

## O P I N I O N

## Editorial...

## Moments of magic

*Faring thee well now  
Let your life proceed by its own design  
Nothing to tell now  
Let the words be yours, I'm done with mine\**

The world lost a couple of unsung giants last week — men who were outside the spotlight but who contributed mightily to the rich tapestry of American music.

John Perry Barlow was a cattle rancher and a “cyberlibertarian” activist — but most of all, a visionary and a poet; one of the two lyricists for the Grateful Dead. He died on February 7, at the age of 70 after a long illness.

Tom Wheeler was a *Rolling Stone* writer, editor-in-chief of *Guitar Player Magazine*, the author of several magnificent books on guitars and, most recently, a beloved professor of journalism at the University of Oregon. He died on Saturday, also at the age of 70.

My daughter made a magical connection with Wheeler just days before his sudden passing. They connected across the gulf of a couple of generations through a mutual love for music, musicians, and the written word.

Music does that. As columnist Jim Williams notes in these pages this week, music is never “just music.” For many of us, it is as much a

part of who we are as our blood and our bones. And it brings people together. We see it here in Sisters all the time. There’s nothing finer than friends gathering to make and to listen to some homemade music with friends at one of Sisters’ welcoming venues. And our community is blessed to have artists of extraordinary talent and power come to town regularly, where we can all bask in the profound joy of handmade art performed with passion and consummate skill.

In those moments, it doesn’t matter where we come from, what our politics may or may not be, what we do for a living. All that matters is that magic is happening at that very moment in our town, in our lives, in our souls.

Music is the greatest builder of bridges we know of. And when the bridge-builders put down their tools and depart, we feel the loss keenly. It’s left for us to pick up the tools and keep building those bridges as we bid the maestros well on their journey back to wherever it is that the magic comes from.

Wheel to the storm and fly.

Jim Cornelius

Editor in Chief

\* “Cassidy,” by John Perry Barlow

## 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 2017 wildfire season across the West was unprecedented in terms of dollars spent, acres burned, and the increased duration of wildfires. Even now, months later, we’re still feeling the impacts from these fires, on our landscapes and our funding.

As wildfires across the nation grow more severe — and costly — the USDA Forest Service is challenged to adequately fund other important work that will benefit our forests and communities because of increasing firefighting costs.

In Central Oregon, the Deschutes National Forest is fortunate to have the support of local elected officials, communities, partners, volunteers, and employees who are all working together to make our forests healthier and more fire-resilient. Partnerships like the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, Community Wildfire Protection groups, and Project Wildfire are making our communities safer and reducing the potential of catastrophic wildfires on the landscape.

See **LETTERS** on page 22

## Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Snow Likely 39/25	Mostly Sunny 42/22	Partly Sunny 47/30	Slt. Chance Rain 47/00	Chance Snow 38/19	Slt. Chance Snow 34/18

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## Robert C. Koehler

When you have a country to govern and you have no idea what to do — and, even more to the core of the matter, you also have a crony-agenda you want to push quietly past the populace — there’s a time-proven technique that generally works. Govern by scapegoat!

This usually means go to war, but sometimes that’s not enough. Here in the USA, there’s been so much antiwar sentiment since the disastrous quagmires of the last half-century we’ve had to make war simply part of the background noise. The military cash-bleed continues, but the public lacks an international enemy to rally against and blame for its insecurity.

Creating a scapegoat enemy domestically has also gotten complicated. Thugs and punks — predatory (minority) teenagers — shoulder much of the responsibility for keeping the country distracted, but in this era of political correctness, politicians have to be careful. Thus the Trump administration has turned to the immigrants. Not all of them, of course — only the ones from Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. In particular, it has turned to . . . the illegals!

Why is America so violent?

“It’s pure evil,” runs the newly released Trump campaign ad. “President Trump is right: Build the wall, deport criminals, stop illegal immigration now. Democrats who stand in our way will be complicit in every murder committed by illegal immigrants. President Trump will fix our border and keep our families safe.”

Governing by scapegoat is more than just a stupid appeal to the base. Its cruel consequences are manifold.

Here’s one look at the humanity of DACA: “It meant we did not fear that today — any day — was going to be the last day we could hug our children, parents or siblings,” Dreamer Reyna Montoya writes at Truthout. “It allowed us to have inner peace, knowing that we were not going to be thrown to a country we no longer know. DACA

provided safety, and that is now being ripped away.”

Leaving hundreds of thousands of lives “hanging by a thread,” as Montoya put it, strikes me as contributing to the problem, not the solution. Trump’s claim that “illegals” contribute in a serious way to American violence is totally without factual basis, but because violence has become a plague in this country, explaining its cause with scapegoat propaganda has a feel-good resonance for a lot of people. It’s so much easier to blame some designated “other” than to look within.

But consider . . .

“The governor and several people in Benton (Kentucky) said they couldn’t believe a mass shooting would happen in their small, close-knit town. But many such shootings across the nation have happened in rural communities.”

Yeah, another one, at a high school in rural Kentucky. Two students killed, as many as 20 injured, a 15-year-old boy arrested. He fired a handgun into a crowded atrium at the school until he ran out of bullets. This is now minor news in America: ho hum, another mass murder.

The agenda that Trump and his cohorts are focused on moving forward is not the one that addresses American misery, but the one that slashes corporate taxes and privatizes as much of the social infrastructure as possible. For instance, four months after Hurricane Maria, 30 percent of Puerto Rico remains without electric power. Government relief efforts didn’t go much beyond the presidential tossing of paper towels — a racist gesture if ever there was one — but now the Puerto Rican governor has a plan to privatize the island’s power utility. Appalled critics are calling this a blatant example of disaster capitalism: the use of tragedy to further a corporate agenda.

Let the rich grow richer. When that causes trouble, blame the ones who have the least.

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