



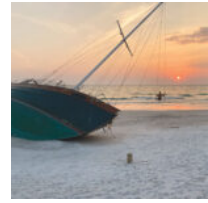
Former MLB player Jim



Heritage Day brings in



BBPD
officers honored with



Crashed sailboat



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Red tide? What red tide?

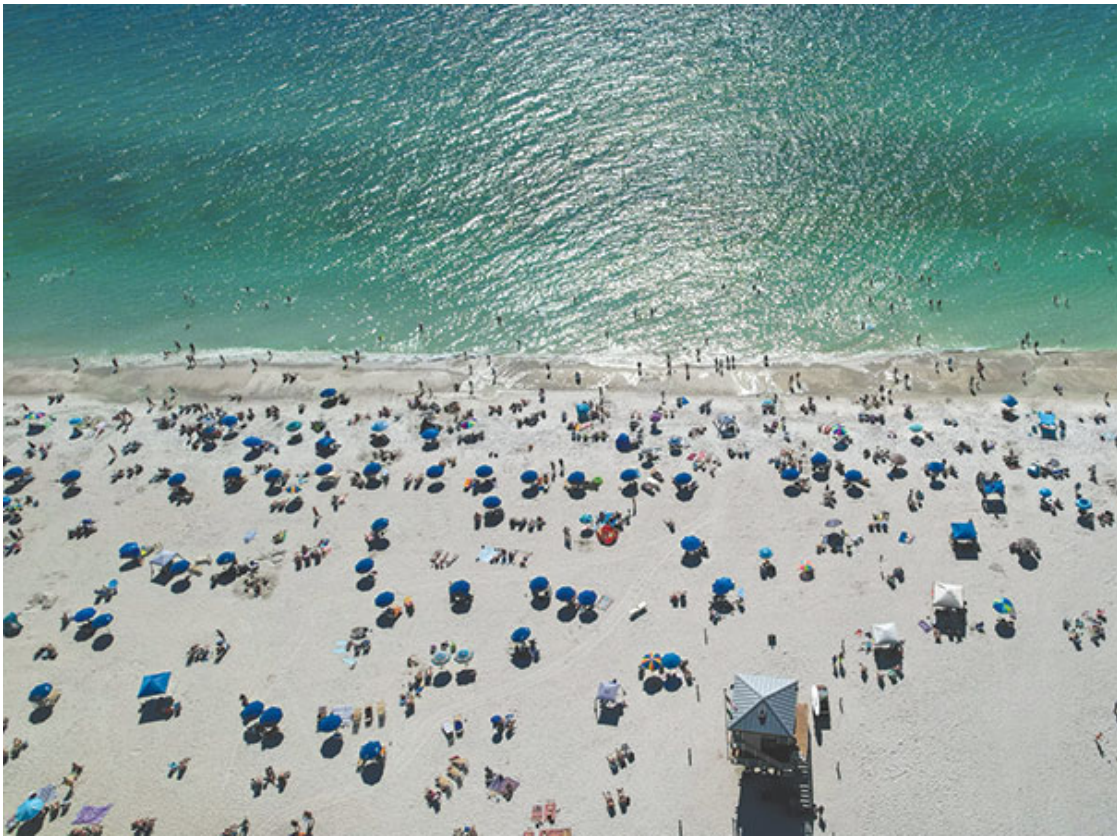
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Sunbathers, beach walkers, chairs, umbrellas, canopies, swimmers and volleyball players dot the sand at the Manatee Public Beach, 4000 Gulf Drive, Holmes Beach, during the final weekend of spring break for local students but no signs of red tide. Islander Photo: Jacob Merrifield

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The Islander Poll:

March Madness brackets, you say?

- I'm in.
- I'm already out.
- Rooting for underdogs.
- Betting on a top seed.
- What's a bracket?

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Ed Chiles speaks March 17 at his Beach House restaurant, 200 Gulf Drive N., Bradenton Beach, during a roundtable discussion on increased levels of red tide in southwest Florida. "Florida's economy is built on the coast and we are seeing harmful algal blooms and water quality issues come more, longer and stronger," Chiles said. He urged action to combat red tide and spoke about the need to leave for the next generation a state as healthy as the one that drew his family years ago. Islander Photos: Robert Anderson

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3-Day Weather Forecast

BRADENTON BEACH

82° clear sky
63% humidity
wind: 6m/s SW
H 86 • L 77

82° 75° 75° 75° 75°
THU FRI SAT SUN MON

Weather from OpenWeatherMap

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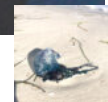
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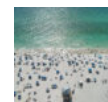
It's spring break for students, but no break from red tide

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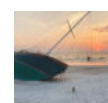
Don't touch the blue balloons

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Red tide? What red tide?

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Crashed sailboat remains



Bradenton Beach Mayor John Chappie, left, praises U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Longboat Key, for coordinating the roundtable event, as well as the congressman’s work on the proposed Protecting Local Communities from Harmful Algal Blooms Act, a bill to amend the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include algal blooms in the definition of a major disaster. The Stafford Act authorizes the delivery of federal technical, financial, logistical and other assistance to states and localities during major disasters or emergencies.

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Members



Sarasota Bay Estuary Program executive director David Tomasko expresses concerns about factors that trigger red tide. He said the red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, can assimilate nutrients from natural runoff, dead fish and human-induced sources such as wastewater overflows and stormwater runoff. According to a SBEP website director's note, "Nutrient loading models and other research indicate that nitrogen loads to Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay, Lemon Bay and Charlotte Harbor are all about 2 to 3 times higher now than they were 80 to 100 years."

Red tide table talk

Politicians and policymakers, business leaders and conservationists gathered March 17 at a waterfront restaurant on Anna Maria Island to address the plight of repeated red tide blooms in the Gulf.

U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Longboat Key, hosted the forum at the Beach House Restaurant in Bradenton Beach, to promote the conversation on red tide and its impact on human health, the economy and marine life," according to a news release.

Those on the roundtable also discussed government solutions for mitigating harmful algal blooms, including Buchanan's bill, the Protecting Local Communities from Harmful Algal Blooms Act, which would amend the Stafford

Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include harmful algal blooms in the definition of a “major disaster.”

Attendees included Beach House owner Ed Chiles, Bradenton Beach Mayor John Chappie, Manatee County Commission Chair Kevin Van Ostenbridge and others on the county board, several Longboat Key town commissioners, Holmes Beach Commission Chair Carol Soustek and Commissioner Dan Diggins and Holmes Beach Clean Water Committee Chair Ron Huibers.

— Lisa Neff

State officials review coastal red tide on chopper flyover

Two top state officials March 14 boarded a chopper for a first-hand observation of a persistent red tide bloom in the region.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission acting executive director Thomas Eason and Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Shawn Hamilton participated in a flyover.

A goal was to signal that the state is taking an “all-hands-on-deck” approach to red tide and to coordinate with local governments to monitor the situation.

“Red tide blooms can cause significant impacts to our local communities,” Eason said in a news release.

Hamilton said, “Our coordinated state approach includes getting out to these impacted communities, speaking directly to stakeholders and local leadership and ensuring the state is providing them with the critical assistance they need to enhance response efforts.”

The FWC and DEP said they are closely monitoring the impact of red tide in Manatee, Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Pinellas and Pasco counties.

Red tide is naturally occurring and has been documented along Florida’s Gulf coast since the 1840s.

In response to the most recent blooms, the DEP signed and executed funding agreements with Lee, Pinellas and Sarasota counties to assist with cleanups, and

as a result, more than 45 tons of biological debris has been removed.

Agreements also have been drafted for Manatee, Charlotte, Collier and Pasco counties, and conversations are ongoing with Hillsborough County, according to the DEP.

— Lisa Neff

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