



YOUR VIEW

PRESCRIPTION PRICESTim Ioannides, M.D., *Vero Beach***Pharmacy too interested in profit**

A patient of mine came to the office recently in some distress. I had prescribed a medication for her that was generic that I knew to cost around \$25. She went to a local pharmacy and was charged over \$345 for it.

As most of my patients are, this patient is on Medicare, on a fixed income. It was a hardship for her to buy this at this incredibly exorbitant cost.

There is a website, Goodrx.com, where one can look up the cost of medications and download coupons. If this patient had called my office, we would have printed this coupon for her.

Local pharmacies and pharmacists have a duty to their patients to offer them the lowest cost equivalent medicine. Too often this duty is ignored. Too many of our seniors are being bankrupted by the cost of medications.

I hope that this local pharmacy, as well as others, will do a better job of caring for its patients in the future.

OUR INDIAN RIVER LAGOONKevin Stinnette, *Fort Pierce***Help keep Riverkeeper on river**

I'm giving my \$47 tax break from the governor to the Indian Riverkeeper to keep him out on the river fighting for clean water for future generations. I encourage everyone to chip in another \$3 and attend the "Buy the Riverkeeper a Truck" fundraiser at Rufus Wakeman's River Palms fish camp in Jensen Beach. Food, fun, great music with incredible silent auction items will happen March 1. A \$50 ticket will help keep the pressure on to buy the sugar land and send the water south. It is a great way to put your tax-cut dollars to work.

Editor's note: Kevin Stinnette is a former Indian Riverkeeper.

GOVERNMENT SPENDINGJohn Lynch, *Stuart***D.C. spending priorities misguided**

Something is wrong with this picture. I present this to fellow readers to evaluate these, what I consider mindless, priorities on the spending habits in Washington, D.C.

The Pentagon spends \$585.2 billion for defense. The F-35 cost billions of dollars in it. The big problem: It does not work and if did it would be useless in today's military operations. This is the latest boondoggle purchases by the Pentagon. It must stop. We have so many weapons of mass destruction it has been said we could destroy the planet with ease.

Let us consider spending on education. The federal government spent \$71 billion for education, a paltry sum compared to our government's desire to pump up the military spending. Our children and their education should be a

high priority. Among developed countries, the United States ranks near the bottom in science, math and reading. Do we think lack of education is going to keep us from being a third-world country? I think we are well on our way to just the opposite. These rankings are a disgrace for us.

Last but not least, we have the environment. A miserable \$8.6 billion spent on something we all should be concerned about. The U.S. ranks second behind China as the biggest polluter on the planet. I think the figures referred above need a realistic adjustment for the United States to become more concerned with people than the war machine. Does anyone else see a problem with this spending priority?

EARNING YOUR WAYJean Gillette, *Sebastian***Freebie mindset must be eliminated**

We need jobs that pay money. The Feb. 9 edition of this newspaper had 77 ads for volunteer jobs. Really? Nothing is free. People who are retired can use money for unexpected expenses, food, doctor bills and gas just like everyone else. It costs money to volunteer — gas, for one.

Our president wants to give away two years of community college. I was brought up that to appreciate something, you should work for it and not expect a handout. I ironed clothes for neighbors for 25 cents an hour just to buy my high school books.

When do we stop expecting everything to be paid for by someone else? Why is every ad on the television asking for donations?

We are no longer a rich society able to help everyone. People need to start working for money.

We live in a free country, not in a nanny county that has to "give" us everything at the expense of the few. Wise up, people. Let's have less volunteer work and more paid jobs. Hard work never hurt anyone.

STUDENT 'ASSESSMENTS'Robert Griggs, *Stuart***State needs to kick testing addiction**

Elementary students in Martin County will spend up to 33 hours completing as many as 27 separate formalized assessments (code for standardized tests) this school year.

The majority of these tests are mandated by state statute, yet the state provides no funding.

All students are required to complete formalized end-of-year exams in every course at every grade level. This means students, even those as young as 5, are now forced to take standardized final exams, not only in academic areas, but also in PE, art and music.

As a parent and as an education professional, I recognize the severe harm this level of testing causes.

Schools stop teaching (except to the test); teachers are forced to violate their own ethical standards, and students lose all motivation to learn.

The results of these tests, most of which are so new they have yet to be scientifically validated, determine

student promotion and teacher retention.

It is time to stop this madness.

The solution is for lawmakers in Tallahassee to listen to their constituents and pass a bill allowing individual districts to identify their own means for determining student promotion, graduation, and teacher evaluation.

Further, the bill should vastly reduce the number of state-mandated assessments, and the results of those assessments should only be used for diagnostic purposes.

Of course, any new legislation must also be fully funded by the state.

The time for action is now. Our children can wait no longer. Contact your state representatives today and tell them to end the testing madness.

VERO BEACH PARKINGDebi Traverse, *Vero Beach***Restrictions tough on workers**

It's pretty clear that Vero Beach City Manager Jim O'Connor is not concerned about the workers on the beach. He said the city has no complaints from businesses since parking-limit signs were erected. There have been three letters to the editor published by this newspaper regarding the lack of parking for workers. The general manager of Waldo's has been very outspoken regarding business issues because of the new restrictions. The Vero Beach Hotel and Spa have had meetings with Mr. O'Connor voicing employee concerns. A petition was provided from over 100 employees.

Yesterday, on an 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. shift, a co-worker had to move her car twice. After she parked her car to go to work, the city worker chalked her tires at 10:35 a.m. She had time before her first service to move her car. As soon as she moved her car, the "parking police" made a loop around and remarked her tires! If that's not being targeted, then what is?

We as voting residents of Vero Beach and Indian River County are not being represented. In theory, parking spots should be turned over; however, there are no shops from the Vero Beach Hotel north, and yet the signs still remain.

O'Connor says the city doesn't profit from these citations. Really? I'm sure this year's profits will far surpass any previous year's. Perhaps the city manager has found a way to balance the budget by writing these citations.

We as workers are happy to be of service to these who visit our wonderful town. These parking restrictions are impacting our ability to do so. Take down the parking restrictions in front of the hotel and north on Ocean Drive now!

ALL ABOARD FLORIDAThomas E. Bennett, *Stuart***It must just be a nightmare, right?**

Somebody, please wake me up. I'm having a nightmare about something called All Aboard Florida. Oh, what a relief it will be to wake up and find I was only dreaming it.

What more needs to be said?