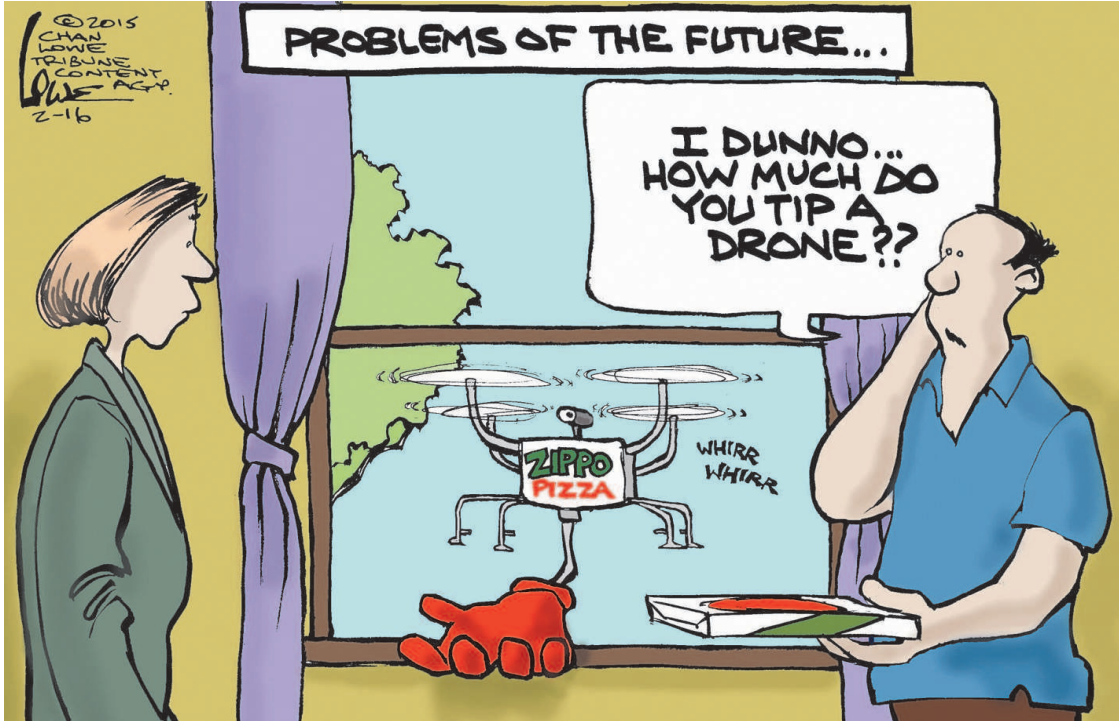


O P I N I O N



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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

There are some basic reasons why I am engaged with this paved trail discussion. I see alignment here with all levels of government.

Senator Wyden has called out his interest to invest in recreational assets on public lands. He has convened a recreational assets committee in the past and out of it are some new biking connections between communities. Building on Senator Wyden's vision, the Forest Service is exploring how to improve non-motorized access to the Deschutes National Forest, and this trail from Sisters to Black Butte Ranch is one of the more promising possibilities.

On a state level we are hearing from the Oregon Transportation Commission that our transportation system needs to be multimodal, that we connect our communities and promote healthy alternatives for people.

At a Deschutes County level we are finding a lot of interest from locals and tourists who come here to ride our bike routes and spend money in our communities. Sisters and Black Butte Ranch have had a synergistic

relationship. The business done in Sisters from Black Butte Ranch has been good for Sisters.

For these reasons, I see a lot of value in this paved trail. It is my understanding that the Forest Service is awaiting a resubmission of a trail proposal supported by the community. I have convened a planning committee to create a process for a community discussion regarding a paved path from Sisters to Black Butte Ranch.

I have asked Oregon Solutions to engage the community through an open dialogue to determine the community's interest in requesting the Forest Service reconsider its decision to withdraw from construction of the trail that was proposed last spring. Oregon Solutions will come to Sisters and meet initially with community leaders as a step in preparing a process for holding a community-wide conversation that is open, robust and inclusive where we can all come together to listen, learn and talk in a respectful and productive

See LETTERS on page 27

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 59/30	Mostly sunny 54/30	Sunny 49/24	Sunny 46/23	Sunny 48/18	Sunny 49/na

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Rachel Marsden

American Voices

PARIS — Massive interconnectivity in our era has ironically resulted in self-isolation, self-delusion and aggression — for individuals and nation-states alike. Did anyone predict that the perception of close proximity fostered by globalization and interconnectivity might lead to blowback?

Yes, in fact several scientists did.

In 1971, Charles Southwick wrote in the *Ohio Journal of Science*: “I think we could agree that the dramatic multimedia approach of our communications networks affects the sense of crowding and crisis that individuals and social groups perceive.”

Southwick theorized that increased social contact and irritation leads to more aggressive and violent behavior, as well as “abnormal clusterings of individuals.” In other words: self-isolation from all but a select few.

Experiments on rats by ethologist John Calhoun in the 1960s showed that some subjects drop out of social interaction altogether and go into a “spiral of deteriorating health” as a result of perceived overcrowding. Psychologist Jonathan Freedman later demonstrated that excessive social contacts and interaction (as opposed to physical overcrowding) were the primary cause of these deteriorations — which is the precise phenomenon exacerbated nowadays by the Internet and social media.

Consider, for example, the guy who doesn't go out much, spends hour upon hour carefully crafting an image on Facebook or Twitter, gauging his success, popularity and self-worth on the number of “likes” from people with whom he has never had a real conversation. He's “clustering”: deliberately limiting his world to a select few, despite having the world at his fingertips.

This person would be devastated if anyone tapped him on the shoulder and burst his bubble of self-delusion by critiquing his lifestyle. He has created a world of his choosing to the exclusion of the onslaught of humanity that he considers omnipresent — if only

online. After all, his entire life is now online. He may even lash out violently if his worldviews are challenged — the phenomenon of cruel Internet trolls fits perfectly with scientific theory on perceived social fatigue.

If this kind of lifestyle proves to be unsatisfying for our hypothetical bubble dweller, behavioral experiments suggest that he would simply further self-isolate — perhaps even give up on society rather than realize what he's doing to himself and simply log off for his own benefit.

What should really raise alarms is when we start seeing globalization lead to isolation and aggression from individual nations.

We're witnessing the world being split back up into Eastern (led by Russia and China) and Western (led by the USA and Europe) bipolarity—and at a time when we've never been more interconnected. The worldwide information boom of recent years, with the vast global expansion of the Internet and social media, correlates with the re-emergence of the old Cold War bifurcation and aggression between the two spheres: verbal sparring, economic sanctions, cyberattacks, propaganda wars, etc.

This increased nation-state aggression at a time of unprecedented interconnectivity seems counterintuitive — except to the science that has long envisioned this precise outcome.

One could also argue that the sense of proximity and competition sparked by globalization has led to insular self-delusion as a means of self-preservation. Many believe that domestic politics have never been more blindly and aggressively ideological, for example.

For all the perceived benefits of an interconnected world, we have yet to realize the full repercussions. We're just beginning to see the downside of the lack of self-awareness that comes with greater use of the Internet and social media, and with our expanded engagement of the world through these relatively new channels.

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