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Holiday decorating ideas are just part of the package when the Junior League of Sarasota stages its 30th Holiday Tour of Homes starting next Friday and continuing through Dec. 3.

Tour tickets will include visits to two models by **Todd Johnston** Homes overlooking the new private **Robert Trent Jones Jr.**-designed golf course at The Founders Club.

On Lido Key, tour-goers will see the 1997 Mediterranean-style home of **Lisa** and **Bob Morris**, 361 S. Boulevard of the Presidents, with its 8,500 square feet. Burstein expects it to be a favorite because of its children's decorations.

On Longboat Key, the league is featuring the home of **Asher** and **Cynthia Bernstein**, 529 Putter Lane, Country Club Shores. It's a brand-new, British island-style house, designed by **Brian Phipps** and built by Murray Homes.

Grammy Winner Performs

The Longboat Island Chapel will present opera star and three-time Grammy winning tenor, **Stuart Neill**, on Dec. 13 and 14. Enjoy an evening of Holiday Music in the Chapel. A donation at the door of \$10 or more per person is suggested. Bring your family and friends. No reserve seating. Call 383-6491 for information.

Next Stop: Tallahassee

Longboat Key Town Commissioner **Jeremy Whatmough** will travel to Tallahassee to present his proposal to solve the controversial sand issue at the Gulfside Drive beach access area. Town representatives including Town Manager **Bruce St. Denis** will accompany Whatmough to the state capitol.

The Commission discussed the plan at the Nov. 16 Town Commission workshop, and a review of the beach suggested a flattening of the mixed, dark sand that has been annoying year-round residents, as well as winter residents who returned to the Key hoping for the white sand they had been used to seeing.

Public Works Director **Juan Florenza** said the movement of the sand, which appears to be following a southern stream, should be expected from the daily movement of the beach as well as recent stormy weather.

St. Denis has constantly said that the movement of the sand is natural and that the beach has lost about a foot of depth over a 40-to-50 foot area.

Former Key Officer Returns Home

John Kintz, who served on the Longboat Key Police Department for 22 years, recently joined TSI Security of Sarasota as a Healthcare and Safety Consultant.

TSI offers technology solutions from simplistic burglary and fire detection systems to elaborate surveillance systems and biometric access control.

Restoration Work at Sister Keys

Town Manager **Bruce St. Denis** said the Town received an update from St. Joe's regarding the restoration work at Sister Keys. CZR is St. Joe's environmental consultant for the project.

St. Denis added that he hoped to have the fieldwork completed by the end of the week or early next week. Meanwhile, CZR is concurrently beginning work on the following:

"Our surveyor is still working on the survey again this week. They did start the survey work last week but had some difficulty accessing the island due to unsafe sea conditions. They told us that it is going to take them a bit longer than they expected to complete the survey work due to thick ground cover conditions,"

CUTR Study May Be Approved

Lia Martin
Associate Editor

The final approval for a transfer of \$35,000 from the contingency fund to the Fund Center for Urban Traffic Research Study, also known as CUTR, from the Town of Longboat Key commissioners is anticipated at their meeting on Monday night.

The traffic study cost includes a gift from both Sarasota and Manatee counties, who each made a contribution of \$7,500 for the study. Sarasota County has already made its contribution. Manatee County will wait to make its contribution when the study has been completed.

An updated study is thought to be necessary because the last traffic study

was conducted off-season. This time, it is thought by the commission that the updated study will better reflect how many people come on and off the Key, as well as the residential use and its apparent congestion.

The Commissioner's Contingency Fund original budget was \$710,297. Since, commissioners have funneled \$100,000 from it to help with red tide cleanup costs bringing the contingency fund total to \$610,297.

The Center for Urban Transportation Research was established in 1988 at the University of South Florida and has become recognized nationally and has served as an important resource for policymakers, transportation professionals,

the education system and the public.

CUTR says they conduct \$7 million in research annually for a variety of public and private sector sponsors in Florida and the United States, including the Florida Legislature, the Florida Transportation Commission, and state and local governments, agencies, and organizations. Areas of research include public transportation, transportation planning, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), transportation demand management (TDM), transportation economics and finance, geographic information systems, access management, alternative fuels, and transportation safety, among others.

Downtown Sarasota Garage Plan Hits Snag

A complaint filed by one of five respondents to a call for proposals on the proposed parking garage at North Palm Avenue, hit another roadblock.

As a result, there will be a re-analysis of all five proposals by the City's consultant. According to reports, the information will move on to a committee to determine the next step.

The respondent complained that the capitalization rate used to judge his proposal was the same as used for other proposals. His proposal called for using city bonds instead of private funding.

The consultants agreed to use the same

capitalization rate for all proposals and also agreed to recalculate the projected parking revenue in order to recalculate the present value.

The proposal, by Sarasota resident Rocco Santomenno, proposed building 1,630 parking spaces with 90 apartments on top to be owned by the county's Community Housing Trust.

A proposal by the John Buck Company and the Leiter Group received the most votes from the commission, closely followed by a tie among Florida Main Street, Benderson Development and the team of Roskamp and Patterson.

Santomenno's proposal was the only one eliminated.

No date is set for the committee to study the new information, but the proposals will be made to the city's Community Redevelopment Authority as well as its City Redevelopment Advisory Board.

After CRAB meets on Jan. 26, final negotiations and a contract between the city and developer can get underway.

The city is offering the 2.8-acre site on North Palm Avenue in return for a 400-space parking garage while developers have the option of going as high as 11 floors.

Mack B Showcases Four Exhibits Saturday

Mack B Gallery in Sarasota presents four art exhibitions, from Dec. 2 through 29, with an opening reception on Saturday from 6 to 10 p.m. The four opening exhibitions will occur simultaneously, and they will be distinguished by separate gallery spaces.

Gallery 1: In the exhibition "Chicken Scratch," Tim Jaeger will exhibit his most recent paintings. Jaeger's expressive depictions of both the figure and animal, namely the chicken, attempt to provoke both universal and intuitive recognition through the application of multiple color fields.

Gallery 2: In the exhibition "The Mechanics of Heaven," Tobey Albright will exhibit recent collaborations in paintings, sculpture and video. Albright



has collaborated with local artists, such as Chris Gray and Tim Jaeger, as well as members of his family, friends and strangers to create a dialogue between our heavenly ideals and their material realities.

Gallery 3: In the exhibition "Beyond the Waterline," Thomas Stephens will exhibit work from the Horizon Series, which was



begun in 1995. For the past ten years, Thomas Stephens has spent over 200 days each year roaming the local bay and gulf waters as a full-time fishing guide in Sarasota. In his early paintings,

Stephens simply celebrates the beauty, color and size of the sea. In his recent work, the sea is confronted by the overpopulation of man-made objects that reflect a heightened sensitivity to our local waters.

Gallery 4: In the exhibition "Dog Days," Ricky Bernstein will exhibit one large wall-mounted glass relief. Bernstein combines the satiric sensibility of Pop with the examination of common human activities found in historic genre painting. He creates scenes of today's technologically enhanced world in which people are troubled by the time and labor-saving appliances meant to assist them.

There will be an Artist Talk with the artists on Dec. 6 from 5 to 6 p.m. Call 363-9025 for information.

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bad situation, she said.

She also talks about how "management" — meaning O'Connor — was never there, there was no clear direction. In fact, Wood has said that O'Connor seemed to not ever be in the office, and that O'Connor never had time for her.

After she was given forced administrative leave and then terminated on Aug. 8, Wood said the Town offered her the opportunity to resign first. Then, they offered her three months salary as severance.

The last offer the Town made to her, Wood said, was three months severance

and benefits for those three months if she would resign and leave.

Wood refused each offer, and optioned her right to appeal her termination.

"It's not about the money," Wood says, "though it's been very hard." She said she has to pay for her own attorney fees out of pocket, while she says O'Connor's attorney fees are being paid by the Town.

Early on, Wood says she received a phone call from former Town of Longboat Police Chief John Kintz, who told her that "they were trying to fire her" over her DUI charge.

Wood says that she did not put down her DUI on her application as cited, but she never knew that a meeting took place

between Kintz and St. Denis when Capt. (then Officer) brought them the police report until later.

"This was never an issue," Wood said. "I lived on Longboat Key. I worked on Longboat Key and I performed community service on Longboat Key at the fire station."

Wood says she had heard that Town staff morale has been down since her termination.

"There is a thought that if this could happen to me, an exemplary employee," Wood said, "it could happen to anybody."

In conclusion, she was not worried.

"I know the truth," Wood said. "And, the employees know the truth."

St. Denis wrote in an e-mail to *Longboat Key News*.

Once the survey is complete, CZR will then be able to complete the earthwork plan. Once the earthwork plan is complete, St. Denis wrote that he would schedule a meeting with Town staff and

CZR to review our progress. The meeting will likely take place prior to the Christmas holiday.

Jaleski Posting Opinions

Long-time Longboat Key resident **Gene Jaleski** has set up a community forum

where readers can see his views on issues involving the community.

He asks that Key residents respond to the site and share opinions. The Web site can be found at <http://longboat.wordpress.com>.