

Letters to the Editor

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Author: Readers, Florida Today

Florida Today

Palm Bay Beltway hits another delay

By Scott Ellis

Melbourne

The loss through veto of \$100,000 in state funds for the Palm Bay Beltway planning provides another excuse for its opponents to delay this critical transportation project.

The Palm Bay Beltway, proposed nearly 10 years ago, provides the only route of transportation relief for tens of thousands of residents living on the west side of the city.

Minton Road now is being used as the major north-south corridor for the residents of not only northwest Palm Bay but ever-increasing numbers from the southwest area.

The beltway, as proposed in 1993, offered an alternative north-south route from Malabar Road to U.S. 192, providing controlled intersection access at Krassner, the regional park, Pace, Emerson and two or three select points north of the city.

Eventually the beltway would extend south around the city to Babcock Street and north as far as the county would desire.

Brevard County collects more than \$8 million annually in local option gas taxes.

That money now has been shifted from capital construction to maintenance and staff salaries.

We need the county gas tax dollars for implementation.

Editor's note: Ellis is the Brevard County clerk of courts.

Solar energy cost is dropping

By Jay Wherley

Melbourne

David Whiteside, in his June 14 letter concerning the cost of solar energy, asked, "So why spend \$28,000 for a system that generates so little electricity, requires maintenance and has diminishing performance?"

In short, because it's the cheapest, cleanest energy you can buy.

Our national energy appetite is not something that changes tastes overnight.

The 4 percent level of alternative fuel use continues to grow as researchers like those at the Florida Solar Energy Center provide more efficient and cost-effective technologies.

Solar energy has dropped in cost by a factor of 10 over the last 20 years -- and it continues to fall.

The Lakeland project, as I understand from the detailed information available at the energy center's Web site -- www.fsec.ucf.edu -- is a test to determine if cooling and other daytime electrical needs can be met via a photovoltaic system.

On the peak day of 1998, the solar efficient house had a 95 percent less net energy demand than just the air-conditioning demand from the control house.

Given enough time, even those requiring a lower pennies-per-kilowatt-hour rate will have a reason to find alternative energy worthwhile.

Also remove pepper trees

By Jan Black

Micco

Unless action is taken by local, state and federal governments in conjunction with private property owners, it would seem that ecotourists drawn to this area to enjoy the Indian River Lagoon Scenic Highway will be disappointed to see only an impenetrable wall of Brazilian pepper trees.

The state could start the process by removing one pepper tree as mitigation for the removal of each potentially canker-infested citrus tree.

With mitigation, some good could come from the eradication effort, and tourism would benefit along with the citrus industry.

Education system needs money

By Quindara Wright

Cocoa

Teachers aren't paid enough. After taxes, an average teacher who has worked for two or three years makes \$16,000 or less a year.

Many have mortgages and children.

Education costs include a campus, equipment, teachers, staffers and supplies.

But who am I to say? I'm just a student growing up in this education system.

Evolution theory is real science

By Kristopher Simons

Orlando

In response to the recent letter by Chip Rohlke who feels that evolution is a religion, currently the theory of evolution is

the only scientific explanation of the diversity of life that exists.

The Intelligent Designer hypothesis has yet to come up with any testable facts.

It can't even define who the Intelligent Designer is.

This designer sounds a lot like a god figure. It's the Intelligent Designer hypothesis that is a religion, not the theory of evolution.

Only science should be taught in the science class. Intelligent Designer, if taught at all, belongs in a comparative religion class.

Let reason set curriculum

By Jim Turner

Merritt Island

The letter by Chip Rohlke on June 18 described perceived problems with the theory of evolution.

The writer decried what he believes is a lack of scientific validity in Darwin's theory and he opposes blind-faith indoctrination of it in educational curricula.

The late Harvard biologist Stephen Jay Gould explained, "There is no 'theory of evolution.' There are many theories. Evolution, however, is fact."

In the 143 years since the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, the arguments against the concept of biological evolution have not changed.

Call it Intelligent Design, Creation Science, or Creationism, the anti-Darwin argument remains a scripturally based position as described in the first chapters of Genesis.

Creation is a perfectly acceptable religious concept. A matter of faith, rather than science.

If one wishes to believe the hand of God stimulates these natural phenomena, no one should debate this matter of faith.

However, reason and not faith should define scientific curricula in public education.

Children face many dangers

By Bruce McBride

Satellite Beach

How can we say children are our greatest asset when priests molesting children were essentially ignored by the Catholic Church?

But take comfort.

The Catholic Church is considering a policy and is developing guidelines.

Recently, the newspaper printed an article about a child molester who was sentenced to two life sentences plus 100 years.

But priests in that category were reassigned to another diocese.

For that matter, how can we say children are our greatest asset when alligators can swim up the canal in a back yard and attack children?

How can we say children are our greatest asset when some neighbor's dog can maul them to death?

Church's power shields abusers

By Steve Schoenfeld

Palm Bay

There is a lot of concern about the lack of accountability for abusive priests. The question is: "How do they get away with it?" The answer is in everyone's minds, but I have yet to hear anyone say it: Power.

The reason teachers are quickly adjudicated and drummed out of teaching is because their union has no power.

If the teachers' union had millions of people walk into its buildings every week, giving tens of millions of dollars every week as does the Catholic Church, then it also would be powerful enough to deflect attention from this issue.

People with power sometimes abuse it. One form of that abuse is to protect their own.

When Congress passed laws to protect women from abusive employers, it exempted itself from the law.

I rest my case.

Boat trip now takes 2 hours

By Tim Boltz

Merritt Island

Letter-writer William Flannigan's June 7 remarks are typical of the uninformed non-boating public.

When I bought my house on Sykes Creek 12 years ago, it took 15 minutes to get to a water sports recreation area. Then a slow zone was created on the north end of Sykes Creek. This added an extra 15 minutes of travel time.

Several years ago, they added more slow zones on the Barge Canal and again I thought, "It's only 15 more minutes."

The new regulations will add another hour and 15 minutes for a total trip time of two hours one way.

Our 5-year-old son is required by law to wear a life vest the whole time the boat is under power. It gets extremely hot at 5 mph. If you would like to know what it is like, the next time you go on a family outing, rent a convertible, put the top down, put on a life vest, and drive to a spot 10 miles away at 5 mph.

Long hours in work week

By L. M. White

Titusville

In response to Bill Larson's recent letter regarding teachers' long hours, I think he has a misconception about the

average person's work week.

My husband is an assistant manager for a major retail store. He, along with the other assistants at his store, work an average of 55 hours per week with only three weeks of vacation per year after being employed for seven years.

If my math is correct, he works 49 weeks per year for a total of 2,695 hours per year for roughly the same pay as a teacher in Brevard County who has about the same number of years on the job. Larson estimated an average teacher works about 2,160 hours per year.

My husband also doesn't have the benefit of having weekends, holidays, spring break and summer vacation off.

I think teachers in general are worth more than they make and should be compensated accordingly.

But if you are going to compare dollar for dollar and hour for hour, I don't think I would be complaining about working 2,160 hours per year vs. 2,695 hours for the same pay.

TV saturated with advertising

By Harry Tucciarone

Viera

At age 81, I can remember when television commercials were only 15 seconds long.

Now groups of commercials last as long as seven minutes.

We spend anywhere from \$300 to \$700 for a TV set, then pay a monthly fee so we can watch it.

Then we get to watch five to seven minutes of commercials every 10 minutes or so.

Change channels?

No way. They are synchronized to show their commercials at the same time.

Where is the Federal Communications Commission? Is this legal?

Does anyone else share my concern?

Return Lindh to Afghanistan

By Wilbur L. Hardy

Viera

When American Taliban John Walker Lindh was captured and discussions were ongoing about whether he should be tried in U.S. courts, I advocated lengthy questioning to extract all the information possible and then returning him to Afghanistan's Northern Alliance for disposition.

Our system of criminal justice was not established to pursue these types of cases, and I thought the defense attorneys would make a circus of a trial.

Now, the defense makes outlandish claims about the poor conditions in which Lindh initially was held.

Compare Lindh's conditions with those of the Taliban just prior to his capture. Compare those conditions to him receiving medical care and food after he was caught.

The circus is just beginning.

I stand by my previous suggestion to return him to the Northern Alliance warlords.

That would save the USA a lot of money and not serve to highlight the exploits of such fanatics.

Baseball players get second place

By Sue Duncan

Indialantic

Eleven energetic 12U-AAU baseball players recently returned to Brevard with a second-place finish in a Super Regional Championship in Charleston, S.C.

Coached by Mark Warr, Gordon Blanke and Pete Columbo, these young dynamos from Melbourne Beach, Palm Bay and Melbourne once again made their community proud.

They deserve thanks for the hard work.

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