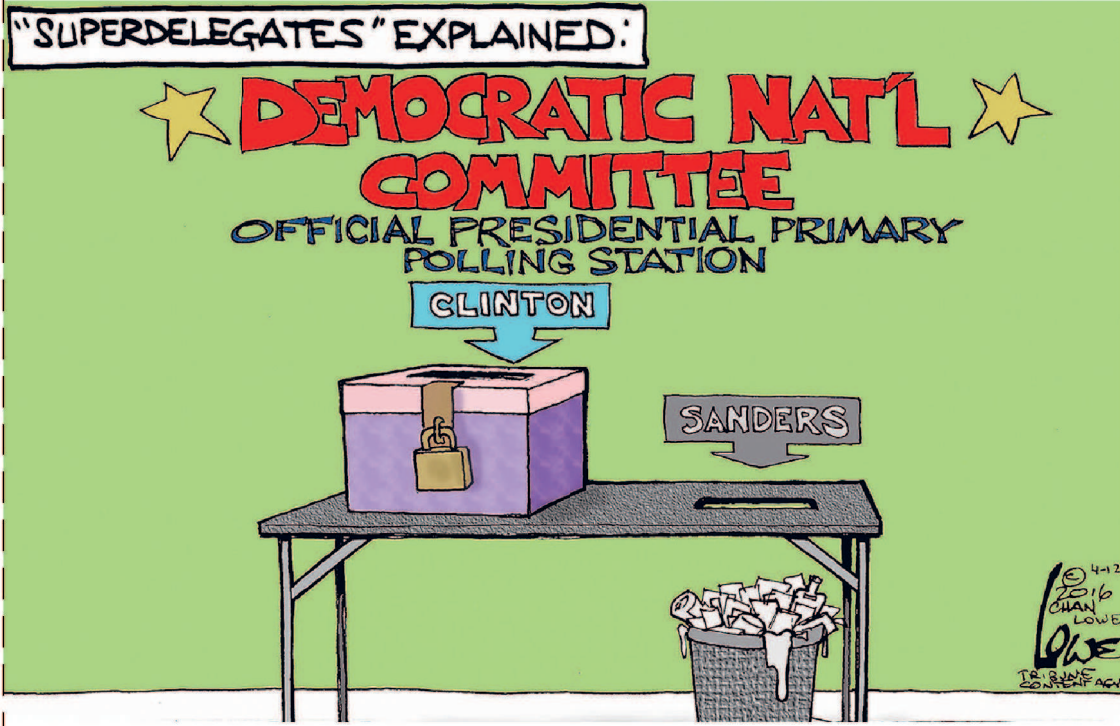


# O P I N I O N



## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:  
 I'd like to take a heartfelt moment to thank all teachers, staff and administrators in the Sisters School District — you do so much for our students, and your talents and hard work radiate through our entire community!  
 At the same time, I'd like to ask the Sisters community to join me in voting yes on School Bond Measure 9-108. Many of us had concerns and voted no on the school bond in 2014. However, under the guidance of our new superintendent, Curt Scholl, we are on our way to a reinvigorated school district, and this 2016 school bond better reflects our overall interests. This \$10.7 million investment in our community will:

- Upgrade safety and security at all our school buildings,
- Pay off full faith and credit obligations and deliver immediate classroom impact,
- Provide needed site improvements at all three schools, and
- Invest in facilities for student and community use.

Take a moment to thank a teacher and to learn more about the upcoming School Bond Measure 9-108 at [http://www.sisters.k12.or.us/pages/Sisters\\_SD/Bond\\_2016](http://www.sisters.k12.or.us/pages/Sisters_SD/Bond_2016). Thank you.

Ann Alisa Duerden  
 . . .

To the Editor:  
 Election cycles always introduce slogans that attempt to tap into the emotional aspects of a constituency. This year is no different and the Sisters School District bond is drumming up the same fervor.  
 The news is filled with words like security, protection, investment and embarrassment, all emotive terms in their own right. Elections count on emotional response — not logical conclusions — and pedaling fear is a monetized strategy. To be sure, the school district is a political body and they are employing political strategies to advance their agenda. But is the current bond request

See LETTERS on page 22

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Chance showers 77/36	Slt. chance t-storms 73/43	Mostly cloudy 63/38	Mostly cloudy 58/34	Partly sunny 54/31	Partly sunny 55/na

# The Nugget Newspaper, Inc.

Website: [www.nuggetnews.com](http://www.nuggetnews.com)  
 442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, Oregon 97759  
 Tel: 541-549-9941 | Fax: 541-549-9940 | [editor@nuggetnews.com](mailto:editor@nuggetnews.com)

**Publisher - Editor:** Kiki Dolson  
**News Editor:** Jim Cornelius  
**Production Manager:** Leith Williver  
**Classifieds & Circulation:** Teresa Mahnken  
**Advertising:** Karen Kassy  
**Graphic Design:** Jess Draper  
**Proofreader:** Pete Rathbun  
**Accounting:** Erin Bordonaro

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**Rachel Marsden**  
 American Voices

PARIS — If there's an issue on which America and Russia could potentially agree, it would be the damage Saudi Arabia has recently wrought upon the national and economic security of both nations.  
 Take Syria, for example. The CIA operation to train Syrian rebels goes by the code name "Timber Sycamore," according to the New York Times.

It was supposed to be easy: Let the Saudis arm and fund some independent contractors to take down Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The CIA covers the training. Assad is driven out. A leader who's friendlier to U.S., Saudi and Qatari interests moves in. Russia loses its footing in the region.

Except it didn't work out that way. Instead, Russia had to swoop in and clean up the mess. This gives Russia more influence in the region and grants it significant moral authority in helping to determine future Syrian leadership at the diplomatic bargaining table.

"We believe that the Russian interference in Syria is very dangerous because it exacerbates the conflict," said Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir.

Actually, Saudi funding exacerbated the conflict. One could argue that without it, the Islamic State would have sputtered out at the incubation phase.

You know what else exacerbates the conflict? The fact that Saudi Arabian leadership hasn't been nearly as generous as, say, German Chancellor Angela Merkel in absorbing massive numbers of refugees from the conflict.

Meanwhile, Russia has long been angered by Saudi funding of Chechen terrorists in Russia's North Caucasus. A few months before the 2014 announcement of Chechen terrorist leader Doku Umarov's death in late 2013, a Russian intelligence source confirmed that Umarov had been captured by Russian special forces and was writing out a confession in which he had implicated "certain Persian Gulf nations" in the funding of

his terrorist activities. (And let's just ignore the fact that 15 of the 19 terrorists who attacked on September 11, 2001, were Saudis.)

The continued butting of heads between Russia and the U.S. over Saudi Arabia stems from the fact that at the height of the Cold War, during the Ronald Reagan administration, the U.S. viewed the Saudis as a means of containing the Soviet threat. Reagan convinced the Saudis to flood the oil market, collapsing the value of Russia's oil exports. At the time, the Soviet Union had no rainy-day sovereign funds from which to draw in case of a crash in oil prices.

The Saudis are now flooding the oil market again. But this time, both Russia and America are suffering as a result.

And who's playing the role of Reagan now, convincing the Saudis to boost oil production? China.

Saudi Arabia is enjoying a series of new Chinese investment deals — including a \$2.5 billion deal to host a nuclear facility — and has moved past Russia to become China's largest oil supplier.

This sort of scenario was envisioned in a now-declassified CIA report from January 1999 that emphasized China's interest in Middle Eastern oil and the resulting development of ties that "could create bilateral tensions" and "increasingly challenge U.S. policy in regions in turmoil, such as the Middle East."

It's unlikely that the Chinese will be using their newfound leverage to rein in the Saudi terrorist-enabling shenanigans that we've seen with the rise of the Islamic State. But what if China, like the U.S., eventually decides to use Saudi Arabia as a Middle Eastern proxy to serve Chinese interests in the region?

Are the U.S. and Russia really going to sit back and let the Saudi regime's alliance with China fuel troublesome economic and security crises? If there's a single issue on which the U.S. and Russia should urgently cooperate, it's this one.

*Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.*