
December 8, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20171208/letters-we-now-need-worry-only-about-death-by-gridlock>

FEEDING THE RICH

It's amazing what politicians will reveal in a personal interview. For example, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, recently responded to a Des Moines Register reporter's questions about estate taxes on substantial inheritances. Grassley, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, replied: "Not having the estate tax recognizes that people are investing, as opposed to those that are spending every darn penny they have, whether it's on booze or women or movies."

Certainly, Grassley is not considering the average middle-class taxpayers. According to the Pew Research Center, the median middle-class household income is about \$59,039 a year. In Volusia County, the 2016 median annual household income was \$41,117. Many Volusia families are "spending every darn penny" paying for food, vehicles, insurance, health care, child care, rent (or mortgage if they're lucky) and paying taxes. They likely have little money left over for investments or Grassley's booze, women and movies.

But if some rich relative leaves them cash, real estate, stocks or other investments, only about one heir in a thousand is required to pay taxes on an inherited estate. The federal estate tax applies only to beneficiaries of estates over \$5.49 million (\$10.98 million for a married couple).

However, Republicans hope to repeal the estate tax entirely by 2027. So, while they push for a budget that would cut federal programs that help low- and moderate-income Americans (such as Medicaid, Head Start, even Meals on Wheels) they're working to make the rich even richer. Oh well, poor folks can always enjoy booze and women at the movies.

Carolyn West Ormond Beach

November 20, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20171120/letters-they-brought-home-gold-and-silver-at-this-three-day-event>

U.S. ATHLETES CELEBRATED FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

On the TV, internet and in the newspapers, we are bombarded ad nauseam with bad news about the NFL. Most recently, we learned about three UCLA basketball players who were arrested in China for shoplifting while President Donald Trump was visiting that country.

How about some good news? At the same time our president was negotiating with the Chinese leader to release the accused shoplifters who were facing up to 10 years in prison, two U.S. teams were competing in women's beach volleyball in the Shenzhen International Festival.

They brought home the gold and silver at this three-day event. One of the four young women was Corinne Quiggle, my granddaughter. In the news release, she was quoted as saying, "This was an unbelievable experience, it's such a great learning experience for volleyball and for life...the people in Shenzhen were so hospitable." Corinne has competed in Cuba, and most recently in the Dominican Republic between hurricanes. She left Ponte Vedra High School before her senior year and moved to Ormond Beach. Soon after she left to train for the Olympics in California. She is now attending Pepperdine University.

Thank you for sharing some good news!

Barbara Sandberg Ormond Beach

October 31, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20171030/letters-while-spending-millions-end-result-will-never-be-achieved>

OPIOIDS NOT ONLY CRISIS

The opioid crisis is serious and it is good to see that it has gotten the attention of the president and Congress. Addiction is a disease, like so many other diseases Americans have to deal with — such as obesity, hypertension, mental illness, etc., and many cannot afford to see a doctor or have the required treatment. They too die.

What is needed is a comprehensive health plan that addresses all health care issues. A healthy economy requires healthy Americans. Call or write your legislators, state and national, to tell them affordable health care is an important issue for you. Make your case for affordable health care on social media and at the polls. Let's unite to make affordable health available to all Americans.

Harry R. White Ormond Beach

October 24, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20171024/letters-our-leaders-should-do-their-research-and-take-vote>

Don't delay on 'First Step'

"First [Step must move forward](#)," the Sept. 15 editorial in The News-Journal, was right on target. Is it possible that after all the hard work to get the approval to build a homeless

shelter that construction is stopped because our elected officials can't make a decision of what kind of roof they want?

Our leaders should do their research and take a vote. How hard can it be? While the "decision makers" have their crisis of confusion, the homeless are doomed to spend another season sleeping outside.

Leigh Montgomery Ormond Beach

Sunday October 15, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20171015/letters-its-basically-because-of-sheer-number-of-beachgoers>

THE REAL GUILT

About your report of [Flagler County residents' being accused of voter fraud](#), you left out mentioning one culprit who stands out, overwhelmingly huge, behind the story. In most civilized countries, inmates do not lose their voting rights while they are in jail — rightly so, because they do not cease being members of their society. Even in many U.S. states, felons' civil rights are restored the minute they have done their time. It's only Florida, under its voter-suppressing "minority" government, that each sentence is ipso facto turned into a life sentence.

People charged with voting after a felony conviction ought to be lauded for attempting to assert rights that this state's government channels through a single bottleneck called "governor." The real culprit here is this state's governor, not freedom-loving folks.

Reinhold Schlieper Palm Coast

October 3 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20171003/letters--beachside-residential-neighborhoods-declined-along-with-retail-businesses>

WITHOUT WORDS

Because it was my birthday, I got to sit at the table with the men at Gold's Gym. The NFL and the players that take a knee were being discussed. Each person around the table expressed their opinion, from displeasure to outrage. When it came for Jimmy Cattelle to give his opinion, he said nothing. He just took out a 2010 clipping from the New York Post that he had saved. Under the photo, it read: "Together, Forever; An honor guard carries the coffin containing the partial remains of seven GIs ... at Arlington National Cemetery."

We looked at the clipping. Silence speaks volumes. No one at the table had anything to add. Before he retired, Cattelle, a member of the Honor Guard, would help carry the

coffins containing the remains of our troops to their grave sites at Arlington National Cemetery.

Barbara Sandberg Ormond Beach

Sunday October 1, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20171001/letters-there-are-heroes-and-there-are-leaders-but-they-are-not-necessarily-same>

THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

I have been watching the outstanding Vietnam War series on PBS; I recommend it to all. It is a combination of history and drama, and provides a case study for how we might avoid future international debacles. One of the lines in President Trump's recent U.N. speech caught my attention. His statement, "If the righteous many don't confront the wicked few, then evil will triumph," is appealing and hard to dispute. Unless you realize that exactly such an argument was used for entering the Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars. In these cases, we pursued an enemy who we underestimated and did not understand. Next time, maybe we should be more diligent in our research, and try harder to understand the issues before we waste tens of thousands of lives and trillions of dollars.

Tom Hilburn Ormond Beach

September 29, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170929/letters-citizens-should-be-knowledgeable-about-these-and-other-educational-issues>

LEAGUE EXPLORES EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Saturday morning, Sept. 23, the Volusia County League of Women Voters presented an outstanding program dealing with important issues in American education. The focus was on local and state matters, but several points related to our nation as a whole. Featured speakers were Volusia County Superintendent of Schools Tom Russell, school attorney Mike Dyer, and State Sen. David Simmons, all of whom were excellent. The league's Pat Drago and Nicki Junkins, who certainly should be highly commended for their work, officiated at the program.

Program highlights included: the importance of free public education for democracy (as contrasted with taxpayer money for private schools and for profit-making corporate charter schools); the high percentage of students coming from poverty homes; the unnecessary amount of high-stakes testing and the need for balance between local and state level control of schools, as contrasted with current Tallahassee-authoritarian (my term)

attempts at control. All of our citizens should be knowledgeable about these and other educational issues.

Public school education played a major role in the early foundation and development of democracy in America and is crucial for maintaining our democracy. The League of Women Voters deserves great thanks for its work on behalf of public school education.

Dan Kennedy Ormond Beach

September 20, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170919/letters-readers-talk-about-irma>

DEEPENING DISCRIMINATION

I was saddened and disappointed to read in The News-Journal about the treatment of people without homes during the recent hurricane. It was particularly disturbing to read about Sheriff Mike Chitwood's remarks about the condition of one of the shelters for the segregated people with no homes,

The News-Journal reports that he complained that one shelter (Manatee Cove school in Orange City) was "trashed with fecal matter ...urination, drug paraphernalia...."

I believe that many other people use these kinds of statements as reasons to separate homeless people.

As a person who grew up where segregation of blacks from whites was legal and enforced, these statements brought back painful memories. That is, many black people who lived in very poor conditions and did hard physical labor did not meet the personal hygiene and housing standards of most relatively privileged whites. This fact was use as an excuse by many for treating blacks differently from whites.

In my opinion, it is disgraceful to segregate people based on whether or not they have houses to live in.

In the U.S., the people who may be legally segregated are criminals and those mentally ill who have been legally determined to be a danger to themselves or others. The essential of any such segregation requires that such a person be individually determined to meet well-defined standards.

We may not segregate based on group membership — not women, gays, Muslims or any religious groups. And we must not segregate people based on their residence or lack thereof.

Roger Patterson Ormond Beach

August 24, 2017

REINFORCING TERROR

I want to thank The News-Journal for [the interesting account of the statue in Palatka](#). Wondering whether or not it should go, I tried to recover the time in Florida when it was built. The statue in Palatka was placed in 1924 by the Daughters of the Confederacy, according to The News-Journal's account. That was decades after the demise of the Confederacy, not likely a matter of mournful remembrance. I wondered what else took place around that time.

In 1920, the KKK advertised its stand against communism and integration. It considered itself as the bulwark against "blacks, Catholics, Jews, foreigners, and 'moral offenders.'" The KKK had new membership applications of about 5,000 a day, and in 1924 there were 3 million active members. In 1920, four black men were lynched in Macclenny, Florida, whereupon the black inhabitants of the town left in fear for their lives. In 1923, Rosewood, Florida, was razed, burned, and its inhabitants scattered or killed by a mob. In 1923, a black man was lynched in Jacksonville for being a "Peeping Tom." Eugenic sterilization acts, miscegenation laws and penalties for interracial cohabitation ruled the spirit of that time. Virginia's eugenic sterilization became a model for Nazi Germany. In 1928, a hurricane killed thousands of people in Florida. Black farm workers were cremated in piles, while coffins and burials were provided for Euro-American victims of the storm.

Those were not times when one places statuary mournfully at courthouses; instead, those were times when "Southern values will stay in power" statuary intimidated an already frightened populace. Indeed, such intimidation rates as terrorism, not as mournful remembrance. Thus, the Palatka statue ought to go to the junk pile of history as another example of unmitigated hate, even though the contemporary citizenry of Palatka may not be aware of those ramifications.

Reinhold Schlieper Palm Coast

August 20, 2017

TURBULENT TIMES

All Americans must think about what happened in Charlottesville, and understand how complex and dangerous the issues of racism and division could be. It will take much patience, wisdom and compromise.

I am very concerned for our future. We're more divided in this country than before, and we've lost trust in our leaders and the media, constantly questioning whether what we hear is true.

The last presidential election was full of division and hate. Usually when the elections are over we continue to live our lives. But not this time. Even after the election, the president

appeared to continue his campaign. His rhetoric created more turbulence, and his war with the media was madness.

Yet many journalists continue to trash the president and attack him personally.

I don't believe the president responded to the Charlottesville incident appropriately; he did not refer to the white supremacists and Nazis as thugs. I was born in Greece during the time the Nazis occupied the country and was lucky to survive — 10 percent of the population died, mostly due to hunger. But as much as we hate extremists, we must remember that our Constitution gives freedom of speech to everybody.

Counter-protesters may have done more harm than good, helping the protesters advance their views. We need strong leadership to bring us out of this darkness. Hopefully the media and the spiritual leaders can work to bring us together. After all, we are all Americans and live in the greatest country in the world.

Panos Stroumpis Daytona Beach Shores

August 19, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170819/letters-if-we-ignore-this--we-will-certainly-regret-it-later>

WHAT WAS BROKEN?

As I read the Aug. 11 "[Trump will fix it](#)" letter, I wondered what country the writer was talking about. He claims that country is "rapidly drifting from the vision of the founders into a leftist, anti-capitalist, progressive nation rushing toward socialism." Apparently, he is not referring to the United States, whose government is currently dominated by the Republican Party, the majority in both the House and Senate, as well as the presidency. The GOP surely is not "leftist, anti-capitalist" nor are its cronies on Wall Street. The last thing they would want is a rush toward socialism. Efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act are surely evidence of that.

The writer declines to "go into the significant accomplishments of the (Trump) administration" yet he claims that "the stock market at record highs and unemployment at a 16-year low" are among them. Apparently he knows little about economics. Even I understand that it took years for the U.S. economy to recover from the Great Recession, a recovery which took place during, and was aided by, the Obama administration. One example was the successful bailout of the auto industry, which is humming along just fine today.

But the writer insists, with no evidence whatsoever, that Barack Obama will go down as a president worse than Jimmy Carter. Instead, he is hopeful that "Trump will fix all the ailments caused by recent liberalism." From the letter, it's hard to figure out what these "ailments" are, but God save us from such fixes!

**Carolyn West Ormond
Beach**

August 16, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170816/letters-their-courageous-stand-for-truth-could-make-them-downsizing-targets>

STOP THE DOUBLE-TALK

On Aug. 3, President Donald Trump said, “The Russia story is a total fabrication,” and “It’s just an excuse for the greatest loss in the history of American politics.” He blamed the Democrats for focusing on the Russia probe: “The reason why Democrats only talk about the totally made up Russia story is because they have no message, no agenda, and no vision,” Trump taunted. “It just makes them feel better when they have nothing else to talk about.”

But Republicans have the majority in the House and the Senate. The investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller was impaneled by Rod J. Rosenstein, Trump’s selection for deputy attorney general. It is time for Trump to stop lying about who is investigating him.

In Trump’s July 1 tweet, he said, “Numerous states are refusing to give information to the very distinguished Voter Fraud Panel. What are they trying to hide?” What is Trump trying to hide in his income tax returns?

And while it is Trump who is bringing up the Russia thing all the time, his party played a major role in passing the Russia sanctions bill with a veto-proof majority. **Harry R. White Ormond Beach**

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170801/letters-when-you-get-several-lanes-of-cars-going-around-it-is-terrible>

August 1, 2017

A HERO AND A VOTE

The bad news about John McCain’s brain cancer caused me to think about his service to our country, especially the time he spent as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton. For five years, McCain experienced episodes of torture and refused an early release offer (probably related to his father’s position as the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command). The wounds that he sustained during the war have left him with lifelong physical disabilities.

It was wonderful that good wishes for McCain came from both sides of the aisle: George W. Bush, John Kerry, Bill Clinton and Jeff Flake. Mitch McConnell called John McCain “a hero to our conference and a hero to our country,” and President Obama said: “John McCain is an American hero and one of the bravest fighters I’ve ever known. Cancer doesn’t know what it’s up against. Give it hell, John.”

President Trump’s comment was: “We hope John McCain gets better very soon because we miss him. He’s a crusty voice in Washington. Plus we need his vote.” I guess the president found it difficult to use the term “hero.” Recall his 2015 comment: “He’s not a war hero. He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren’t

captured.” I think it would be good for the president and for the nation if he could apologize for that comment.

Tom Hilburn Ormond Beach

July 7, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170709/letters-america-is-slowly-inching-away-from-shame-of-homosexuality>

LET MARKET DICTATE BEACH VENDING

Regarding the article about the county considering limiting the number of vendors on the beach: In a supposedly free-enterprise country, common sense would suggest that the free market would be allowed to decide the number of vendors.

(READ: Amending vending - Volusia mulls sales rules)

The beach vendors create a safe, pleasant atmosphere, and they serve a demand. They also provide a revenue stream: On top of the exorbitant fees they pay to be “allowed” to work the beach, they also pay their share of taxes.

I’m tired of excess bureaucracy squelching the small, locally owned enterprises that are the true lifeblood of our economy. I believe the government-managed, one-vendor thing has been tried already — wasn’t it called the “Soviet Union”?

By the way: A belated happy American Independence Day, everyone!

Jennifer Nazak Daytona Beach

June 25, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170625/letters-there-should-be-no-controlled-burns-of-this-scale-in-new-smyrna-beach>

A PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF WORLD HISTORY

While not favoring monarchy, I’m beginning to wonder if Plato may have had the correct idea regarding political philosophy and governance.

Will Durant, in his “The Story of Philosophy,” wrote the following about Plato’s ideas: “...in the perfect state the industrial forces would produce, but they would not rule; the military forces would protect but they would not rule; the forces of knowledge and science and philosophy would be nourished and protected, and they would rule.” And: “Statemanship is a science and an art.”

Plato, in his “The Republic,” wrote: “Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and wisdom and political leadership meet in the same man ... cities will never cease from ill, not will the human race.”

It should be noted that Plato had built into his “ideal society” system mechanisms for upward and downward mobility relative to ability for government leadership.

June 21, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170620/letters-we-have-disrupted-homes-of-native-black-bears-and-deer>

Trump slammed by his own words

Trump supporters become upset when he is criticized. One of their most popular defenses, as in Cal Thomas' Tuesday column, is to quote something said by Barack Obama (e.g., "If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. ...").

This is fair censure, but to add some balance to this picture, let's look at some of Donald Trump's quotes:

- "Why doesn't he show his birth certificate? There's something on that birth certificate that he doesn't like" (March 23, 2011). After five years of such quotes, candidate Trump stated, "President Barack Obama was born in the United States — period" (Sept. 16, 2016). There was no apology — no "I was wrong."
- "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." (Nov. 6, 2012)
- "I will build a great, great wall on our southern border, and I will make Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words." (June 16, 2015)
- "He's not a war hero. He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured." (July 19, 2015)
- "I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally." (Nov. 27, 2016)
- "How low has President Obama gone to tap my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!" (March 4, 2017)

There are many, many more such "bigly" quotes, but I am approaching the 250-word limit.

Thomas Hilburn Ormond Beach

June 19, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170619/letters-thank-you-for-posting-two-feel-good-stories-about-two-angels-in-our-community>

SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW COMPASSION

Thank you to Jim Abbott for his heartwarming story June 16 story, "[Guardian Angel](#)."

The story describes the many years that Tom Cox has brought joy to Jill Matthew, his disabled former co-worker. It is good to read about local folks who have gone out of their

way to show kindness, compassion, concern and to then help brighten the day of another person.

During these unsettling times, when we hear about the senseless violence that is going on in this country and throughout the world, it is easy to feel helpless. How can we change things and make them better? Cox has set an example that can inspire us all. We may not be able to make a difference nationally, but we can do something locally. All we need to do is look around and then act with compassion and kindness.

Joanne Kennedy Ormond Beach

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/20170522/former-volusia-teacher-donates-art-collection-to-schools>

May 22, 2017

Former Volusia teacher donates art collection to schools

Feature article about Donald Kennedy

[http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170518/letters-it-will-once-again-be-gorgeous-building-and-always-](http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170518/letters-it-will-once-again-be-gorgeous-building-and-always-historic-landmark)

[historic-landmark](http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170518/letters-it-will-once-again-be-gorgeous-building-and-always-historic-landmark)

May 18, 2017

MORE BOMBSHELLS

Recent “drama” at the White House is concerning many Americans.

FBI Director James Comey was fired after requesting more funds to investigate the Russian influence in the 2016 election, whereas he was lavishly praised in October for his investigation of Hillary Clinton’s emails. White House staff have given many conflicting responses, with the president in seclusion due to “seething anger” at his staff for leaking information to the media. The latest “bombshell” is Donald Trump’s reported sharing of classified information with the Russians.

I have one question for those who voted for Trump: Is this how to “Make America Great Again”?

Marilyn Sapsford Ormond Beach

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170517/letters-i-did-terrible-thing>

May 17, 2017

Ormond Beach

GOTTA HAVE ART

My wife and I recently visited the Ormond Beach Memorial Art Museum. The current exhibit is the Ormond Elementary Art Show. It is a celebration of Ormond Elementary's 100th anniversary. There is a display of art from each of the school's kindergarten-through-fifth-grade students. The art is creative and fun; it makes everyone feel like a kid again! Thanks to the principal and teachers at Ormond Elementary School for giving these children a well-rounded education. The exhibit is showing through May 22. Don't miss it.

Thomas Hilburn Ormond Beach

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170512/letters-our-lives-have-been-turned-upside-down>

May 12, 2017

“OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

A tennis court is seen at the Oceans Racquet & Recreation Club in Daytona Beach Shores on Tuesday. NEWS-JOURNAL/CASMIRA HARRISON

The slogan of Daytona Beach Shores is “Life Is Better Here.” For many of residents, our lives have been turned upside down.

About a year ago, I sent a letter complimenting the mayor of our city, as well as other board members, for their charming and friendly attributes. But after the fiasco the mayor and his friends have created, it is appropriate to set the record straight.

I am referring to the Oceans Racquet and Recreation Club. (READ: [Unhappy residents don “Tennis Lives Matter” shirts](#))

Years ago, club members were informed the city was going to rebuild the clubhouse. Shortly thereafter, a group of people visited the club for feedback from the players about the new clubhouse. That was very encouraging. Later, however, we found out the plan was to build a senior center.

At first, they told us they may close some of the courts during the construction, taking out two courts for parking. We tennis players tried to organize to express our concerns, hoping they would listen. Then they made a decision to take out two additional courts! This would essentially destroy the tennis club, in existence for more than 40 years.

The reason for scratching the Oceans tennis club was due to the cost of money to operate the facility, which was nothing compared to \$7 million for the community center. Question: Where did they find all the money?

The club is like an embassy for Daytona Beach Shores and attracts people from all over the world. People purchased homes in Daytona Beach Shores because of the Oceans tennis club. Property values will decrease because of the absence of the club. An

embassy is not closed because it costs money to operate. The city should focus on solving the issues with the multiple vacant buildings along State Road A1A.

The community is more divided than ever before because of this decision.

Panos Stroumpis Daytona Beach Shores

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170507/letters-i-hope-people-give-her-chance-vs-not-time-or-place>

May 7, 2017

THE WRONG VENUE

Yes, Let DeVos speak, but not at commencement:

Your May 3 editorial offered a convincing argument to support Dr. Edison Jackson's invitation to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. Higher education must provide, as Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune herself urged, "an opportunity for dialogue, education and understanding for both sides." You wrote that good could come from this invitation: "By exposing DeVos to the B-CU experience. By educating her to student and alumni concerns. By challenging her on her policies. And by listening to her answers."

But have you never attended a graduation? DeVos was invited as a commencement speaker, not as a visiting expert or debate contributor. She will fly in for a quick visit. She'll be introduced with accolades and honors; she'll make her speech, pocket her unearned degree, offer thanks, praise the university, and then leave.

This is no forum for intellectual interchange. No one will publicly "challenge her on her policies," so no one will learn anything "by listening to her answers." So what's gained? DeVos will be endorsed and gain a few headlines.

But hundreds of B-CU students will consider their special celebration to have been tainted. Some will even skip it. Commencement should be about the students, not the political alliances sought by the university's administration.

Commencement speakers should be widely appreciated and admired, not controversial in themselves. Students don't want their graduation to publicly honor someone they strongly oppose, granting that person a public forum and unearned honors — while they who have earned the right to celebrate get only handshake, a tassel, and a quick walk across the stage.

So Dr. Jackson, please do invite Secretary DeVos: Invite her to speak and provide a forum that encourages question and debate. But not as commencement speaker.

Evan Rivers Port Orange

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170416/letters-the-daytona-beach-homeless-problem-is-areas>

Sunday April 16, 2017

FRIENDLY OFFICERS

On March 30, I was en route to have my car repaired when all of a sudden the electrical system in my vehicle shut down. That left me stuck in traffic in the middle of one of the busiest intersections in Ormond Beach.

After trying to wave cars around my stalled vehicle and trying not to get hit by the cars passing by, I saw a car coming up behind me with flashing lights. I immediately recognized it as an Ormond Beach Police car — coming to my rescue. The two officers could not have been more understanding and concerned about my predicament. They were officers Andrew Bayne and Shannon Champion.

Bayne remained behind the police car and directed traffic, while Champion approached my car. The first thing she was interested in was my health and whether or not I had some sort of medical event causing me to stop in the middle of the road. After she was aware of what had happened, she reassured me to remain calm and not to worry.

She called for a tow truck and then called the dealership and spoke to my service advisor. This was extremely important to me as it was almost closing time.

The two officers stayed until the tow truck, with me and my car aboard, left.

When we speak of the police department, we first think of law and order but we should not overlook the community service they provide.

Thank you again, Officers Champion and Bayne.

Dr. Morris Carter Ormond Beach

April 10, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170410/letters-daytona-beach-city-leaders-have-taken-first-bold-step>

NOT JUST DAYTONA

The April 3 story, "[Daytona homeless shelter: Who will be County Council's swing vote?](#)" came with joy and disappointment.

Joy came from reading Volusia County Council Chairman Ed Kelley's statement, "I still think it's a countywide problem and I think the county should have been the one to take ownership of it from the start,". It would be wise to take a very open-eyed look at it to try and find a way to make it work. It would be unwise to turn our back on it if it's something that's workable because we need it."

But I felt disappointment at the shelter being called "a Daytona Beach homeless shelter," when Kelley said — to repeat — "I still think it's a countywide problem and I think the county should have been the one to take ownership of it from the start."

Daytona Beach recognized the need for a homeless shelter years ago and hired a consultant to address the issue that produced a report identified as "Volusia Safe Harbor"

that came with plans for the development of a shelter to house, provide health care, drug addiction treatment, job training and case management. The County Council offered money for construction and the land for the building with the condition that Daytona Beach and other Volusia County cities pay the operating expenses. Daytona Beach and several other cities offered funding and others refused.

Daytona Beach no doubt has the largest homeless population. Daytona Beach tourism is the economic engine of Volusia County and tourism officials invest heavily promoting "The World's Most Famous Beach," the home of NASCAR and the Daytona International Speedway. The county should protect this investment by providing shelter for the homeless living and panhandling in Daytona Beach and the rest of Volusia County.

Harry R. White Ormond Beach

March 29, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170329/letters-we-should-be-proud-of-volusia-countys-lifeguards->

BAD FOR FLORIDA

The March 10 letter, "Don't block fracking," claims that concerns about environmental damage caused by fracking methods to extract oil are based on a "false narrative." The writer blames environmental activists and worries that "ineffective leadership" in the Florida Legislature will lead to a fracking ban, and claims that a 2015 EPA study determined that "there is no evidence that fracking harms groundwater."

However, a 2016 EPA study does not support this conclusion. The study "found scientific evidence that hydraulic fracturing activities can impact drinking water resources under some circumstances." One situation involves "water withdrawals for hydraulic fracturing in times or areas of low water availability, particularly in areas with limited or declining groundwater resources." These circumstances certainly describe most of Florida, where we know that over-consumption of fresh water and periods of drought are bringing about these conditions. The pumping of water used in the fracking process may worsen salt water intrusion from both coastlines.

Unlike many places where fracking has mined shale rock, most of Florida sits on highly porous sedimentary limestone. This base is like a sponge that allows water to flow freely. Unfortunately, companies would drill for fossil fuels very near this sedimentary rock base and thus near the Floridan Aquifer, the source of our fresh drinking water.

Although the oil drilling is supposed to take place below the aquifer, there is still danger from leakage through the permeable limestone or from an accident and resulting pollution. For example, brine chemicals injected underground during the fracking process may leak into the aquifer and thus contaminate and irreversibly destroy our drinking water supplies.

The writer might generalize about fracking in other parts of the U.S., but he is mistaken when he applies similar arguments to Florida's setting. Let's hope our lawmakers in Tallahassee see the hollowness of his case.

March 10, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170310/letters-a-call-to-action-for-our-communities>

HIDING TAX RETURN

Thanks to The News-Journal's publishing the voting records of our legislators on March 5, I found out that U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis, our representative in D.C., apparently does not want to see or know anything about the presidential tax return. I guess that means DeSantis is satisfied that the president is smart enough to exploit any legal loophole to pay no taxes — as Donald Trump told us as a candidate.

So, ethics be hanged; it's the narrow letter of the law that matters for DeSantis. I am sure that this kind of attitude does not make him my representative, nor should he be a representative for any morally astute citizen of these counties.

Reinhold Schlieper
Palm Coast

February 22, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170222/letters-we-need-to-stop-blaming-trump>

ANGER FROM THE RIGHT

In Cal Thomas' Feb. 14 column, "[Major media remain in denial](#)," he attacks mainstream media's questioning of President Donald Trump's honesty, and the media's failure to apply the same standard to the Democrats and the Obama administration. Thomas ascribes this mistreatment of the president to the lack of conservatives in the mainstream media.

It is probably true that the news media such as ABC, CBS, NBC, the New York Times, and the Washington Post have a liberal bent, but this does not explain the severe criticism of President Trump by mainstream conservatives and Republicans. The critique of the president by George Will, Charles Krauthammer, David Brooks, Michael Gerson, Ross Douthat, Rich Lowry, and Jonah Goldberg has been withering — much of this appearing in The News-Journal. These and many others on the right have attacked the president on his incredible lies, his astounding ego, and his lack of knowledge of history, foreign affairs and domestic issues.

Thomas Hilburn Ormond Beach

January 15, 2017

A CLOUD OF FALSITY

In a Jan. 7 News-Journal column, Federalist editor David Harsanyi asserts as "a lie" the claim that Russian operatives "hacked" the 2016 presidential election. He admits that we should be concerned about any Russian interference, but he maintains that it didn't affect the outcome. However, a front-page story in the same issue reports that every U.S. intelligence agency now agrees that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered "a comprehensive cyber-campaign to upend the U.S. presidential election." Who actually knows how effective it was? Certainly, not David Harsanyi.

Apparently, the Russian efforts were meant to favor Donald Trump, but there's not enough evidence to show that they actually resulted in his winning the election. Possibly no one will ever know how much the constant churning of misinformation and "fake news" affected the 2016 voter behavior and turnout. Some intelligent people I know actually believed, for example, the false story that Hillary Clinton laughed at a young rape victim after successfully defending the rapist. In another case, a man responded to a fake-news story by storming a Washington, D.C., pizzeria with an assault weapon to rescue children falsely reported as being sex slaves, supposedly part of a child-abuse ring led by Clinton. Such ludicrous stories would be amusing if they were not a sad commentary on this entire election process, and even sadder if they affected its outcome.

Carolyn West Ormond Beach

January 9, 2017

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/20170109/letters-timing-for-current-votran-system-is-crucial>

A CLOSER LOOK

The author of the Jan. 5 letter, "Fuss about Russia," uses Julian Assange's statements during a TV appearance to discount Russian hacking. (Assange has endangered American lives by putting a mass of sensitive information into the public domain.) The letter argues that hacking was justified because the material was not fictional, and it was "actual, factual, damming communications."

By this logic, none of us has a right to privacy. The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated ...;" The Bill of Rights was intended to protect us from our own government; but., we would also hope our "persons, houses, papers, and effects" would be protected from non-governmental entities and foreign powers.

This should not be a partisan issue - we all have a stake in maintaining our right to privacy.

Thomas Hilburn Ormond Beach