

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Last summer I wrote (a letter) published in *The Nugget* comparing the erratic and schizophrenic behavior of sage rats to the mainstream media.

Given the volume of fake news and vitriol spewed by the press since then, I feel the need to make a sincere apology to the sage rats for making that association.

At the White House press conference last week regarding the President's recent physical exam I was encouraged however as one hard-hitting reporter demonstrated new hope for journalistic integrity. She was about to blow the Russian collusion story wide open. You could hear a pin drop in the tension-filled moment when she asked "does the President wear dentures?"

Jeff Mackey

To the Editor:

Why should Sisters make marijuana use easier? Is this the kind of community we want?

I've already encountered people smoking marijuana outside the library, at the public parks, and on the job. I don't want to see any of our kids here in Sisters thinking that this is OK or normal. Marijuana has drastic side effects we all know about. The biggest ones effect memory, brain development, and feelings of apathy. In a world where people are already losing touch with reality do we really want more of this?

There are many ways to chill out, manage pain, and deal with a whole host of other things people use marijuana for. We have many great restaurants and cafes for relaxing, we have many hiking trails for clearing the

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Rain/Snow 41/23	Chance Snow 37/24	Chance Snow 35/27	Rain/Snow Likely 41/31	Chance Rain 44/31	Slt. Chance Rain 43/31

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Jonah Goldberg

Sen. Lindsey Graham says he scolded the president for saying something scatological about certain countries and their emigrants. "Diversity has always been our strength," Graham allegedly said. By my very rough count, this makes Graham the bazillionth person to proclaim some variant of "diversity is strength."

But is it true? I think the only close to right answer is, "It depends." Diverse stock portfolios are more resilient. Diverse diets are healthier. But that doesn't mean picking bad stocks will make you richer, nor that eating spoiled foods is good for you.

I once heard the Rev. Jesse Jackson explain that racial integration of the NBA made it stronger and better. He was right. But would gender integration of the NBA have the same effect? Would diversifying professional basketball by height? Probably not.

In other words, all of these analogies can only take you so far. Thomas Sowell once said, "The next time some academics tell you how important diversity is, ask how many Republicans there are in their sociology department."

There's a growing body of evidence that even if diversity once made America stronger, it may not be doing so anymore, at least in the short and medium term. Robert Putnam, a liberal sociologist at Harvard, found that increased diversity corrodes civil society by eroding shared values, customs and institutions.

I think the real culprit here isn't immigration or diversity in general, but the rising stigma against assimilation. Anyone of any race or national origin can be an American, but it requires effort and desire from both the individual and the larger society. There's a shortage of both these days.

But while traditional notions of assimilation are increasingly heretical, there is a kind of anti-assimilation assimilation movement afoot. It insists that we must "celebrate our differences" and make them the essence of our identity. The University of California officially considers terms like "melting pot" offensive

and "triggering." But no one would confuse the UC system as a hotbed of free and independent thought. What is expected is assimilation into an ideological worldview all its own, one that simply asserts without proof that one kind of diversity makes us stronger.

So far, all of this should be familiar. Liberals, broadly speaking, assert that diversity makes us stronger. Conservatives, broadly speaking, respond with skepticism or emphasize a different kind of diversity.

What gets less attention, however, is the premise that "strength" is an indisputably overriding priority or ideal.

Strength has always struck me as a strange ideal for a democracy. Strength, like other fetishized ideals such as "unity," is wholly amoral. Even "diversity makes us richer" has more moral content than "diversity makes us stronger." Stronger to do what, exactly?

This has been one of my core objections to Donald Trump's rhetoric. He constantly extols strength, at home and abroad. He praised the Chinese government for showing strength at Tiananmen Square. He admires Vladimir Putin's strong leadership. On the campaign trail, he upended the traditional conservative critique of big government by decrying the "weakness" of America's political leaders and institutions.

If you read the Federalist Papers, you'll learn that among the top priorities of the founders was to ensure that the government, particularly any branch of government, not be too powerful. The Bill of Rights is all about constraining the power of government. The Constitution never once mentions the words "strength" or "strong." Neither does the Declaration of Independence. But both documents include a great deal about freedom and liberty.

Of course, I don't want America to be weaker, depending on how you define weakness. But maybe the overriding problem with the debate, on both sides, is the assumption that strength is its own reward?

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