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August 14, 2015

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Ms. Lisa Nellessen-Lara
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Mr. Rick Outzen
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Independent News
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Dear Ms. Reese, Ms. Nellessen-Lara and Mr. Outzen:

I came downtown last weekend but all of the restaurants were so crowded that I would have had to wait to get in. The sidewalks had tables and chairs that were filled, and I had trouble moving quickly on the sidewalk because there were so many couples of all ages walking hand in hand. There was entertainment all up and down Palafox Street, and the bars were crowded. If one read the PNJ for the last several weeks and the Independent News for the past several years, you would be shocked to know anything positive was happening. Did the media know that Palafox Street had been named one of the 2013 Top Ten Great Streets in America by the American Planning Association? The only thing I can think of is the two newspapers must have been so involved in searching the public records, blogs and gossip against the Mayor looking for negative that the positive has been ignored. All you have to do is just walk down our main street day or night seven days a week to realize what really is going on in our city and it is good!

I have been a resident of the City of Pensacola for over 78 years. The changes that have taken place in our city under our new strong Mayor is the envy of cities throughout this country.

Under the Mayor, the ad valorem property tax has been reduced by 5.5%. There has been a double digit crime reduction, including residential burglaries down 40% and violent crimes down almost 20%. The pension reform was negotiated so as to cut the unfunded portion by as much as 15 million dollars. The city budget has been cut by 30 million dollars. The number of fulltime positions has dropped almost 100 employees, and the number of department heads has been dropped from 17 to 11.

The Mayor negotiated UPS to come to Pensacola International Airport, which included many additional jobs. He was able to convince Southwest Airlines to come to the Pensacola Airport. Also, there is a memorandum of understanding with ST AeroSpace bringing 300+ jobs to Pensacola.

In regard to minority participation, he has appointed the first African American Police Chief and the first African American City Attorney in the history of Pensacola. He has opened two new neighborhood resource centers in the historically neglected neighborhoods of Woodland Heights and Legion Field, which was a 6 million dollar investment.

Drive Bayfront Parkway and look at the landscaping and also Admiral Mason Park, which recently received the Project Excellence Award. There is a grant that will soon fund construction of another similar park at Corrine Jones Park on the west side of Pensacola. Our Mayor led the fight for and has now completed three compressed natural gas fueling stations which will save millions of dollars. These are but a few of the major things that our Mayor has accomplished in his first term.

No reasonable person can believe the amount of newspaper space that has been spent in pointing out that the Mayor made a mistake by saying that Tamara Fountain, the COO of the City, got a degree at FSU and that she got an MBA at the University of West Florida. Ms. Fountain was hired based on several great recommendations and at the point that the Mayor mentioned her academic degrees, there had not been a resume filed by her. Immediately after the Mayor made the comment (because he mistakenly believed she had gotten a degree at both institutions that she attended) Ms. Fountain called and straightened out the situation. You would think that would be the end of it. It wasn't because the two newspapers decided to go on a campaign to destroy Ms. Fountain, and they succeeded, because she resigned. This was so even though Randy Hammer, a former publisher of the Pensacola News Journal and the General Manager of BLAB TV, stated the COO seemed to be growing into her job as the day to day manager of City Hall.

The next issue was in regard to the Maritime Park lease. In the negotiations to come up with a satisfactory lease, the City hired outside lawyers; those lawyers stated it was going to take

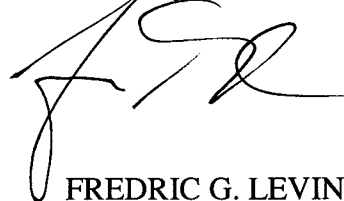
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a little more time to complete the issues that were still to be decided. The Mayor did what any client would do when he hires good lawyers. The two newspapers started a campaign to destroy the Mayor because he was listening to the lawyers. I wonder what the newspapers would have said if the Mayor had entered into the lease against the advice of the attorneys? By the way, the University of West Florida and Mr. Studer have agreed and are going to do a fabulous job with the entrepreneurial center.

I would hope that both of the newspapers would print this in its entirety. Is it possible that when the committee for the Pulitzer Prize, for journalism, analyzes these destructive writings of these two newspapers, it might bestow a new award upon both for negative stupidity? They have certainly made a strong case for this recognition.

In the future, I hope that our two newspapers will realize that when it comes to the City of Pensacola, the glass is half full.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. G. Levin', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

FREDRIC G. LEVIN