

opinion

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A VERSE FOR TODAY
“... Ask, and it will be given to you;
seek, and you will find; knock, and it
will be opened to you.”
Luke 11:9

Shad Khan's exciting Shipyards plan

Shad Khan's winning proposal to develop the Shipyards is truly a victory.

For all of Jacksonville. Khan's winning Shipyards bid opens a new and exciting chapter in the bond between the city and the Jaguars owner, one that continues to add vibrancy to Jacksonville and raise its game as a community on the move.

Khan has clearly proved that he's a big-picture thinker with an innovative spirit.

He's clearly proved his love for Jacksonville. He's clearly proved his willingness to commit considerable resources to making Jacksonville a better place.

And that has led to a magnificent partnership between Khan and the city — one that's seen the Jags owner invest millions on projects with the city also chipping in a substantial share.

The formula has produced a wonderful body of work:

- The state-of-the-art video scoreboards at EverBank Field, which have helped Jacksonville host premier events like last fall's Navy-Notre Dame game.

- Other wide-ranging stadium improvements that have made EverBank Field one of the NFL's top facilities and secured the Jaguars' long-term future in Jacksonville.

- Still taking shape is the construction of the Daily's Place amphitheater (a 5,500-seat, futuristic venue that will officially open soon) and an indoor practice facility, which will both be adjacent to EverBank Field.

In short, when Khan and the city get together on something, things get done. And they're done well.

VISION IS PROMISING

The same result is all but guaranteed with this latest collaboration between Khan and the city to transform the Shipyards.

And our community can feel pretty confident that, finally, the Shipyards will reach its promise as a downtown landmark.

For one, Khan's impressive proposal — which was chosen by the Downtown Investment Authority over two



An aerial view in 2001 of the old Jacksonville Shipyards property illustrates what once was a site for heavy industry. (Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union).



Jaguars President Mark Lamping talks about the proposed shipyards project in front of an artist's rendering March 8 at EverBank Field. (Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)

other submitted plans — isn't merely bold in concept, it's broad in scope:

- It would span 70 acres and entail more than \$500 million in private investment.

- It would include 300 to 500 condominiums — and an equal number of apartments — built on our majestic riverfront.

- It would bring significant numbers of stores, restaurants and hotel rooms to the previously underutilized Shipyards — as well as a massive marina to take full advantage of the St. Johns River.

- It would lead to the revival of the Shipyards and Metropolitan Park (which would also be developed).

This is beyond being an ambitious plan. It is a transformational one.

It holds the potential to make Jacksonville a better and richer city for decades to come.

And Khan has the track record to bring this vision to life.

As on previous joint efforts, the city will be an active, engaged and constructive partner with Khan in revitalizing the Shipyards: It is expected to take care of the major

infrastructure work — from environmental cleanup to upgrading streets — that must be done to support the project.

We're sure the city will live up to its end of the deal. And let's be clear, this is a great deal for Jacksonville.

Over the past few years, our town has reaped the great benefits of having a forward-looking figure in Khan — and city leadership that has wisely embraced the opportunities that have been presented to work with him in creating an enhanced Jacksonville.

Other cities — including Tampa and Cleveland — have parlayed professional sports franchises into downtown revitalization.

So Jacksonville is fortunate to have, in Khan, one of the nation's richest and energetic figures as owner of the Jaguars, its only major sports franchise.

Khan has long said that Jacksonville needs to finally fulfill its potential.

There is too much natural beauty in our city to leave it unrealized.

The partnership with the city and Khan is a beautiful relationship that benefits both parties.

Sean Hannity letter

Light-hearted reaction to a warning

I received a six-page letter from Fox News commentator Sean Hannity alerting me to an alarming situation of which I have been blissfully unaware.

In his letter, Hannity painted a grim picture of Fernandina Beach's future, telling me that our bucolic Amelia Island town has been identified as an “emerging immigrant community” that is being “transformed into a haven for displaced, Middle Eastern illegal immigrants.”

He said that “busloads of thugs, anti-American activists and terrorists” may be on their way here right now.

He urged me to write to Gov. Rick Scott to alert him of this grave situation and to ask his help in preventing these undesirables from storming our beaches and “terrorizing legal residents.”

Wow! Why waste time writing to me? I've never even met the governor. I don't know Hannity, either. In fact, I have no idea how I got involved.

However, the thought of busloads of barbarians barreling down State Road 200 toward our town is disturbing.

Do Democrats get mail like this? Do their letters come from folks like Rachel Maddow and Bill Maher warning that we're in danger of being overrun by hedge fund managers, venture capitalists and National Rifle Association members?

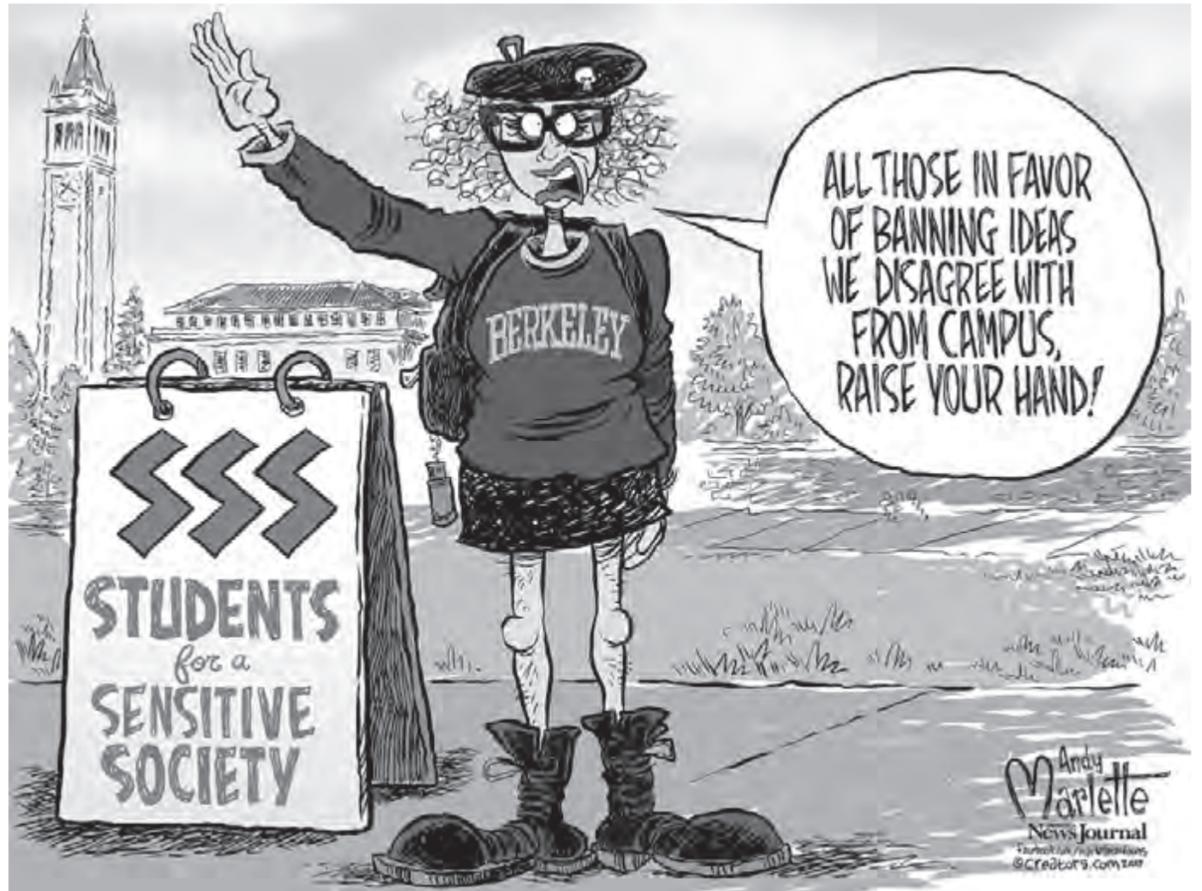
Don't get me wrong. I don't want Fernandina Beach to become a haven for illegal Middle Eastern terrorists or hedge fund managers, but I'm not sure those are the issues that currently resonate with local residents.

Hot-button items our City Commission has been focusing on include horses pooping on the beaches, noisy rock bands and ensuring that nesting sea turtles get a good night's sleep.

But now, thanks to Hannity, every time I see one of those big tourist buses pull into town I'll be keeping a close watch on who gets out of it and have the phone number of the governor's office on speed dial just in case.

Dave Scott, Fernandina Beach

Another view: Andy Marlette Creators Syndicate



Letters from Readers

NETWORK NEWS

OUT OF TOUCH

It is becoming more difficult to watch any television news these days.

At times, I wonder why we didn't just elect the national news to run our country; after all, they have every answer to solve all of our problems.

ABC News interviewed the U.S. Treasury secretary and it was embarrassing to watch. I don't care what President Donald Trump earns or pays in taxes. I do not care how a tax cut affects his worth.

If he made another \$10 million or went broke tomorrow it does not affect me one bit. But a tax cut does affect my family in a very big way!

My daughter and my son along with their young families have struggled over the past eight years as a direct result of Washington's political malfeasance.

None of these elite media types or party politicians struggle for next month's rent or a day's meal. Many hard-working Americans do. Who will benefit from a tax cut? The ones who pay it!

Jerry Tisdell, Casselberry

SHIPYARDS PLAN

WE NEED MORE

Three bids were submitted to give Jacksonville's downtown a new vibrancy, a place that locals and tourists would flock to. Presently there are hotels, businesses, restaurants, condos, shops, an entertainment venue, fairgrounds, a baseball park a rundown Landing with boarded-up shops and a football stadium.

The winner of the contract to energize the area (which will cost the taxpayers plenty) is Shad Khan, owner of the Jacksonville Jaguars football team, who seems to be taking charge of Jacksonville by leaps and bounds.

Khan's plan is to build shops, hotels,

businesses, restaurants, condos and possibly a marina. It's hard to understand why people would want to spend their vacation in an area that offers so little.

Now if we had an aquarium or a beautiful botanical garden with a dinner theater and other restaurants and more hotels we might attract some tourists.

Add an excursion by boat to the zoo to give tourists another outing along with a few other options and visitors might just want to spend a holiday here.

I don't think we will have to worry about overcrowding downtown. Jacksonville seems destined to come alive a few times a year for the football and baseball season and then go back to snoozing.

Jean Alexander, Jacksonville

ESTATE PLANNING

MUCH IS INVOLVED

I read with interest the letter regarding the importance of estate planning.

It amazes me that well-known people like James Gandolfini, Jimi Hendrix, Sonny Bono, Picasso, Michael Jackson, even Abraham Lincoln, a lawyer himself, died without specifying how they wished their estate to be passed on to their loved ones.

I spend most of my time educating people about the importance of making life planning decisions. The size of one's estate doesn't matter as much as some believe. Dying intestate (without a will or trust) generally means that those who will survive you will have to go through a sometimes lengthy and expensive probate process. Estate planning is not enough if you want to leave a gift to your loved ones. You need:

- A financial plan that ensures you can enjoy your retirement and not leave your heirs with a financial burden.

- A tax plan that ensures that your financial assets are not unnecessarily sub-

ject to federal taxes that must be paid by your heirs from your estate.

- A health care plan to ensure your assets are not depleted by unexpected out-of-pocket medical expenses.

- An advance care plan and a plan for final arrangements that will better ensure your end-of-life wishes are carried out.

All of these plans, fully-integrated and coordinated, will best ensure that the gift that you leave for your loved ones will be one that is fully appreciated.

Jeannette Bajalia, Jacksonville

TRUMP BUDGET

PILING ON DEBT

Wow, the Trump budget is anything but conservative. It will increase the deficit substantially. Is this the way Trump ran his businesses? I guess so since they went bankrupt several times.

Let's not do the same to America!
Jack Bernard, Peachtree City, Ga.

PSA TESTS

TAKE DOCTOR'S ADVICE

Guidelines are now changed for the PSA or Prostate Specific Antigen test that can help detect prostate cancer.

America's experts now say that it should be up to the doctor to decide if this screening test should be offered and performed. I know that we have found many cases of prostate cancer with the help of this simple blood test.

Not one person who had prostate cancer wanted to let it grow in their body and kill them. But if prostate cancer is not detected very early, it is deadly.

So, if your doctor recommends this test, I suggest you take it along with an appropriate examination to avoid this terrible disease.

William Choisser, physician, Orange Park

LETTER POLICY

Letters of about 200 words are preferred. Letters are edited for space, clarity and newspaper style. All letters should include a name, address, occupation and telephone number. Only the name, city and occupation (when relevant) are published. Letters with a clear, concise message have the best chance of being published.

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