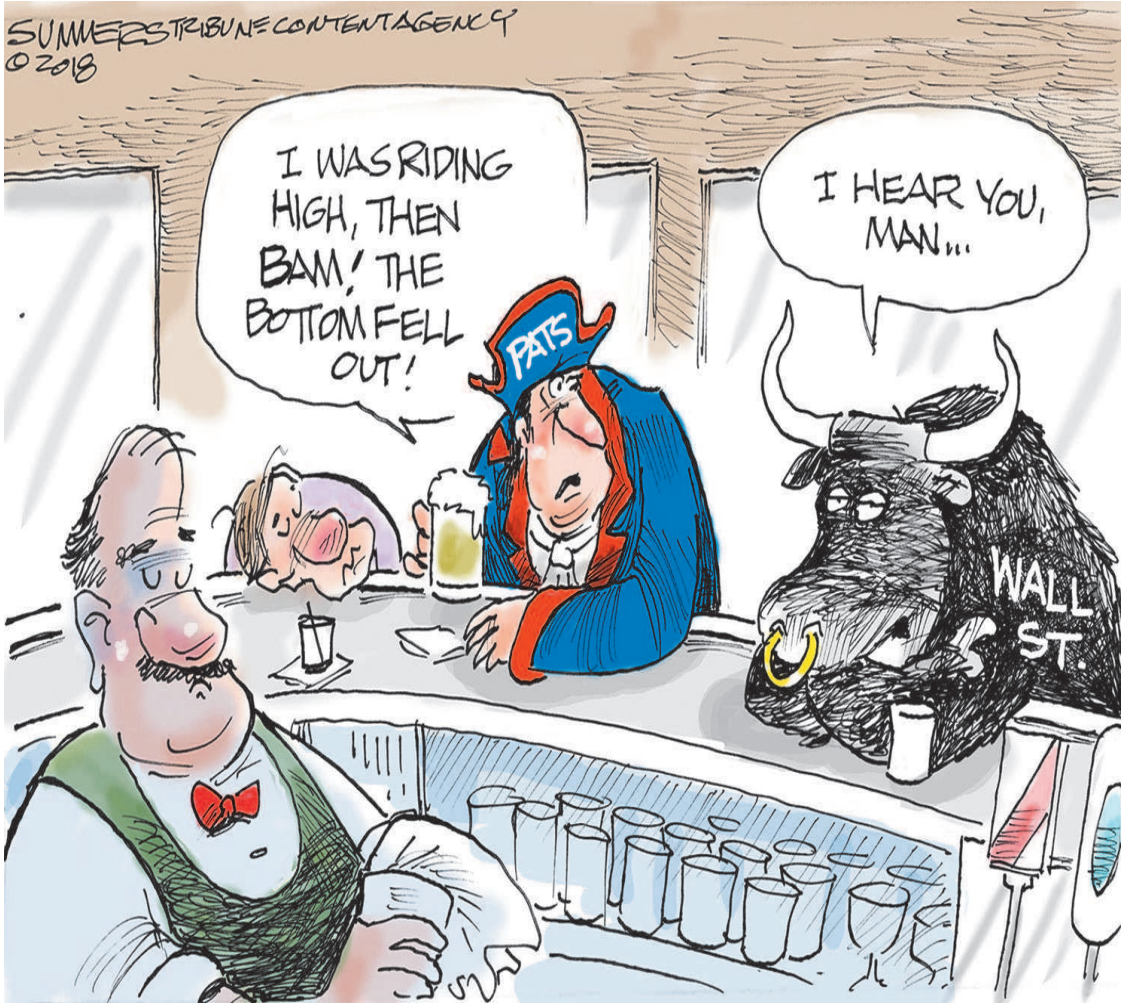


**O P I N I O N**



**Editorial...**

**Help create the gateway to Sisters**

Everyone in Sisters should stop by City Hall over the next couple of weeks and weigh in on what the gateway to Central Oregon will look like.

Models of art installations for the Highway 20/Barclay Drive roundabout are on display in the lobby — and public comments are invited. It's not a people's choice vote on the art, but it's a sure bet that public comments will weigh heavily in the ultimate city council vote on the installation.

The three finalists for the project have turned in very different interpretations of the theme of a "Land of Contrasts." If nothing else, a visit to City Hall will enhance your

appreciation for the wild variations of the creative mind.

The artwork that ultimately graces the roundabout will represent Sisters to millions of travelers — and we'll each see it just about every day for years to come — so it behooves us to take the opportunity to make our voices heard as to our preference for the art.

The display will be up through February 16, and a decision by the art selection committee and the City Council is expected by the end of the month.

*Jim Cornelius*  
Editor in Chief

**Sisters Weather Forecast**

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Mostly Sunny 60/38	Mostly Sunny 62/31	Mostly Sunny 45/21	Mostly Sunny 41/18	Mostly Sunny 47/25	Mostly Sunny 47/33

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**'A cheerful heart is good medicine'**

By Terry Hardin  
Guest Columnist

In her article "Mental illness and places of worship," ("Your story matters," *The Nugget*, January 31, page 7) Audry Van Houweling makes some valid points.

Throughout history, the mentally ill typically have not been able to find refuge in places of worship and have instead been faced with shame at their presumed lack of faith or pressure to put on a happy face despite their internal turmoil. However, I thank Ms. Van Houweling for noting that many churches now "recognize the prevalence and impact of mental illness" and are doing something about it. Yes, giving each other grace is crucial.

I would, however, like to explain why "there may be a hesitation to seek treatment and trust mental-health professionals as they may not be adhering to the teachings of a particular faith, yet the same may not be true when being treated for a ruptured appendix, diabetes, or taking pharmaceuticals." As a retired nurse, I know that it is always better to mentally prepare a patient for treatment and recovery. That being said, physical ailments have little to do with how you think — you just want the antibiotics to kill that infection!

Treatment of mental illness sometimes involves taking medication, but it always involves helping you to change the way you think. A professional counselor who does not share my faith will not help me learn to trust God to take care of those things beyond my control and to work on those things that are within my control with His help. They will not help me see that the root cause of my anger might be an excessive, stubborn

desire to have things go my way or that it may be due to fear of losing something — like control — upon which I place inordinate value. They will not see that many good things (children, spouses, jobs, hobbies) can become bad things when elevated to a place where only God should reside in my heart.

Learning how to think differently, how to prayerfully "put off" selfish, destructive ways of thinking and "put on" unselfish, constructive, loving ways of thinking is key to mental health for persons of faith. That is the focus of Biblical Counseling.

Many churches across the country offer Biblical counseling. In Central Oregon, Grace Bible Church is not only a training center for Biblical counselors, but offers Biblical counseling without charge from people who have had extensive training. Biblical counselors do not dismiss science. They will not tell patients to stop taking their medication, leaving this part of their therapy up to their medical professionals and prefer, in fact, to work with the person's medical professional.

I wholeheartedly agree with Ms. Van Houweling when she says, "there is a need for enhanced dialogue about mental illness among church leaders, congregational members, and community professionals."

Mental illness is more and more evident in every population — including churches. We must learn as much as we can about how to deal with it, remembering all the while that these people are suffering. They need our compassion and help, not our judgment. My prayer is that more and more churches are offering that compassion, help and love.

"A cheerful heart is good medicine." *Proverbs 17:22*

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