

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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"  
Commissioner Unger —

Thank you for your interest to unite the communities along the highway corridor leading into Sisters from the west.

One option is the STA desire to build a 10-mile bike and hiking path connecting everyone to the Tollgate development, Black Butte Ranch, a Suttle Lake unimproved bike path and Camp Sherman.

When you support the plan, please be certain that this is a wise use of government monies, which are funded by citizen taxes.

Your studies, if responsible, need to include impact statements affecting all involved citizens and, where applicable, their private properties. Safety and security, as well as creation of recreational opportunities serving the greatest good for the greatest number of people, should be assured within your domain of responsibility. Maintenance funding and added public safety resources for municipal and state agencies must be adequately funded for the added burdens created by non-motorized

citizen use of facilities built very near our high-speed highways.

You must also be prepared to help provide additional resources needed to deal with the effect of problems created by increasing public access to privately owned residential property.

I understand that some people favoring this trail accuse some private property owners of being selfish. Be aware that many of those being unjustly accused are fervent supporters of the Sisters community businesses and social needs (examples include Habitat for Humanity involvement, public schools involvement, and church memberships whose missions specifically include support for community needs). Perhaps those citizens are the ones most intent upon preserving the environment we all enjoy in Sisters Country. I suspect that there are many people who very significantly support Sisters, both financially and through service, but do not crow about it.

William Peterson

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### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Increasing clouds 51/29	Chance rain 45/28	Rain 44/24	Mostly cloudy 40/15	Mostly sunny 44/18	Mostly cloudy 43/na

# The Nugget Newspaper, Inc.

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## Rachel Marsden

American Voices

PARIS — While surfing the Internet on Valentine's Day, I came across a love story so poignant that I just have to share it with you. I'm taking really hot and heavy—as in actual fire.

I noticed a banner advertisement for an event in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in April called the "Kingdom Future Energy Summit," complete with a stunning image of what appears to be an ashen finger catching fire as it reaches out to touch a stream of oil. Ouch. It's the kind of image that you might expect neo-hippies to daydream between trips to the recycling bin, not one put forth by a Middle Eastern petro-state whose oil sector represents about 80 percent of its budget revenues. What's going on here? Apparently a steamy geopolitical liaison, that's what.

I'll bet you probably figured that the "future energy" in Saudi Arabia is oil, since the entire country is floating on a sea of it. No, silly — it's renewable energy!

Has Saudi Arabia suddenly been hit on the head with some kind of self-sacrificing environmental conscience? Is this a sea change for the founding member of OPEC, the world's top producer and exporter of oil for years, single-handedly able to raise or lower oil prices, (as we've seen in recent months)?

As heartwarming as that would be, it makes about as much sense as some other relatively recent oil interests masquerading as environmental concern. Like, for instance, Chinese billionaire and Communist Party member Huang Nubo pushing to purchase more than 100 square miles in Iceland for "eco-tourism," and later a large tract of land in the north of Norway, again for "ecological" reasons. It shouldn't come as much of a surprise that both overtures coincided with China — a country geographically nowhere near the Arctic — angling for a place on the Arctic Council alongside nations that are actually located in that oil-rich region.

As with everything else in life, the fastest way to cut

through any window dressing is to ask who benefits.

Granted, the Saudis have no shortage of sun to power solar panels, but continuing to pump oil is far less work than going to the trouble of making solar-power equipment. What do you know — China is the world's leading installer of solar-power equipment, according to the International Energy Agency. The Saudis signed an agreement in Beijing last summer to benefit from China's expertise on renewable solar and nuclear energy. Saudi Arabia is planning new solar power plants in five regions by the end of the year.

In 2011, China was willing to suck up a loss of billions of yuan in a railway project in Mecca, demonstrating its commitment to infrastructure-for-oil deals with the Saudis.

So there we have it. The world's largest installer of solar-power equipment has linked up with the world's largest exporter of petroleum in a relationship that feeds the insatiable appetite of the former for black gold and of the latter for gifts of infrastructure that ultimately benefit both.

What does this mean for the rest of us? Saudi Arabia, a longtime political ally of the West, has diversified its economic interests, opening up bilateral trade in Chinese currency and moving away from the U.S. dollar. Political interests tend to follow closely behind economic ones.

Some would rightfully argue that the United States and its allies might soon be distancing themselves from the Saudis economically anyway, as the U.S. moves toward energy independence. What hasn't been given careful consideration is what would fill that vacuum left by the West, and what the likely consequences would be if it's filled by China.

Join us next time, when Russia shows up on China's doorstep with red roses and a jealous Iran tries to run down Saudi Arabia in the parking lot.

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