

O P I N I O N

The Nugget will close at 3 p.m.  
on Friday, December 30.  
*Happy New Year!*



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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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'd like to thank several groups of people whose efforts may have gone unnoticed during the holiday season.  
Thanks to Paul B. and the crews that cleared the streets and sidewalks of snow, including much-needed downtown parking spaces. I hope I speak on behalf of many downtown shopkeepers who really appreciated all of your efforts, especially as several storms hit during the holiday shopping season.  
Thanks to ODOT and their crews who helped clear the main roads into Sisters. I

commute on Highway 20 and this year it was no concern at all driving after the storms.  
Last but not least, a big round of applause to all who staff the Sisters Post Office. I had to send and receive many holiday packages and was always greeted with a smile and a great attitude. Despite only two windows at their front counter and tons of mislabeled and mis-addressed parcels they managed to once again make it through the busy season. I'm sure they're still digging out from under the packages that were mailed late.  
Steven Segal

**Sisters Weather Forecast**  
Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly cloudy 35/19	Mostly sunny 38/21	Mostly cloudy 34/14	Mostly cloudy 31/18	Mostly cloudy 32/17	Mostly cloudy 24/na

The Nugget Newspaper, Inc.

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**John Kass**

American Voices

Author Tevi Troy begins his excellent book "Shall We Wake the President?: Two Centuries of Disaster Management from the Oval Office," with something innocent. A children's song.

It is much like other rhymes that children sing, or used to sing, the nursery rhymes we sang as kids on the South Side of Chicago, near the stockyards, without knowing what they meant, like "Ring Around the Rosie" or "London Bridge is Falling Down."

But this one involves a tiny bird named Enza: I had a little bird/ Its name was Enza/ I opened the window/ And in-flu-enza.

And by the time it was over, the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918 had infected people worldwide and killed more than 50 million. Some estimates put the global death count as high as 100 million. It killed millions more than World War I, which had already brought unimaginable horrors to Europe. The pandemic was so severe that in the U.S. alone, it knocked 10 years off the average American's life expectancy.

And one man was, in great measure, responsible for spreading the terrible disease. Through hubris and weakness and indecision, he sentenced his own soldiers to death while allowing it to wash across Europe: President Woodrow Wilson.

"President Wilson was sending U.S. troop transports to Europe to fight in WWI, even as the war was winding down," Troy said. "He was told by the Navy that those troop transports were spreading the disease and that he should stop. But the chief of staff of the military objected. Wilson sided with him and the troop transports continued, even though it was only a month before hostilities in Europe ended."

Troy's book is a hard-eyed look at history, and what presidents — and citizens — may learn from it and how to best deal with what will certainly come our way. So the reason to read "Shall We

Wake the President?" isn't about reliving old horrors. Instead, it should be read to examine decisions and indecision and bureaucratic traps inadvertently set by the most powerful being on the planet, the president of the United States.

Bad planning and hubris can ripple out from the White House and compound disasters.

"You can't know what disasters you might face on your watch, but you must think about how you might deal with them," Troy said. "And you can build a team that is prepared to react to them."

In our talk, I mentioned Wilson's role in causing the influenza epidemic to spread, President Jimmy Carter's mishandling of the New York power black-out, and President George W. Bush's blunders — of organization and public relations — during the Katrina disaster that devastated New Orleans and his presidency.

"In all the cases you mentioned, the presidents seemed unprepared and kind of knocked off their game by the disasters that struck them, and the American people can sense it," he said. "So in my book I talk about communication strategies to reassure the American people, learning about the different mechanisms of government so that you're ready, and making sure that your staff is trained and drilled to deal with these things."

To illustrate his point, Troy often uses a story of bureaucrats at some disaster site passing out business cards to one another.

"Then you know you've already failed," Troy said. "And the response will be a failed response, because it means they have not prepared, that they don't know the other people who are dealing with the disaster, they don't know their capabilities or lines of responsibility."

"So if you're out there handing out business cards at the site of a disaster, it's going to be an even bigger disaster."

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