

OPINION

OUR VIEW

A winning combination

As adults, we work, volunteer, and recreate alongside one another, often without much regard to age or gender.

That’s why it makes so much sense to offer youngsters a sporting experience that includes students with physical challenges, in grades 6-12, and is coed.

Kudos to Eric Norstad for seeing a niche and working with International Falls school officials to fill it by establishing the Falls Trap Team that competes in the Minnesota State High School Clay Target League.

The obvious benefit to local students is that we are a community where few people don’t hunt or target shoot. So that makes so much sense it’s hardly worth mentioning.

But the other advantages of a trap team are many.

This sport doesn’t cost our district a whole lot of money because there is no travel involved and students provide their own equipment, and this sport doesn’t cost parents or students a lot of the green stuff. A sign up fee is \$50, team members supply their own gun which many families already have, and donations help cover the cost of ammunition.

And it is a safe sport. There are no tackles or body checks, slipping or falling, and therefore there are no concussions or

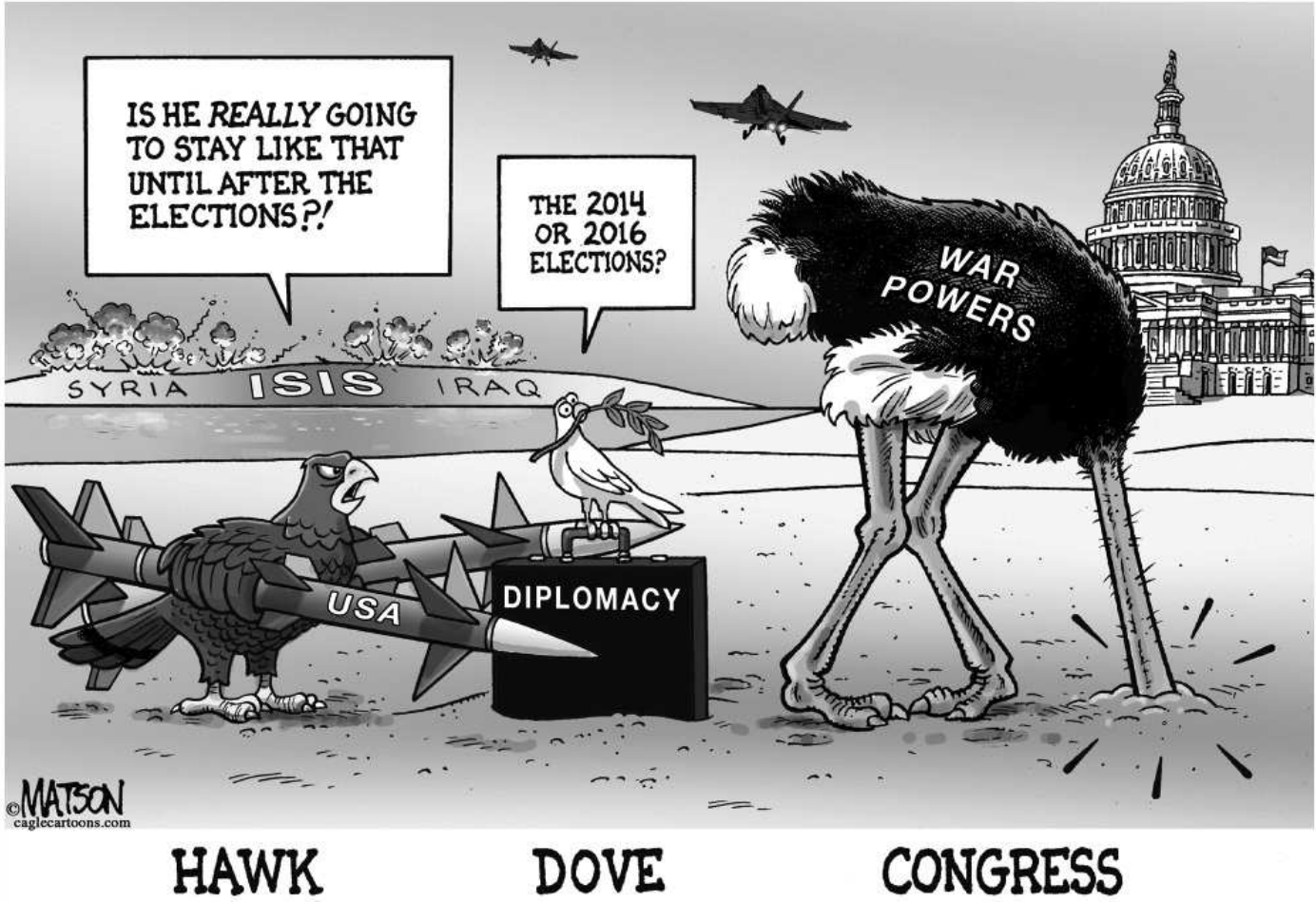
bodily injuries.

A sport that combines kids and guns may make some people a little nervous. But these kids must have a gun safety certificate to even get involved. Many times, teaching kids safety — whether on bicycles, driving cars, or shooting guns — is better retained, and in this case makes a whole lot of sense in a world with guns.

These kids will be shamed by being told to leave a competition on the first safety violation and kicked off the team on the second violation. It’s not likely a kid that violates a safety rule will forget it or become complacent about safety, as many adults do.

Norstad said this community has again been very generous in donating to help the youth of our community. Money has been donated to cover the cost of ammunition, members of the trap shooting community are helping to coach, and a grant from the Purple Pride group will allow for the construction of a warming house at the Falls Trap Club, which is offering its facilities.

Shooting is a lifetime sport. It doesn’t take strength or endurance. Instead, it takes concentration, hand-eye coordination and skill. Sounds like a winning combination.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Time to create our own future

To the editor,
Last Thursday, the Economic Response Long Term Vision and Strategy Team (LTVST) invited the residents of Koochiching County and the surrounding region to learn how two regional cities reinvented themselves through a community engagement process.
Over 150 people from throughout the county heard Dr. Jim Bensen, president emeritus at Bemidji State University and Mike Lundstrom, executive director of the Hermantown Chamber of Commerce talk about how they engaged their citizens to move their respective communities forward by defining a community vision and identifying key “destiny drivers.”
At the conclusion of the

event, Jay Bartkowski talked about the challenges, opportunities, and culture of our region. The event ended with a “call to action”- a request of those that attended to participate in a community engagement process over the next six months. From those that attended, we had approximately 50 people sign up to help move this community forward through an initiative we are calling Voyage Forward — Journey to Success.
It was a great turnout and a great response
It is time for the people of this region to become involved in our Journey to Success. It is time for the citizens of this region to start participating and move this region forward. It is time for the citizens to start participating in

their own future so we can create a vibrant, healthy, and economically viable Koochiching County and surrounding area.
Those volunteers, or “stewards,” will be meeting for the first time on Oct. 8, 5:30 p.m. at the Backus Community Center Conference Room to clearly define our strategy for the next six months.
If you are interested in creating our future; if you are interested in making our community better; if you are interested in participating in what we do as a region; join us. If we are going to make this region a viable option for our kids and grandkids, we need support from every corner of the county. We need to see participation from Northome to the border, from Birchdale to Ash

River-Kabetogama, Fort Frances, and every nook and cranny in between.
Join us on this Journey to Success.
If you didn’t get an opportunity to come to the event, you can see the presentations and listen to the speakers by visiting www.voyageforward.org.
Our region is at a crossroads. We can sit and watch the future happen or we can participate and create what we want it to be. It’s time to stand up and start doing, instead of watching.
Join us.
Sue Natysin, co-chair, Long Term Vision and Strategy Team International Falls, MN
Editor’s Note: This letter was also signed by Michael Wellcome, co-chair, LTVST.

GUEST COLUMN

Time to lock White House doors

The White House sprayed by bullets.
A hospital guard with a criminal record and a gun the Secret Service didn’t know about riding on an elevator with the president in Atlanta.
The fence-jumper who made it all the way into the East Room of the White House.
Secret Service Director Julia Pierson had no choice but to resign on Wednesday afternoon.
She did it a week or two late, but she did the right thing.
The vaunted federal agency — whose core duty is to protect the president of the United States, his family and his home — has become just another bungling Washington bureaucracy led by incompetents and political appointees.
Earlier this week we saw Pierson on TV being upbraided by lawmakers from both parties who couldn’t believe how the Secret Service has turned into the Keystone Cops. Aka, “Security Breaches ‘R Us.”
Pierson was at times evasive, uninformed and self-contradictory during her testimony.
She had been appointed to head the Secret Service in the spring of 2013 after agents on an advance team were caught drinking excessively and procuring prostitutes in Colombia.
That was shame



Michael
REAGAN
MAKING SENSE

enough. But under her brief reign, the Secret Service’s standards apparently fell so low they couldn’t be counted on to keep the president or the inside of his house safe.
Pierson, a veteran agent who owed her directorship to political correctness, was clearly not up to the task of reforming or running the Secret Service.
But like a typical Washington “executive,” she spent half of her time before Congress whining about how cuts in funding had hurt her agency’s ability to operate. The other half was spent covering her own you-know-what.
The White House complex is protected by the Secret Service’s 1,300-person uniformed division, which became part of the agency in 1930.
The personnel who didn’t notice the White House fence-hopper were not highly trained agents like the heroes who threw their bodies in front of my

father when he was shot.
Those elite agents — members of the PPD, or presidential protection division — travel with the president wherever he goes.
They also provide protection 24/7 for the president’s wife and children. That’s why, for eight years I, my kids and my home in L.A. had constant Secret Service protection.
The agency did a great job in the 1980s. But today the Secret Service has become dangerously careless or complacent about basic security measures at the White House.
“The People’s House” isn’t an airtight fortress surrounded by minefields and machine gun nests.
It’s had a few lone intruders before. Presidents Hoover and FDR each found themselves in the White House in the presence of strangers.
Some guy followed the Marine Band into the White House after my father’s second inauguration and wasn’t discovered for 15 minutes. And remember those Obama White House party crashers a few years back?
But in 2014 the Secret Service has gotten sloppier than a bunch of drunk rent-a-cops at a stag party.
It’s the age of terrorism. Every major

building, airport concourse and ballpark in America is on guard against terrorists.
Yet the White House, despite untold millions that have been spent to fortify it since 9/11, is still vulnerable to intrusions by individuals who are curious, crazy or intent on doing serious harm.
Sixteen idiots have jumped the White House fence since 2009 — six this year.
President Obama supposedly has had three times as many death threats as any other president. Yet when bullets were fired at the White House in 2011, the Secret Service didn’t learn about it for months?
It’s pathetic, even by Washington standards.
Pierson’s isn’t the only head that should roll over “Intruder Gate.”
The president should fire the head of the Secret Service’s uniformed division. Then he or Michelle should find someone who has enough sense to keep the White House front door locked.
My neighbor’s teen-age baby-sitter is available.
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