

## READERS' LETTERS

# Welcome center at The Breakers would be a positive change

For a city that prides itself on being a world-class tourist destination, Newport has an embarrassing lack of world-class tourist facilities. For example, try finding a nice public restroom downtown.

The lack of great facilities to match our great attractions is not always due to lack of effort or imagination. Rather, the lack of facilities is often due to knee-jerk opposition to change that arises every time a plan for any improvement is put forward. This opposition to positive change results in stalled and shelved plans, followed by complaints that nothing ever improves in this city.

A current case in point is the proposed improvement of the welcome

center at The Breakers. Currently the welcome center consists of a tent (with no air conditioning) and a toilet trailer. The Preservation Society of Newport County plans to replace this tent and toilet trailer with a beautifully designed and cleverly concealed structure that will enhance the visitor experience and provide first-class restroom facilities for the 400,000 visitors who come to The Breakers each year. The plans for this welcome center have been painstakingly made to be as tasteful, elegant and invisible as possible while still providing a first-class experience to visitors.

However, as usual, there is a vocal minority that is opposed to these improvements. If this opposition stalls,

or even worse kills, this project, then the 400,000 visitors to the Breakers each year will still be stuck under a tent using a toilet trailer far into the future. This would be a black mark on Newport's world-class status.

Remember, not all change is bad. There was violent opposition to the building of the Eiffel Tower, the Washington Monument and the Flatiron Building, all of which became icons for their cities. The new welcome center at The Breakers is so beautiful that it too can achieve icon status while also providing a world-class tourist experience. Let's give positive change a chance.

**William J. Corcoran, Newport**