

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

INSTITUTION OF SPORTS MIRRORS SOCIETAL FLAWS

As an institution, sports are a microcosm of society — imperfect and even flawed. But lately, sports have gotten downright ugly.

In an interview last month, tennis star Sloane Stephens told Reuters she's dealt with racism for her whole career — but that it's getting worse. Stephens, who is Black, cited online attackers, saying, "When there are FBI investigations going on with what people are saying to you, it's very serious."

Stephens isn't alone, nor is tennis. Professional athletes in all sports — and around the globe — are regularly confronted with racist comments and behavior.

Real Madrid (Spain) soccer player Vinicius Júnior, a Black Brazilian, has been derided since joining the team five years ago. According to Associated Press writer Tales Azzoni, the racial insults keep coming, including "monkey" chants outside a stadium, offensive gestures and taunts, and an effigy hung off a highway bridge in Madrid.

Recently, Vinicius was on the

receiving end of racist chants at a match against Valencia CF. The team has banned one of the offenders for life and is looking to identify others. Real Madrid asked local authorities to get involved, saying they considered the incident to be a hate crime.

If only soccer in real life was like soccer as seen in the series "Ted Lasso." AFC Richmond, Lasso's team, was multicolored and multicultural — and adored by fans, at least when they were winning.

And winning, it seems, is key. As reported by theconversation.com, research has shown that when visibly diverse teams lose, exclusionary and racist undercurrents rise to the surface.

Nationalism prevails and players of color don't belong. It wasn't "my" team, or "my" people that failed, it was this interloper.

Rejection strengthens a sense of superiority.

In professional basketball, losing has different consequences. The NBA has unofficially adopted a zero-tolerance policy for losing coaches — even if they were win-

ners in seasons past.

This year, Mike Budenholzer, Monty Williams and Nick Nurse were fired after their teams — the Milwaukee Bucks, Phoenix Suns and Toronto Raptors, respectively — were ousted from post-season play.

Each of them had led their team to a recent championship; Budenholzer was named Coach of the Year in 2021 and Williams in 2022.

Most recently, Philadelphia 76ers coach Doc Rivers joined the "what have you done for me lately" crowd, after the team was eliminated in the second-round of the playoffs.

Following Rivers' firing, Joe Vardon of The Athletic linked the "coaching carousel" to teams' star players.

That's where the power resides, Vardon said, and organizations are terrified that, if unhappy, they will demand a trade before their contract is up.

Let's just think I'm naive, I realize these teams have a lot at stake. At the end of the 2022 basketball season, the 30 NBA

franchises were collectively worth \$90 billion. The Golden State Warriors topped the heap, with a valuation of \$7.56 billion.

No doubt the Denver Nuggets, which just won their first-ever NBA championship, will improve upon their position as the 21st most valuable team.

The companion to the "winning at all costs" norm is greed.

It's on full display in professional golf, where the PGA Tour and breakaway LIV Golf League — which have been embroiled in a legal and public relations battle for more than a year — agreed on June 6 to merge, along with DP World Tour (a Europe-based league). Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund will become a major tour sponsor.

While the financial details are still unknown, the merger has aroused the ire of golf insiders and observers alike. Last week, the Senate opened an inquiry into the deal.

Yet, for all the flaws in sports today, two-thirds of Americans describe themselves as fans. We continue to pack stadiums, buy

team merchandise, and (on average) watch more than four hours of sports on television each week. We encourage our kids to participate in sports, believing in its ability to improve their health and fitness and build life skills, like discipline, teamwork and leadership.

Thankfully, there are still players to admire, like Milwaukee Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo. When asked if he viewed the season as a failure (following the team's elimination from the playoffs), Antetokounmpo said, "There's no failure in sports. You know, there's good days, bad days. Some days you are able to be successful. Some days you are not. Some days it's your turn, some days it's not your turn. And that's what sports is about. You don't always win."

It was a perfect response.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRCC's programming, visit ncrcnline.com

SHIP • As many as 50,000 recruits a year trained on board until it closed in 1997

FROM B1

The Recruit was used to teach Navy newcomers the fundamentals of shipboard procedures. As many as 50,000 recruits a year trained on board.

The ship was refurbished in 1982 as a training guided-missile frigate. The overall length was increased to 233 feet, along with renovation of the classrooms below deck.

The Recruit continued to be used for training until the base closed in 1997.

Over the years, the ship got screen time as a set piece in the original "Top Gun" movie and in the opening sequence of the TV comedy series "CPO Sharkey" starring Don Rickles.

The Recruit was the first of three similar training vessels built by the Navy after World War II; the others were in Chicago and Norfolk, Va. The Recruit is the only vessel of its kind remaining.

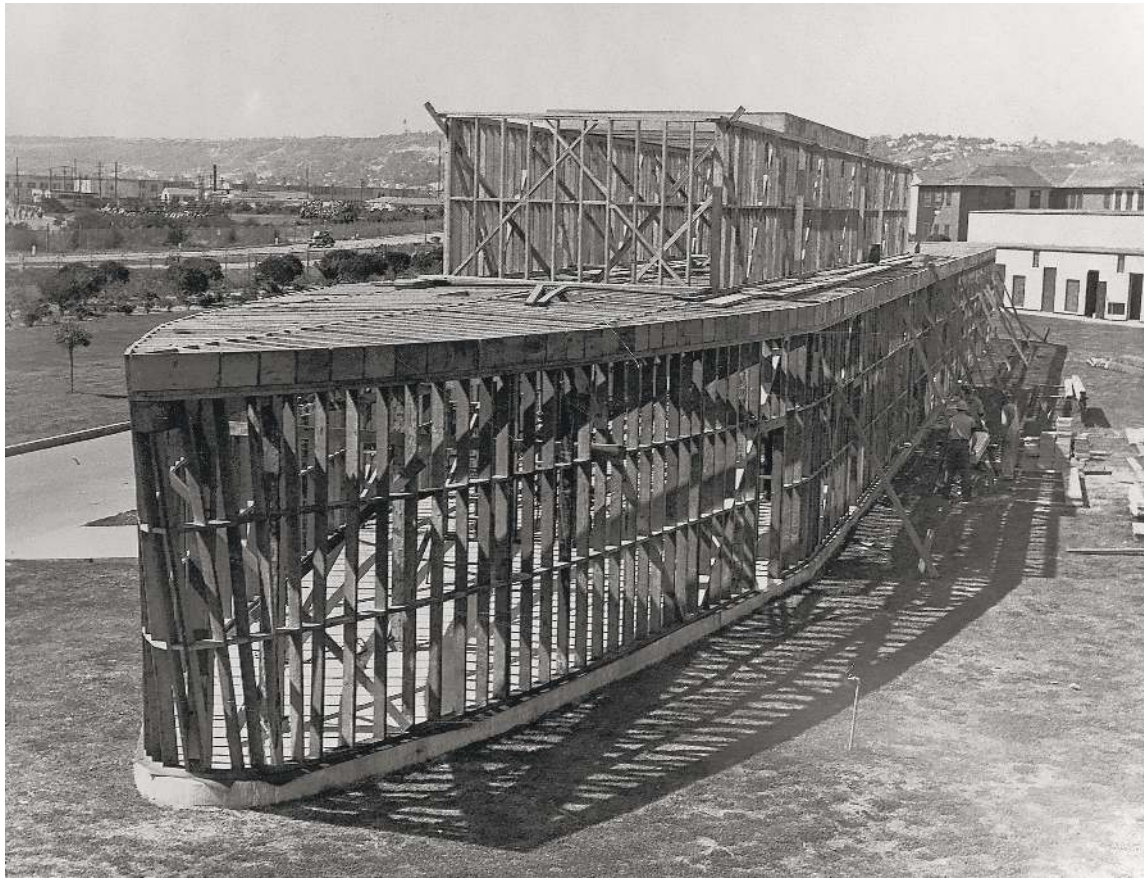
As the base transformed into Liberty Station, the Recruit sat unused. In 2001, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places and in 2004 was designated a California historic landmark.

The property on which the ship sits was previously owned by The Corky McMillin Cos., which attempted a refurbishment in 2014 in conjunction with volunteers from San Diego's USS Midway Museum.

"It's been renovated throughout the years with the help of the people at the Midway Museum, but what was happening was it was just falling apart," Albrecht said. "Nothing had been done with the boat up until this period of time."

The property was acquired in 2018 by The Seligman Group, a property acquisition and development company based in San Francisco.

"We have a lot of historic build-



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The USS Recruit was built almost entirely of 2-by-4 boards of lumber and sheet metal casing.

ings here at Liberty Station, but they've been repurposed into restaurants," said Steve Adams, special-projects manager for the group. "I think the boat that was just sitting here, there was a lot of curiosity and we decided to tell the story about what it is and why it was here."

The Seligman Group also owns historical properties such as the Watergate office building in Washington, D.C., where the company opened the Nixon Lounge, ac-

knowledging the presidential scandal of the 1970s that began there. The Seligman family also owns the largest collections of historical memorabilia from the San Francisco earthquake of 1906.

Albrecht, whose association spearheaded the centennial celebration for the former Naval Training Center, said the group wanted to open the Recruit to the public to further acknowledge the property's history.

"When you come (to Liberty

Station) for a dance class or an art exhibit or for dinner, the history of the space kind of gets overlooked, and that's the point of this centennial — to tell that story," Albrecht said.

In addition to several pop-up events, the association worked with The Seligman Group to revitalize the Recruit and offer a public exhibition. An archivist with Seligman collaborated with the National Archives and the San Diego Historical Society to gather infor-

mation about the ship that had been lost when the base closed.

"We were actually able to obtain photographs and a lot of history and knowledge," Adams said. "We started interviewing people and through the National Archives were able to pencil together the history of it. We found it very fascinating."

Refurbishing the ship for the exhibit began in November and included sealing leaks in the top deck, installing two doors, putting down new carpet and applying a fresh coat of paint. To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, only a portion of the lower decks is available for viewing. Because of the ship's construction and its age, options for the renovation were limited, Albrecht said.

"When you go into a boat that was built in the 1940s, you're always going to find things," she said. "The ship itself is nothing but ... lumber and sheet metal. We can't even put things on the wall because we would just be attaching them right to the sheet metal on the outside of the boat."

The interior exhibition features historical photos and a peek into the different chambers of the lower decks. The Liberty Station Community Association also collected comments from service members who worked on the ship, which play on a video loop in the exhibit and are available on the association's website at bit.ly/3Jcm0E8.

The exhibit is open from noon to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays east of Laning Road and north of North Harbor Drive. Admission is free.

Adams said further developments for the exhibit, including installing elevators, are not ruled out and that the organizers are looking into the feasibility.

Faurot is a freelance writer.

BUDGET Propose funds in line with mayor

FROM B1

"We are not a strong mayor form of government, and the majority of this funding right now is going to the mayor and the mayor's executive assistant," Bush said.

"I have no issues with that being spent like that," he added. "What I'm asking for is some equity. What I'm asking for is a correction in the disparity. What I'm asking for is increased staff resources and staff time so I can do my job better."

Bush, an affordable housing project manager for the nonprofit MAAC Project, said part-time council members would greatly benefit from aides who would focus on better engaging constituents, building community programs and attracting revenue-generating projects.

City staff said they found no other city of similar size — a population of 56,000 — to have equal budgets among mayors and part-time officials. Chula Vista, a city with 280,000 residents and a \$258 million general fund, has an annual mayoral budget of about \$454,000 to cover personnel costs and supplies and services. Its four part-time council members each have \$211,442, including for aides, according to the city.

Morrison and Vice Mayor

Luz Molina voted against the motion.

"It makes me incredibly nervous to have \$100,000 at our disposal because of the fact that we are political figures and we can very easily overstep the bounds, perhaps completely innocently," Molina said.

They find it wrong to approve without a spending policy, especially when only half of the districts have elected representatives.

"Even if it was a great idea and other cities were doing it, we shouldn't even be considering that until after the next election when you actually have four district representatives," Morrison said.

National City held its first district-based elections in November. Voters elected Molina for District 1 and Yaman for District 3. Next

year, District 2 and 4 voters will choose their council members. Rodriguez and Bush, elected at-large in 2020, happen to live in those districts, respectively.

If the budget is approved, City Attorney Barry Schultz said Rodriguez and Bush "have a fiduciary duty to the constituents of the entire city, including the council district which they are assigned, and would be entitled to spend their allocation in accordance with that fiduciary duty."

There was also debate about whether the city could even afford to allocate \$400,000 for district budgets.

National City has a surplus of more than \$1 million thanks to federal stimulus funding. Officials want to use it to cover several new expenses, including the district budgets. Also covered:

hiring a staff member to speed up permit issuance, two police officers, two dispatchers and three firefighters; having a four-member firefighting crew rather than three, adding an afterschool program and a second tree-trimming crew with two employees; and funding to enforce amortization of non-conforming businesses.

Because they require ongoing funding, the city expects to have deficits ranging from \$81,000 to \$4 million through 2028. To find a balance, the city plans to dip into its unassigned general fund, which would decrease from \$19 million next year to \$14.7 million in 2028.

City staff recommended reducing expenses, such as decreasing council budgets from \$100,000 to \$75,000 each or one fewer police officer, to

have a balanced budget in 2028. The City Council made no changes, however.

District budget discussions come after another divided vote about pay raises. Morrison had proposed a 15 percent increase for everyone, maintaining the status quo. But Bush successfully pushed for 30 percent boosts for council members only, saying the difference would be "more equitable" and because the hours that council members work oftentimes exceed that of part-time positions.

In March, the City Council approved increasing salaries from \$1,189 to \$1,546 per month for council members and from \$4,532 to \$5,211 for the mayor. It is their first pay jump since 2017.

tammy.murga@suniontribune.com

SMOLENS Schiff well ahead in fundraising

FROM B1

...tied to the Kremlin — including an intelligence officer — to defeat Hillary Clinton in 2016.

The move to censure Schiff was defeated rather easily on a 225-196 vote, with 20 Republicans joining Democrats to vote against it. Reps. Darrell Issa of Bostall and George Santos of New York were the only two Republicans to vote "present," along with five Democrats.

Luna said she will reintroduce her resolution but plans to remove the \$16 million fine. Under the failed measure, the fine would have been assessed if the House Ethics Committee determined Schiff had "lied, made

misrepresentations and abused sensitive information."

Republicans who otherwise said they would favor censure balked at voting for it because of the fine, with some contending it was unconstitutional.

Schiff seemed to relish the moment.

"Today's partisan and failed attempt to censure me is a badge of honor that I will wear proudly," Schiff tweeted after the vote. "MAGA Republicans are going after me because I dared to hold Donald Trump accountable. These efforts to intimidate me will not succeed. I will always defend our democracy."

It remains to be seen how long this reverberates in the hotly contested Senate race. There's a small handful of major contenders, and the field appears to be growing.

Schiff already was leading in fundraising. Campaign finance reports for the first quarter ending in March showed Schiff with

\$24.7 million cash on hand, and Rep. Katie Porter, D-Irvine, with \$9.5 million. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, had \$1.1 million in the bank.

Schiff not only outraised Porter, but he had a relatively easy re-election last year and was able to carry over a substantial sum to the Senate campaign. Porter is also a prolific fundraiser but had to spend heavily in a difficult re-election bid.

Meanwhile, former Google executive Lexi Reese, a Democrat, recently filed paperwork to run, has assembled a team of political veterans and apparently has the financial resources to compete.

Of the leading Democrats in the race, Schiff is far more disliked by Republicans, according to a poll conducted in late May by the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies. The candidates' favorable and unfavorable ratings among Democrats are fairly close. But among Republicans, 72 percent of those surveyed

rated Schiff unfavorably, compared with 41 percent for Porter and 39 percent for Lee.

In overall support, the lone Republican listed in the survey, attorney Eric Early, was at the top with 18 percent. That's not a surprise, given the split among Porter (17 percent), Schiff (14 percent) and Lee (9 percent). Nearly a third of voters were undecided.

Despite these results, Early — or any Republican for that matter — is given virtually no chance of winning the election in heavily Democratic California. The seat is open because Feinstein, who will be 90 next week and is dealing with health problems, announced she will not run for re-election.

As always, Trump presents a dilemma for Democrats. Opposition to Trump may be the greatest energizer and unifier for Democrats, perhaps outside of abortion rights.

Democrats generally

loathe him and don't want him to be president, but at the same time he has benefited them politically. He was largely the reason Democrats won the House in 2018 and Senate in 2020, when his re-election bid was thwarted by Joe Biden.

He raises the profile of individual Democrats by attacking them, which in no small way encourages some Democrats to go out of their way to poke him.

But it works both ways. The more Trump is attacked, investigated or indicted, the more his support strengthens and his campaign account grows. On Wednesday, Trump's campaign said it had raised \$7 million in the six days after his indictment on federal charges of mishandling classified documents.

That all bolsters his standing right now as, far and away, the leading Republican presidential candidate. Many Republicans fear, and Democrats hope, he would doom the GOP's

chances if he is the party's nominee next year. Experts say he could run even as a convicted felon.

Whatever his status, few are ruling out the possibility that Trump could return to the White House.

Regardless, he almost certainly will be on California's March primary ballot with the Senate candidates and will be an unavoidable focus of the election.

There's a symbiotic relationship going on here that carries some risk for Democrats.

Tweet of the Week

Goes to Liam Dillon (@dillonliam) of the Los Angeles Times.

"Big fan of Philly/I-95 but would love some of this 'urgent rebuilding' energy for the San Diego/Los Angeles train — second busiest rail line in the US — which has basically been out of service for nine months."

michael.smolens@suniontribune.com