

No more lights on U.S. 19, not even for ABR

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Body

Re: Business may get its own stoplight, story, Aug. 14.

I travel on **U.S. 19** all the time, especially in Palm Harbor. It is already awful, and it seems that everywhere you look, there is a **light**. If there is another **light** added (**even** a part-time one), there would **not** be a minor impact on traffic but a much bigger one.

I mean, how can a traffic **light** stopping traffic during rush hours have a small impact? I don't see how a traffic **light** will help **ABR** employees make **U**-turns, as the article stated that employees had a hard time making them. I seriously believe that if they are having problems making **U**-turns, then they have a bigger problem than just wanting a traffic **light**.

LET18

I know **ABR** has been trying to bribe Pinellas County into putting up a **light** by threatening to leave, but I don't believe them. They spent so much money building that place that I seriously doubt they will just pack up and leave if they don't get their way.

Courtney Hardy, Clearwater

Illegal immigrants deserve better

Re: Police, INS tactics must be tempered, editorial, Aug. 13.

Thank you for your fine editorial regarding the often tragic immigration situation. I would like to make a further comment regarding this issue.

Very few are aware that many of these illegal immigrants have **no** way to improve their situation. The new immigration laws are so restrictive that unless one marries a **U.S.** citizen or is a professional, such as a doctor or lawyer, it is practically impossible to enter the country legally.

What seems to be missing in such restrictive legislation is the need for a hard-working, industrious labor force. They have the requisite skills and desire to truly help this country but are **not** able to do so since the law does **not** permit such a work force. If one were to ask the local businesses about such employees, I am certain that one would hear nothing but praise.

The laws need to be changed in order to better reflect the local realities. Honest, hard-working blue-collar (immigrant) workers have always been the backbone of this country. Why are we so intolerant now? Why now do we **not** see opportunities for growth and understanding in our diversity as a nation?

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If we continue to mistreat these people, it will be to our own detriment as well as our own shame as a nation.

The Rev. Peter Schweitzer,

St. Cecelia Catholic Church, Clearwater

Enclave hungry for improvements

I have been reading with great interest the articles and letters about the annexation of enclaves in Pinellas County. We live in a so-called enclave and curiously enough, five houses at the bottom of our street are in the city of Clearwater, while we exist with 40-year-old aging septic tanks, deteriorating roads and all the rest of this boondoggle.

Our subdivision, Sunnypark Groves, is off Highland Avenue just south of Lakeview. We are surrounded by small pockets of city-maintained property, complete with street lights and newly paved roads. There are a few die-hards who will not respond to a reasonable request for improvement of this situation. Surely they must realize the value of our property can only be appreciated by these improvements.

Our greatest concern is the impact this environmental disaster could have on our property. If there is any way the city and county could work together to alleviate this situation, we would be most happy to assist. By the way, our street is Satsuma, the newest street in this area of citrus-related names.

Helen J. Spicer, Clearwater

Non-residents can be civic supporters

We are 15-year newcomers to this beautiful area.

Our relocation to this area was heavily influenced by the nearby cultural facilities such as Dunedin Fine Arts Center, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, etc.

We do not agree with being just takers but instead support the arts in whatever way we can. In the case of the Dunedin Fine Arts Center, my wife has been a volunteer for approximately six years, working in the gift shop weekly. In addition, we work on the Garden Party fund-raiser and financially support as well as work diligently for two months on the annual Holiday Festival.

While working at or writing a check to the Dunedin Fine Arts Center, we never consider that we are supporting a neighboring community rather than our own Palm Harbor. Instead, we consider that we are doing our part to ensure the continuation of a fabulous facility that happens to be in Dunedin.

We have been total supporters of the expansion of this facility and while, at this point, that support is only moral, we have all intentions of adding our financial support to this endeavor.

Perhaps the dichotomy that has appeared, related to the Dunedin Fine Arts Center, could be reduced by a visit to the center and attention paid to some of the visitor comments from other communities and other countries. Then, perhaps, the descanters would glow with pride instead of indignation.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Landman, Palm Harbor

9-foot parking spaces just right

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Re: Tarpon must look to future with eye to past, Aug. 8.

I appreciated your editorial of Aug. 8, but you are preaching to the choir.

The reduction in parking width may have been spurred by the new ABR Plaza. However, its necessity is rooted in fundamental principles. When the required number of parking spaces can't fit in a desired area, either the parking space size becomes smaller or the total paved area increases. ABR wants to keep as much green space as possible. Ten-foot-wide spaces are a luxury. Eight feet is a nuisance. Nine feet is environmentally sensitive and minimizes urban sprawl.

You are right that the city needs ABR, but not just for the economic jolt. ABR's development order will fix the finished floor area to about 400,000 square feet. Nevertheless, the 70-acre site can be developed to more than 1-million square feet. We are fortunate that ABR wishes their headquarters to have a campuslike look and feel. If we lose ABR and the next developer comes along, that is when we will see a real squeeze.

The swimming pool setback issue originated as a neighbor dispute and now is being pitched as a cause. If anything has muddied the water, it has been the continued and poorly founded rhetoric over this issue being critical to saving the city and its environment. This issue involves at most 5 percent of the city's shoreline. We have gone full circle from preserving the view and waterfront character, to improving water quality, to protecting marine life and, now again, to preserving the waterfront character. State agencies are contradicting each other, and who's caught in the middle? The City of Tarpon Springs. Go figure.

The \$ 750,000 grant for the sponge docks area is great. But we can't rely on money to solve all our problems. I am optimistic that the forthcoming Sponge Docks Cultural District and smooth implementation will preserve the sponge dock's future in its past.

Costa S. Vatikiotis, city manager, Tarpon Springs

Spending should benefit residents

A gentle reminder to the city of Dunedin commissioners. The contributions of money and services provided to the Fine Arts Center are items that should be utilized by the city for the benefit of Dunedin residents.

If the residents derive no benefit from such money or services or derive such little benefit that non-residents benefit equally or better, then consideration should be given to transferring the money and services to some other area of activity that would be of more value to residents.

Comments such as "the Blue Jays are my first priority" or "I will not abandon the Center" seem hardly compatible to the needs of the residents of Dunedin, more like responses to the loudest voices.

C.J. Scripps, Dunedin

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