

LETTERS

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detailed description of the project's construction.

Of 440 homesites, 183 expressed favor for the trail. This equates to 41.5 percent which is far short of overwhelming support. The wording contained in this survey clearly states that the results would have no bearing on whether or not the project would or would not be built. The survey also states that none of the trail is on Tollgate property.

This latest trail proposal clearly crosses Tollgate property and easements.

Proponents of this project should not lose sight of the conditions required to connect the trail to Wagon Wheel and to cross Tollgate Road — 2/3 of homeowners voting in favor. There is, at this time, no formal endorsement from either the homeowners' board or the homeowners for this project.

Steven Madsen



To the Editor:

I have maintained that I wouldn't write a letter to the editor regarding my views on a paved hiking/biking trail between Sisters and Black Butte Ranch. I had shared my opinion, privately, with Commissioner Unger, family and friends but was hesitant to jump into the rancorous and vituperative free-for-all that *The Nugget* letters have become.

This morning, as I was mulling the meaning of Independence Day, I realized that there was a far bigger issue at stake than whether or not Sisters paves a trail in the forest.

We honor the military men and women who have given of themselves to help ensure our freedoms, but we seldom remember the responsibility each of us has to support and maintain those freedoms every single day of our lives. One of our most cherished freedoms is the freedom of speech—guaranteed to us by our founding constitution. I realized, this morning, that after 38 years of living in this beautiful community, I no longer felt comfortable expressing my views publicly. The level of animosity, name-calling and belligerence, in so many of the letters to the editor, has risen to an all-time high. The number of conscientious men and women who have decided to step down from public positions in Sisters due to negative, personalized verbal attacks is sad as well as telling.

Our freedom of speech does not give us the right to harm, belittle or stifle others' speech and

opinions. It does give us the inalienable right to express our heartfelt beliefs, our ideas and our concerns in a way that allows us to be heard while not harming other's rights.

Speak the truth, speak with kindness, speak what is useful and of benefit.

Happy Interdependence Day!

Barbara Secrest
Sisters, OR.

Just for the record: I am in favor of the proposed biking trail and I would enjoy using it!



To the Editor:

As a subscriber to *The Nugget*, a University of Oregon-trained geologist, and professor of paleontology, I am very impressed with the quality of Sisters' newspaper. Your science reporting is truly outstanding, as you showcase the value placed on science in the local schools and community, which hosts science talks, ecology restoration projects, guided nature walks, star-gazing, and many other activities. Kudos to you!

Your dedication to scientific accuracy did not prepare me for the June 24 article on "Hunter believes she has a treasure" — specifically a "nose and two umbilical cords leading from a placental mass" in a presumed "dinosaur embryo" from Texas. Surely your science-savvy readers know that placenta are rare in reptiles (a rudimentary form occurs in a few snake species) and have never been found in egg-laying dinosaurs.

The additional claims — that the gallery owner has extracted fossils of "tiny heads, noses, feet, a little bird with feathers and a tiny stegosaurus in an egg" and "skulls, some with flesh" — should also be questioned, as these types of embryonic or flesh-bearing remains are exceptionally rare. In fact, the rare examples of preserved soft tissue in dinosaurs are mainly associated with mummified skin or iron-mineralized proteins encased in fossil bone — and their origin continues to be debated by dinosaur specialists.

Finally, "blood and tissue fragments" found in "local dinosaurs" is a claim suited for Hollywood's Jurassic World sci-fi fantasy but should be questioned by Sisters residents. Central Oregon's volcanic landscape formed 30 million years after dinosaurs had gone extinct, so unfortunately Sisters Country will not yield any dinosaur remains.

Perhaps the article was written as satire or with tongue-in-cheek; please forgive me if I missed the

joke. Otherwise I wish to commend you on promoting an interest in and appreciation for science.

Constance Soja



To the Editor:

On this Fourth of July, 2015, it's great to see America celebrating independence and the freedoms we are able to enjoy. Above all we must never forget the price paid for our freedom by hundreds of thousands of men and women serving in the military.

Today we are faced with a world in turmoil; enemies that want to destroy all that disagree with their perverted worldview. In my opinion we have a more dangerous enemy among us that doesn't destroy with weapons, but with an unrestrained abuse of power given by the Constitution.

The founding fathers would not recognize the mainstream press of today that works hand in hand with government "they approve" rather than holding them accountable as was intended in drafting the Constitution.

As a Vietnam veteran with 30 years of service, I've never witnessed such dishonesty, lack of integrity, and corruption demonstrated by the mainstream press as during the last seven to eight years. Whatever happened to the Journalistic Code of Ethics? The framers of the Constitution gave the press virtually unlimited and protected power to be the watchdogs for the people against government gone "astray" — not lapdogs gushing like school girls discussing their first kiss.

Who in government has been held accountable for the numerous broken promises made during election campaigns? Who in government has been held accountable for four Americans killed at Benghazi? Who in government has been held accountable for broken promises to keep our health plans and doctors? Who in government has been held accountable for IRS corruption in attacking political groups? Where the hell is the press?!


I believe every new college graduate in journalism should be required to spend a day visiting Arlington National Cemetery. Maybe by walking the grounds, observing the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier, and gazing over the thousands of gravesites they can come to the realization of the incredible price paid for freedom of the press they'll enjoy as Americans; and be committed to a lifetime of adherence to their Journalistic Code of Ethics.

Jeff Mackey

Common Sense Tip

FOR DRIVERS

DON'T PASS STOPPED CARS.



There could be a good reason they're stopped, like a pedestrian! A little patience could save a life — and a lifetime of regret.

Share the Road. *The Way to Go.* Transportation Safety — ODOT