

South Florida 100

Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting you.

To read responses from more South Florida 100 participants, go to SunSentinel.com/100

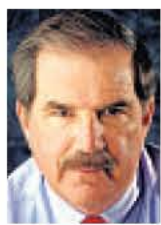
The top stories last week



Gary Resnick, mayor, Wilton Manors
The U.S. Supreme Court's decision not to review appellate court decisions finding bans on same sex marriage unconstitutional was a milestone for marriage equality. As a result, same sex marriage will be legal in 35 states and the District of Columbia, up from 19. Unfortunately, this does not affect Florida, where the attorney general continues to appeal four court decisions finding Florida's ban unconstitutional. Even before the Supreme Court's decision, attorneys general in other states decided not to appeal lower court decisions. Florida should avoid being on the wrong side of history and should allow implementation of courts' orders.



Frank Ortis, mayor, Pembroke Pines
With last week's opening of Trader Joe's and many other key businesses now calling our city home, we have come to realize how critical it is to be implementing our recently created Economic Development Strategic Plan. It outlines not only goals, but also objectives and the strategies to fulfill them. This ensures that appropriate decisions are made for the betterment of all our residents and other businesses. Economic development is a cornerstone of sustainable development, especially when all local governments face formidable challenges, as well as greater opportunities. Quality of life for all citizens should always remain the focus.



Earl Maucker, commissioner, Lighthouse Point; former editor, Sun Sentinel
With all due respect to those trying to help the homeless, they might find municipalities more sympathetic to their plight if they would lay off threats of lawsuits and helped the cities work out solutions. The latest dust-up comes from Arnold Abbott, director of Love Thy Neighbor, who is threatening Fort Lauderdale with more legal action if the city restricts areas where the homeless can be fed. Communities have a responsibility to maintain order for the health and welfare of all neighborhoods. Activists who support the homeless need to help resolve issues rather than create new ones.



Mitchell Berger, founder and co-chairman, Berger Singerman
The King Tide is here and the Miami Herald wants to know whether or not the new pumps on Miami Beach will hold back the sea. This story is part of our present and our future. Building the infrastructure to hold back the sea is part of the action plan South Florida must be prepared to put in place. With the Sun Sentinel Editorial last week and the King Tide stories this week, we are beginning to emerge from denial to acceptance and from acceptance to action.



Archbishop Thomas Wenski, Archdiocese of Miami
Teachers' unions and state school boards are seeking to shut down a scholarship program that serves 67,000 of Florida's most economically disadvantaged schoolchildren. Why? The vast majority, about 77 percent, of the beneficiaries are minorities, African-American or Hispanic. The scholarship program is funded not by direct State dollars but through donations from Florida corporations. Children who were not doing well in public schools excel in the private schools thanks to these scholarships at less cost per pupil than the public school system, which ultimately benefits the tax payer while offering the children of poor families a chance of a better future.



Richard Radcliffe, executive director, Palm Beach County League of Cities
The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners decided that all of our regional planning should take place with appointees from Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties instead of appointees from Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River, as it has been done since 1976.



Robert Runcie, superintendent, Broward County Public Schools
In response to community interest in the effective and efficient use of General Obligation Bond Referendum proceeds, the Broward County School Board approved a resolution to create a Bond Oversight Committee that will serve as an independent citizens' advisory committee to

ensure commitments are met. This is an important mechanism to establish greater accountability, transparency, public support, and confidence as voters consider approving bonds on Nov. 4 for safe and modern schools. The bond will provide \$800 million for school safety, renovations and technology across all schools in the district and cost the average homeowner about \$50 per year.



Roy Rogers, developer, environmentalist and community advocate
Important issues often get drowned out by the political noise inundating the airwaves. But one issue on the ballot is too important to ignore: Amendment

1, Florida's Water and Land Conservation Amendment. This important measure protects our state's natural water and land resources for generations to come — all without raising taxes. As former chair of The Nature Conservancy, I cannot stress enough the importance of preserving Florida's conservation lands. Areas like our beautiful beaches and precious Everglades are a major part of what makes Florida magnificent, and this amendment ensures that these precious treasures remain protected for years to come.



Richard Berkowitz, CEO, Berkowitz Pollack Brant Advisors and Accountants
An analysis of vending machines on government-owned properties found that public food dispensers are still filled with junk food. In the private sector, the battle between individuals looking for healthy snacks verses those looking for mid-afternoon a sugar rush rages. It is difficult to find unrefrigerated healthy snacks rather than chips, cookies and candy. It is a delicate balance for employers trying to create healthier workplaces. California requires that 35 percent of snacks and two-thirds of beverages in vending machines meet specific nutritional guidelines. The long-term question is whether government fiat will ultimately determine our snack options.



Patty Asseff, president, Broward League of Cities
Educators in Broward County cities are using chess in 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms as a means of developing critical thinking, logic, math and science skills — ultimately to improve education outcomes for students. Initiated by Sunrise Mayor Mike Ryan, the concept is taking hold in elementary schools and has gained support of the school board, which is partially funding the initiative along with First Move, a national organization that focuses on teaching chess skills to children. Our cities are on the cutting edge, using a 1,500-year-old game to sharpen the minds of our electronic age youth.



Irela Bague, president, Bague Group
I attended the 6th Annual Southeast Regional Climate Conference, an event where south Florida's largest coastal counties congregate to discuss and explore solutions on the effects of climate change and the inevitable threat of sea level rise to Florida's coastal urban areas. It was hosted in Miami Beach, a city that already floods during sunny days. It was encouraging to see the Mayor of Miami-Dade County and Miami Beach as well as the Chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce work together with scientists, planners and international experts. There is no denying that Florida's coastal governments must take immediate action to protect our economy, infrastructure and sustainable growth.



Joy Cooper, mayor, Hallandale Beach
As we recognize National Domestic Violence Month, every person must become part of the solution or consider themselves a part of the problem. If you see something, say something. How many children must remain in harm's way? If you can donate to Women in Distress or other agencies that help victims, do it. If you cannot afford a monetary donation, donate items or time. I loved what my Rabbi said about volunteering. Clicking a "Like" button on Facebook is not volunteering.



Keith Koenig, president, City Furniture
Don't forget October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Looking ahead to this week



Mike Ryan, mayor, Sunrise
William Spann, an Army veteran, died last week trying to cross a six-lane, high-speed road from a bus stop to a VA Clinic. Many warned this would happen without a signalized cross walk. Veterans who have crossed fields of fire, tumultuous waters hiding deadly dangers and endured the doubt of whether they would come home from missions, should not have to scamper across a six-lane road to get the care they earned and deserve. This past week, Broward County, Sunrise, Tamarac and congressional leaders met to find real and meaningful solutions. We owe our veterans nothing less.



Eleanor Sobel, member, Florida Senate
When I heard that Hospital Corporation of America is proposing to move 200 beds from Plantation General to the campus of Nova Southeastern University, I immediately took action. I am currently gathering information and listening to the stakeholders. There are good arguments for each side. Nova Southeastern wants a teaching hospital for medical residents, so they can grow their medical school. But will the citizens near Plantation General be negatively impacted by the loss of beds? I am looking into these questions so that I am fully educated before the public hearing on Oct. 22.



Thomas Shea, president, Right Management
South Florida's next massive infrastructure program is taking shape with amazing speed. Plans for All Aboard Florida's rail station complexes in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach are already evolving as engines for urban revitalization. With communities along the Miami-to-Orlando route raising important questions about traffic, safety and the environment, don't expect a smooth ride for the private-sector transit initiative. Recently All Aboard Florida announced changes to its \$1.75 billion financing plan to eliminate risk to taxpayers and public entities — a wise approach.



Dr. Michael Dennis, chairman, Florida Atlantic University Schmidt College of Medicine
Severe debilitation and extraordinarily high fatality rates make Ebola a unique threat to world health. One man does not constitute an epidemic, but the death of the Liberian in Dallas on Wednesday — despite access to the highest level of medical support — illustrates the difficulty of controlling this disease. There is no reliable cure and the incubation period of 21 days between contact and recognizable symptoms makes a fever check at the airport appear naïve. Extended monitoring is crucial. Clearly a coordinated, intelligently crafted global intervention including the original sites of infection in West Africa needs to be implemented quickly.



Katy Sorenson, president, Good Government Initiative, University of Miami
On the November ballot in Miami-Dade County is a referendum for a \$393 million bond to build a new court house and repair the existing one. The current one, a historically significant building, is crumbling, moldy, full of vermin and too small. Engineering inspections have revealed structural corrosion to the foundation and the support columns. It's harmful to the people who work there and insulting to our citizens who have a right to expect dignified, adequate public buildings. Vote yes.



Mary Riedel, president, Women in Distress of Broward County
The NFL is awash in a sea of pink and breast cancer awareness is clearly an important issue. But I hope the NFL and domestic violence continues in the news — action is needed now to bring about last change against abuse of all forms and in all settings.



Andrew Duffell, president, Research Park at Florida Atlantic University
On Nov. 4, Palm Beach County voters will be asked to continue a 0.25 mil assessment to fund arts, physical education and choice programs for the School District of Palm Beach County. I will vote in favor of this referendum in part because funding per student in Florida today is below the level it was in 2007-08. In order to provide the best future for our children and ourselves, we must better fund public education.



Ron Klein, former member, U.S. House of Representatives
As political ads become even more aggressive during this last 30 days before the election, keep your eye on the ball when it comes to understanding that your vote counts. Your vote is a privilege and a precious right. Don't allow cynicism or cynics to tell you that it doesn't matter. Fourteen years ago, we elected the President of the United States by a mere 537 votes. The next governor of our state will select four Florida Supreme Court Justices who will make decisions affecting your life for the next twenty five years. Think about it. Your vote counts.



Richard Barkett, CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale REALTORS
Now that school has started and autumn is in the morning air, it's time for us to take stock of 2014 and consider what might happen through the end of this year and into 2015. As mortgage rates have stabilized, house prices have clearly benefited with consistently strong year-over-year growth. Though some may be disappointed in the performance of the housing market in 2014, I see this as the beginning of a fresh start. Of course, there are still issues to debate and problems to address, but we are a far cry away from where we were five years ago.



Ina Lee, president, Travelhost Elite of Greater Fort Lauderdale
The 55th Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, the world's largest, showcasing more than \$3 billion in mega-yachts and more than 3-million-square feet of marine products, opens Oct. 30 on Fort Lauderdale Beach. Heralding the beginning of the winter tourist season, the Boat Show has a larger economic impact than the Super Bowl and is vital to our destination.