for Longboat Key, St. Armands Key, Lido Key, Lido Shores and Bird Key.

In March 1995, the Hunters sold The Longboat Observer to the families of David and Ruth Beliles and Matt and Lisa Walsh. And they have kept up and built on the tradition of providing the most comprehensive coverage of news, people and events on Longboat and surrounding keys. Throughout the year, The Longboat Observer averages 18,000 net circulation, the highest penetration on Longboat Key of any print medium in the market.

HISTORY OF THE LONGBOAT: Since The Longboat Observer's founding, the newspaper has used a rendering of a "longboat" as one of its identifying symbols. According to historical accounts, when Juan Anasco, scout for Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto, anchored off the coast of Longboat Key in 1538, Anasco and his crew used "longboats" to get through the pass from the Gulf of Mexico to Sarasota Bay.

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If you wish to suspend or discontinue home delivery, call our 24-hour customer service line: 383-5509, ext. 18.

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SIKEMANN from page 1A

"I'm just glad to be sticking around to do the work that needs to be done."

Meanwhile, Jaleski opted to hear the news from interim Town Clerk Trish Granger from his Village home, where he retreated after spending the day shaking hands with the voters.

Upon hearing the results, Jaleski said he was pleased to receive his 718 total votes.

"I wish Bob Siekmann well," Jaleski said. "I enjoyed running immensely and will be back next year."

Jaleski said he plans to get more involved in town affairs and will attempt to attain a seat on the Longboat Key Planning and Zoning Board.

"I plan to continue my work with island cell-phone reception and bring fresh beach-renourishment ideas to the table," Jaleski said.

Siekmann and Jaleski differed over both topics during the course of their campaigns.

The race and charter-amendment questions apparently spurred voter turnout, albeit smaller than in the two previous years.

Two weeks of early voting resulted in a 24% voter turnout. And with 2,621 total votes cast Key-wide, that totaled 41.2% of the town's 6,364 registered voters casting a ballot.

During the last commission race in 2006, 44.2% of the voters cast ballots for Siekmann's first race against Leavitt. And in 2005, 47% of the town's registered voters went to the polls for the race between Vice Mayor George Spoll and Bob Sewell.

A crowd of about 50 people gathered around Siekmann to celebrate as he shook hands with commissioners and



Jessica Luck

George Symanski and Walter Hackett, holding signs supporting District 5 Commission candidate **Bob Siekmann**, stand outside of Town Hall on Election Day with District 5 candidate **Gene Jaleski**.

received a hug and a kiss from his wife, Mimi.

"I am happy that Bob received another term and wish him well in my seat," said Mayor and current District 5 Commissioner Jeremy Whatmough, who has reached his term limit this month.

Vice Mayor George Spoll also congratulated Siekmann.

"He was as calm, cool and collected as he was during the last election," Spoll said. "He has earned a second term, and the voters agree."

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