

# The Miami Herald

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## Get to know Spain

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The Feb. 14 letter *Spain's cruel sport* showed a lack of knowledge about and respect for Spain.

The writer could have expressed his distaste for bullfights in many other ways than saying that, "It seems Spain has not progressed much since the 1400s." This derogatory statement showed an ignorance about Spain's history and culture.

Furthermore, it feeds prejudice and stereotypes, two traits no one should want to cultivate.

The letter writer should take the time to visit Spain, get immersed in its reality, history, culture and people.

He may very well come back with the same distaste for bullfights, but I guarantee that he will gain a perspective that will prevent him from making the same kind of statements about Spain or any other culture in the future.

**MARIA JOSE GARMENDIA**, Miami Springs

Help when needed

Regarding Edward Wasserman's Feb. 15 column, *I'm here to help -- maybe*: I believe that any journalist's first allegiance is to his religion, no matter what it is, which states that: "Knowing to do good and doeth it not, to him it is a sin."

**ROLAND V. RAKOW**, Cutler Bay

Misspent funds

I thank The Miami Herald for pointing out that the Miami-Dade Police Department purchased 10 SUVs with money from the Environmental Task Force Trust Fund, which is used to fight environmental crimes. The SUVs were used for administrative purposes, not direct enforcement.

Oh, the irony. Now that these resources will be reassigned to investigators, let's get busy solving those environmental crimes -- from the stealthy cover of idling SUVs.

**THORN GRAFTON**, Miami

A sustainable future

Re Dick Polman's Feb. 9 column about the Tea Party, *Onward! (But to where?)*: Finding a fix for our failing system offers lots of positive possibilities if we explore all the options.

National politics has morphed into a professional wrestling match where outcomes are usually predetermined, and media distractions are used to divert attention from real issues.

Maybe the affirmative agenda of a "kinder, gentler America" mentioned in the article can be modeled after Florida's own Venus Project.

Its goal is to improve society by moving toward a resource-based economy, design of sustainable cities, energy efficiency, natural-resource management and advanced automation -- focusing on the benefits they will bring to society.

Capitalism -- with a human face -- could work if citizens remained vigilant. Just don't let anyone label it socialism.

**RON COLE**, Tavernier

Wrong on Obama

I thought Dave Barry was the humor columnist for The Miami Herald until I read Cal Thomas' hilarious oped attempting to blame President Obama for a policy of "scorched earth" that the Republican party has perfected (*Obama and the GOP: Coolidge was right!*, Feb. 3 Other Views). They now oppose policies they previously championed just because the president says he might agree. Heck, they wouldn't even clap for tax cuts for small businesses.

I especially like the ongoing effort by conservatives like Thomas to link the "tax cuts for the rich" militarily hawkish modern Republicans to the isolationist Calvin Coolidge whose tax policies actually eliminated income tax for nearly everyone except the rich.

The *uber* conservative Cato Institute says that under Coolidge, taxes on the rich more than doubled and their share of taxes increased from less than a third to nearly two thirds by the end of his presidency. Where are those Republicans now?

**SEAN McCRACKINE**, Miami

No victories

Boxers retire, and baseball players retire. But without winning a championship in boxing or batting 500 home runs, Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart retires from Congress and announces it like it was the event of the century.

Referring to Cuba, of course, he said that his mission was accomplished. What mission and what accomplishment in Cuba is he referring to? The only change on the island that has occurred in the 18 years he's been in Congress is the transfer of power from Fidel Castro to his brother Raúl and an increase of the repression. Is that what Diaz-Balart considers triumph?

He added that he contributed to the embargo becoming law. In other words, Diaz-Balart contributed to a law that excused Fidel Castro for keeping the population in misery by allowing him to blame the U.S. embargo. If he cares so much for the island, he should be there in Cuba,

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not in Washington, doing something for its liberation.

**JOSE A. VARGAS**, Miami

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