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Panetta for president

Letters to the editor

Former congressman and presidential chief of staff, our local Leon Panetta, recently wrote in The Herald (May 7) that we are governed by "leadership or crisis."

In 1976, President Carter called it a crisis "equivalent to war" when oil soared to \$34 a barrel. Later, under President Nixon, the crisis was the Arab oil embargo. Today the U.S. and Iraqi oil fields are in a "supply crisis." To compensate, President Bush initiated a \$2.1 billion technologies appropriation bill to commemorate "oil independence day" in 2025. He also signed a major energy bill that provided billions in tax incentives to oil companies.

Let's get with it, Mr. President. Since 1976 these repetitive crisis programs don't work. What we really need is governmental encouragement of turning sugar beets, sugar cane, wheat, corn, etc. into an independent U.S. ethanol industry.

Our desperate need today is integrity in leadership. In my opinion, we should promote Leon Panetta as the candidate for president and Condoleezza Rice as vice president.

Bernard G. Jaksha
Monterey

Reality of military life

The Defense Language Institute's Language Day invited hundreds of high school students to learn about the valuable skills of multilingual ability. The Herald article (May 20) emphasized the Army's view of the day as an opportunity for recruitment of young people 16 to 18. The allure of pretty dancers and very friendly recruiters may have obscured the reality that most recruits just out of high school will not qualify for linguist training but will be placed in positions the Army needs filled right now. Recruiters earn nice bonuses for meeting quotas.

The article cites an Alisal High senior who plans to go to a community college. He has figured out that the skills, discipline and breadth of education available there, along with the financial aid and support services at all community colleges, will be far better preparation for the adult world of employment and advancement in the public, private or military sector.

There is plenty of information about the real facts of military life that need to be discussed before young men and women sign that eight-year enlistment contract.

Carole Erickson
Carmel

No easy fix for river

The May 21 commentary by Bob Perkins of the Farm Bureau about recommendations for the Pajaro River by my organization, American Rivers, and the Pajaro River Watershed Committee is filled with factual and scientific errors, scare tactics, and misguided outrage at the concept of working and planning for a healthy river.

Healthy rivers and floodplains provide vital flood protection to riverside communities as well as a host of other benefits, such as clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. It's a simple fact: the current approach to flooding is not working to protect the communities of Pajaro and Watsonville, yet the Corps of Engineers and the Farm Bureau appear to want to build more of the same -- at substantial cost to taxpayers.

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