

~Letters To The Editor~

Katie,

I'm writing to share my displeasure with the article about the "neighborhood resource center - El Sol" that appeared in your latest paper. As we all know, "immigrant workers seeking work" are, for the most part, illegal aliens who have entered our country against federal law. These illegal aliens cost U. S. taxpayers billions of dollars per year, for the provision of healthcare, education and social services. In addition, they pose a threat to national security, as no one in the federal government, or anywhere else for that matter, can say for sure how many of them are here and how many terrorists/violent criminals are among their numbers. Suggesting we go "to the Resource Center when needing help around the house" is actually inviting people to engage in criminal activity. It is, after all, a federal crime to hire an illegal alien. I do not think it is appropriate that the newspaper should encourage illegal behavior.

Thumbs down!

Mary F.

Dear Mary-

We appreciate your opinions in the El Sol story. The dilemma regarding immigrant workers has long been a heated subject and one that is not likely to go away with the opening of a resource center. However the center has received legal approval as a viable alternate, or for better words compromise, to this difficult situation. Perhaps this was partly done in anticipation of possible changes in federal laws. In any case as it stands it is recognized as a legal operation. While the paper is not trying to sway residents one way or the other it is our goal to provide readers with as much information as possible. From there it is up to them as to what to do with that information. It would not only be inappropriate for us to encourage illegal behavior it would be irresponsible and illegal! Once again we appreciate your comments in this ongoing issue.

Katie

Katie,

I can NOT believe your "clarification" of the situation that you printed in the paper. Yes, our new neighbor is not labeled as a Predator under Florida law. He is an Offender.... Nobody is labeled as such until they have been CONVICTED. Just so happens that our neighbor was CONVICTED of a second degree felony.

You believe that "with better understanding we can prevent bigger problems, which might otherwise occur as a result of a well intended over reaction." The way that I interpret your writing is that by informing the neighborhood that there is a sexual offender living in the neighborhood, we in some way made things worse. Jupiter Police Department found it important enough to tell everyone on our street. We found it important enough to tell the entire neighborhood.....

If you know of anyone looking for a place to rent here in the Heights how about sending them on over. The other half of the sex offender's duplex is vacant. The previous tenants, of six years, found him disturbing enough to move out immediately when they found out their new landlord was an offender.

I do not believe you have done this neighborhood justice by the couple of paragraphs in your editorial comments. It was not accurate. You DID minimize the situation and you did NOT clarify it.

Francis St. Resident

Dear Francis St-

Clearly my intentions were misunderstood and for that I do apologize. My comments were in no way intended to be personal in any one direction. As a mother of four I can fully appreciate the concern, frustration AND yes aggravation, you experienced upon notification of your regrettable new neighbor. Thankfully with new laws in place (should they stand up in court) it will be next to impossible for additional such persons to move into our neighborhood. I am certain that fellow Heights residents were appreciative that you took the time to ensure that they were informed of this regrettable situation. That said- the bigger problems that I was referring to were those individuals that would attempt to take the laws into their own hands. While we do need to be aware, we must also be mindful that laws have to be upheld on both ends. Neither the town nor the paper would desire to see a lynch mob reaction to this situation. (And NO I am NOT insinuating that you were reacting that way) You did what we're expected to do- you informed your neighbors. However there are always those individuals that take things a step further, by breaking the laws in an attempt to (shall we say) encourage that individual to move on. I would also hate to see some sort of retaliation on the offender's part. Your email was the first I received but far from the last and the majority of the emails referred to this individual as a predator. The town was quick to try and put a stop to that (stating a predator was far worse) and THAT was the only reason behind the clarification. Thus the need for better understanding.

It is regrettable that this situation also caused you to lose a far better neighbor in the process. As you have clearly pointed out few people would knowingly choose to move into such an environment.

It is also unfortunate that you missed the Heights meeting- this subject was discussed at great length as was the upcoming change in laws to thankfully prevent further such situations.

Finally, I regret that you feel I did the neighborhood an injustice in my handling of this topic. I take the situation just as serious as you do but felt it was also important to help cool the smoking gun that was developing.

While clearly we view the handling of this situation differently I do appreciate your comments in this matter. Hopefully you be able to make the next meeting on September 14th.

Katie

Thanks to the reader for including the following information link-
<http://offender.fdle.state.fl.us/offender/FAQ.htm>

Dear Katie,

As I read June Brown's well-written article, "El Sol: Jupiter's Neighborhood Resource Center - Help is a Two Way Street!", I find a glaring omission from the piece. What Ms. Brown fails to mention is the complete lack of background- screening on the "extremely hardworking, eager, pleasant, and enthusiastic individuals" that would determine eligibility for their working in the United States. It does not seem to be a matter of

concern to the Center that some of the immigrants could be in our country illegally, thus making their working here an illegal practice.

Turning a blind eye to a person's legal status when seeking their employ is not only against our laws, but also adds to the huge problems that ILLEGAL immigration creates. According to Nicole Janak's August 18, 2006, article in the Palm Beach Post, some of our community leaders claim the effects of ILLEGAL immigrants on health care, crime, education and Social Security are quite visible. She cites a North Broward Hospital District spokesman as declaring millions of dollars in uncollected hospital bills have been generated by ILLEGAL immigrants who have no health insurance and are forced to use emergency rooms as doctors' offices.

We must be aware that if we use immigrant workers from El Sol we may be using the services of those who are not eligible to be working in our country. That practice does not create the two-way street of which Ms. Brown speaks: It makes it a one-way street at a high cost to citizens and immigrants who are in our country LEGALLY.

Unsigned

Dear Unsigned,

Thanks for your comments on the El Sol piece. As you can imagine I have received quite a few emails on this controversial issue. Since several of the emails were concerning the hiring of illegal immigrants I decided to ask for the centers comments on the handling of this, their response has been that "the hiring or contractual agreement of individuals is solely between the two parties". While it is true that many of those individuals lack legal status to work in the US- many others however are legal and are diligently looking for work, the best way they know how.

For the record I have also requested comments from their legal council and hope to include them in an upcoming issue of the Heights paper.

Thanks again for taking the time to express your opinions.

Katie

Katie,

I can certainly understand not wanting random cats on your property. However, before code enforcement is called please talk to your neighbors first. Usually a cat will only wander a short distance from their home. Also, cat owners should have their cat implanted with a tracking device. Any vet or shelter can provide this service for a nominal fee. This way if your cat is picked up by animal care and control or another agency they will be scanned for the tracking device and the owner will be notified. The alternative is the almost certain destruction of the animal as these agencies typically wait only 24 hours before putting the animal down.

Good Neighbor

Dear Good Neighbor,

Thanks for sharing this great advice. I'll be sure and include it in the next issue.

Katie

Note from the editor- We welcome your questions and comment. Should you have an issue that you would like addressed, just send your Letter to the Editor to NPBHeights@bellsouth.net. We will try and print as many as possible.