

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Concerns about Selby Gardens legitimate

The Sept. 12 editorial about Selby Garden's request for a rezoning trivializes the legitimate concerns of many residents of Sarasota, not just gardens neighbors, over the gardens' plans for expansion as a commercial event center.

The Herald-Tribune incorrectly stated that neighbors were concerned "the multistory parking garage would loom garishly over their lanais and boat docks and swimming pools." That is factually incorrect, misleading and unfair.

Nearby residents of Selby Gardens have legitimate issues with Selby's plans to operate an intensive commercial event center, with the attendant noise and traffic. City residents not immediately adjacent to the gardens have a very legitimate concern about adding significant traffic impacts to an already overburdened intersection.

Our neighborhood existed peacefully with Selby Gardens until 2016, when the decision was made to establish the gardens as a "world-class catered events and dining destination and premier Bayfront entertainment location" (Selby Strategic Plan, 2016-21), significantly increasing the size and number of events, many with loud, amplified music.

We love Selby Gardens and have always supported it as a *botanical garden*. It is our hope that we can find *meaningful* compromise moving forward.

The impacted neighborhoods' concerns should not be minimized nor trivialized.

Robert Bernstein, Bay Point Park Association, Sarasota

Selby compromise blend of old and new

It was heartening to read your editorial Sept. 12 on Selby Gardens' expansion plan, and hear the sound of reasonableness and progress above the noise of private property and selfish privacy.

Some "tiers" of nostalgia may be shed as Selby Gardens continues to grow from its lovely old-world bayou gardens into a respected research institution, but the present compromise plan saves both worlds and the gardens plan in modified form.

It is time now to move a few yards of opinion to an enhanced field goal of recreation and education.

Martin Tucker, Sarasota

Sarasota should grow up, not out

The citizen-initiated proposal to redesignate the 6,000 acres-plus area between Verna Road and Fruitville Road for "rural heritage" is a heroic attempt to stop the sprawl and draw the line between rural heritage preservation and urban development.

The notion of hamlets and villages contained in the 2050 Plan is a Potemkin dreamscape reminiscent of a

scene in Bilbo Baggins Shire or Hobbiton. But growth begets growth, and is dynamic not stagnant stagecraft.

Even under the guise of "clustering," sprawl is sprawl.

Sprawl is low-density development that must be serviced with roads, utilities, shopping, medical facilities, more roads and a whole bunch of other stuff that transform natural areas and rural landscapes into extensions of networks of urban development.

Sprawl is a form of land abuse, not land use.

Sarasota needs to grow up, not grow out into the rural landscapes. There is so much wasted land and air rights space in the urban services area to accommodate future growth that none of the East County subject area should be needed for the expansion of urban forms of development.

Sprawl hurts us all.

Larry Grossman, Sarasota

Trump treats followers like 'deplorables'

Hillary Clinton got in hot water for putting Donald Trump supporters in a "basket of deplorables." Having heard what the president told Bob Woodward about COVID-19, one wonders if he might feel the same about his cult of followers.

If he valued them as humans, why in the world would he mislead them about the dangers of the coronavirus? How could he know that it was more deadly than the "strenuous" flu, and was spread in the air, and not warn those who trusted him and recommend the wearing of masks?

That leaves us with this question: Is his conduct the result of an incredibly evil mind or is he just plain stupid?

John R. Blue, Parrish

Voters: Strive to consider both sides

The one word I use to describe myself is "fair." A Sept. 13 letter, "President's negligence led to many deaths," pushed my tolerance for injustice over the edge.

"The deliberate negligent murder of more than 190,000 Americans by President Donald Trump is beyond unthinkable," according to the writer. Not only is that statement grossly unfair, it is legally incorrect to combine the adjectives "deliberate" and "negligent" to modify the word "murder."

Juxtaposed on the page following the letter were two op-eds on the coronavirus pandemic with opposing viewpoints: Michelle Goldberg's "These Tapes Reveal a Conscious Deception" and Marc Thiessen's "If Trump Lied, so Did Fauci."

Please voters, whether progressive or conservative, consider both sides of a controversy and be fair.

Judith H. Rousseau, Venice