

## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Recently local TV Channel 11 re-aired their coverage of the May 2015 meeting of the Bend City Club. A standing-room-only crowd of citizens heard a panel of wildland fire experts and local land managers discuss the role of planning in protecting our forest residential communities from forest fires

The primary presenter was a resource economist with a background in forestry and wildlife. He discussed results of collaborative efforts of a group in Summit County, Colorado, west of Denver, incorporating planning as a tool to alleviate fire susceptibility of new and existing forest residential communities. As in Deschutes County, new housing areas are rapidly being planned and built in dry pine forests that are prone to disastrous fires.

After examining many of these communities, several common problems were found, which have led to recommendations that can be applied here as well as there. First: areas of young, closely growing trees/thickets are often maintained for privacy and need to be thinned for safety. I do not know what spacings of trees local foresters now recommend;

however, during my long career in forest ecology research, pine-thinning studies conducted in eastern Oregon and Washington determined that trees spaced 20 to 30 feet apart, on the average, maintain a healthy, fast-growing forest while reducing the danger of rapidly moving fire.

When the crowns are not allowed to intermingle, the result is an effective shaded fuel-break.

Second: enclosed communities should have at least two usable exits bordered by shaded fuel-breaks. I expect it would be very dangerous to try to leave Tollgate by the one paved exit to Highway 20 while a fast-moving fire roared through the dog-hair thickets less than 100 yards away. It might not be possible to get out the locked, gated fire exits at a moment's notice.

Third: forest residential communities are safer if encircled by a widely shaded fuel-break, that includes a hard surface path. In the communities they studied, the path served not only for recreation, but as a critical fire-break

See **LETTERS** on page 19

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 91/49	Sunny 94/54	Sunny 92/53	Mostly sunny 92/54	Mostly sunny 91/54	Mostly sunny 90/na

## The Nugget Newspaper, Inc.

Website: [www.nuggetnews.com](http://www.nuggetnews.com)

442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, Oregon 97759

Tel: 541-549-9941 | Fax: 541-549-9940 | [editor@nuggetnews.com](mailto:editor@nuggetnews.com)



Member

Postmaster: Send address changes to  
The Nugget Newspaper,  
P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759.

Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

**Publisher - Editor:** Kiki Dolson

**News Editor:** Jim Cornelius

**Production Manager:** Leith Williver

**Classifieds & Circulation:** Teresa Mahnken

**Advertising:** Lisa Buckley

**Graphic Design:** Jess Draper

**Proofreader:** Pete Rathbun

**Accounting:** Erin Bordonaro

## Discernment and thanks

By Bruce Rognlien

Guest Columnist

Discernment: the ability to judge well.

Thanks: an expression of gratitude.

We all need to be questioning what we read in *The Nugget* and *The Bulletin*. Is it factual? Does it make sense? Do I agree or disagree with the writer or article?

For example, in the July 1 *Nugget* Letter to the Editor," a visitor, Mr. Chris Schaffner (Tangent, OR), says regarding the trail system: "so the proposed path would benefit the same 'wouldn't it be great minority' (my italics) at the expense of all of you."

According to what I have read in *The Nugget*, Black Butte Ranch (twice) has voted in favor of the trail and Tollgate took a survey and two-thirds of those responding were in favor (183). So, if the majority has voted for the trail, why and where does the writer get away with saying the minority want the path, while the majority does not?

Additionally, Steven Madsen writes in *The Nugget* (July 8) that only 41.5 percent (183) of 440 Tollgate homeowners surveyed were in favor of the trail. Another source says 67 percent were in favor, 183 out of 275 respondents... I have no idea what the actual numbers were, but I would discern that 100 percent of the homeowners (440) wouldn't reply to any survey.

Another example, is one of Mike Morgan's quotes in *The Bulletin* on July 7 ("Sisters councilor resigns after less than a month"). He is quoted saying, "But there have been pretty serious missteps over there" (i.e. City Hall)...and also notes, "City Hall's focus on 'big projects' over day-to-day operations." Ok, specifically, what day-to-day operations are deficient? The city never looked better. I'm told by several merchants that business is

strong. The city's recent survey of businesses confirms that they are very satisfied with the city's work. I understand the budget is balanced, no phantom employees are on the payroll, that I have heard of or read about... So, what are the specific problems?

And what should we consider serious? A one-man hot dog stand at the corner of Boyd's bike shop property, plus three other one-person food stands (i.e. "food cart controversy")? Every merchant in town that can figure out how to add food services is doing so. That includes art galleries, the coffee company, two bike shops, an in-town market and a clothing store — and good for them!

The article in *The Bulletin* of July 7 also paints Sisters as a "problem city" that "no one will touch with a 10-foot pole." I disagree! I think we have a wonderful community and I want to thank the staff at City Hall and the city counselors for their work on behalf of all of us.

In my opinion, the city employees do a great job for us. Lets start with Kathy Nelson, the "guardian" of city hall. Every good organization I have ever known has someone like Kathy; they care, they own the joint. Thank you, Kathy. Paul Bertagna, public works director, treats the city property like it's his backyard. The city never looked better. Thanks, Paul. Andrew Gorayab does a great job as city manager and "gets things done." Carol Jenkins in planning, with her great smile, has been with the city since there was a city (seems to me). Finally, the receptionists are always friendly and helpful.

Thanks to all of you for your hard work and dedication.

Things can always improve. We all need to advocate for our community while always doing our individual part to make it better, not tear it down.

*Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.*

The Nugget is mailed to residents within the Sisters School District; subscriptions are available outside delivery area. Third-class postage: one year, \$40; six months (or less), \$25. First-class postage: one year, \$85; six months, \$55. Published Weekly. ©2014 The Nugget Newspaper, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. All advertising which appears in The Nugget is the property of The Nugget and may not be used without explicit permission. The Nugget Newspaper, Inc. assumes no liability or responsibility for information contained in advertisements, articles, stories, lists, calendar etc. within this publication. All submissions to The Nugget Newspaper will be treated as unconditionally assigned for publication and copyrighting purposes and subject to The Nugget Newspaper's unrestricted right to edit and comment editorially, that all rights are currently available, and that the material in no way infringes upon the rights of any person. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return or safety of artwork, photos, or manuscripts.