



Posted on Fri, Apr. 06, 2012

Letters to the Editor 4/6 Americans and death

There is a haunting reality to the U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales story. A weird dynamic gets linked to the American psyche when the horrors of war occur, especially when it concerns the boy next door. It brought to mind My Lai in Vietnam, torture at Abu Ghraib, the family at Haditha in Iraq, 16 innocents in Afghanistan murdered by a U.S. soldier.

This act seems to have shaken the American public; good that violence can still shake us up. The inescapable question, if contemporary war is viewed objectively, is: What makes such an incident a crime? What makes it different from large-scale civilian killings ordered by military action? What makes My Lai different from aerial napalming of entire villages? What makes Haditha different from the untold thousands of Iraqi civilians, including children, who died as "collateral damage"? The half-million children under the age of 5 who died as a result of American-inspired U.N. sanctions, and the scores of civilians killed by drones?

It seems Americans can see death when it is up close but don't see when it's afar. Perhaps we are more like Sgt. Robert Bales than we care to admit.

Jesus wept.
Craig Kelso
Paso Robles

May Rush endure

Much has been written about Rush Limbaugh since his bashing of Sandra Fluke. He is venerated by the right and reviled by the left. Sponsors of his radio show have left by the dozen and many have called for his resignation.

While I do not agree with his misinformed tirades, demagogic pronouncements and exhausting castigations, I do tune in to his program from time to time to reassure myself that the level of his audience's intellect has not increased.

Intelligent and independent-thinking listeners would not allow themselves to be brainwashed by a man whose sole purpose in life is to trash the president, demean the Democratic Party and humiliate anyone who dares to contradict the dictates of his masters.

Therefore, I hope that Rush will be with us for a long time. His massive audience can add him to its list of intellectuals such as Sarah Palin.

Joseph Codispoti
Paso Robles

Sportsmanship lives

At a time when we read numerous articles about less-than-exemplary conduct by parents at sporting events, sportsmanship is alive and well on the Central Coast.

The San Luis Obispo High School baseball team had just finished a three-game sweep of the Atascadero Greyhounds, and like a crowded elevator you would think the Greyhounds would want out of there as soon as possible. Instead, the Tigers were amazed to discover that the parents of

Atascadero had prepared a free barbecue for the entire team.
Now that's the definition of sportsmanship. Stay classy, Central Coast.
Chris Casciola
San Luis Obispo

A paradigm shift

The water pipe connection project from Nipomo to Santa Maria will be defeated on May 9, in part because people are fed up with bond measures that tax us, our sons and daughters, our grandchildren and even our greatgrandchildren for years to come.

The manner in which our state, our counties and cities, and, yes, NCS D fund projects cost us millions of dollars in finance charges. NCS D has a payment procedure within their proposal that would allow people's money to earn dividends much like federal, state, city and county pension funds. Without the burden of finance charges and the accumulation of dividends, the project could be paid for in five years. I believe our governments are hampered by a financing paradigm and poor planning that allows/requires spending beyond our means, which, by the way, caught up with us in the most recent past.

Good fiscal planning should pay dividends and not increase the cost of projects. Bond issuance is a penalty that can be avoided with improved planning and financing methods. Public officials must first look in depth at current financing practices; invest first, and then spend, discounting emergencies. Let's only buy what we can afford.

Ronald Bowers
Nipomo

Where's the parking?

Have I just missed them, or is Paso Robles lacking in handicapped parking spaces? This has become an issue for me as I recover from back surgery and suffer from Parkinson's disease. I know parking spaces are premium, but the lack of a place to park makes one learn to plan to go elsewhere where they can safely reach their destination.

Planning a luncheon date means selecting somewhere other than our fine downtown restaurants (I miss them and the ambiance they offer). But for me now, they are off-limits.

Come on, Paso Robles; do what is right and offer some spaces to those in need!

Joanne Sixel
Paso Robles

Do unto others...

This is a letter in response to The Tribune's editorial, Bob Cuddy's article, and St. Barnabas' Episcopal Church's desire to allow homeless people to sleep in cars in its parking lot.

I live in the neighborhood adjacent to St. Barnabas', and I was one of many who urged the Arroyo Grande City Council to vote against the congregation's application to open its parking lot for the homeless. My question for the 14 people who argued in favor of the program, the five City Council members who voted for it, and the authors who wrote The Tribune's editorials regarding it, none of whom live in our neighborhood. Why are you not inviting the homeless people to sleep overnight in your driveways?

Only three homeless people will have access to the program at the church. By my calculation, we could actually serve 21 homeless people if

people above who was for it acted on their beliefs.

What is upsetting about this process is that none of those in favor of inviting homeless people to park in our neighborhood actually live in our neighborhood.

Politicians and advocates should never support or vote for anything they would not be willing to do themselves.

Zachary M. Hall

Arroyo Grande

With a grain of salt

The Mesa Community Alliance has made a number of questionable statements in its campaign opposing the water pipeline from Santa Maria to Nipomo:

The MCA claims there is no water shortage. However, the technical group (comprised of experienced engineers with expertise in water issues) that monitors water levels on the Mesa for the court disagrees, stating that “there are a number of direct measurements that indicate that demand exceeds the ability of the supply to replace the water pumped from the aquifers.”

The MCA claims that the pipeline will result in “growth” and ignores that the 83 percent of the supplemental water is designated to replace water currently being pumped to supply existing customers. After implying that growth is bad, the MCA “supports solutions that produce new water,” which apparently won’t result in “growth.”

The MCA claims that supplemental water will cost “approximately \$2,500 per acre-foot,” an amount that overstates the actual projected cost of the water. The alliance then proposes desalination as a better alternative, even though water from the desal plant they use as an example costs \$2,700 per acre-foot.

Seems like it would be prudent to take MCA’s claims with a grain of salt (pun intended).

Craig Armstrong

Nipomo

We deserve more

Two police officers have made allegations against the Paso Robles Police Department and its ex-chief of police. One is a serving officer and the other is a former police officer. They allege a ticket quota, and sexual harassment. The police chief saw fit to leave the force as her reputation was damaged. As she loped out of town into the sunset, the city manager, with the approval of the City Council, stuffed her saddlebags with \$230,000.

How is the city of Paso Robles involved in this, and why were we on the hook for more than 200 grand? The only City Council member who has commented is John Hamon. The rest, along with the city manager are in a root cellar someplace biting their fingernails, hoping this will all blow over. The citizens of Paso Robles deserve more from their elected officials and their city manager.

Marvin Cowley

Paso Robles

Nipomo water

In Sam Saltoun’s Viewpoint “Pipeline first, then desalination” (March 25), the only part Sam has corrected is that we all vote to ~~and~~ cancel the NCSA supplemental water project. The Superior Court’s decision is not

final and it can be reversed.

I toured the largest desalination plant in Florida in 2002. Desal works.

Where and how to build it? You must have a heat source.

We have one at the ConocoPhillips oil refinery. An abandoned 8-inch pipeline already exists from the refinery to Summit Station that could be retrofitted with current technology to transport water. The water Nipomo will receive comes from the Santa Maria section of the aquifer; that has the highest concentration of nitrates and ag pollution.

Under Oso Flaco is a 2.5 million acre-foot underground lake with the area's best water. NCSD could drill a large well there and use that water until the desalination plant comes online, and cut Santa Maria out of the equation. Oceano Community Services District's open letter proves that NCSD used faulty data to make its case for seawater intrusion. Vote "no." Keep the money in Nipomo for the benefit of Nipomo.

Bob Blair

Past director, NCSD

A step at a time

What is needed is a new beginning!

I'm Gary Nemeth and I'm running for mayor of Paso Robles because I believe in accountability, integrity, honesty and trust you the community deserve to expect no less than the best in the leader you hire to represent you. The voters of Paso will be the real triers of fact in how you want the future of our city to progress.

Our city just paid out \$250,000 for an early retirement to Chief Solomon. If you are not satisfied with the status quo, you the individual voter do possess the power to make the changes necessary. As mayor I would start by changing the city manager and city attorney as I have lost trust and confidence in them both. At a council workshop on March 24, Mr. Picanco said we needed a special tax to fund programs requiring a two-thirds vote, because community members he has spoken to said they did not trust this council if they voted for a general tax. Councilman Gilman said he has heard the same thing. The council voted to bring back the language for the special ballot vote in November. One step at a time, one person can make a difference; don't let others tell you it can't be done.

Gary Nemeth

Paso Robles

Visionary members

Shocking to read that members of a county board that purports to "control pollution" would be "sharply divided" on that goal ("Local air pollution board OKs limits on greenhouse gases," March 29).

Shouldn't the county Air Pollution Control District board consist of individuals who exhibit a greater commitment to the environmental health of the county (and the planet) than to the boomerang mentality of the fast buck? An appreciative thanks to those board members who retain some sense of the visionary: Bruce Gibson, Adam Hill, Joe Costello, Jan Marx, Noah Smukler and James Patterson.

M. Power Giacoletti

San Simeon