

# 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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.*

Craig Eisenbeis' article last week about local avalanche conditions was timely in this season of heavy snowfall. I would like to supplement his work by pointing to some excellent resources for winter backcountry travelers.

The Central Oregon Avalanche Association (COAA) is a nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to avalanche education in the area. COAA provides a weekly snowpack summary and daily observation reports prepared by local guides and avalanche professionals who volunteer their time to improve backcountry safety. These reports are supplemented by hourly observations from several weather stations located between Hogg Rock and Odell Lake. You can find these reports and observations at <http://www.coavalanche.org>. COAA also provides free Know Before

You Go seminars to give backcountry users a basic understanding of avalanche safety. Their course schedule can be found on their website.

If you are going out to play in the winter backcountry, make sure to use these free resources. Your loved ones will thank you.

Bob Hoffman

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor,  
Congratulations to all those folks who have been successful in obtaining the roundabout in Sisters.

I have traveled and lived in areas with roundabouts. So, roundabouts have never been a problem for me. However, this one is bad news and will make shopping, banking,

See **LETTERS** on page 14

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Chance snow 27/14	Snow 24/17	Snow, likely 31/22	Chance rain 40/27	Chance rain/snow 37/23	Chance snow 35/na

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## Robert B. Reich

American Voices

Donald Trump is such a consummate liar that in coming months and years our democracy will depend more than ever on the independent press — finding the truth, reporting it, and holding Trump accountable for his lies.

But Trump's strategy is to denigrate and disparage the press in the public's mind, convincing the public that it shouldn't believe the press because it's engaged in a conspiracy against him.

Trump wants to use his tweets, rallies and videos to make himself the only credible source of public information about what is happening and what he's doing.

It is the two-step strategy of despots. And it's already started.

Step 1: Disparage the press and lie about them:

At a televised speech at the CIA, Trump declared himself to be in a "running war" with the news media, and described reporters as "the most dishonest human beings on earth."

Trump then issued a stream of lies about what the press had reported, accusing the media of falsely under-reporting the number of people showing up to hear his inaugural address. (When aerial photographs confirmed media accounts, he called the acting head of the Park Service and demanded new photos.)

Trump then accused the media of falsely reporting that he had disparaged the CIA. "They sort of made it sound like I had a feud with the intelligence community," Trump said, continuing to criticize the press for its "dishonest" reporting.

In fact, Trump had repeatedly vilified the CIA and the entire intelligence community for reporting about Russia's intervention in the 2016 election.

Then at press secretary Sean Spicer's first televised news briefing, Spicer blasted the press even more about its supposed false reporting of inauguration day events and numbers. (When confronted with Spicer's outright lies, Kellyanne Conway, counselor to the president, told NBC that Spicer had merely given "alternative facts.")

Later in the week, Steve Bannon, Trump's chief

strategist, told the media to "keep its mouth shut," and asserted that the press is now the "opposition party."

Step 2: Threaten to circumvent the press and take the "truth" directly to the people.

At his CIA speech, after denigrating the media, Trump issued an ominous warning. "We caught them, and we caught them in a beauty. And I think they're going to pay a big price."

What price? One big clue came the next day at Spicer's press briefing, when he said "The American people deserve better. As long as [Trump] serves as the messenger for this incredible movement, he will take his message directly to the American people."

We're not talking Roosevelt-like "fireside chats" here. Trump's tweets have already been firestorms of invective directed at critics, some of whom have been threatened by Trump followers stirred up by the tweets.

Trump won't stop with tweets. We're seeing the emergence of pro-Trump news sources that get access at the expense of traditional news companies.

The ultimate "price" the media will pay comes when a significant portion of the public trusts Trump's direct communications more than it trusts the media.

But when that happens, our democracy ends.

And it's the perfect punishment for a press that dares criticize him: He makes the press irrelevant by substituting himself as the source of truth.

At that point, most of the public will believe his inauguration attracted a record number of attendees, he was elected in a "landslide."

They'll believe anything he wants them to believe — that humans don't cause climate change, Putin is a good friend of America, Muslims should be presumed dangerous, vaccinations cause autism, scientists shouldn't be trusted, and critics of Trump are enemies of America.

Four years from now they may even believe Trump made America great again.

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