

**THOMAS WENT OVER THE TOP**  
**By CAROLYN WEST, Ormond Beach**  
**December 22, 2010**

Posted in: Letters to the Editor Tagged:taxes I too am disappointed in the recent tax-compromise bill passed by Congress, especially in the continued tax breaks given to those who can most afford to pay taxes. I hope to heck that the costs to our nation's growing national debt will be worth it if the tax cuts work as the economic "stimulus" that Congress maintains they will.

However, the fulminations of Cal Thomas on your Dec, 15 editorial page seem over the top. For one, Thomas claims that "the left's real concern is that too many people might become independent of government and might have less 'need' of politicians."

What a strange and untrue accusation! I think that the last thing we left-wingers want is for people to become dependent. But we realize that not all people are born into the world with the same advantages. We hope that most folks can pull themselves up by their own boot straps -- but first they've got to have boots.

In fact, the whole idea of the social safety net is to give such people a hand up, rather than a handout. For example, public education is one way out of dependency. I have taught in community colleges for nearly 40 years, committed to the idea that such colleges try to give low-income students a second chance at becoming successful, independent wage earners.

Remember that wage earners pay taxes! Wage earners buy stuff, and the economic stimulus cycle continues in positive directions for both the individuals and the country as a whole. Thus, county, state and federal investment in public education pays off many times over.

Thomas seems to have no concept of "the country as a whole" in considering the economic health of our American society. He goes on to accuse President Obama of "manipulation" and a "shameless theft of Republican ideas." Amazing! Nobody owns ideas.

Yet, to him, it appears that there are those low-down "politicians" and then there are Republicans. But is Thomas so much a troglodyte that he cannot perceive reasonable dialogue?

Perhaps he can't even imagine that some "politicians" might listen to others, might compromise in order to gain what's best for the country instead of only what is good for their political party.

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**NO - BRAINER' WAS RIGHT PHRASE**  
**BY RICHARD "BUD" MURPHY, ORMOND BEACH**  
**November 21, 2010**

Bert Fish Medical Center board member Robert Weiss recently described the decision to merge the Bert Fish Medical Center with Adventist Health as a "no-brainer."

No-brainer may be an apt description. The rationales provided by board members at the continuing "re-enactment" are all good examples of no-brainers. If board members were using their brains, would they cite Adventist Health's near-monopoly of local health care delivery as a strength? For whom? Certainly not overburdened citizens and health care consumers.

Were board members using their brains when they cited Adventist Health's \$6 billion in annual revenues as a strength? Just because Adventist Health is nonprofit doesn't mean they will use locally generated revenues locally. As a multi-state chain, Adventist Health can use revenues anywhere they see a business opportunity -- and given the local saturation, it is not likely to be anywhere near here.

They've demonstrated their business acumen by building a lavish facility on the edge of their service area and leaving behind an abandoned facility. Were board members using their brains when they cited a majority of calls in favor of a merger with Adventist Health? A "Dancing with the Stars" type "call-in" campaign is not how thoughtful decisions are made.

Can promises of a vast hospital chain about future tax burdens be as responsive as commitments from a publicly owned hospital with ongoing accountability to taxpayers and health care consumers? I hope this flawed merger process will be undone and the new effort will be aided by both the light of the Florida Sunshine Law and the light of reason.

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**REMEMBERING WAR'S HORRORS**

**November 17, 2010**  
**HEATHER RAGSDALE**  
**Ormond Beach**

I am a World War II veteran.

I served in the London Fire Service starting June 6, 1939. War was declared when Germany invaded Poland on Sept. 3. England had a treaty with Poland -- if invaded, England would go to her aid. Little did we know what would ensue. During one period of the war the Germans raided and bombed the city of London where I was stationed. Every night for 79 nights, the city was set ablaze. Thirty thousand Londoners were killed -- I lost friends. In one incident a bomb fell on Station 68 in the city. All personnel -- 78 -- were killed. We lost our access to water. It was terrifying. To this day -- at 89 years old -- I cannot tolerate suspense.

I am grateful and happy to live in Florida with many wonderful friends. But I grieve for

every one of our young folks recruited and sent into a war zone, innocent. To learn that we may stay in Afghanistan until 2014 breaks my heart. I think of families ruined, good health destroyed forever. Yes, we are safe here. But please never forget those who are serving abroad, leaving anxious families behind.

Send a prayer that they may escape harm and return home safely.

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**SPRAWL DOESN'T EQUAL JOBS**  
**BY CAROLYN WEST, ORMOND BEACH**

**November 11, 2010**

**Amendment 4**

I find your Nov. 5 editorial ("Voters realized folly of land-use amendment") rather insulting. Nowhere do you make clear why Amendment 4 would have been "folly" except for the argument that voters are too ignorant to understand land-use issues. One reason you give for opposing Amendment 4 is the area's high unemployment rate, suggesting that if developers and builders have more free rein to build "in their preferred locations" that we will be able to "compete effectively for jobs" etc. You, of course, do not mention that the "preferred" location is often where land is the cheapest, farther away from already developed areas. While the land might be cheap for the developer, the taxpayers usually wind up paying unnecessarily to extend utilities, schools and other services to that area. Often those "preferred" areas are vital for water recharge, wildlife corridors, or other such crucial uses, all of which are valuable to the citizenry as a whole. When the quality of life in an area is endangered, it's surprising how well voters can become informed, especially when the issue will affect the future of their communities. If Amendment 4 had passed, it would have required agreement from the residents who would be affected by major changes in the area's comprehensive plan. You tout the figure \$44 million as a cost to citizens, claiming that figure would likely be the price tag for putting land-use changes up for "special elections" by a "popular vote." As I understand it, allowing such voters to choose would certainly not cost that much, as most issues could be placed on the ballot in regularly scheduled election cycles. Perhaps those millions of dollars would be spent by developers and other such monied interests to try to influence the election? We saw such major outlays of cash this fall when these special interests pulled out all the stops to try to defeat Amendment 4.

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**A CASE IN POINT**  
**by ED KOLASKA, Ormond Beach**  
**October 31, 2010**

Responding to The News-Journal editorial regarding Amendment 4, I would like to address the other side of the topic. I take issue with several points made in the "Our View" article Oct. 17.

By voting "No" on the amendment, we would find ourselves in the same predicament that we are in now. That is, the developers would control the politicians. We have chaos now -- why would we want to continue that mode? You also state in your editorial that "if we are

not happy with Congress, the Legislature or the City Council," we can "vote to throw the rascals out." So idealistic! We would have to live through their tenure and endure more of the same during that time.

A few years ago a developer wanted to change the building height of structures in Ormond Beach to accommodate their purchases of vacant land and distressed properties. As bait, the developer pointed out that there would be a greater property-tax base. The City Commission was in favor of this change. What the developer, and possibly the City Commission, did not take into account was that there would be a higher population concentration beach side and this would affect the infrastructure. More people, more vehicles. Would the Granada Bridge be able to accommodate a higher traffic count? No. Is there room for another bridge? No. Would the developer pay for infrastructure requirements? (Sure, when pigs fly.) Fortunately, this issue was brought to a public vote, and the rest is history.

Yes, the government does need a major overhaul. But do not attempt to do that at the expense of the public, by insinuating that voting against the amendment will help solve this problem. If anyone reading this letter cares about maintaining control over what changes are to occur in your general neighborhood, be sure to vote "yes" on Amendment 4. I trust my neighbor more than I trust any politician.

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## **STATE COULD STILL GROW** by **NATALIE DIX, Holly Hill**

**October 31, 2010**

Many articles and letters critical of Amendment 4 say it would slow the economy. I disagree. The amendment would have no effect on the present comprehensive plans previously accepted and registered in Tallahassee, which allow a population of 100 million. That's five times the current population!

Accommodating growth like that will keep developers busy for many years. Finding enough resources-- affordable drinking water, for example -- would slow growth sooner than Amendment 4.

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## **Why interrupt news conference?**

**BY BARBARA TRACY, ORMOND BEACH**

**October 4, 2010**

I am writing this letter immediately following the live presidential news conference (Sept. 24) on our local CBS station, WKMG-TV. I was appalled when it was interrupted (I mentioned it was live, didn't I?) to broadcast a Republican political ad (that was negative).

The live presidential news conference then continues. Not only does this send a loud and clear message of the bias of CBS News -- or at least our local affiliate Channel 6 -- but it also broadcasts their irreverent and unpatriotic attitude, I would have no idea where this outlandish decision was made to interrupt a message from the president of the United States of America to sling some mud on behalf of the Republican Party but, on whatever level, the message to me is that I do not want to be anywhere near them. This is a time in our country that we all need to stand together in a united front. CBS, through its affiliate's action, is attempting to lead its audience in the opposite direction.

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## **INFORM YOURSELF ON GROWTH BY MARTI KING, ORMOND BEACH**

September 28, 2010

The League of Women Voters made an excellent presentation Sept. 22 at the Unitarian Universalist Society on the pros and cons of amendments to be voted on this November. The league doesn't take sides, but it presents the choices and possible effects of each issue.

The presentation was well-attended, and the many questions following the presentation showed that people are very involved in trying to understand the impact their votes will have on our community.

Amendment 4, which would allow citizens to have more influence on how our communities grow, was my main interest, and I came away convinced that voting "Yes" on Amendment 4 is the right thing to do. If local planners and elected officials approve major changes in the local land-use plans, we voters would get to vote our approval or disapproval at the next regular election. There would be no special elections. But "we the people" would get to say how we feel about the proposed land-use change. Please vote for Amendment 4 in our November election!

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## **PUZZLING CONTRAST IN SUGGESTIONS**

August 22, 2010

**CAROLYN WEST, Ormond Beach**

Two letters on your Aug. 17 Opinion page certainly present a contrast in tone, and apparently in intent as well.

In one, League of Women Voters President Sandra Horikami urges readers to explore the issues and research the candidates before voting. She suggests a visit to the local League website ([www.lwvvc.org](http://www.lwvvc.org)), which features questions/answers and other information about candidates and ballot issues.

The league website also includes a description of the nine proposed constitutional

amendments to the state constitution that will appear on the November ballot, as well as background and a pro/con discussion of each.

In contrast, in his "Community Voices" column, Ray Sanchez of The Volusia 9.12 Project speaks of "the forces of tyranny (that) are at hand" and suggests that Congress and the White House "have capitulated to socialist and radical ideologies." He thinks that such capitulation should shake Americans "to the core." Nowhere does he mention specific examples that led him to such conclusions or why he thinks that "only a spiritual revival of American values can strengthen our political will."

Sanchez also offers an organizational website ([www.volusia912.org](http://www.volusia912.org)), which includes a listing of candidates. However, I could not locate specific stands or statements by local candidates, nor reasons why some of them are "preferred" or "approved" by The Volusia 9.12 Project.

I also looked for the nine proposed amendments that will appear on the November ballot. The only discussion about these proposed amendments to the Florida Constitution was an attack on Amendment 4, with no pro/con discussion or specifics, and support for Amendment 9. There was heated discussion supporting repeal of the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (which established the direct election of senators by popular vote.)

It makes me wonder why Sanchez would fan the flames of fear of tyrants and loss of American ideals, while others in his organization support efforts to block or overthrow the voices of the voters and the will of the people.

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**Deltona, House by House**  
**BY ED KOLASKA, ORMOND BEACH**  
**August 15, 2010**

I read the Aug. 10 story about Matthew Armon, and I feel his pain. I have been following the foreclosures in the Sunday editions of The News-Journal for quite some time. Over the past year, I have noted that 25 to 35 percent of the Volusia County foreclosures are in Deltona.

I have wondered to myself how any city can survive, financially or aesthetically, with the lack of income and upkeep of all these vacant properties. Deltona is, obviously, one of the most affordable cities because of the low housing values due to all the foreclosed properties. But the statisticians who come up with all these general analyses do not take into account the underlying details.

I know Deltona received several million dollars from the federal government to assist in buying up these foreclosures to resell them, but that dollar amount is a mere drop in the bucket to what is needed to solve the overall problem. I hope that Matthew's plea to the City Commission provides a spark to generate short-term, and long-term, plans to dig Deltona out of this quagmire. These leaders should look to individuals like Matthew to

overhaul the city one house at a time, one block at a time. Incorporating a plan to revamp the infrastructure must also be implemented.

Thanks for a short, well-structured article by Mark Harper

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## **FRAMING TRANSGENDER ISSUES ON NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH**

**By DAN KENNEDY , COMMUNITY VOICE**

**March 25, 2010 posted in Editorials**

A March 14 lead article in The News-Journal discusses a genotypically (i.e. genetic inheritance) and phenotypically (i.e. internal and external genitalia) female child who basically feels that he is a boy. I use the terms "he" and "his" not only in respect for the wishes of the child and his family (as did the N-J), but also because there is neuroscience research in support of his gender identification as being valid.

The article refers to some "experts" believing that some parents "are just indulging bizarre behavior," while others hold that everyone is "hardwired" at birth with a male or female brain. The latter opinion appears to be well supported by research.

While cognitive psychology was one of my areas of interest during a university career that combined education and psychology, I am not a neuroscientist. However, it is my understanding that neuroscience research has provided clear and strong evidence that humans (and other animals) are born with sexually dimorphic brains. People are born with male or female brains that are clearly distinguishable by structural and organizational characteristics at gross, cellular and molecular levels. For the large majority of people, the brain type (i.e. female or male) is compatible at birth with their genotypic and phenotypic sex type. However, a male brain type is also physically compatible with a genotypical and phenotypical female, and vice versa, and that does sometimes happen.

There is a critical period in utero when human brains become sexually dimorphic (i.e. male or female) due to chemical/hormonal functioning, and this cannot be changed, at least not at the present state of medical science. A hormonal malfunctioning during the critical period can give a physically female infant a male brain, or a physically male infant a female brain. Current scientific research would certainly indicate that this is what accounts for transgender feelings. In a sense, Mother Nature is not always perfect. Kennedy, Ed.D, lives in Ormond Beach.

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## **Whiff of Dead Fish**

**By WALT DeYOUNG , New Smyrna Beach**

**March 5, 2010**

The Associated Press report "Rio fights stench": Nearly 80 tons -- yes, 80 tons -- of various species of fish were washed up on a "popular" Rio De Janeiro beachside lagoon "offending" joggers' olfactory senses, leading the city to fight the stench with disinfectants.

Which, of course, will upset more environmental function. The Rio environmental secretary speculated that increased levels of a "harmful" algae may be the immediate cause of the sudden die-off last Friday.

So, isn't it insightful (the mental state that is) of the me, me, me jogger set? Their narrow-minded concern for their olfactory senses rather than the environmental awakening from tons of dead fish washed up on a popular beach this should have engendered? What an inconvenience! They could have jogged around the stench and pretended it didn't exist.

Lucky for us it was a "popular" beach or we never would have heard about it, because such incidents are and have been occurring and ignored worldwide, including here in Florida, where business interests are able to squash the deleterious effects of algae bloom from hitting the media as much as they should.

Which raises the question: Are these joggers getting healthy to devote their lives to helping the Earth's dilemma or just to eat the next meal? And raise more selfish offspring whose only concern is me, me, me, and the hell with what's happening to our planet, as long as I get mine?

Offending their olfactory senses. Really.

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## **REALISTIC ROUTE TO SOLVENCY**

March 1, 2010

**By EDWARD FLANAGAN , Ormond Beach**

In her Feb. 15 letter "Social Security solvency" Dorothy Guardagnino offers an interesting and useful challenge. Doing the math, her suggestion of deducting \$1 a month from 56 million Social Security checks would collect about two-thirds of a billion dollars a year. Unfortunately, that wouldn't pay the interest on our current national debt for one day!

Over 15 years ago (when the national debt was one-third of its present size), The Concord Coalition was doing the math and sponsoring the Debt Clock to portray the speedy rise of our nation's expenditure of other people's money. It now seems clear that most of us have little concept of the place value of millions, billions and trillions.

Reality will kick in when taxes have to rise steeply (or more money has be raised from foreign sources) to replace trust fund surpluses being spent, year after year, on useless wars, unnecessary entitlements and much more. But Washington will continue to cut taxes as long as special interest sponsors are allowed to contribute big bucks (as free speech?) to elect the Dodds, Shelbys, Leibermans and their overpaid colleagues.

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**February 4, 2010**

**GAMBLING FOR EDUCATION:**



Wow! With Gov. Crist's budget plan, as an out-of-luck gambling parent, I can do what I love most and still get my kid an education!

**L.M. VAN PETTEN, Ormond Beach –B**

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**January 31, 2010**  
**GOP AT THE CORE**

I cannot get over the way the Republicans keep trying to sell their political/economic philology in the face of the eight-year results of 2000 to 2008. They will never have a more favorable opportunity to prove the superiority of their product than in this period. To me, the results were a complete failure.

The results are convincing proof that the real political/economic philology of the GOP is nothing more than to protect and nature the wealthy.

**CHARLES L. McDEARMONT, Daytona Beach–B**

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**January 3, 2010**

**HASTEROK MUST READING**

Pamela Hasterok's Dec. 21 column, "Is beach plan wise? Just asking," should be a must read for those who missed it and a re-read for the rest of us. I tried to write a letter praising and reinforcing her essay, but her writing is too rich to condense without serious loss.

Her final questions are, "Is it good policy for taxpayers to build and own a hotel?" and "Is that the best use of the public's resources?" Among her excellent summary of options and pitfalls: "Is it wise to hire the same consultant who worked for the developers/landowners until September?"

This was journalism at its best.

**EDWARD FLANAGAN, Ormond Beach**