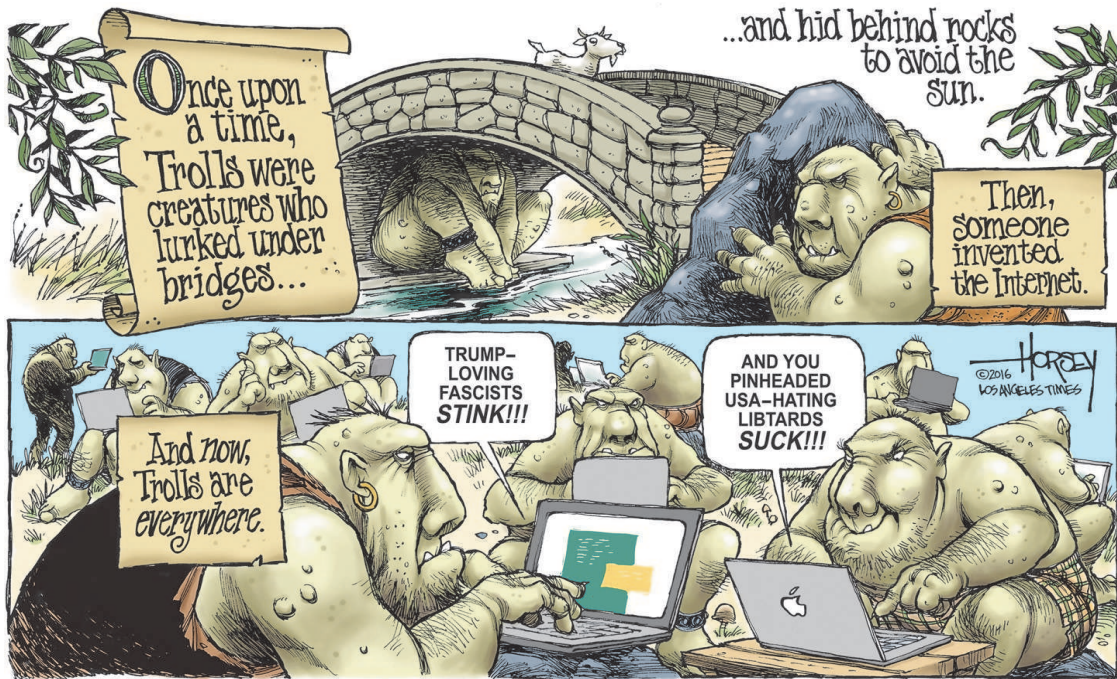


# O P I N I O N



## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

I am also very concerned over the offensive noise pollution from the skydiving business at Eagle Airport.

Each weekend and some weekdays the drone of the skydiving airplanes circling over Sisters Country mimics that of an annoying mosquito circling one's head. It doesn't matter where you are — at home, hiking a trail, biking, shopping, dining outside at a local restaurant — the noise is with you. The constant drone of the skydiving plane gaining altitude becomes difficult to ignore.

When the folks of Sisters voted for the airport to be included within in the city limits I was happy as I thought this meant more oversight. I never thought the airport would be allowed to incorporate commercial operations so close to a downtown core.

Is it safe for skydivers to land so close to Camp Polk Road? This is a very busy artery. I've seen cars dramatically slow down to gawk at the dropping skydivers, an accident waiting to happen.

Is it legal for a commercial business to use

the industrial area for skydiver landings?

Should we place the assumed economic benefit before livability? Residents also spend money at local businesses and if we are forced to leave town each weekend due to the offensive, constant airplane noise we are spending our money elsewhere. Many of us work all week long and look to the weekends for some quality time at home or in nature, but we now need to find it somewhere else. Will tourists that come to Sisters in search of tranquility continue to visit or will they seek alternatives? Will anyone want to host outdoor events such as weddings while a plane is circling above?

Unless your vision of Sisters Country includes the drone of skydiving airplanes and the possibility of helicopter and plane tours please contact city officials and the airport now.

Eagle Airport, please give us back our tranquility.

Marie Clasen



See **LETTERS** on page 14

## Airport should be responsive to community

By John Mapes  
Guest Columnist

I share the concerns of increased noise from airplanes flying over Sisters expressed in Bruce Mason's Letter to the Editor of *The Nugget* (June 15, 2016). I read the letter the day after attending a meeting among the airport manager, city manager, and members of the board of the Indian Ford Ranch HOA. The HOA had written a letter to the airport and to the City of Sisters concerning the increase in airplane noise from take-offs/landings and circling for hours over Sisters.

The opening statements of the meeting were sobering and disheartening. The pilots are not breaking any laws. The airport expansion has been supported by consecutive city councils, by county commissioners, and by state officials and agencies (including \$1 million in ODOT administered Oregon Connect funding). Over 80% of Sisters residents voted for annexation of the airport. The Master Plan for development of the airport has been approved by a previous City Council. And virtually every home and parcel in Sisters falls within an "Airport Safety Combining Zone," designated as "AS" on county property records, considered sufficient notice of potential noise from airport operations and potentially prohibiting lawsuits to mitigate the negative impact.

In the meeting the airport manager stated that he would consider any reasonable suggestion for mitigating the noise, but as yet had not heard any. He was asked if the drop of skydivers could be moved away from inside the city limits and instead to uninhabited open space. No, that would be inconvenient to the skydiving company. And, in fact, the airport is planning to build a permanent skydiving landing site at the airport. He was asked if the planes could gain elevation away from Sisters before dropping skydivers above the airport. No, if the skydivers are to land at the airport, for safety reasons the FAA requires that planes

circle inside a five-mile radius of the landing site, resulting in planes circling over Sisters.

He was asked if the airport would take action, such as prohibiting a pilot from use of the airport, if the pilot was repeatedly flying in a way that did not honor the airport's "Fly Neighborly" statement, in cases where the pilot was not breaking any laws. No, he would not take such action if a pilot was not breaking a law. One participant in the meeting described how her children couldn't fall asleep at night due to the drone of airplanes as late as 8 p.m. She asked if the skydiving company could be limited to operating up to 5 p.m. No, the airport manager would not attempt to limit the hours of operation of the skydiving company. He suggested the woman ask the owners of the skydiving company directly if they might consider doing that.

The City planning commission has just issued a contract for the update of the Transportation System Plan. Regarding air transportation, the current plan, written prior to the proposed airport expansion, states "No additional facilities are considered necessary within Sisters." It is imperative that the City proceeds with careful scrutiny of its plans and of any applications from the airport to ensure that noise impacts are considered and mitigated in any updated and new plans and approvals.

And it is critical that Sisters residents express their concerns to the owners of the airport and to staff and City Council of the City of Sisters. If there is limited regulatory and legal recourse to address the current noise, then the main path for mitigating noise from planes flying over Sisters, current and future, is for residents in the community to speak up, as Mr. Mason did, and for the owners and management of the airport to choose to develop and operate the airport in a way that is responsive to the community and that minimizes the airport's negative impact on the community.

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

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 74/45	Chance showers 66/38	Mostly sunny 64/37	Sunny 77/41	Sunny 80/43	Sunny 82/na

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