

opinion

Mark Nusbaum, President
Frank M. Denton, Editor
Michael P. Clark,
Editorial Page Editor

Editorial board: Those at left, Bobby Martin, editorial
writers Roger Brown and Paula Horvath; also Hank
Coxe, Abubakr Hassan, The Rev. Vaughn McLaughlin,
Tala Reynolds, J.R. Ross and Ron Salem.

A VERSE FOR TODAY
Let all that you do be done with love.
1 Corinthians 16:14

Florida House, District 12, GOP Primary

Yarborough is a solid pick

Clay Yarborough has come far since he was a political novice who went door-to-door through Arlington neighborhoods and won a

City Council seat at age 26.

During his two terms, Yarborough displayed a willingness to tackle Jacksonville's tough issues. Yarborough served as City Council president when that body passed the historic pension reform bill in 2015.

Yarborough has proven that he can be a hard-working and effective lawmaker. That's why voters should choose Yarborough in the Aug. 30 Republican primary for House District 12.

Yarborough would make expanding economic development for Jacksonville a major focus of his work as a state legislator with an eye toward increasing opportunities in distressed areas of District 12.

He would be a fiscal conservative in the statehouse but open to supporting worthy initiatives like efforts to strengthen Florida's mental health programs.

And Yarborough has a strong record as an elected official who supports transparency in government, which ensures that citizens always remain fully informed about how the public's work is being done.

Yarborough deserves to be the District 12 Republican



FLORIDA HOUSE, DIS. 12, GOP PRIMARY

Our pick: Former City Councilman Clay Yarborough has shown a willingness to tackle tough issues.

Opponents: Former Councilman Don Redman, Stan Jordan, Mark MacLean and Terrance Freeman.

Election Day: Aug. 30.

Early voting: Though Aug. 28.

Information: Find news, endorsements, candidate bios and questionnaires online: jacksonville.com/election2016.

nominee.

A WIDE, DIVERSE FIELD

Another former council member in the statehouse race is onetime District 4 Councilman **Don Redman**, who gained a reputation for being an accessible official who put a high priority on providing strong constituent services. A barbershop owner for decades, Redman knows firsthand how bloated regulatory procedures can stifle the growth of small businesses across Jacksonville — addressing that problem would be one of his signature issues in Tallahassee.

By far, **Stan Jordan** has the most political experience of the District 12 Republican candidates. A decorated retired Army colonel, Jordan served in the Florida House from 2000 to 2008, chaired its committee on military and veterans and sat on a panel to study potential base closures and realignments. And before serving as a state legislator, Jordan spent 16 years as a Duval County School Board member. A business owner, Jordan said he's seeking the District 12 seat to protect Jacksonville's interests as a military community and bolster the state's preventive care programs.

Mark MacLean is a longtime Jacksonville lawyer making his first run for elected office after years of serving on area boards and advisory groups. During the editorial board's interview session with the Republican candidates, MacLean offered thoughtful views on Florida's need to use more diversionary programs to punish nonviolent offenders — which in turn would make the currently overburdened prison system more efficient.

Terrance Freeman is another rookie political candidate. He is an assistant to City Councilman Aaron Bowman, a past member of the Jacksonville Journey Oversight Committee and a former professional baseball player. If elected to Tallahassee, Freeman said he would focus on building consensus

Pension sales tax

Good reasons to support sales tax

The plan to resolve the city's huge unfunded pension debt has turned partisan, which is sad.

Some Democratic Party leaders called a press conference to oppose it, though others like former Mayor Tommy Hazouri and Eric Smith support it.

Pensions, like potholes, aren't partisan. Police and fire protection are not partisan. Here are key issues in brief:

One-time opportunity: The Legislature will never approve a regular sales tax option. Mayor Lenny Curry masterfully lobbied the Legislature and governor to approve the special sales tax option.

A broader tax: Sales tax revenue will capture revenue from commuters and visitors. Everyone, including renters, benefits from Jacksonville's police and fire protection.

Property taxes: This option will always be there. Property taxes, however, hit small businesses hard.

Reform: Revenue can't be used until there is pension reform. The same can't be said for property tax increases.

It's not kicking the can: There is no end to the city's pension obligations. A retiree this year will live several more decades.

A complete solution: Analysis shows that the debt will be fully paid by 2049 when the tax would end.

Trust: Those worried about pension reform should remember that Curry is a conservative business owner. He is committed to pensions that are fair, competitive and affordable.

No more delays: The city has been dealing with this crisis since 2008. It has hurt morale among police officers and firefighters. There is no perfect solution. The biggest danger involves more delays. It is time for closure.

Another view: Tom Stiglich Creators Syndicate



Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

Bullying prevention

Support programs that help kids

The start of school is exciting — for some youth, however, school is about fear and dread due to bullying.

As Northeast Florida schools open their doors this month, it's important to remember that bullying has tragic consequences.

Thirteen-year old Danny Fitzpatrick of Staten Island, N.Y. completed suicide Thursday night. He was found by his eldest sister hanging by a belt. According to the New York Daily News, Danny's death is directly related to bullying he experienced in the past school year.

The nation's sympathetic response to Danny's story shows how many people experience bullying in their lifetimes.

A GoFundMe page (tinyurl.com/hj8b6fv) has raised over \$110,000 since last week with nearly 3,000 people donating \$5 and up.

The effects of bullying are clear

All schools can ensure a safe climate in which everyone succeeds. Fortunately, we have resources to call on in Northeast Florida.

in research and in tragic events like Danny's death.

Research shows that bullying affects youth in both direct and indirect ways, casting a shadow over a number of witnesses and others involved.

All the more reason to pay attention to and prevent bullying. In schools where each student, regardless of background, feels safe, then everyone thrives.

All schools can ensure a safe climate in which everyone succeeds. Fortunately, we have resources to

call on in Northeast Florida.

In our area, Mental Health America of Northeast Florida prevents bullying in private and public schools. Through funding provided by United Way of Northeast Florida and Full Service Schools, Mental Health America reaches more than 10,000 parents, teachers and youth each year. The program helps students share their experiences with bullying and promotes healthy dialogue between adults and children.

Any school, community group or organization can contact MHA at (904) 738-8423 or kelvin@mhajax.org to request the bullying prevention program.

We want to provide our youth with the tools they need to succeed and "Stop Bullying Now," so no child in our community suffers like Danny Fitzpatrick.

Denise Marzullo,

President & CEO,

Mental Health America of Northeast Florida

Letters from Readers

SUPPORTING POLICE Living with danger

In view of the fact that recent marches, lootings, burnings and incredible destruction have occurred to protest police actions against black men, it's amazing that this doesn't happen when the situations are reversed.

Officer Tim Smith of Eastman, Ga., who was just 31 years old, was killed Saturday by a 24-year-old black male with no provocation from the officer as soon as he stepped out of his police car!

All has been quiet in the streets; his three children are fatherless. Further, a few hours later Scott Davis, a Marietta, Ga., police officer, was shot by a 15-year-old with a stolen gun.

Davis and two other officers were responding to a call before 4:30 a.m. about a car being broken into. Upon arrival, the teens started shooting at the officers. Davis was then taken into surgery. Fortunately he didn't die.

As the sister of a retired JSO officer as well as having a nephew who is currently one, I don't think people realize that an officer never knows what will happen when a suspect is pulled over.

It's unbelievable that when they are called into dangerous situations and a shooting is involved, immediately the officer is castigated for doing what so many times he has to do to save his own life so that he can go home to his family at night!

Let's not judge all police officers by the few who have violated the public's trust. Hopefully one day racial bias will cease and people will no longer be judged by the color of their skin but will be judged instead by their character.

Becky Calhoun, Jacksonville

BICYCLE RIDERS Breaking the law

I read with interest the informative article on Monday titled "Sharing the road."

According to the article, "By Florida state law a bicycle is legally defined as a vehicle and has the same rights and responsibilities as a motorist."

Then bicycles should be licensed and insured just as motor vehicles are, and the operators should be required to pass a written and road test, carry a license and be required to have insurance.

Furthermore they should be subject to the same fines and even

arrest as a motorist.

I see bicycle riders breaking the law every day, running traffic lights because they are rolling through intersections on old beaters, who transition from sidewalks to roadway and back with total disregard of motorists or pedestrians.

When was the last time anyone heard of a bicyclist getting a ticket?

The bicycle operators should be held to the same standards as motor vehicles operators.

Then maybe Northeast Florida would be a bit safer for everyone.

Robert McVeigh, Jacksonville

RIVERSIDE-AVONDALE Supporting neighborhoods

Kudos to City Councilman Jim Love for filing 2016-366. This legislation would enforce current laws and is vitally important to the future of the Riverside-Avondale Historic District.

In recent years, spot zoning has become all too common in Riverside, and the trend is spilling over into Avondale.

Commercial intrusion into long-established neighborhoods has brought safety, traffic and noise issues to an area long known for its quiet neighborhoods and tree-lined streets.

With passage of 2016-366, the Planning Department and City Council will be required to base decisions regarding zoning in the historic district on the zoning code and the historic zoning overlay that was passed unanimously by the City Council in 2008.

Applying the zoning code equally to all properties protects all residents and property owners and ensures the future of these two National Historic Districts.

Joan E. Moore, Jacksonville

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.

Email is preferred:

letters@jacksonville.com

Mail: Letters From Readers

The Florida Times-Union

P.O. Box 1949

Jacksonville, FL 32231

Web: jacksonville.com/opinion

SUPPORTING JOURNALISM An informed reader

I bought a copy of the Sunday paper because of the John Oliver piece on HBO.

I subscribe to The New York Times, The Economist and The New Yorker because I believe in paying for and supporting good journalism.

I haven't subscribed to the T-U since the '90s because it seemed to be a provincial, right-wing paper. (I'm a 59-year-old retired Navy commander.)

I live in Ponte Vedra Beach but enjoy downtown Jacksonville, only recently becoming a member of the Cummer and MOCA. The city has a lot of potential. The library downtown is marvelous!

I read Editor Frank Denton's piece and enjoyed it a great deal. I also enjoyed the pieces on the Outpost development in Ponte Vedra and the schools piece.

The city needs a good paper and patrons who support good journalism. It looks like it's time to give you guys another chance.

I'll be subscribing again. You can thank John Oliver. Best wishes for success.

Dave Rogers, Ponte Vedra Beach

TRUMP'S COMMENTS Public loves him for it

Some people love to bash Donald Trump and his followers, especially the syndicated writers who seem to speak for our ruling elite. Fans of Trump know he is not politically correct, and they love him for it! He is brash and sometimes insulting in a New York way.

Mayor Lenny Curry is bashed by association with Trump. Cppimnist Tia Mitchell says Curry will pay a political price for supporting Trump and serving as master of ceremonies at a recent Trump rally in Jacksonville.

I think many underestimate Trump much like they underestimated Ronald Reagan.

Trump is a lot more savvy than the press gives him credit for.

He is the anti-politician, and that is endearing to his fans. People are cheering Trump because he is our hero for stepping out of his comfortable board room and exposing his family and himself to ridicule and personal threats.

His campaign is exciting people with patriotic themes and national pride that we haven't felt in a long time. The elites just don't get it.

William Choisser, Orange Park