

Of a certain age...

By Sue Stafford
Columnist

I may sound old-fashioned, or maybe just old, but it appears to me that as a country, as a culture, even as a small Central Oregon town, we are in an ongoing decline when it comes to everyday civility. It even seems like I have seen that word mentioned a number of times in the last few weeks — and always referring to a lack of it.

I watch the TV news any night and see a growing onslaught of rudeness on the part of our politicians — in the U.S. Congress, in the run-up to the 2016 election. The office of President of the United States used to be shown some level of respect, but when citizens of South Carolina chose to greet our African-American president by waving Confederate flags at his arrival, civility was nowhere to be seen. When an elected official calls the president a liar from the floor of Congress, respect for the office seems a distant concept.

Unfortunately, “The Donald” seems to think he

can say whatever he wants, wherever he wants, to whomever he wants, regardless of the truth, or lack thereof, in his statements, regardless of whom he offends. It seems that all the attention the media is giving to his uncivil discourse has caused other Republican candidates to jump on the bandwagon of bad manners. Trump has lowered the bar of civility and, like the Pied Piper, he has been followed into the muck by his fellow candidates, who are trying to garner some of the headlines for themselves.

Someone I was discussing this with last week used a perfect phrase to describe what is going on in our country — “the coarsening of culture.” To be coarse is to be harsh or grating, lacking refinement, unpolished, vulgar or obscene. A survey of popular music, current TV shows and movies, fashion, and everyday conversation appears to bear out the idea that our culture is becoming coarser. Profanity is used like a punctuation mark. Hollywood stars seem intent on appearing in greater states of undress each

Oscar season. Every sitcom and drama on TV seems to revolve around actual or insinuated sex and infidelity. Some R-rated movies of today would have been considered pornographic in earlier decades.

The development that troubles me most is the seeming deterioration of civility right here in Sisters. In public meetings and in letters to the editor there seems to be an undercurrent of anger and rudeness that is driven by assumptions and accusations that are held as truth often without checking the facts or asking those involved. There seems to be a “my way or the highway” attitude. People’s minds are made up and closed.

What I have loved about Sisters for most of the last 11 years is the small-town feel where people go out of their way to be helpful and kind. And that quality is still here. But I fear the public face we are presenting to our visitors and surrounding neighbors in Central Oregon is one of discord, fault finding, and lawsuits. The weekly letters to *The Nugget* are often hostile, accusatory or disrespectful in

tone. *The Bend Bulletin* has picked up on this in several recent articles. I even saw several posts on Facebook just this morning referencing this development. Certainly we can share our opinions in a respectful way and find ways to actually get things done.

How I think and act and speak contributes to the overall atmosphere and attitude in Sisters. I choose to conduct my daily business with everyone I meet in a cordial, respectful manner. My work with others is more easily accomplished if I approach it with curiosity and an attitude of cooperation and compromise. I don’t have to be right all the time; the relationships are what matter.

The most important characteristics I think a person can possess are empathy and compassion. If I am able to understand and identify with another’s struggles or pain or life circumstances, then I will be less prone to condemn, criticize, or chastise them for their behavior and choices. If I can imagine on an emotional level what someone else may be experiencing, I will have

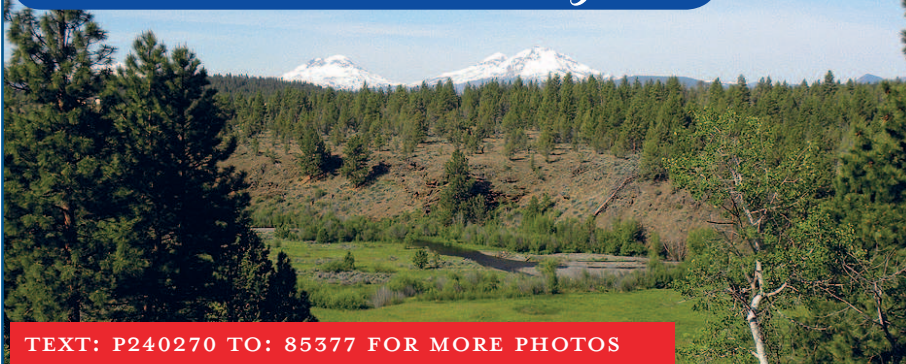
compassion for and appreciation of their situation.

Can we as a community, working together, find a suitable compromise regarding the proposed paved bike trail between Sisters and Black Butte Ranch? Surely an equitable solution in which parts of everyone’s hopes are met can be worked out.

How about looking for the best in our City staff, elected officials, and volunteers who willingly agree to serve our community? Let’s show them appreciation for what they do well. When we disagree, let’s address the issues with respect in a cooperative manner, to find common ground. If there are things that need to be changed or corrected, be willing to be a positive part of the solution.

I hope we can “polish up” our communal attitudes and behaviors to match the shiny new storefronts, beautifully landscaped streets, and the gorgeous natural setting which we are all fortunate to call home. After all, the Three Sisters are named Faith, Hope and Charity — not Disrespect, Discord and Division.

Welcome to Sisters Country!



TEXT: P240270 TO: 85377 FOR MORE PHOTOS

2,700 + sq. ft. home sits elegantly on Aspen Rim with an unrestricted view of the Cascade mountains. 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, spacious living & dining area all in immaculate condition. Across the street from Aspen Lakes award-winning golf course & minutes from downtown Sisters. \$649,900. Call Peter Storton. 541-549-2500 MLS#201505082

Extraordinary Horse Property!



TEXT: T1189382 TO: 85377 FOR MORE PHOTOS

3-level 10,144± sq. ft. home on 10+ acres. Updated gourmet kitchen, & indoor swimming pool & 2 master suites. Horse setup with a 6-stall heated barn, hay storage, tack room, hot wash rack, 3 pastures, round pen and more. RV pad with hookups. 7.5 acres irrigation. \$1,499,900. Call Peter Storton. 541-549-2500 MLS#201401164

Refined living at The Ridge in Sisters



TEXT: P610379 TO: 85377 FOR MORE PHOTOS

Spacious entry into the greatroom with picturesque windows overlooking the HOA maintained pond & Cascade mountains. Single-level 2,751 sq. ft. home with separate wing master suite. Additional 843 sq. ft. guest cottage with heat pump, full bath, heated floor & sauna. \$799,000. Call Sandy Goodsell. 541-549-2510 MLS#201502602

Spectacular Cascade mountain views!



TEXT: P517711 TO: 85377 FOR MORE PHOTOS

Protected view corridor with views from almost every room. Custom-built 3,142 sq. ft. 3 bedroom, 4 bath newer home in Pine Meadow Village in Sisters. Wood windows, hardwood flooring, travertine tile, heated slate flooring in master bath, heat pump and more to this well constructed home, complete with elevator. \$697,500. Call Sandy Goodsell. 541-549-2510 MLS 201500386



Sandy Goodsell
Principal Broker
ABR, CDPE, GRI, CIAS
541-549-2510
541-480-0183



625 North Arrowleaf Trail
Next to Ray’s Food Place in Sisters
541-549-3333
www.ilovecentraloregon.com

Peter Storton
Principal Broker
ABR, ACP, CDPE, CIAS, CLHMS
541-480-9605
peterstorton@gmail.com

