

October 7, 2020

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Respect. Aretha Franklin's song asked for just a little bit. Respect for those who rush in to help us: the firefighters, EMTs and policemen. Respect for our Constitution, the cornerstone of our republic, defining our rights and responsibilities as Americans. Respect for our flag, the thirteen stripes symbolizing the federation of independent states and the stars for those who joined the union. Respect for our national anthem, the words composed after the burning of our nation's capital and written by Francis Scott Key while watching the bombardment of Fort McHenry from a ship at the Port of Baltimore. We are the home of the free and the brave.

Respect. Hard to earn, yet easily lost.
Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

November 21, 2019

Legalize young undocumented immigrants

An executive policy decision by an American president is only valid as long as that individual resides in the Oval Office.

A legislative answer, a bill passed by both Houses of Congress and signed into law by the President, is the only path forward to address the illegal immigration of children brought into America with their parents.

The Eleventh Amendment to our Constitution concerning the judicial power of the United States does not extend to any suit in law or equity of citizens or subjects of any foreign state.

Immigrants have a rich history of learning the language, working hard to advance and educate themselves, pay taxes and serve in the Armed Forces. They joined the "melting pot" of America, not the "salad" of their difference.

The so-called "Dreamers" speak English, contribute by their hard work and education, pay taxes and some have found a way to enlist to protect America.

Surely our elected representatives can find a way forward for them to join us and become Americans. After two previous administrations failed to achieve a consensus, times up.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

Greta's climate demands don't go far enough

Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg's powerful scolding speech to the countries of the United Nations assembly concerning the effects of global pollution did not go far enough.

Call them out by name. The worst polluters are in Asia: India, Pakistan, Iran and China. Countries producing the most CO₂ are China number one, at double the U.S. rate, with India third, at half the U.S. rate.

The top 500 most polluted cities by particulate matter are also in Asia. There were no U.S. cities found in the top 1,000. California has five of the top 10 in the United States. Increasing industrialization and urbanization, dependence on steel and coal industries, chemical waste, and wrong waste disposal are the leading causes.

In her speech, Thunberg talked about the economically profitable motivation countries have to continue their environmental devastation. Boycott them. Find the many ways we can support her cause. Refuse to accept the birthday/holiday present or "must"-have bauble produced by them. Money can be a powerful motivator.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

October 4, 2019

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

everything else?

Increasing taxes will kill the golden geese that lay the golden eggs, the dynamic motivating engine that propels investment and innovation. The money tree will wither and new shoots will fail to appear if the "tax the rich" mantra (determined by whom) succeeds to further burden our Republic.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

Unacceptable

I find the health care proposals this election cycle unacceptable and unsustainable.

Why do we want to burden the already overstressed Medicare/Medicaid programs?

Where are the standard health care ideas for prevention, doctor visits, blood work, and generic medications? If these are provided with no out-of-pocket expense, shouldn't there be a requirement to have a supplemental insurance policy to pay for

August 11, 2019

May 11, 2019

Too many visas

Seriously, 30,000 more visas? Double and triple that number (illegally) have come into the United States every month for years.

If you are a well-connected tech or media company, you have replaced long-term experienced workers legally with foreign help and reduced costs while have them train their replacements.

They were not jobs that no one else wanted. To address the need legislators need a paradigm shift.

I suggest have any foreigner that is employed – legal or not – register and receive a biometric ID. Check in and confirm their employment status to stay or inform us that they are going back home until the seasonal job is available again, present the ID and return.

Remove the costs of the black market shadow economy and collect the taxes to help the soon (so I have read) to be insolvent Social Security and Medicare systems.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

April 1, 2019

Caution in arming teachers

Trying to find the scenario where guns in schools is an acceptable solution to the threats our children face is elusive. Arming teachers introduces a rabbit hole of alarming unintentional consequences.

How will they be stored and kept safely out of the hands of other students and faculty? Fingerprint ID's to open the case or storage locker? The tracking and location is also a concern. Building walls and escape rooms suggesting a prison-like atmosphere for higher learning?

I urge caution because the consequences of any scenario is unknown.

**Steven Graves
Fort Lauderdale**

December 7, 2018

History is full of unpopular presidential decisions

From the beginning of our Republic, America's presidents have made tough and controversial decisions. The Whiskey Tax to pay off the war debt and support the fledgling federal government was vehemently rejected and many western Pennsylvania farmers rebelled against it (Thomas Jefferson was against the tax). George Washington as commander-in-chief personally led the militia to resolve the dispute.

The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 became the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy toward European affairs (noninterference), Abraham Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus during the Civil War to maintain order (arrest and detain without trial), and FDR was able to pass the Lend-Lease Act despite opposition from members of Congress, public opinion and the Neutrality Act. George H.W. Bush ended the first Gulf War after 100 hours. Many disagreed with ending it, especially after the systematic slaughter of Iraq's own citizens under Saddam Hussein outside the no-fly zone.

The closing of the southern border will be just the latest example of a tough and controversial decision made by an American president.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

2016 election was the perfect storm

The 2016 presidential election could be viewed as the perfect storm of American politics. A well-known, seasoned politician is unable to overcome personal baggage. One party is financially strapped and a candidate uses that for influential bias to secure the grey area of nomination delegates.

Hacked emails are released suggesting a point of disdain toward the voter, coupled with public "nasty" words. Pent up frustrations

that have been glossed over again and again are addressed by a politically incorrect novice candidate, which inspires many and causes mainstream opponents to fall by the wayside.

The disruption of the status quo, after effects of the storm, continues.

**Steven Graves,
Fort Lauderdale**

July 22, 2018

Safely landed flight is proof heroes exist

The engine failure on a Southwest Airlines flight (piloted by Captain Tammie Jo Shults) that sent the plane into a 40 degree bank could have become much worse very quickly; for instance, a barrel roll, an inverted dive, or an almost unrecoverable death spiral powered by the thrust from only one side of the aircraft. A quick decent without knowing the damage to the wing and how much speed and stress the plane could handle is another factor.

A successful crosswind landing requiring pitch correction from a single engine — already providing yaw at high speed that did not blow out the tires — is proof that miracles happen and that there are heroes among us.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

April 23, 2018

No end to gun-control debate

"Here we go again" is a phrase we should get used to hearing now. The talking heads will lament over the cancer overtaking America's humanity. Gun violence is everywhere — from the inner cities of the gang drug wars to the rural outposts of our smallest communities. Excuses will be made for the legislative inaction as the regulation/control debate wanders through the halls of Congress. Bill Murray "sings" it best — When will we ever learn? It's all about the Benjamins.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

November 10, 2017

leaves the area he was assigned. A musician leaves his nightclub gig and his car breaks down going home. The musician is on the phone when a nondescript white van stops near him. The audio is being recorded by the roadside assistance operator. Then Nouman Raja makes a rookie mistake; tactically unsound, unsafe and grossly negligent. But he was not a rookie. A few moments later the musician is dead.

The forensics as reported: the policeman was not wearing his vest nor announced himself as one. The musician had a permit for his gun, the chamber was empty and the safety was on. One of Corey's wounds was from the back.

I find the "stand your ground" defense a most deplorable and disgraceful shadow upon our men and women that serve and protect our community with honor and distinction. The apples to oranges comparison of the Corey Jones-Nouman Raja confrontation to a person carrying a very realistic looking air rifle with earbuds, blocking the commands of a uniformed officer who exited a clearly and distinctly marked vehicle is impertinent and irrelevant (And the height of insolent rudeness. You think we're idiots?).

When the dust clears, one will still be dead and the other disgraced. It is indeed a tragedy.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

February 2, 2018

Musician-former cop confrontation tragic

The information released about the death of Corey Jones is disturbing and has the elements of a terrible tragedy. A police officer still in the 90-day probationary period

People in path of weapons deserve safety assurances

Shooting a rocket straight up almost eight times higher than the orbit of the International Space Station is quite different than launching a guided missile to a faraway target. Geo-spatial targeting is not the same as the point-and-shoot demonstrations that fell into the Sea of Japan.

Launch failures from the early days of America's space program and errant trajectories should give Russia and China pause as they too could be in the landing area. Especially if more powerful rockets to deliver a heavy payload (nuclear) are tested. China's concern over refugees is well-founded since many/most North Koreans live in absolute abject poverty according to several "not fake" news sources. The international community needs to assure them that assistance will be gladly given should the need occur from regime change.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

July 19, 2017

April 17, 2017

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Preserve statues and our history

For me, removing Civil War statues seems similar to ISIS and the Taliban destroying artifacts from the past; the Roman city of Palmyra and the Buddha statues at Bamiyan — getting rid of anything found personally offensive. Visit the Vatican Museum and see first-hand the marble sculptures with pieces of their privates chopped off because a previous pope found them vulgar and insulting. The writings of ancient scholars were lost when the Great Library in Alexandria, Egypt burned to the ground. Cause unknown.

The history I see is one where wealthy plantation owners (the 1 percent) became colonels and commanders safe in the rear ranks as the poor white sharecroppers were forced into conscription to become cannon fodder on the battlefields. These soldiers were given no courtesy or respect. Without these relics, would our children seek out the Andersonville POW camp and learn about the conditions there even though it is a national museum?

These symbols connect us to the horrors at the Battle of Antietam, Gettysburg, and Shiloh, to name just a few. They should not fade into the shadows and become an inconvenient truth of our past.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

February 18, 2017

Immigration debate raises tough questions

If an individual has immigrated here illegally for employment and has a job, give them a work permit and let them stay. If they are fleeing political or religious persecution, should temporary refugee status be extended and access to federal and/or state entitlement programs granted?

The woman in Colorado seeking sanctuary from a church did not help her cause by not communicating in English, having been in America for 20 years. Many view it as an insult since it does not promote tolerance but rather exclusion; a refusal to coalesce, to fuse and unite into a whole.

Immigrants annihilated the Tequesta Indians through their diseases, and are responsible for the Trail of Tears as indigenous people were resettled once and then again when their land became valuable. Many were indoctrinated into a religion not their own, and a way of life for the plains inhabitants was destroyed as the buffalo were driven to the edge of extinction. Not something to have pride in. Should we be wary since history has a way of repeating itself?

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

November 26, 2016

When will 'Free at last' ring true in America?

I wasn't quite five years old when Martin L. King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech on the National Mall. The closest I had come to experiencing the racist bigotry of color was a few years earlier at the "colored only" bathroom in the Kansas City railroad station, not really knowing what that meant.

The wisdom of judging a person on their character still rings true. When I hear someone say, "they look like me," I can't help but wonder, "So you act like them? Did you sell drugs at school or bring a loaded weapon onto campus?" Using color in a sentence or statement exemplifies one's own bigotry and racism sinking one further into the quicksand of injustice.

America's promissory note of tolerance has been returned "insufficient funds." We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last." When will it ring true?

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Concerned about foreign workers

Common ground might be found in the land of fantasy, or more likely it has been swallowed up by the rising tide of climate change (global environmental pollution). He said, she said — literally — has yet to touch on a big concern for me: the use of third party contractors to circumvent H-1B legislation and replace American citizens with foreign workers (e.g. Disney). In so many incidences, they train their replacements. So wrong.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

August 8, 2016

Questions linger on impact of Bahia plan

Should the Bahia Mar property be developed? Probably. Other proposals have included building a casino but the issue of expanding gambling in the state was not approved by the voters.

I do have some questions though. The traffic issue is a concern. Can more lanes be added in front? Will the state help pay for it since A1A is a state road? The extra height for the condos would be a significant resource for property tax revenue. Can it be earmarked for our new aquatic center? Would the county commissioners agree to do so? Keeping the economic engine of the boat show in place is important to many businesses here. Is their commitment a "done deal?"

Some of the stuff seems to be just fluff. A grocery store? If the residents and vacationers would use it, sure. The offerings would most likely be expensive though. Other things such as the wind tunnel blowback from the east and how it might influence the Tortuga country music concert, now a cultural staple for us, should be part of the overall discussion too.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

February 2, 2016

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Iran on a path to war

History seems to be repeating itself, as it usually does, and politicians seem to be practicing the definition of insanity over and over again.

How can we really be certain that Iran doesn't have "the bomb" already? Was the stuxnet computer virus that successful? How many centrifuges do they actually have? The inspection process lends itself to speculation and doubt.

If we could show their citizens the burned-in shadows of Japanese people vaporized at Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the blisters, deformities and eventual painful deaths of the firefighters at Chernobyl, or even the consequences of war on the civilian population, maybe the leaders of Iran might take a step back from nuclear development.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

August 26, 2015

Nation's promise lost along the way

Immigration to America started long before the end of the 16th century, before the Spanish brought disease to the Tequesta Indians of Florida, before Jamestown, maybe even before the Bering Sea ice bridge brought people from Asia.

The pilgrims came looking for religious freedom but it wasn't long before intolerance brought the Salem witch trials. Famine and starvation brought others. Violence from drugs, human trafficking, religious oppression and discrimination around the world have brought many to our shores because we represent that guiding light of hope. Now that violence dogs us at every turn.

Disease, intolerance, discrimination and violence. The 21st century had such promise.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

November 29, 2014

Reflecting on some issues of the day

Some things on my mind:

1. Red-light cameras are about revenue, otherwise the warning sign wouldn't be 50 feet behind you when you cross the intersection. If it's really about safety, put the sign next to the traffic signal.

2. I wish there were more educational money for everyone. The lottery and general tax legislation of the 1980s has proven there is not.

3. Giving preferential treatment to one takes an available seat from another.

4. I would love to accept the \$51 billion from Washington D.C. to expand Medicaid, but we will have to pay 10 percent of that eventually.

5. Religious freedom depends on which side of the line you're on. All faiths have their correct points of view.

6. Businesses risk missing out on the experience offered by stay-at-home moms trying to re-enter the workforce: Resolving squabbles and petty differences, offering motivation, supervising homework, and the list goes on.

7. It is sad that history has treated Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula so poorly. They gave up 1,600 nuclear devices for world peace. They were a

partner in commerce with Russia and accepted the Black Sea naval base, instead of tourist destination resorts.

8. I pray that when young people are faced with the choice of violent confrontation, they remember Michael Jackson's song "Beat It" and live to see another day.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

April 12, 2014

Fort Lauderdale is more, so much more

The Onion's keen sarcasm of Fort Lauderdale might have had "legs" in the 50's when a poor black man, on the wrong side of the tracks after dark and lacking \$15 in his pocket, would be taken to jail. Today, Fort Lauderdale is light years beyond the "Where The Boys Are" debauchery.

Downtown began redevelopment after Fort Lauderdale High School was moved and replaced by the Landmark building. Being less than 100 years old, the locals were thrilled when trademark Coca-Cola gas line caps were rediscovered from the pioneer times. The Performing Arts Center, an IMAX theater, and Museum of Discovery were a mere dream 30 years ago.

For a city so young, it has deep roots with the military — from the Naval Air Station training pilots to the Korean War fighter jet in front of the War Memorial

auditorium.

Fort Lauderdale has become more than miles of public beaches, culinary delights, and multi-national cultures of social diversity. But those of us who live here know that.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

May 16, 2013

Nuclear energy

Sixty-seven years ago a nuclear device was dropped on a Japanese city in an attempt to end a bloody world war. The military rulers refused. A second one was dropped killing many thousands more and finally civilians won peace.

The near meltdown of the Three Mile Island nuclear energy plant in 1979, the mismanagement at Chernobyl in 1986 that created a "dead zone" and the unforeseen geological event in Japan last year, has again warned the world of the terrible human costs associated with the pursuit of nuclear power.

The ruling government of Iran seems unwilling to accept this possibility as they rush to build "Armageddon" and more than willing to accept the price of economic hardship for its citizens and the potential for a nuclear catastrophe.

Their argument is baseless. It's not about them, it's about the civilians of the Earth who will have to deal with the results of

their actions.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

August 29, 2012

Ecological accommodation is the buzz word

Clarity seems to be even more obscured than usual this election cycle by the fog of political sound bites and photo ops.

Energy independence; coal, gas fracking, deep water oil drilling and nuclear all have serious engineering challenges. Burning coal at higher temperatures can significantly reduce its toxic output, the casings for fracking and deep water drilling are an essential part for environmental safety, and nuclear Gen III reactors have their own long laundry list of scenarios before they can be considered safe. Solar and wind energy efficiency are nowhere near the cost effective replacement value yet.

Burying the Keystone pipeline on America's greatest natural resource, the Ogallala aquifer; the one that enables us to grow the food that feeds the world, is so short-sighted (corrosion, leaks, visual maintenance).

Long-term problems occur when the easy answers to complex solutions are not fully vetted.

Ecological accommodation is the new buzz phrase for climate change (global warming).

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

April 15, 2012

December 31, 2011

Peace takes hard work

The back and forth “discussion” about America’s current administrations friendship with Israel made me wonder how we got here.

The State of Israel arose from the ashes of the crematoriums, the corpses of the concentration “death” camps, and the inhumanity of Hitler’s “final” solution.

Peace can be an elusive goal due to a deep, bitter hatred neighbors have against neighbors. Generations of youth have been lost from the rallying cry of religious differences with the eastern Mediterranean becoming a wasteland from the battlefield of war.

Yet a door to peace opened when the Sinai was returned to Egypt and aggression from the Golan Heights ceased.

I want to live in a world of peace, prosperity, and enlightenment. Not a reality from aggression of nuclear annihilation or the prophesies of the four horsemen; the end of man on Earth going the way of the dinosaurs to extinction.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

LETTERS

The new 21st century high

So, America’s economy needs another “shot in the arm.” In the 1970s that phrase referred to IV drug abuse. Now I understand. We are addicted to stimulus, the be all, do all “high” of the 21st century. The pusher — our government — claims we will feel good. Just try it one more time. Everything will be better.

The other similarities are strikingly ominous. Steal from your neighbor to get it (government safety net programs), buy it from the bad guys who hate you (foreign debt) and ultimately pay for it with your health (a sunken/sullen lifeless expression of social and economic decline).

Then the pain of withdrawal.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

September 17, 2011

April 16, 2011

Medicare, Medicaid both vital

Re Medicare and Medicaid:

Consider an older person, around 60, facing the costs of medical care. Life-choices made may have given one the financial ability to overcome the economic realities of the expense. Higher education, entrepreneurial success, or long term employment, which includes retirement medical benefits, do not make up the majority of U.S. citizens. That is why we have Medicare/Medicaid.

Quality of life is just one aspect of the programs' benefits. Seniors can remain a vibrant and productive part of our society. They volunteer their time, share their knowledge and wisdom and allow an oral history with the emotions and passions you can't get out of a book.

Let the bean counters have their say. At the end of the day, the leg they stand on will come from America's social safety net.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

November 19, 2010

November 1, 2009

Limiting guns is folly

After the British were defeated at Yorktown, the 13 colonies had a choice: Join together as a federation of states with a central government or become individual countries. Fearful of either, the citizens demanded certain immediate rights that became the first 10 amendments to their Constitution, superseding all laws that the federal or states' governments might enact — the right to bear arms being central to the covenant of our union.

Should some states succeed in their argument of the separation of powers and "state's rights," then state elections would also not be bound to other constitutional amendments like voting rights, and a return of poll taxes and gender and race limitations would surely follow. It is indeed a slippery slope.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

We must get past prejudice to advance as a civilization

The 19th century gave us the ability to communicate through radio and then television. The combustion engine gave us the freedom afforded by the automobile. Coupled with the Wright brothers' ingenuity and followed by the invention of the jet aircraft, travel across the globe was reduced to hours instead of days. Advances in agriculture have enabled us to feed the world.

Today we can heal in vitro, provide synthetic limbs to the crippled, and solve a plethora of maladies. The Internet provides information at our fingertips. Nanotechnology has allowed us to construct smaller devices at a micron scale.

The new millennium brings us to the cusp of a golden age of humanity. If we can just get past our prejudice of sex, race and religion, we can climb that mountain that leads to the promised land.

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

Shedding light on stereotypes

When the force of the debate of your argument descends to your sex, your race, or your religious orientation, that is why your point of view is better. It's more correct, or just plain more right than a perceived stereotype image. What does that say of the person listening to you and accepting your conclusions as true?

Steven Graves, Fort Lauderdale

June 4, 2009

April 19, 2008

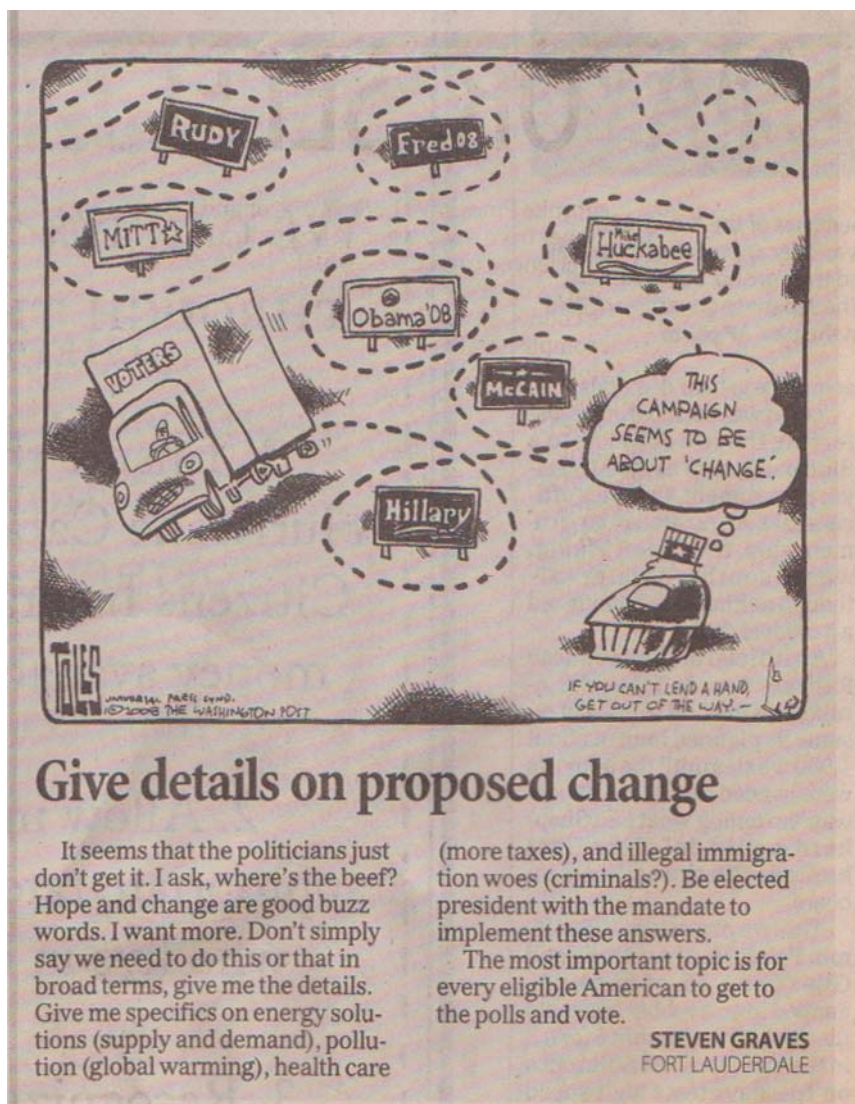
Water shuffle

Ah, at last a glimmer of truth concerning our water woes. Andy Reid's article in Tuesday's Local section has much of the information we need to expose the sham of the drought.

Because the Lake Okeechobee dike "poses a grave and imminent danger [of collapsing]," knowledge gained after the May 2006 engineering report, the level of the dike will never reach a 14-foot levee until the reinforcement project is completed years from now.

Something to think about when the spinmeisters try to explain why your water bill goes up as your consumption goes down. Sort of like the price of oil, huh?

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE



Give details on proposed change

It seems that the politicians just don't get it. I ask, where's the beef? Hope and change are good buzz words. I want more. Don't simply say we need to do this or that in broad terms, give me the details. Give me specifics on energy solutions (supply and demand), pollution (global warming), health care

(more taxes), and illegal immigration woes (criminals?). Be elected president with the mandate to implement these answers.

The most important topic is for every eligible American to get to the polls and vote.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

April 25, 2007

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tax 'solutions' seem more problematic than helpful

There are many things wrong with the property tax reforms being proposed.

Increase the sales tax to send to Tallahassee and hope they send it back? How confident should we be over that?

If the annual income of a household is \$946,000 and the annual cost of a 2 percent sales tax hike (estimated, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, Feb. 25) is \$4,033, then I say the people are probably living in a multimillion-dollar home and are currently paying at least \$20,000 in property taxes, maybe have a water view and more than 3,000 square feet of living space.

The current situation we find

ourselves in is the very reason we have the "Save Our Homes" protection. Just because your neighbor(s) wanted to sell their home(s) for a substantial profit to someone willing and able to pay, doesn't mean that you want to move also or that the value of your home is worth as much. Many Floridians would have been forced out of their homes years ago. Is it fair for long-term residents to pay more because property "flippers" and speculators have increased the supposed value?

We have become our own worst obstacle for less expensive homes. Developers are required to pay for the roads, set aside some of their land for public use (parks and

community centers), and are delayed by seemingly endless litigation, although some of it is of their own doing.

The focus is on collecting, not spending our taxes. There have been several instances in the last five years of wasteful and extravagant purchases (buildings and real estate, some not even used) with the extra \$13 plus billion statewide that we have entrusted to our public servants.

And now one of the biggest tax spenders is our tax collector?

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

Protect troops

We are in Iraq. I do not wring my hands with worry over "was it the right thing?" The events on the ground tell me it was to be.

A sandstorm stopped the advance of our troops until a field of land mines could be exposed, saving the lives of hundreds. Many individual acts of bravery, such as at the international airport, changed the tide of battle. Saddam Hussein was a tyrant who used every horrifying weapon at his disposal throughout his tenure of oppression and murder.

My disappointment has been with all of the elected officials of both parties. From the failure to get used donated bullet-proof vests that were collected by a Gainesville deputy over there because of a "tax" problem, to the efforts by the families of the Alabama National Guard to get steel-covered Humvees only to find after the fact that their modifications would make it prone to roll over, endangering the lives of those they were trying to protect.

Like all patriotic Americans, I want our troops home. It is neither cut and run nor stay the course that is important, but how well we honor our country's foundations of freedom, justice and individual liberties that we give to others that will define America.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

January 30, 2007

don't sneak in like a thief in the night nor greet me at the back door like some indentured servant or slave.

The fact is all of America's ancestors came from somewhere else. Even the "native" Indians crossed the Bering land bridge from Asia during an ice age. According to anthropologists, we're all Africans! To find an answer to handle the current wave of immigration, we only need to look at our history.

Uncontrolled immigration through California for the building of the transcontinental railroad brought a culture of drug addiction and disease with the results being discrimination and a laissez-faire attitude over their deaths from the hard, dangerous work available to them. Gang violence was a common occurrence.

Controlled immigration through such places as Ellis Island helped them assimilate and kept out the sick and criminals. It also helped instill a sense of pride to be an American. (An example of uncontrolled immigration would be the westward migration in the 1800s. It destroyed a buffalo-based economy, native language was replaced by a foreign tongue, and now they inhabit small pockets of land called reservations that are in some ways similar to the "gated"

communities we find across the country. Alcoholism and illiteracy are major problems.)

We should not cheapen the task to become an American nor give unwarranted benefits to those hiding in the shadows.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

July 23, 2006

Migrant workers could use H-1B

We have a government program for H-1B workers. Why don't we have the same for migrant laborers? The diversity of America is one of our greatest strengths. I want people to come to America — the land of the free and the home of the brave, the world's great experiment in democracy that began in 1776. But

Inflated opinion?

Imagine a speck of dust on a grain of sand along the deep ocean within a small blue planet orbiting a common yellow star sitting beside the edge of an obscure galaxy resting among one of the indefinite places in the known universe. And religion(s) believe that we are the linchpin to the entire cosmos? The interstellar void filled with our enormous ego is only exceeded by our capacity for ignorance.

Maybe, in a millennia, should we survive our current chaos, we will do something. But it will happen because of our capacity for love; not revenge, hate, or our propensity for violence.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

March 20, 2006

Letters to the Editor

Amendments and our rights

Concerning the challenge to executive orders creating the White House office of the faith-based and community initiatives and similar centers in 10 federal agencies: Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution vests executive power in a president of the United States. However, Article 1, Section 9 states that no money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law (through Article 1, Section 1), all legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States and (Article 1, Section 8) to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever.

It seems to me that any funding appropriation made by the executive branch not legislated through Congress is wrong. How can a federal judge rule that taxpayers have no standing to challenge funding appropriations made by the executive branch when the 10th Amendment states: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people" (us, the taxpayers).

January 21, 2006

There is no right to privacy as there is no right to an abortion, but we do have the right through the Fourth Amendment to be secure in (our) persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures ... but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the person(s) or thing(s) to be seized. If "seizure" is invoked, by what probable cause I cannot imagine, then this "person(s) or thing(s)" (child!) becomes a possession of the state. Imagine your parent being the federal government.

Finally, there are four amendments securing our right to vote: Amendment 15 (Feb. 3, 1870) race, color ... servitude, Amendment 19 (Aug. 18, 1920) sex, Amendment 24 (Jan. 23, 1964) poll tax, and Amendment 26 (July 1, 1971) age. It seems like it is the one right someone is constantly trying to take away, yet one that we fail to counsel fully.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

Where to point finger of blame

Let's see: 3 million customers times five days (for a lot of us many, many more) times \$10 a day (more or less) equals \$150 million. I don't recall a shutdown of Turkey Point from diminished demand. All of the power plants work at an optimum efficient capacity. Florida Power & Light Co. didn't lose any money; they just supplied power to the grid at a different profit margin. And don't tell me that our government, insurance agencies and the power companies can't afford to bury the power lines. Developers do it and still make money.

Don't expect a rebate or a goodwill credit from Comcast. They don't have to. We pay by the month. Good weather, bad weather, sun spots ... it doesn't matter.

Synchronize the traffic lights? Get real. We have been trained for years to speed to make the lights that the traffic engineers will now adjust (again) to give us expensive tickets to support an inefficient, wasteful and poor planning government apparatus that we have voted in.

Eventually, we will be

blamed for all of this because of global warming and our (selfish?) desire to ride instead of walk, eat something besides wild berries, and enjoy life in air-conditioning (for a few more months, January/February for us Floridians is just around the corner) instead of ... Well, you get the message.

The buck stops here, but the finger points to us, not them.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

November 13, 2005

September 21, 2005

Meet challenge

It doesn't matter that human waste cluttered the streets, that garbage filled the gutters or a shower/bath left you feeling dirty and wanting another after Katrina arrived. It doesn't matter that there were black-on-black crimes of rape and murder, roaming bands of armed thugs promoting anarchy and lawlessness, or that the situation has filled the heart with despair and anger.

What matters is how we reach out to those in need. What matters is how we face the faceless multitude crying for help. What matters is how we as a nation answer the call to action, to find the solutions, to meet the challenge that will define our greatness as Americans, as human beings, as citizens of the world.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

Different faiths

The differences between Muslims and Christians boil down to this: One says God is great and the other says God is love.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

Quick fixes for most problems

So many issues, so little space in the newspaper.

Concerning the looming water shortage: There is a viable solution patented by the U.S. Energy Department. It is Ocean Thermal, U.S. Patents 4,210,819 and 4,210,820.

Concerning the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport expansion: Give the problem to Miami International Airport by building a high-speed monorail between the two with the \$500 million. (Is that all it's going to cost?!) Concerning the Muslim terrorist murderers: If the Muslim communities are so outraged, where are the protest rallies against the beheadings?

Gay marriage? Sure. We've already seen how the Connecticut millionaire didn't want to divide his assets with his "life" partner. The separation of church and state is very clear in the Constitution. Just don't use religious differences as a hate crime.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

June 14, 2005

June 12, 2004

Letters to the Editor

Lack of concern led to Sept. 11

The commission investigating the events before the Sept. 11 horror seems to be a forum for the political harpies seeking traction for their favorites. A glimmer of the elements leading up to a connecting link to the terrorists' success and America's failure glosses over one vital aspect.

It tears at the very fabric of our free society. Reports have been made that many other nongovernmental individuals, through either rumor or complacent smugness, did not find the anxiety (an abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear) their concern and were able to cope with their intimate knowledge of what might and indeed did happen.

This loss of caring and concern for our fellow human beings by whatever rationale they prescribed to themselves has exposed a much larger emotional deformity in our free society. The narcissistic tendency by a few has brought a foreboding evil upon us all.

"We must remember that any oppression, any injustice, any hatred is a wedge designed to attack our civilization." — Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1940.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

Citizens initiative stance expected

I was not surprised to read your opinions, "Constitutional amendments: Flawed process needs repair." At a time when very few registered voters participate in the process because their opinions are not heard or their vote doesn't matter, you advocate taking away another choice. Don't tell me that big bucks donors aren't influencing legislation. Remember the Everglades Restoration bill passed this year?

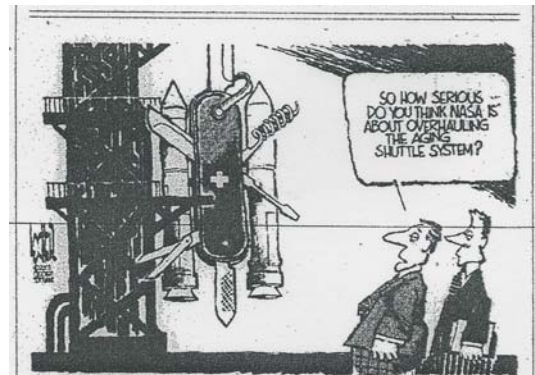
And why does every discussion seem to spiral downward to the unfunded mandate for a bullet train? Maybe we're tired of the asphalt expansion over our diminishing natural beauty that is Florida. Can you admit or even consider the benefits that fewer cars will have upon the health of Florida? When you quote the expense of the project, balance it with road dollars conserved and the health benefits from lower auto emissions. Auto fatalities would decrease if there were a bullet train between here and Naples.

The citizen initiative process yells, "We're not happy and we demand change." We vote for representatives to legislate, the power to write and pass laws. When they don't listen because we're the little people that don't have the time or money to influence the laws being passed, we must become the "squeaky wheel" to get the job done.

Your opinion of "legislative initiative" is just another way to muddy and delay the voting process and sweep us, the concerned citizens of Florida, under the rug.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

December 8, 2003



Redesign shuttle's launch phase

The greatest achievement of mankind in the 20th century could be our achievement of space flight. Our ability to slip through our home's gravity and move through our solar system to explore and learn is truly a special accomplishment.

But the continuity of our success is at risk. While, indeed, the shuttle program has been a remarkable victory over 20-plus years, recently it has been found lacking. The safety of the orbital vehicle is not 100 percent. The launch phase of the project's design has failed and must be redesigned. The debris field of the solid rocket boosters and the liquid fuel tank should never, ever endanger the vehicle again.

(There are more than 400 debris field hazards occurring in the first five minutes after lift-off. Most significant dangers involve the explosive bolts for separation from the launch pad, the solid rocket boosters, and the liquid fuel tank.)

The liquid-fueled rocket motors should be placed in a separate first-stage platform that can be recovered, inspected and reused. Additional lift-off thrust requirements would continue to use the solid rocket propulsion system. Yes, each flight's cost would be more, but this fundamental change must be achieved for a return to flight safety. The inherent dangers of space flight require it. The search for our astronauts' safety demands it.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

August 10, 2003

The worst of the aggressive drivers

If you haven't driven west on the 17th Street

Causeway to Federal Highway (U.S. 1), you are missing a truly awesome South Florida experience. Some of the most rude, aggressive and dangerous drivers ply their road rage there.

The most interesting spectacle occurs at the intersection of Miami Road. Some drivers turn left here, thinking that they can beat the congestion to State Road 84 and quickly bypass others to Interstate 595. However, the area speed limit is 25 and the traffic enforcement there loves to hand out citations.

Then there are the drivers in the middle lane poised to pounce on the slow movers and unsuspecting ones with a quick lane change or a forceful "Let me merge in," usually without a turn signal.

In the late afternoon, as traffic backs up eastward beyond Publix, the really special people want their importance and righteous savings of a few moments given to them.

Don't miss the next exciting display of our finest example of "me-firstism." Coming again today.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

May 9, 2002

Slow federal growth, reduce taxes for all

In January of this year, [Federal Reserve Chairman Alan] Greenspan speculated that current conditions envisioned paying off the debt in five years. That's \$3.5 trillion in five years (\$700 billion per year). He then warned about the consequences, the effect on the Treasury markets and suddenly having huge surpluses in year six. A premium would be required to retire outstanding debt before its maturity.

A \$1.6 trillion reduction over 10 years (\$160 billion a year) doesn't seem all that much when you consider the fact that real government spending is almost \$2 trillion this fiscal year. And why pay

more to retire the national debt than you have to?

Of course these numbers are not a fixed yearly amount divisible by five (debt reduction) or 10 (tax reduction). It is an ever-increasing curve to larger amounts based on productivity, unemployment and economic expansion.

Are President Bush's proposals fair? I think slowing the growth of government spending is a great idea. Many departments still increase more than the rate of inflation, and everybody should get some kind of tax relief. OK, a small percentage of a large number is still big, but success is still the American dream. Don't penalize hard work and discourage the desire for betterment.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

March 19, 2001

January 14, 2000

Right questions offer insights into candidate

Some may call it "ambush" journalism but in some circumstances it is a valid way to achieve a keener insight about a candidate.

If Edward Kennedy had stated that his desire for the presidency was "because the government of the United States is not doing its best for the people of the United States," could he have beaten Jimmy Carter for the Democratic nomination?

What if Lamar Alexander had answered the New England milk price question differently? What if he had demonstrated his knowledge about how the current price is achieved through regulation and monetary supports and then commented on his feelings toward them?

Our latest guerrilla exposure to a candidate's persona was the four-leaders question. I believe that Texas Gov. George W. Bush should have responded differently. Who a country's leader is today is not as important as an understanding of how those people live and the influence their culture and history plays, such a large part of their daily lives.

Yes, Pakistan's leader is "the general" but, to me at least, the how

Berry's World



and the why he is now in power (historical military rule and civilian political corruption) is more important from a foreign policy standpoint than simple name "recalling."

A creative answer is needed for the 21st Century's situations of debt and taxes, not Donald Trump's quick fix.

Our next executive should be able to see, understand and verbally confer the "Big Picture" for all of the actions initiated from the executive mansion. We need a good leader in the White House.

STEVEN GRAVES
FORT LAUDERDALE

Beach redevelopment has been a huge disaster

I would like to say a few words about the beach redevelopment situation in Fort Lauderdale. So the beaches' "escape plan" to pay for a five-year delay and millions wasted in fees is dead. Gov. Chiles stopped it with his veto. I'm not surprised, because everything that has been done with this project has courted failure.

Lost opportunities, such as the face-lift and room expansion for the Oceanside Hotel by a group of interested investors, torpedoed because it didn't fit into the "master plan." A Norwegian businessman wanted to build a 300-room hotel next to the Bonnet House but he was turned down, too, due to someone's "aesthetics." Similar poor management has brought about the possibility of losing Birch Park to an Ohio college's hotel development plan.

This a classic example of a government project gone out of control. Strong interest from investors of medium size was "driven away" while a colossus was chosen who began asking for concessions which prompted the added tax.

The "our way or no way, feet in cement mentality" has not allowed the possible success from the "Art of the Deal." The ability to join together and create a coalition of interested small pieces was foiled by the "buy it, bulldoze it, then completely rebuild it for a billion dollars plan." Instead, establish a theme of the area and let free enterprise help achieve the prosperity for us!

I'm glad the tax for a total 10 percent on rooms failed. Even at 9 percent, tourists are selecting "cheaper" accommodations elsewhere. A strong dollar hurts European business that has sustained many businesses after the loss of "Spring Break." We don't need another tax.

We need to rationalize our conception and a solution. Eventually, when the redevelopment has matured, the owners will gross over a billion in sales. Surely that interests someone willing to work for it, not demanding it be brought to them on a silver tax platter.

S.D. GRAVES
Fort Lauderdale

Generating nuclear power in a safe way is a gamble

I feel compelled to answer R. Emmett Tyrrell's advocacy of nuclear power. Forgotten or overlooked is the fact that the cooling pipes in one nuclear plant were so clogged with tools and aluminum cans from the construction workers that entire sections had to be taken apart and replaced.

There is also the bankrupt project in the Pacific Northwest raising utility bills astronomically and the storage problems of spent nuclear waste. Remember the nuclear plant in California built near an earthquake fault center?

Radiation dangers are all too clear. Maybe Tyrrell should move next to one for 20 or so years and then tell us he doesn't have leukemia or cancer. Finally our government admits 30 years after the fact that it unfortunately contaminated the environment and we the taxpayers will have to pay hundreds of billions of dollars to clean it up.

Safe generation of nuclear power is a crap shoot and businessmen know it. That's why they are canceling construction orders and not seeking permits for new ones. France's blackmail prospects by terrorists have led it to reassess its dependency on nuclear power, too.

S.D. GRAVES
Fort Lauderdale

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Chinese students pressed for unrealistic outcome

I have derived a different portrait of today's China. An important state visit had taken place, easing Sini-Soviet tensions, but very demanding for Chairman Deng who is over 80 years old, ill and now in the hospital.

The Communist Party leaders of China wanted to achieve their own *perestroika* to help their modernization drive until the humiliation of the military through non-violence forced a resolve of will into the picture. Accommodation was their watchword because these men understand China's need for advancement.

The early success of the protesters at the expense of the military led to a situation of anarchy. As fear of the collapse of the Beijing government spread, controlling the situation became impossible. The students wanted to win.

Instead of consolidating their accomplishments and backing down when the tanks arrived, they pressed for complete victory — an

"IF YOU SEE ANYBODY LIKE THIS,
EXECUTE HIM AT ONCE"

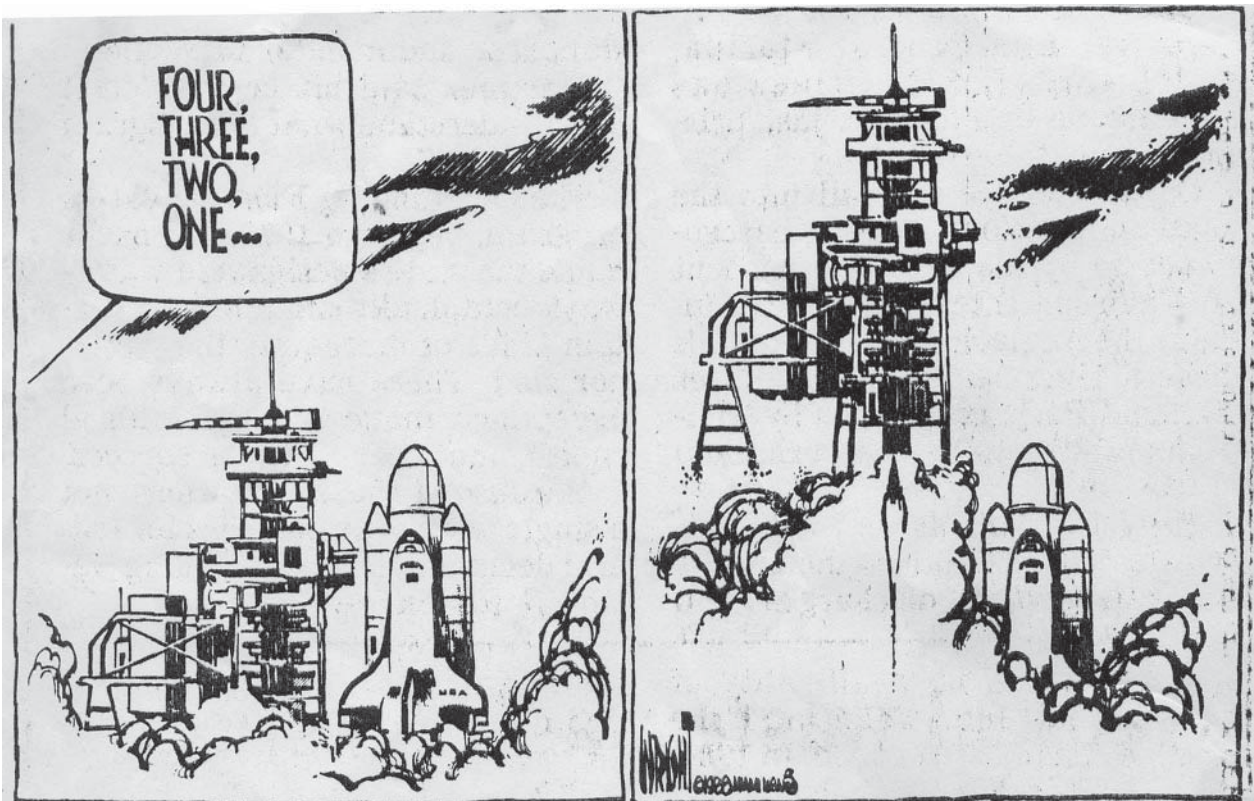


unrealistic and impossible outcome. It was a bridge too far too fast.

The failure of the protest leaders to see this cost many lives and now the isolation of China — causing further regression of a society into the Dark Ages.

S. D. GRAVES
Fort Lauderdale

July 9, 1989



Space out there waiting for us to take advantage of it

Once again the shortsightedness of our nation's space program is stagnating the awesome dynamics of current scientific and technological achievements.

Breakthroughs in medicine, such as safer insulin for diabetics and more precise diagnostic equipment, are literally waiting in the heavens for us to reach out and use.

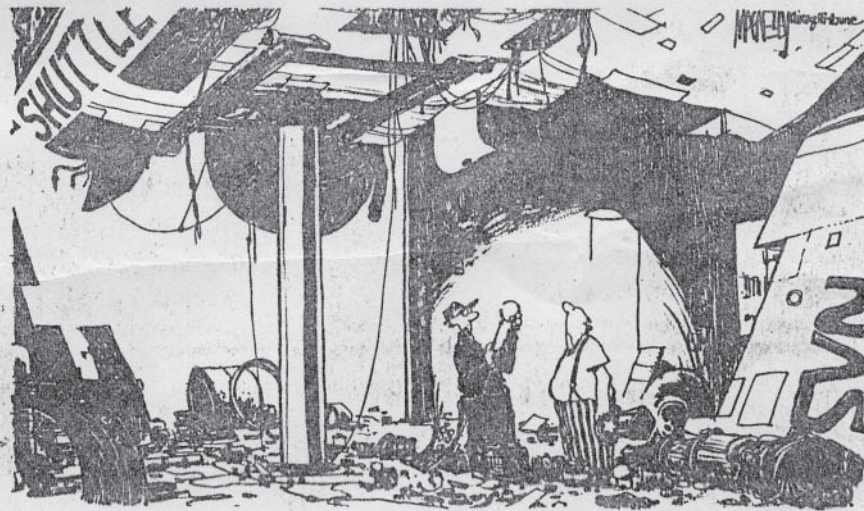
Americans have designed space-motors that will allow human access to other planets in weeks, not months. This could open a whole new field for the processing of space ma-

terial. From only these few ideas a boon awaits us in space.

Unmanned shuttle-clones must be constructed now to deliver the bulk required. As the *Discovery's* launch date slips further back, weather will become an increasingly important factor.

What is the launch status of our other shuttles? Has their necessary maintenance also been neglected for the past two years? Our tax dollars must not be squandered.

S. D. GRAVES
Fort Lauderdale



"YUP. THAT'S YOUR TROUBLE, RIGHT THERE...."

America's shuttle program needs to push forward

I disagree strongly with your assertion that NASA is now on the right track. The O-ring and insulating putty setup for the Solid Rocket Boosters (SRBs) should be eliminated with construction of single unit SRB. The contention that reusing the pieces saves money is groundless. How much has been saved now?

The true problem with the SRBs was the need for increased thrust to propel heavier military satellites into orbit.

The deterioration of the O-rings became significant after this increase in main engine thrust to 104 percent with the additional aerodynamic stress and pressure applied; Lawrence Malloy's [manager of the solid

rocket booster program] famous "... risks are acceptable..." decision.

The space shuttle is not an all-weather launch vehicle. I support several launchings at the same time for optimal performing characteristics. Our country's space requirements demand not one, but seven new shuttles; \$25 billion should be budgeted for this in 1987.

Science-fiction possibilities of yesterday are manifested by today's technical ingenuity waiting for usage. The return to our society through curiosity, learning and hope, especially upon our youth, is tremendous. It deserves our support.

S.D. GRAVES
Pompano Beach

August 14, 1986



Seminole Chief James Billie in traditional garb.

Chief's urge to kill panther diminishes achievements

I am outraged over some of the circumstances of the James Billie case and would like to share my thoughts with your readers.

The heritage of the Seminoles is rich with the respect for and understanding of nature. The remoteness of Florida saved it from the rape of the white man until the beginning of the century and even then this influence was restricted until recent times. The fact that we have such a variety of wildlife and plants is directly related to the culture of the Seminoles.

Preserving the environment has

been the forte of the Indians throughout American history and is one area where they can truly shame the white man. Surely they want to protect the remaining aspects of their identity. I can't remember a chief before James Billie that felt the need to kill a Florida panther for religious reasons, for the personal gain.

The heights of their achievements is now somehow irreparably diminished in my eyes because of the slaughter of a beautiful, endangered creature in their custodial care.

S. D. GRAVES
Fort Lauderdale



Andrew Young Supported

Andrew Young resigned after being accused of hampering the peace process by meeting with a PLO representative. Andrew Young did not hamper the peace process through this meeting. The solution in the Middle East is not a cut and dried one; all factors must be considered, including the PLO.

He did violate U.S. foreign policy. So what? We have to remove the blinders that have been put on the eyes of our government. Andrew Young was a man that followed through with his beliefs and was not intimidated by Washington bureaucrats. Although he could have used a better approach in voicing his views on issues, he should not be remembered as a sore thumb to President Carter. He did not "pass the buck." Instead he met the issues head on.

"Was he good for our country?" Yes. I hope we get more statesmen like him.

Steven Graves
Fort Lauderdale

Unknown Date

Unknown Date

Be thoughtful in vote

I have made my decision. On page 12 of the November issue of *Omni* magazine, John Anderson advocates more aerospace development, my most important issue. We must strive to make our future; the future of our children, and their children's future, safe, exciting, joyful and beautiful.

However, this may not help other voters who cannot make up their minds. Let's examine the facts. The November, third quarter, statistics are out. The record losses by our great industrial corporations are staggering. How can an incumbent president run on this type of record? It has been said it is not his fault. Are they serious?

How can Reagan seriously suggest a separate, lower minimum wage for teen-age blacks. I suggest that youngsters' paychecks not be taxed and the employers get certain tax incentives (breaks) by hiring teen-age youths.

We need a man of foresight, strength, courage, and wisdom capable of unifying and leading our country. I don't think it is either Carter or Reagan.

A vote is a very individualistic act. When you walk into the booth please pause for one moment to reflect, consider and pick your choice for the highest, most powerful, most honorable position we, the American citizens, can extend to a member of our society, the office of the presidency of the United States.

Steven Graves
Fort Lauderdale

Unknown Date

We need a man of vision

Here we are well into October 1980 and the political blitz is underway. None of the candidates represents a majority of my views. So now I must decide which problem is the most important.

Abortion? If so, then I would vote for John Anderson. I don't believe that the government has a right to be in this area. Have we forgotten the lesson of coat-hanger abortions, of unwanted and abused children, of dead teenagers? Who would give the government the right to condemn them?

Defense? If so, then I would vote for Ronald Reagan. Our servicemen deserve a decent wage and our equipment deserves proper care. We deserve the strength and security that our technology offers. What a sad state we are in with archaic ships, tanks and planes. I advocate the M-1 tank, the B-1 bomber and the neutron bomb.

Social problems? If so, then I would vote for Jimmy Carter. That is the only thing he has done in his four years. The old, the hungry and the poor need our help. They deserve a chance. We all do.

I would lay emphasis on the \$4 billion Space-Energy program (the construction of a solar cell manufacturing plant on the moon). However, none of the candidates have. Do these men represent the vision and ideals of our country?

Just one more question please. In 10 years most of the third-world countries will have nuclear capacity. We live in a finite world with dwindling resources and a growing population. I believe the time for discussion is over. We must decide now.

Steven Graves
Fort Lauderdale

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The goal of the Polish people is to find a new life

I am deeply concerned for the people of Poland and would like to state some views concerning their present situation. I don't believe their purpose is to consciously overthrow the communist rule. They want a say in the way they live their life. They do not want to be machines but people with desires for advancement and the right to seek opportunity and better themselves through their own sweat and hard work. They want freedom to go and worship God in their own way and to seek the best education for their children. They want the right to become all that they can and to have the possibility to attain a way of life free from shortages and starvation.

This, however, means the attainment of personal freedom that the Soviets cannot allow, but will have no choice but to allow. They may be able to forestall the certain eventuality for a time, but the communist rule of oppression is following a path of certain failure. A government ruling the people cannot sustain itself, but a government ruled by the people shall be sustained because of itself.

The Polish people want the civil liberties civilization demands and will seek at all costs — even their lives. There is nothing but existence without freedom.

Steven Graves
Fort Lauderdale

Unknown Date

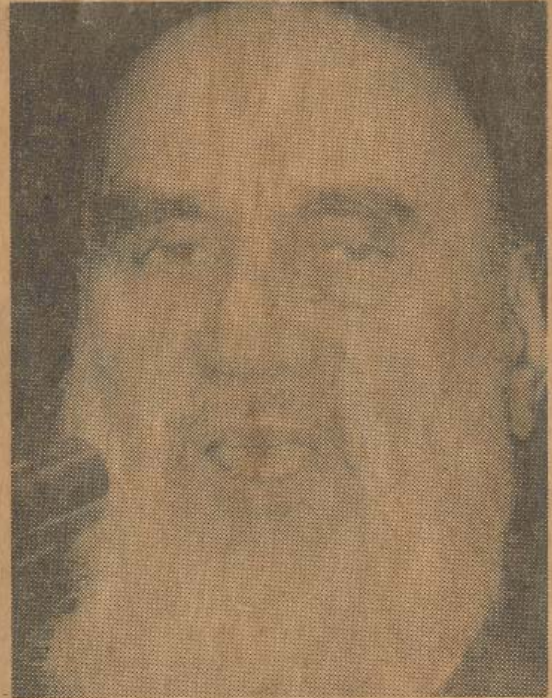
September 14, 1979

Neutron bomb a good defense

Having read about recent developments in Afghanistan, I would like to make a suggestion to President Carter concerning the Soviet Communists. If they feel free to use chemical weapons against Afghanistan freedom fighters, then the United States must develop the neutron bomb for defensive purposes.

Steven Graves
Fort Lauderdale

March 12, 1980



Ayatollah Khomeini

Students no better than shah

I have been trying to understand the position of the Iranian students holding U.S. citizens hostage. I am now so built up with anger for them and their cause that I must express feelings.

They are asking us, the American people, to become partners in a cause that will mean certain death to a man. I could not ask a man to die for me. We are not unfeeling to their cause, but their actions lead us to believe they are a pack of bloodthirsty wolves full of hate, destruction, and revenge. To subject fellow human beings to such terror to accomplish a goal is, in my mind, unforgivable. They (the hostages) have done nothing wrong. Violent action can only hurt a righteous cause. I believe the shah was a mass murderer and deserves a trial by his peers, the countries of the world. But are the Iranian students, now, any better than he?

Steven Graves
Fort Lauderdale