

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

The devastating June 25 motor-vehicle crash outside the Black Butte Ranch main entrance has been cruel to victims and their families. They must all be in our thoughts and prayers.

The Oregon State Police and local law enforcement authorities as well as the Oregon Department of Transportation played vital roles on scene.

I particularly want to commend the firefighters and paramedics from the Black Butte Ranch and Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Departments. They did an extraordinary job. We are lucky to have them.

Larry Stuker
Black Butte Ranch



To the Editor:

Have you caught the new show in town? The Roundabout? Get a DQ, sit on the patio and watch. It's already a lo-o-o-ng running show as participants are backed up to Tollgate.

Tom Kopec

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 91/49	Sunny 89/51	Sunny 89/49	Sunny 88/49	Sunny 88/na	Sunny na/na

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Jonah Goldberg

I do not fear much correction when I say that my columns of the last few years have not been characterized by an overabundance of cheerfulness and optimism.

For instance, about a year ago, I endorsed a Twitter personality for president. No, not that one. I backed SMOD, the "Sweet Meteor of Death," whose sole presidential campaign promise was to deliver an extinction-level event upon impact with earth. But SMOD, like so many politicians, disappointed me, which is why my refrain of the last few years has been, "Cheer up, for the worst is yet to come."

I bring this up for two reasons. First, to acknowledge for the reader my misanthropic biases, and second, to beg some indulgence, as I'm unaccustomed to describing the light at the end of the tunnel as anything other than a locomotive's headlamp.

So here it goes: Maybe things are getting better.

The standard brief against the president, from the left and much of the desiccated center, is that Donald Trump is a threat to the constitutional order. I do not dismiss this view out of hand, and if President Trump were much more popular, I'd worry about it more. But to date, things aren't working that way.

The press, by its own self-aggrandizing account, is enjoying some new golden age. Newspaper subscriptions are up.

No thanks to the White House's own efforts, this really is the most transparent administration in history. Leaks make it almost impossible for the White House to keep anything secret. And when it does, the president's Twitter account serves almost as a live feed into what he is thinking.

Obviously, liberals despise the president's agenda, but most of what he has accomplished, almost entirely through executive orders, has actually been entirely defensible — and from a conservative perspective, laudable — on policy terms.

If you don't like him

rescinding so many of President Obama's executive orders, perhaps you should have pushed harder for Obama to get things done the proper way — through the legislative process.

Then there's Congress. For decades, under Republican and Democratic presidents and Republican and Democratic majorities, Congress has been a feckless doormat for the president, ceding ever more authority to the executive branch. This is not how it's supposed to work. Congress is the "first branch" of government precisely because the founders saw in the presidency the threat of despotism, or what Edmund Randolph called "the foetus of monarchy." That's why Congress has all the real power under the Constitution: the sole authority to declare war, levy taxes, ratify treaties and craft legislation.

Most of the Republicans in Congress have little experience in crafting serious legislation, never mind asserting their first branch prerogatives. Thanks in part to the president's incompetence and in part to his laudatory desire to delegate the tough decisions to Congress, House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell have had to step up, filling a breach that began under Woodrow Wilson and became a chasm at the end of the Obama years.

No one can dispute that it's been an ugly and at times embarrassing process, one that seems frightening to Beltway denizens who've grown accustomed to presidents driving outside their constitutional lanes. Nor can it be argued that the rank-and-file Republicans racing to hastily slap together healthcare legislation and tax reform are doing so primarily out of a patriotic fidelity to the founders' vision. Rather, they know that if they don't deliver, they will be thrown out of office like drunks who can't pay their bar tabs. But that's OK. The founders understood that political ambition was the lifeblood of institutional health.

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