

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 2013:

**Published: Friday, December 27, 2013**

### **STORY RAISED MANY MEMORIES**

**Barbara Waite Sandberg Ormond Beach**

Referring to Jim Haug's excellent article with a photograph of Connie Fagan on a paddleboard in the Dec. 23 News Journal: The article begins with the question, "In 2014, why not try something new?" My mother, Ethel Waite, must have thought the same thing in 1930!

So she ordered a paddleboard from Hawaii. It was hollow and made of mahogany. It cost \$60. It was the first one used in New England for rescue work where my mother was hired as director of waterfront activities. She told me that she usually used the board in a prone or sitting position, but liked to stand on the board because as Connie Fagan said, "It's that much fun. It's a total-body workout." I think of my mother now, still patrolling the waterfront from her park on the Halifax River, Waite Park, which was dedicated to her by the city of Holly Hill.

It is a small park with a big oak tree. Her passion was in preserving the natural beauty of the waterfront. One of my most horrific childhood memories was her guarding the oak tree with her life from an approaching bulldozer. The standoff ended in the bulldozer leaving and never returning. She had won in the game of 'chicken.'

**Sandberg is a goodwill ambassador for the city of Ormond Beach and a local Realtor.**

**December 7, 2013**

**CAROLYN WEST Ormond Beach**

### **RIGHT TO WORRY ABOUT CLIMATE**

I was indeed puzzled by your Dec. 2 editorial, "Hurricane season puzzles experts." It points to our relatively quiet hurricane season in the northern Atlantic as proof that the climate-change alarm ringers• and their ilk are guilty of a "kind of religious absolutism"• about the reality of climate change. Your editorial reminds me of the parable of the blind man and the elephant, where the poor man could report only on his immediate experience and could not see the big picture.

For example, nowhere in your editorial do you mention the devastation that Typhoon Haiyan brought to the Philippines just last month. Killing nearly 5,000 people and leaving a trail of destruction, it is one of the strongest storms on record. Nowhere do you seem to acknowledge that climate change is a worldwide phenomenon, and that we are all in it together.

While your editorial suggested that climate change believers should cool their rhetoric about global warming, nowhere do you mention that these believers include the more than 2,000 respected scientists from around the world who agree that human activity contributes to and is accelerating climate change. They represent a consensus of the 154 countries who support the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. They are not claiming that global warming causes these terrible storms, but their research indicates that when such storms occur, they can be supercharged like Typhoon Haiyan this November or Superstorm Sandy in New York last year.

We live in a low-lying coastal area, and the seas that surround our state are already warming and rising. Dr. Harold Wanless, chair of the University of Miami's Geological Science Department, predicts a sea level rise of 4 to 6 feet by 2099. Vulnerable cities and counties in South Florida have already banded together to form a regional climate action plan. It seems irresponsible of The News-Journal to suggest that this issue is overblown by "alarmists."

**November 7, 2013**

**DAN KENNEDY**

**Ormond Beach**

### **RESPECT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**

In response to an excellent letter to the editor concerning public prayer, "A matter of fairness":• of Oct. 31. I have also found the recent letters quite interesting. As a matter of fairness, the writer calls for a different religious tradition to be represented at each public meeting; e.g., readings from the Torah, the Koran, Book of Mormon, a Hindu meditation, an Indian rain dance. Implementation of this procedure would be of educational value to participants at the various public meetings and events. What we have currently are usually representations of Christianity, which often tend to foster mythology and superstition. Let us show how various religious traditions can serve these purposes.

**October 13, 2013**

**Marilyn Sapsford**

**Ormond Beach**

### **ONCE, PEOPLE LISTENED**

Getting older is not for sissies, and I am having some signs of aging. Yet I struggle to keep up with a new job, dietary changes, doctor appointments, cardiac function tests and the fast pace of the health care and alternative medicine system.

I am mystified by some recent experiences. I asked a health-food store greeter where I could find a chair, as I felt weak, and he pointed across the huge area and hurriedly said "There!" Later, while walking along the aisle, he almost knocked me over!

In another health food store, I explained that I didn't feel well and needed to move slowly, to no avail. Yesterday I told a phlebotomist that I wasn't feeling well, and the response was "Can I have your Medicare card?" and "Please hand me your Visa card."

I relish the good old days of my telling a joke to help a laboratory patient relax, or of Peace Corps volunteer work in a village where time seemed to stand still. I chuckle that seniors with high blood pressure are exposed to loud TVs with reporting of troubling news in a fast-paced tempo, and look forward to telling my young grandson of a time when we listened attentively to one another.

**September 5, 2013**

**Marilyn Sapsford - Ormond Beach**

### **"DON'T FORGET OLDER WORKERS"**

I agree with the Sept. 2 News-Journal editorial, Job worries dominate holiday, that lawmakers need to "spur the creation of jobs and raise income levels in the process,"• and would like to add a concern that is seldom discussed.

I am one of many who retired a few years ago, and need to return to the workforce now.

Holding a master's degree, I worked for decades as a professional in the social service and medical fields. In 1999, having an inheritance and disliking completing necessary paperwork in off-hours, I retired.

After visiting several countries with a lower cost of living in hopes of settling there, I returned to Florida in late 2005. The money supply has dwindled greatly and there are challenges to getting a job: my age, the big "gap"• in the resume, lack of necessary licenses or certificates (and lacking money to get them), and greatly increased competition. I would be happy to get any job in the helping professions, but am considered overqualified" or lacking recent experience or a certificate.

I recall my Navajo colleagues in New Mexico many years ago teaching that older persons deserve great respect due to their wisdom.

As a senior citizen, I continue to agree with this viewpoint, but there are overdue bills to pay.

**August 12, 2013**

**Carolyn West  
Ormond Beach**

**"SCIENTISTS AGREE ON CLIMATE"**

A recent letter to the editor asks us to rethink global warming and claims outright that the term "carbon footprint" was "invented to demonize" carbon dioxide emissions. The writer suggests that efforts to control carbon emissions into the atmosphere "stifle the country's economy by taxing polluters, unnecessary regulations, etc. He claims the Earth's average temperature declined slightly in the last 10 years, but nowhere does he provide evidence that would disprove that the world is getting warmer.

Recently the American Geophysical Union (AGU) released a statement on climate change: Extensive, independent observations confirm the reality of global warming. These observations show large-scale increases in air and sea temperatures ... (and) they document decreases in the extent of mountain glaciers, snow cover, permafrost, and Arctic sea ice.

The AGU explains that climate change is not expected to be uniform over space or time. Deforestation, urbanization, and air pollution can affect temperature, precipitation and other weather factors.

However, the AGU concludes that while climate and weather may vary from year to year and location to location, this variability raises no challenge to the reality of human-induced climate change. In addition to the AGU, international scientists from 154 countries around the world have concluded that human activity is seriously contributing to and accelerating climate change.

**It's time for the letter writer to, once again, rethink his opinion on global warming.**

**May 22, 2013**

**MARILYN SAPSFORD  
Ormond Beach**

**"LEAD BY EXAMPLE"**

I agree with a letter writer in the May 18 paper who said that Americans need to "focus on the real issues." The primary issue for the past five years has been the economy and creating jobs. The front page of that paper displayed the headline, "Jobless rates still improving." In April, Florida added 17,000 jobs, and nationwide employers added 165,000 jobs. This is the news we have been waiting for!

The writer concluded "It is amazing that Americans have such a need to air dirty laundry all the time." In my years living in Third World countries, I saw the fascination with anything that Americans do. News of scandals (Democratic or Republican) provided much entertainment.

I wonder what would happen if we spent some of the millions allotted to investigating the latest scandal on helping homeless or drug-addicted persons to rehabilitate and become employed. We would provide less entertainment, and more of a positive example to the world.

**May 3, 2013**

**EDWARD FLANAGAN  
Ormond Beach**

**RETHINKING DRUG CRISIS**

The just-released book entitled "Clean" is a must-read for all concerned with the failure of the war on drugs and its (sometimes well-intended) cost of tens of billions of dollars, to little avail.

Award-winning author David Sheff, inspired by wrenching drug problems in his own family, explains how the U.S. attacked the supply of brain-damaging drugs for 40 years and should instead do a full-court press on treatment.

He supports this move with thorough research, understandable explanations of the human brain's physical reactions to all addictive substances, and the various possibilities of treatment.

He also calls for the creation of an organization fashioned after the American Cancer Society, aimed at destigmatizing addiction and broadening support for treatment.

This book may be a game-changer.

Please don't miss reading it.

**March 16, 2013**

**REINHOLD SCHLIEPER**

**Palm Coast**

## **RECONSIDER HEALTH CARE**

Mac Thrower confuses obstinacy with principle in his Sunday column. At issue should be a clear cost analysis, not a spurious attack on a person's consistency be that person Gov. Rick Scott, former Gov. Charlie Crist or anyone else.

The principle at stake in the entire debate is whether health care is a commodity or a human right. If the former, the apportioning of scarce medical resources should be as it is now the task of financial institutions and human-resource departments that will classify people's worth by wealth and ability to pay. If the latter, an objective analysis of successful medical intervention will govern scarce medical resources.

What a society must pay for, it must find a way to pay for. Bellyaching about the discomforts of a possibly strained purse is not a proper response to meeting human rights. After all, slavery and exploitation are exceedingly inexpensive ways of running a business, but they are not right ways of running a business.

The News-Journal should make an effort to deal with facts, not with ad hominem fallacies. I recommend some solid research, keeping in mind Emerson's valuable reminder from Self-Reliance: A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines.

**March 12, 2013**

**LOOKING BACK AT CHAVEZ**

**PANOS STROUMPIS**

**Daytona Beach Shores**

**Who was the real Hugo Chavez?**

The voices of the international community, particularly the people of Latin America, portray him as a heroic figure, one who fought for justice and equality in his own country as well as the rest of Latin America. He fought against poverty, provided his own people with health care, education and basic needs which they had not had in the past. He became the most admired leader of the vast majority of his people.

Here at home, the major media and some politicians describe him as a tyrannical dictator. How can we call someone a dictator when he was elected by the democratic process four different times?

We keep making the same mistake, labeling someone as a socialist. This word in itself creates such a negative impression that we cannot see beyond the label. There is no country in the world, including the United States, that does not have a blend of capitalism and socialism. What do you call Social Security, Medicare and the military? It would serve our interest better if we would tolerate and accept others who disagree with us.

Hugo Chavez had something in common with Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. They all came from poor families. The difference is that Hugo Chavez never forgot where he came from. I do not doubt that President Obama admired Hugo Chavez. But I don't blame him for being afraid to express his views as he would alienate too many.

My own criticism is that Chavez stayed in power too long. It is unhealthy for democracy for any of us to believe that we are irreplaceable.

**March 3, 2013**

**CAROLYN WEST**

**Ormond Beach**

### **THE WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE**

In the recent letter "Skeptical about warming," the writer claims that "Republicans and other conservatives investigate the facts before climbing aboard the bandwagon" of concern about global warming. Although he admits that "climate change is occurring," he explains it as a result of "periodic cyclical change" due to natural causes. He paints as "fearmongers" those who might point to human causes. The work of one scientist seems to convince the writer of the "facts" Dixy Lee Ray. Ray was a marine biologist who served as chairwoman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and was elected governor of Washington state. However, she was also connected to The Heritage Foundation and other conservative think tanks, which actively dismiss environmental science and deny global warming. No surprise there, since from 2006-2010, the Heritage Foundation received over \$2.5 million from oil and gas interests.

Nowhere does the writer mention the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, composed of over 2,000 respected scientists from around the world. Their reports require not only their agreement with each other, but also a consensus of all the 154 participating countries. Those reports have concluded that human activity is seriously contributing to and accelerating climate change.

Note that I did not say "causes" climate change. We need not fall into the "either/or" logical fallacy and conclude that there is only one answer to the very complex issue of why our earth is warming, why this past summer was the hottest one on record or why we have "freak" storms such as Hurricane Sandy. To dismiss all but one's own pet theory as "fantastical" is dangerous. I'm curious if the writer lives on waterfront property. If so, he will have a front row seat to observe the effects of our warming Earth.

**February 27,**

**LANI VAN PETTEN**

**Ormond Beach**

### **GET REGISTRATION ONLINE**

In an age in which people can pay their bills, buy almost anything they want and even start their cars via electronic gadgets, it is high time our voter registration system joined the 21st century. Paper-only voter registration is antiquated, costly and by no means free of errors. All signs suggest that the system should be modernized, via the creation of an online voter registration system.

As a resident of Ormond Beach, I am eager to see improvements made to all facets of our elections system, and the creation of an online voter registration system should be one of the first places we address. Currently, 12 other states have online voter registration (with three more in the process of implementing it), and they have found that it saves a significant amount of time and money. Furthermore, online voter registration can eliminate the human errors and mistakes that occur from misinterpreting handwritten forms.

I join with the League of Women Voters of Florida in urging the Legislature to help Florida's elections into the modern age with the creation of an online voter registration system.

**February 7, 2013**

**MARILYN SAPSFORD**

**Ormond Beach**

## **POT AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE?**

I was interested to notice two stories on the same page of The News-Journal: "Lawmakers target looming budget cuts" and "Effort builds to change U.S. pot laws."

An \$85 billion federal spending cut looms on March 1, and many cuts would affect persons needing mental health and humanitarian services.

For the record, I have never smoked pot. But I wonder what would happen if a bill similar to the one proposed by U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, was passed, and portions of the estimated \$20 billion revenue were given to mental health organizations in each state? Would there be less possibility of a mentally troubled person shooting a weapon at innocent children or adults?

It is time to "think outside the box" regarding budget woes, and shooting rampages.

**February 6 2013**

**CAROLYN WEST**

**Ormond Beach**

### **FIND WAYS TO WORK TOGETHER**

The News-Journal recently published two columns by Jonah Goldberg and Leonard Pitts that provide a startling contrast in subject matter, logic and tone. For example, Goldberg argues, in "Trading great good for small benefit," that any effort to control guns is foolish and fruitless. In contrast, Pitts proposes compromise and cooperation with active communication among all parties in Washington.

Goldberg refers to former Food and Drug Administration regulator John O. Nestor's efforts to prohibit new drugs reaching the market because they might be dangerous. He compares this effort to the Obama administration's efforts to control the selling of military-style weapons, high-capacity ammo clips and to require buyer background checks at gun shows. But Goldberg uses a false analogy to make his case, since the new proposal does not try to eliminate 100 percent of guns.

According to United Nations statistics, as reported by The Washington Post, Americans are 20 times more likely to be gunned down than individuals in any other developed country. Certainly these are not figures to be proud of or defend. Even the National Rifle Association should be sobered by the horrific killing in Newtown. Goldberg claims that it's "ridiculously impossible" to keep children from harm, but that does not mean we should give up on trying.

In contrast, Pitts argues that for our country, and its government, to make any progress at all, we must begin to "restore civility to public discourse" and stop allowing partisan politics to freeze most positive legislative efforts such as the compromises suggested by the Obama administration's efforts to control gun violence. Such partisan intractability frustrates sane discussion in a nation where, as Pitts puts it "reason is treason." Maybe we can hope that Goldberg, and the gun advocates he supports, can see beyond their own paranoia to a common-sense solution.

**February 2, 2013**

### **A COLD CALCULATION**

**REINHOLD SCHLIEPER Palm Coast**

The News-Journal's report about closings of public restrooms in a Holly Hill park to save soap that the homeless might use makes that city look exceedingly cynical.

When the homeless can be ticketed for public defecation or public sleeping, the cities of this area should at least support alternate venues. No one should be forced to follow laws that do not acknowledge the facts of our common humanity.

Such a Catch-22 seems much more imposing on the homeless when compared to the burden that putting up a bit more cash for soap would place on the city of Holly Hill.

I wonder when the citizens of this area last listened to "what you have done to these the least of my brothers, you have done to me" (Matthew 25:40).