

VIEWPOINT

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Rants & Raves

Got something to say?

Email the Hometown Rants & Raves at

brevnews@hometownnewsol.com

or call (321) 242-1276.

Contributors are asked to refrain from making slanderous or libelous statements.

We need to slow down these drivers

Listening to the radio the other day, the host asked his guest how Europeans view America.

The guest responded that they see America as an undisciplined child.

Then, the very next day, a letter ranted about the drivers we encounter everyday in Brevard.

My wife and I just returned from a month-long trip to Europe. Traveling across Western Europe - England, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy - we saw drivers who were not only courteous, but knew the rules of the road and obeyed them and traffic laws.

What is it with our American drivers? The speed limit is 55 mph on Pineda Causeway; but virtually no one, except me and a few others, obeys that law. Almost without exception, I cannot drive in on a 55-mph road without being passed by car after car doing at least 70-mph, or better. My wife was almost killed on Pineda Causeway nine years ago by an aggressive driver whose speed was estimated to have been 100-110 mph before he rear-ended and totaled her car. He weaved in behind her but couldn't pass because of a dump truck in the other lane. People, SLOW DOWN and obey speed limits and other traffic laws before you injure or kill someone.

As a side note, our county and city commissioners seem to want to raise taxes to boost income. I have an idea: ENFORCE TRAFFIC LAWS, and the fines will be more than adequate for all the pet projects.

I saw a bumper sticker the other day, and just have to share this

"If you are not outraged.... you are not

paying attention."

I.E.: budget proposal, Medicaid, food stamps, medically disabled on disability, EPA, health care, discriminatory practices and so much more.

Where is the moral compass, humanitarianism and bridge-building?

I am very saddened by family and friends who voted for this. I cannot relate.

Mail the empty envelopes back

To the person seeking suggestions on how to stop receiving excessive mailings for money. Open the mail, and mail the return envelope (empty) that's inside back to the organization requesting the money. They will eventually get tired of paying postage both ways for nothing.

Stop labeling people and making assumptions

According to our Supervisor of Elections, there are 128,104 registered Democrats here in Brevard County alone.

I can assure you, they are all not "progressive, socialists liberals," if that is what was meant by a recent rant.

Some are moderate; some are progressive. I am a Democrat and do not support Bernie Sanders' socialist views. Are all right-wing-leaning Republicans the same? I think not. There are good and bad in both parties. The sooner we stop labeling people and making assumptions, the better.

Thank you there in the parking lot

To the lovely lady at the Merritt Island Post Office parking on Saturday, May 27, thank you for your very generous gift.

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Ready to roll out



Alex Schierholtz/staff photographer

Kyle Johnson, 14, of Satellite Beach, prepares assorted fresh fish during 'Create Your Own Sushi' hosted by The Gathering Table, Friday, May 26, in Historic Downtown Melbourne.

Understanding need for nonprofits

In 1966 at an appearance before the Brevard County Board of Commissioners, I was asked what changes I would recommend regarding the management of nonprofits. I told the Commissioners that my first step would be to reduce overhead costs so that more funds could be directed to serving those in need. In an editorial in Florida Today on May 27, 2017, columnist John Bryon said essentially the same thing.

I agree with much of what Mr. Byron said in his column. Support of nonprofits is shrinking. United Way dollars are declining, and government funding is being cut. Mr. Byron also stated that nonprofits are not reacting well to change. Again, I agree, but with certain qualifiers.

Charity funding is decreasing for three reasons. First, needs assessments are being ignored. The 2014 Senior Needs Assessment conducted by the Helping Seniors Advocacy Council was the first county-wide survey done in Brevard since 1996. The 2014 study showed essentially the same needs as



HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD
JOE STECKLER

the 1996 survey, with the top two senior concerns being information and financial support.

A second reason for decreased nonprofit funding is inefficient management. Based on an analysis of 990 IRS tax documents and published annual reports, some county nonprofits show an overhead rate as high as 30-50 percent. Mr. Byron talks about challenging existing business models of nonprofits to increase operational efficiency, and this is needed. For instance, a good business model does not include 90 percent dependence on government and grant support.

I speak from practical experience
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Seniors

From page 6

having been in this business for 24 years. A nonprofit budget should have varied revenue sources, and spending should not exceed income. Years ago in a discussion with the director of a major nonprofit in Brevard, I asked what would happen if they did not get federal funding for a certain program. The answer was, "We just won't do it." In my book, that is not a satisfactory answer.

That brings us to the third cause of dwindling nonprofit support, which is lack of awareness. Donors are often poorly informed about the use to which their support is channeled. They may question operational efficiencies or why a nonprofit exists. nonprofit Yes, it has become easy to establish a nonprofit. The ones that will survive are those that provide viable services and make the public aware of their capability. Our task is to pinpoint need, determine which nonprofits can meet that need, and educate the public.

In 1996 the Brevard Commissioners voted to support community based organizations with \$500,000 in annual funding, which was later increased to 1 million dollars. Recently, they voted to phase out these dollars over a five-year period to help fund road repair. Depending on which source you contact, there are about 2,300 funded county jobs. Perhaps a meaningful reduction in

county staff could be made to fund the road repairs instead of challenging programs for seniors and other vulnerable populations.

In fact, many of our nonprofit organizations are vitally needed, so funding should be developed to pay for them. Local leadership, starting at the commissioner level, needs to be better informed about the actual effects of budget cuts. A five-minute discussion from beleaguered nonprofits, unsupported by any significant input from Brevard County Housing and Human Services staff, does not constitute meaningful discussion on need.

Helping Seniors exists to inform citizens about available services and connect seniors to needed resources. We do not compete with other nonprofits or take away funding from anyone. However, with the current state of available funding, more noses will get bloody unless positive actions are taken to work together. Nonprofit funding, like government funding, should be open and above board. Overhead costs should be kept as low as possible. Cost effectiveness can be achieved, but it will require oversight. A good place to start would be the development of an effective Aging Plan for Brevard County.

Joe Steckler is the President of Helping Seniors of Brevard, a non profit organization designed to advocate, educate, and fundraise on behalf of Brevard's senior citizens. Feel free to contact us at info@helpingseniorsofbrevard.org or by calling (321) 473-7770.

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