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Letters to the Editor for April 22

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The military is the biggest threat to the environment

Happy Earth Day! There's plenty of blame to go around for the environmental problems we face today. One finger can be boldly pointed at the U.S. military.

The U.S. military is the single largest consumer of oil in the world and the world's largest polluter, generating 750,000 tons of toxic waste annually.

By not funding the war in Iraq, our tax dollars to the tune of \$3 billion a week, could go toward developing clean, green sources of energy and funding environmental programs.

War is hell on the environment. War solves nothing. The mining, milling, manufacture, transport, testing and use of weapons is the greatest threat to our environment. If you love the Earth, work to end war.

*Jaueline Betz,**Gainesville***The Sun's coverage of Crapo was fair**

With news of Ed Crapo having his situation positively resolved by the ethics board, I imagine that there will be a rush by some to censure the "liberal" Gainesville Sun for yellow journalism. Well, let me be the first to congratulate The Sun for a rare piece of quality investigative reporting.

The constitutional right of a free press is one of our nation's most treasured attributes. A responsible press provides a measure of much needed transparency to both governmental and corporate entities.

In the case of Crapo it was shown that he is one of the rare county property appraisers who has the ability to manage both his full-time public duties as well a lucrative consulting business on the side. He certainly gets my vote for multi-tasker of the year.

Crapo had suggested to The Sun, in its initial reporting, that despite the fact that several of the companies he did consulting work for were also receiving contract work from his public office, he nevertheless determined that there wasn't even the slightest hint of impropriety involved.

Well, here's the rub: The ethics board determined that since Crapo wasn't simultaneously working with these companies at both of his functions, he was able to clear any ethics hurdles. Apparently, Crapo had the wisdom to let at least a few days transpire before one hand washed the other.

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The goal of media review is not to hang all of its subjects. And, in this case, the caliber of The Sun's report should not be judged by a final legal review of Crapo but rather in the dispassionate manner it presented a thorough and illuminating review into the public life of an important government official.

Robert Ehlers,

Gainesville

Crapo does a great job

I'm glad Ed Crapo was exonerated by the ethics panel. I hope the party or parties responsible (The Gainesville Sun, County Manager Randall Reid) for having Crapo investigated will do the right thing and reimburse any and all costs to Crapo and Alachua County taxpayers.

I've lived here all of my life and have known Crapo since I was a teenager. As far as most of the voters of Alachua County and myself included, we think he's done and continues to do a great job for the county. Maybe it's time to look into other people such as Randall Reid and how they conduct business.

Wade Jones,

Bronson

You can celebrate Earth Day by supporting local farmers

The local, sustainable food movement has come to north central Florida, especially Gainesville and Alachua County.

The number of farmers markets has doubled in the past two years. The Eastside Culinary Arts program has added local foods to its curriculum, with the help of local chef Bert Gill, and recently won a state competition. Eric Flagg (his film "Gimme Green" airs on the Sundance Channel) is shooting a documentary of its efforts.

Slow Food, an international organization advocating good food, cleanly grown and fairly traded, has started a Gainesville convivium, which has sponsored farm tours and yummy potlucks.

The University of Florida has a restaurant which purchases and serves local foods and many local restaurants pride themselves on serving locally grown produce.

Loften High School's horticulture program is teaching organic farming and its cafeteria serves Loftens produce to the students on Local Food Fridays.

Florida's Eden's newly released Heart of Florida Trail Guide features a food section, recognizing the social and financial impact of agriculture on tourism - agritourism. An online farmers market, food coalition and a food cooperative will open in Gainesville within the next few months.

How can you be a part of this movement?

Support local farmers and farmers markets. Take the time to talk to them; find out how your food was grown and the best ways to serve it.

Plan your meals based on what is seasonally available. Produce in season is fresher and hasn't traveled long distances, using gallons of gasoline, to get to your plate. Locally grown food is fresher, cheaper and just plain tastes better.

Celebrate Earth Day every day, with every meal!

Stefanie Samara Hamblen,

The Sun should issue apology to Crapo

Crapo believes in a high standard of honesty, integrity and respect for himself and others. I know this is a true statement because I have had the pleasure of being employed by him for the past six and a half years.

The Sun has repeatedly questioned Crapo's ethics. As a student of the Alachua County public school system, I was taught journalists should have a high standard of ethics and report the complete truth. We were instructed to review The Gainesville Sun each morning to determine the "Who, what, when, where, why and how" of an article that we found interesting and be able to discuss it in detail.

I was under the assumption that the standards had not changed in the past 30 years and was vastly disappointed to see that I was incorrect. Since the Ethics Commission has now cleared Crapo of any wrongdoing, will we see the "whole truth" from The Gainesville Sun? I'd at least think an apology would be in order.

Crapo has dedicated 30 years to our county and has handled the smearing of his name with aplomb. Can The Gainesville Sun recognize its failure to ethically report the story and do the same?

Glenda Walrath,

Hawthorne

No guarantee that transit system is the answer

A bus rapid transit system is proposed in order to mitigate west Gainesville traffic concerns that would be exacerbated by the Newberry Village project under consideration by the County Commission.

Although such a system may indeed fulfill expectations, there can be no guarantee.

Newberry Road, in the vicinity of The Oaks Mall, North Florida Regional Medical Center, I-75 and points west is already over capacity and extremely congested at certain times of the day. Congestion is such that traffic moves at a snail's pace (if at all).

Access from feeder streets is very difficult and dangerous. Emergency vehicles are seriously impeded from reaching their destinations. Gasoline is being wastefully consumed by idling vehicles generating polluting exhaust fumes.

Before development of the Newberry Village project is approved, would it not make sense to first provide the transit system in order to determine whether expectations are realistic? At the very least, there should be an expectation for significant remediation of the situation that is already intolerable.

David F. Pawliger,

Gainesville

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