

## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

The letter written by Elizabeth Burns last week is so disturbing that I just have to comment on it. It's so wrong in so many ways. I'm a lifelong educator, as well — which I'm embarrassed to say after reading her letter.

Her statement automatically pinning the blame on people because of their sex, color and age, is disgusting. "Like so much in this country old white men ...." So to follow her logic, young non-white women are automatically not ever at fault? What about older women then? What about non-white males? Or all white women? All equally disgusting assumptions. That's exactly what we are trying to avoid in America. Aren't we? That kind of knee-jerk statement and those assumptions?

She decries "Cronyism and favoritism," then turns right around and does exactly that herself. To paraphrase her: "Many of the

children have been part of the community for years. The coaches have been here for mere months." OMG! That's rank cronyism and favoritism RIGHT THERE! Can't you see? Automatically good people and bad people, based on how long they have lived in our town. That's really how to rank people? Think about it. Virtually all of us were newcomers to Sisters at some point. That's an awful, awful assumption. Dead wrong, too.

Then to top it off: "Children are to be believed." Well, OK, but believed just as much as the adults/others involved. No more, and no less. Fair is fair, right? Only an in depth investigation or a court can actually determine who is telling the whole truth and who is not. Wait and see. Until then the accused are presumed innocent — unless that has changed in the last

See **LETTERS** on page 35

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 78/48	AM Clouds/PM Sun 59/37	Partly Cloudy 53/38	Mostly Sunny 62/38	Mostly Sunny 75/46	Partly Cloudy 82/51

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## Jonah Goldberg

I've changed my mind (a little) about how we discuss generations. First, let me illustrate my longstanding gripe.

"I am probably the biggest fan of the millennials you'll ever meet," retired Navy Admiral William H. McRaven, who oversaw the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, said in a recent CBS interview. "[Critics] talk about millennials being soft and pampered and entitled? Well, I'm quick to say that you've never seen them in a firefight in Afghanistan. ... This is a fabulous generation, and anybody that worries about the future of the United States, I don't think you need to worry."

I can't stand that kind of talk.

Imagine that I said, "I am probably the biggest critic of millennials you'll ever meet. Fans talk about millennials being brave and courageous. Well, I'm quick to say that you've never seen them mooching beer money in a 7-Eleven parking lot."

This might instantly strike you as unfair — and it is! That's the point.

There are some 83 million millennials, defined as Americans born between 1981 and 1996. It's difficult to generalize about a group of people this large.

I would leap at the opportunity to buy beer for the millennials who raided bin Laden's compound. But some random guy who was playing video games when bin Laden was taken out? He can buy his own beer.

In other words, characteristics can be generalized, but character is formed by individual deeds. There is no transitive property to glory or blame. A hero in one generation isn't less heroic because of the misdeeds of someone else his age. Generational pride is the cheapest form of identity politics.

On the other hand, it's true that you can make some useful generalizations about various generations.

Joseph Sternberg, an editorial writer for *The Wall Street Journal*, has a new book, "The Theft of a Decade: How the Baby Boomers Stole the Millennials' Economic

Future." He casts a thoughtful, nuanced and important light on the plight of millennials. Crucially, Sternberg does it from a center-right, pro-market perspective rather than from the more familiar center-left view that often gets mired in larger identity-politics formulations.

Millennials entered the workforce in large numbers around the time of the financial crisis of 2007-2008 and the deep recession that followed it. That, along with policies in areas such as housing and education pushed by allegedly self-interested baby boomers, had dire consequences for a large swath of young people.

Sternberg's argument that millennials — whether they fought in Afghanistan or not — have legitimate complaints about how the system is failing them strikes me as a valuable and worthwhile form of generational stereotyping. It's rooted in empirical facts and figures.

But Sternberg's attempt to blame the boomers for the millennials' travails strikes me as the wrong kind of generational stereotyping. And I say that as a Gen Xer for whom bashing baby boomers is a birthright.

I have no doubt that some of the policy missteps Sternberg lays at the feet of the boomers can be attributed to certain generational attitudes. (They were the damn hippies, after all.) But many of those attitudes were inherited from the "Greatest Generation" or earlier.

More to the point, the policies the boomers implemented were hotly debated among boomers themselves, and virtually none of them expressly argued from a desire to self-deal for their own generation at the expense of others. Just as there are millennial socialists and millennial anarcho-capitalists, there are boomers in those categories as well. If we're going to assign blame — and why not? — it's more helpful to put it on those who were wrong rather than indicting an entire generation of some 75 million people.

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