

# The Bradenton Times

NEWS

OBITUARIES

SUNDAY NEWSPAPER SIGNUP

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## This Week's Poll

Do you think Manatee County is moving in the right direction?

- Yes
- No

**vote**

## Obituaries

Obituary: Betty Cline Oxford

Obituary: English Seals Des Champs III

Obituary: Thelma Grace Giannico

Obituary: Arline Wilma Herrel

Obituary: Alyssa Margaret Trichter

## Paradise or Paradise Lost?



Dennis "Mitch" Maley ·

Sunday, Jul 11, 2021

In the song *Big Yellow Taxi*, Joni Mitchell sang that they paved paradise and put up a parking lot. When the iconic hit came out in 1970, the overdevelopment of our most pristine hamlets had become a major concern. Half a century later, Floridians are plenty used to macadam papering what used to be lush earth but should be more concerned

about our paradise being turned into a toilet.

Earlier this week, *TBT* publisher Joe McClash sent me a picture of a dead manatee that staff from Mote had been pulling from the water at the Palma Sola boat ramp while he was getting his boat out of the water ahead of the impending storm. It was a jarring image, one he said he wouldn't soon forget.

### BBC News - World

#### Afghanistan: Taliban offers ceasefire for return o...

The Afghan government says the offer of a three-month truce for 7,000 prisoners is a "big demand".

#### Cuba protests: Tax on food and medicine imports li...

In response to rare protests, Cuba will temporarily allow travellers to bring in some goods tax-free.

#### Britney Spears wants to press charges against fath...

The pop star tells a US court "I'm angry", as a judge rules she can now hire her own lawyer.

#### Germany floods: Collapsed buildings and submerged ...

Heavy rain has caused flooding in western Germany, leading to collapsed buildings and submerged cars.

#### Angela Merkel and four US presidents

The German chancellor, who first took office in the Bush era, makes a farewell visit to Washington DC.

#### Debbie Harry on Blondies monumental Cuba trip and ...

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The same day, Dustin Pack, a charter fishing boat captain, took pictures of a dead dolphin near Weedon Island. The water surrounding the dolphin's corpse was inundated with dead fish and other lifeless sea creatures. McClash also said that he'd spoken with a [Sarasota Bay Estuary Program](#) official who told him that there were 20 miles of dead sea life ranging from small fish to goliath grouper in the area.



Weedon Island is directly across Tampa Bay from Piney Point, so it doesn't take much speculation to surmise that the unpredictable

consequences of the recent forced discharge of nitrogen-rich water from the former phosphate processing site are now becoming more clear. The only thing left to *predict* would seem to be how much worse matters are likely to get.

And Piney Point's most recent contribution to our water challenges is only one piece of a frightening puzzle. The past decade has brought a rapid increase in blue-green algae and has led to the discovery of cyanobacteria toxins in hundreds of bodies of water across the U.S., most notably, right here in the sunshine state. The effects of global warming are noted to have had a significant impact, as the algal bloom season is already beginning earlier and lasting longer because of warmer water temperatures. As the Earth continues to warm, the season will only grow longer and see more intense peaks.

The increase in rainfall intensity we've seen also increases the amount of agricultural runoff, pushing phosphorus and nitrogen from fertilizers and animal waste into the water bodies where they can supercharge the blooms. Blooms can produce both neurotoxins and hepatotoxins, which can cause symptoms ranging from headaches and sore throats to tumors and cancer.

In 2019, thick "algae mats" clogged waterways all throughout the area, and they're back this summer, if not quite as intense as two years ago. Blue-green algae absorb energy from the sun and can grow very fast in warm water, making Florida a perfect petri dish for the microorganisms called cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria blooms can steal the oxygen and nutrients other organisms need to live and, as a result, you wind up with lots of dead fish floating around your paradise.

At the same time, Manatee County is enjoying something of a moment, with more and more people discovering it throughout the country. Only recently, it seems, I needed to explain Anna Maria Island to people up north as *the one a little north of Siesta Key*. Today, such geographic references are no longer necessary, and the desire for proximity to the new crown jewel of the gulf coast is driving demand for housing all over the county. It might be counterintuitive to put the brakes on anything during an epic economic run, but it's also not hard to see where we're enjoying our current fortune at tomorrow's expense.

As we continue to make room for tomorrow's residents, we do so knowing that more concrete where permeable land once sat will only exacerbate the problems, and that's before you consider all of the corners that will be cut and exceptions that will be given for the sake of padding the bottom line. And none of that even begins to consider all of the other gypsum stacks looming throughout the state, or the Lake Okeechobee problem. In short, if we don't get serious about protecting our golden goose, we might find that the parking lots are the only thing suited for surviving what comes next.

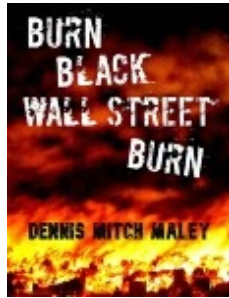
At the center of all of this is a lack of political will, or, more succinctly, modern Republican politics. Both Manatee County and Florida as a whole have only grown more and more red in recent years and, as a result, the fate of our state seems intrinsically linked to the RPOF's convictions. I might remind readers, that the current dynamic of environmental concerns being a lefty issue is relatively new. So much so that it's actually hard to argue against Teddy Roosevelt and Richard Nixon having had the two best environmental records of all American presidents, both of whom were Republicans.

Ronald Reagan was a party outsider who managed to leverage the inner party's post-Watergate woes in securing an otherwise unlikely nomination and was then assisted by Teddy Kennedy's fall from grace. Once elected president, the Gipper brought a new brand of laissez-faire to government regulation, arguing that the markets could, would, and should solve all problems. It's been well documented that trickle-down economics was an abject failure, but when the history is ultimately written, it may well pale in comparison to the havoc wrought by environmental libertarianism, or whatever you'd like to call the practice of essentially allowing anyone to do anything with very little consequence.

And before Democrats dislocate their shoulders patting themselves on the back, it should be noted that positioning yourself just to the left of *anything goes*, isn't going to forestall the environmental apocalypse that we're currently headed toward. Dems have become great at pointing to the abject depravity of their rivals on this issue, but whenever they get their hands on some power, they tend to offer little more than token gestures. Case in point, there's no one who's seriously predicting that either Teddy or Tricky Dick's legacies are in jeopardy of being rivaled by Uncle Joe. At the end of the day, the Democratic Party is just as aligned with corporate power as the

Republicans and just as eager to protect the bottom lines of the industries that line their pockets.

That means it's up to the people, an increasingly difficult proposition when more and more of the wealth—which is to say access to power—is continuously appropriated by the same small class of individuals who are too busy profiting off the status quo to ever contemplate changing it. Eventually, the people will have had enough and will become willing to mount the sort of difficult fight that can be won by superior numbers, inferior resources notwithstanding. Whether that happens before or after we've reached the tipping point will be the only question, and, by the time we get the answer, it will already be too late.



*Dennis "Mitch" Maley is an editor and columnist for The Bradenton Times and the host of our [weekly podcast](#). He is also the host of [Punk Rock Politix](#) on YouTube. With over two decades of experience as a journalist, he has covered Manatee County government since 2010. He is a graduate of Shippensburg University and later served as a Captain in the U.S. Army. [Click here](#) for his bio. His latest book, *Burn Black Wall Street Burn*, is available [here](#).*

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10 Comments

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**Paul Finer**

Simon and Gaffunkel THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE:  
"The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls" and also in The Bradenton Times. The Joni Mitchell song about paving Paradise and putting up a parking lot is also spot on. Let's not forget The Pretenders Chrissy Hyne singing in BACK TO OHIO that the fields were paved over "by a Government that has no pride." Great article, Dennis!

Like · Reply · 3 · 4d

**Lara Zoya**

I get paid over \$190 per hour working from home with 2 kids at home. I never thought I'd be able to do it but my best friend earns over 15k a month doing this and she convinced me to try. The potential with this is endless .Heres what i have been doing...Open this====>  
<https://longprofites.surge.sh>

Like · Reply · 4d · Edited

**George Rahal**

The only way to get good government is to vote for good government.

Like · Reply · 5 · 4d

**Lynn Aragon**

The photos say so much. It doesn't seem to be the same dead manatee that was found at Robinson that I was told about by Mote . My manatee had just given birth to twin infants which were lost and eventually found. I asked how they knew so much about the dead mother and was told she had been watched for 10 years or more because she had been hit by boat propellers so much. The dumping of fertilizers or run off is killing the grasses that manatee eat as well. They are less manatees in the Palma Sola canals this year, as evidenced by many of us who live on them, and yet we

continue to fertilize the... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 5 · 4d



**Laureen Geraghty Smith**

A dead baby manatee was found floating in the Braden River this week but other than photos, Fish and Game had no interest in it and told neighbors just to push it back into the main river.

Like · Reply · 1 · 4d



**Beth Weir**

An yet today and tomorrow we vote these developer money infused officials to govern. Yes, our beloved Gulf is a vast sewer. Pathetic

Like · Reply · 7 · 4d



**Charmaine Engelsman-Robins**

Don't include me in that "we;" this voter most definitely does not!

Like · Reply · 18h



**New Pearce**

When humans disregard mother nature thru it's bad behavior of abusing its resources then the only outcome is for mother nature to disregard humans and their surroundings. We brought this on ourselves

Like · Reply · 2 · 4d



**Charmaine Engelsman-Robins**

Again: Don't "WE" me; many of us who have been here 50 years or more have CONSISTENTLY attended the meetings, written letters to editors, picketed commission meetings, etc. .... unheeded.... all those years.

Like · Reply · 18h

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