

O P I N I O N

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY...



Editorial...

Use common sense during high fire danger

According to news reports, “a group of partygoers shooting at exploding targets on private property Saturday are thought to be responsible for starting the Ana Fire, which has burned 6,200 acres in the Summer Lake area.”

It’s hard to believe anybody could be so stupid. It’s high summer in the Oregon outback. It’s dry; it’s hot; vegetation catches fire easily. Yet some folks thought it was a good idea to shoot exploding targets. What could possibly go wrong?

That’s going to be an expensive misadventure. The “partygoers” are on the hook for millions of dollars in fire-suppression costs and restitution for property destroyed.

Sisters has seen more than its share of wild-fire in the past 15 years; we don’t need any more. Lightning fires are inevitable; human-caused fires are not. Just a little common sense goes a long way toward preventing fires that could devastate our community — and leave those responsible in financial and possibly actual shackles for the rest of their lives.

There are some basic guidelines that should be easy enough to abide by — even for “partygoers”:

- Know fire risks and obey fire restrictions, such as campfire bans. And if you have a campfire, leave it DEAD out. I can’t count the number of still-smoldering campfires I’ve come across and put out over the past two decades in Sisters Country.
- Avoid parking or driving on dry grass, as hot vehicles can start a wildfire.
- Carry a shovel and fire extinguisher or at least a gallon of water when you take your vehicle into the woods.
- Do not use candles, fireworks, tiki torches, or exploding targets in the woods.
- Dispose of smoking material in deep, sturdy ashtrays. Make sure butts and ashes are extinguished with water and sand. Don’t grind out butts on the ground or in vegetation.

It’s better to be excessively careful with fire than to be responsible for a destructive blaze that can ruin lives — including your own.

Jim Cornelius, News Editor



Robert C. Koehler

The United States boycotted the U.N. negotiations to ban—everywhere across Planet Earth—nuclear weapons. So did eight other countries. Guess which ones?

The nine nations in question, of course, are the nuclear-armed ones: the U.S., Russia, China, Great Britain, France, India, Pakistan, Israel and . . . what was that other one? Oh yeah, North Korea. Bizarrely, these countries and their short-sighted “interests” are all on the same side, even though each one’s possession of nuclear weapons justifies the others’ possession of nuclear weapons.

None of these countries took part in the discussion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, even to oppose it, seeming to indicate that a nuke-free world isn’t anywhere in their vision.

As Robert Dodge of Physicians for Social Responsibility wrote: “They have remained oblivious and hostage themselves to this mythological deterrence argument that has been the principal driver of the arms race since its inception, including the current new arms race initiated by the United States with a proposal to spend \$1 trillion in the next three decades to rebuild our nuclear arsenals.”

The treaty reads, in part: “. . . each State Party that owns, possesses or controls nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices shall immediately remove them from operational status and destroy them, as soon as possible . . .”

This is serious. I have no doubt that something historic has happened: A wish, a hope, a determination the size of humanity itself has found international language.

But nonetheless, I feel a sense of cynicism and hopelessness activated as well. Does this treaty sow any real seeds, that is to say, does it put nuclear disarmament into motion in the real world, or are her words just another pretty metaphor? And are metaphors all we get?

Nikki Haley, the Trump administration’s U.N. ambassador, said last March, according to CNN, as she

announced that the U.S. would boycott the talks, that as a mom and daughter, “There is nothing I want more for my family than a world with no nuclear weapons.”

How nice. “But,” she said, “we have to be realistic.”

In years gone by, the diplomat’s finger would then have pointed to the Russians (or the Soviets) or the Chinese. But Haley said: “Is there anyone that believes that North Korea would agree to a ban on nuclear weapons?”

So this is the “realism” that is presently justifying America’s grip on its nearly 7,000 nuclear weapons, along with its trillion-dollar modernization program: tiny North Korea, our enemy du jour, which, as we all know, just tested a ballistic missile and is portrayed in the U.S. media as a wildly irrational little nation with a world-conquest agenda and no legitimate concern about its own security. So, sorry Mom, sorry kids, we have no choice.

The point being, any enemy will do. The realism Haley was summoning was economic and political in nature far more than it had anything to do with real national security. Mutually Assured Destruction is not realism; it’s a suicidal standoff, with the certainty that eventually something’s going to give.

A change of mind or heart is, presumably, the only way global nuclear disarmament will happen. I don’t believe it can happen by force or coercion.

I therefore pay homage to South Africa, which played a crucial role in the treaty’s passage, as the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* reports, and happens to be the only country on Earth that once possessed nuclear weapons and no longer does.

“Working hand in hand with civil society, (we) took an extraordinary step (today) to save humanity from the frightful specter of nuclear weapons,” said South Africa’s U.N. ambassador, Nozipho Mxakato-Diseko.

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

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 82/44	Sunny 75/42	Sunny 83/46	Sunny 87/48	Sunny 88/50	Sunny 87/na

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