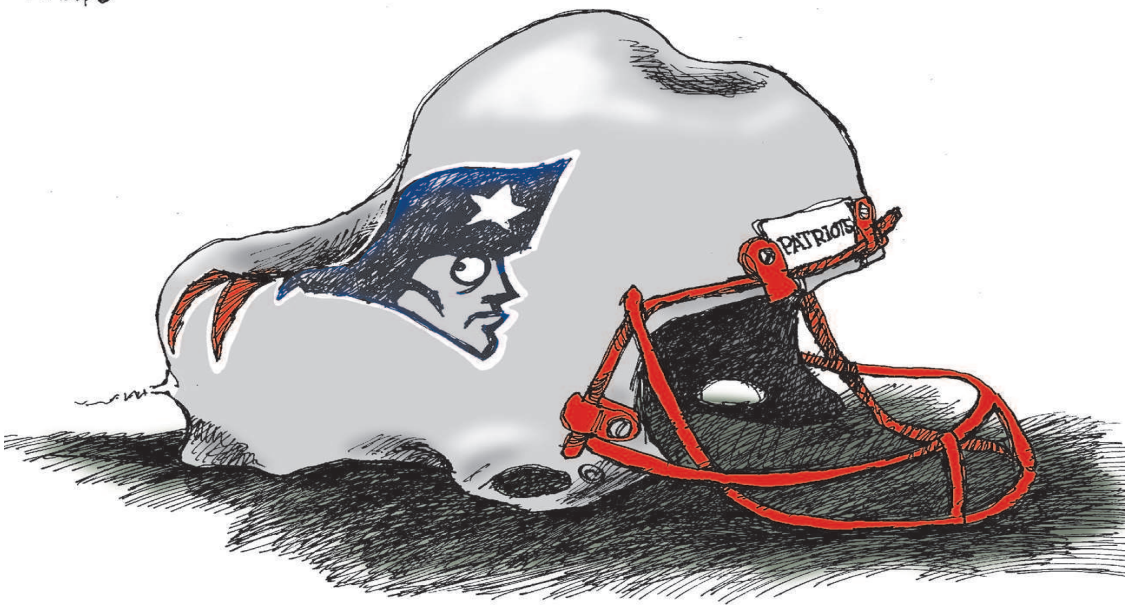


O P I N I O N

STAFF
SISTERS TRIBUNE



DEFLATED

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

As the newest member of the Cloverdale Fire District board of directors and a 20-year veteran of the department, I must respond to the misinformation being published by the campaign to unseat the incumbent board members. I take personal affront to comments made pertaining to the ability of the current board.

First, the constituents, who the board represents, approved our 20-year plan by voting overwhelmingly to provide the funding to make it happen. The specifications for the buildings as well as the engines have been formulated over a five-year period (not 20 minutes) and have been discussed at almost every board meeting during that time. The 20-year plan was unanimously approved by all board members. The funding provided by the bond is allocated for specific capital expenditures and cannot be subverted for other projects, therefore financial oversight does not require the expertise that candidate Rob Malone claims the board does not have.

Second, at the request of board member Keith Cyrus and a cost of \$4,000, an independent survey of our 20-year plan was conducted

by a reputable firm and the results confirmed our plan met the needed response and firefighter safety goals as required by law and set by the department. The survey's top priority was engine replacement.

Third, each station will have one each of the three primary-response vehicles and the station covering the vast majority of calls will have the additional equipment utilizing the additional bay described. The board's job is to provide policy and fiscal management, not to micro-manage the operations of the district. District operations is the job of the fire chief, Thad Olsen, whose management has reduced response times overall and provided for greater firefighter safety and response effectiveness.

It appears that Mr. Cyrus, who has not voiced a negative vote against any issue in five years, has somehow distorted the proceedings of the district board and is supporting an Aspen Lakes employee for reasons other than public safety and firefighter safety.

As this election draws to a close, the incumbents would like to thank all the community

See **LETTERS** on page 14

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Chance showers 53/30	Chance showers 56/37	Chance showers 59/37	Chance showers 61/33	Chance showers 66/33	Chance showers 65/na

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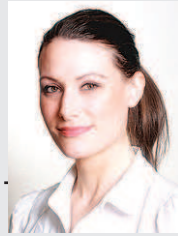
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Rachel Marsden

American Voices

PARIS — Stupidity and obesity are now matters of U.S. national security. And it's only the tip of a more significant iceberg that threatens America from within.

An organization called Mission: Readiness comprised of more than 500 retired generals and military leaders routinely publishes reports — including one just last month — detailing how a significant number of American kids these days are either too fat to be effective fighters or too low-scoring in math, literacy, and problem-solving to pass the basic military enlistment exam.

Granted, the way modern warfare is heading, future recruits might spend their days sitting at a desk and operating a joystick, directing missile fire from drones. Lockheed Martin and Teledyne Scientific & Imaging have developed a rifle system for the U.S. Department of Defense called "EXACTO" that allows amateurs to hit targets at extreme ranges, effectively democratizing sniper credentials.

Sounds like the U.S. military has a good jump on the potentially depressing future of warfare, using innovative technology to compensate for a generation of recruits too fat to fight.

Meanwhile, many commentators missed the point when Russian President Vladimir Putin recently called for the reinstatement of mandatory minimum fitness standards for Russian schoolkids by 2016. Britain's *Telegraph* newspaper called it "the revival of the Soviet-era physical evaluation programme." Apparently physical fitness standards promote communism. Maybe we can just declare all standards "communist" and do away with them completely.

I recall the similar "ParticipACTION" program while growing up in Canada.

Intended to promote physical fitness and healthy living, the program taught me the importance of goal-setting, the value of uncompromising standards, and the relationship between effort and reward. Last I checked, those tenets represented the very foundation of excellence in a

free society.

Conventional thinking in America these days dictates that if enough people aren't going to step up to attain high standards, then the standards will just have to get over themselves.

Excuses are rampant in modern society, and any excuse will do: the bad economy, the lack of government intervention (or too much of it), the outsourcing of jobs or the depression of wages through globalization. Not to say that some of these factors aren't legitimate, but none should be accepted as valid excuses for complacency.

The "American dream" has gone from something that's earned to an assumed right. Any adverse consequences for bad choices are externalized. Someone or something else is always scapegoated. And when that transfer of accountability fails to satisfy, the end result is demoralization. When a citizenry experiences demoralization en masse, it becomes highly vulnerable.

Take the recent rioting in Baltimore. Rioting isn't an activity favored by rational people. It's a political tactic favored by the frustrated, impatient, and hopeless. Riots appeal to the demoralized for whom the material destruction of one's community is little more than a means to an end. There's no point in arguing over whether rioters have a right to feel that way. They simply do.

Last weekend, two apparent converts to radical Islam showed up with guns outside a Prophet Muhammad cartoon exhibition in Garland, Texas, fired at a security guard and were subsequently shot to death by police. Regardless of how the two gunmen felt about the art or Islam, how disposable to do you have to consider your life in order to do something like this?

Experts are struggling to figure out ways to interrupt the self-radicalization process that some young Americans choose to undergo. It's the individual and the culture that need hardening.

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