

## O P I N I O N

## Editorial...

## Prepared citizens save lives

Sisters is blessed with top-notch first responders who can roll out on a variety of emergencies quickly, with the right tools for the job and a high level of professional skill.

But they'll be the first to tell you that when an emergency strikes, they are at best minutes away.

Last month, a Sisters resident saved the life of another Sisters man in cardiac arrest through the quick application of citizen or bystander CPR. He knew what had to be done and he knew how to do it — though he'd never done it before. And he acted.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to outsource the maintenance of our safety to professionals — police, fire and paramedics, public works. In some jurisdictions, civilians are actively discouraged from acting in an emergency, other than calling 911, and personal preparation for disasters is regarded in some circles as a sign of paranoia.

Fortunately, the pendulum is swinging back again. We could do worse than to all of us adopt the old Boy Scout Ethic: "Be Prepared."

"Normalcy bias" leads us to think that things will always bump along as they usually

do. But sometimes they don't and it pays to be ready. The intricate web of utilities and services upon which we depend is far more fragile than we like to think it is. A natural disaster — even on the order of the winter of 2016-17 — can leave people vulnerable. When the power goes out and the trucks that supply the grocery store can't get through, it pays to have emergency supplies and a plan.

Be Prepared.

When a friend or a loved one collapses in cardiac arrest, know what to do to save their life.

Be Prepared.

Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District is offering classes in CPR and First Aid. There's a CPR class set for March 17 and a First Aid class on March 18. A few hours of our time learning from professionals could save a life, someone dear to us. Maybe we should all get some training, gear up for emergencies and make a plan. Sisters will be a better place for it, and we will be better, more resilient ourselves.

Be Prepared.

*Jim Cornelius, Editor in Chief*

## 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:

Regarding Mr. Rullman's column "Our predator problem," published in the February 28, issue of *The Nugget* (page 7):

While I agree with most of what Mr. Rullman says, I would argue the weapons are also part of the problem. These weapons are prevalent in our culture as an accepted form of entertainment to be used by or under the supervision of a responsible adult. That limitation works just about like the legal age limit for drinking and smoking as well as the total prohibition of recreational drugs. In other words some children will see the possession

of a semi-automatic pistol or rifle as a right of passage to adulthood and they will get their hands on them. Add to that the media training ground and a psychosis brought on by abuse or mental illness and we know the rest.

Semi-automatic weapons are readily available, convenient and effective mass killing devices. Semi-automatic weapons are not the best choice in a home defense scenario. They are not necessary for hunting, nor are they very sporting. What they are is fun to shoot. They are a toy. So are we really going to insist that it is more important to keep playing with

*See LETTERS on page 15*

## Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Rain Likely 47/33	Rain Likely 49/35	Chance Rain 47/28	Mostly Sunny 51/32	Chance Rain 53/33	Chance Rain 50/38

## The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

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Postmaster: Send address changes to

The Nugget Newspaper,

P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759.

Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

**Editor in Chief:** Jim Cornelius

**Production Manager:** Leith Easterling

**Classifieds & Circulation:** Teresa Mahnken

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**Community Marketing Partners:**

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**Proofreader:** Pete Rathbun

**Owner:** J. Louis Mullen

The Nugget is mailed to residents within the Sisters School District; subscriptions are available outside delivery area. Third-class postage: one year, \$45; six months (or less), \$25. First-class postage: one year, \$85; six months, \$55.

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## Robert C. Koehler

There's a bigger problem embedded in the social order than our lack of effective gun laws, and I hope the movement that emerges out of the Parkland massacre makes the leap beyond anger and single-issue politics. The nation's weak gun laws — the easy availability of AR-15 assault rifles — are, in fact, a symptom of the general cheapening of human life in American society, which is reflected in the nation's ever-expanding obsession with war and a military budget the size of Godzilla. War always has a way of coming home.

Planning for war — celebrating war, glorifying war — has a long-term psychological impact on a large segment of society. To prepare for war begins with belief in an enemy and, eventually, the will to kill that enemy.

But as David Grossman, a psychologist and former military man, pointed out some years ago in his book "On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society," most people have a natural aversion to killing other human beings, which is a problem for those in charge of waging war. Grossman points out that researchers in World War II discovered, based on a large number of interviews with soldiers who had been in combat, that no more than 15 percent or 20 percent of them would actually point their guns at the enemy and fire.

This led to changes in the training process meant to "disengage" recruits from their troublesome aversion to killing, such as replacing bull's-eye targets with human figures during marksmanship training. The process of "disengagement" became a standard part of basic training, and its success was seen during the Vietnam War, when soldiers' willingness to fire at the enemy soared to over 90 percent, according to Grossman.

As I wrote in my 2006 column, "Blowback from a Bad War," "The romanticization of war and militarism

within the general culture — the proliferation of 'point-and-shoot' video games, for instance, along with formula revenge-motivated movie and TV violence — expand the 'disengagement training' to non-vets, contributing, along with plentiful handgun availability, to a state of domestic insecurity far more serious than the threat of outside terror that Bush has turned into his political meal ticket."

In that column, I also happened to quote the words of a certain lieutenant general who was gaining a reputation for his homicidal candor. Addressing soldiers during a panel discussion, he said: "It's fun to shoot some people... You go into Afghanistan, you got guys who slap women around for five years because they didn't wear a veil. You know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."

The guy's name was Mad Dog Mattis. He's now, of course, America's secretary of defense.

Once again, I go back to the gargantuan military budget, and the preparations underway for eternal investment in the culture of death.

On the domestic front, conservatives like Rush Limbaugh shill for gun manufacturers by calling for arming America's schoolteachers rather than controlling the sale of firearms.

Another well-known Mattis utterance — "Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet" — "even made it into a popular video game," according to Politico. When I read that, I felt the connection between militarism and popular culture settle eerily into place. "Killing is sometimes necessary" morphs into "killing is fun."

And a disturbed 19-year-old who has just been expelled from his high school can purchase an assault rifle and ammo without a problem.

I have a dark fear that it's all connected.

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