

Commentary...

Sisters students walk out for change

By Hana Schultz and Mia Burton
Correspondents

Since Sandy Hook, when 20 children and six adults were gunned down by an adult using an AR-15-style rifle, 7,000 more young people have been killed by gunfire. 7,000 empty shoes filled the grounds outside of the Capitol building last Tuesday, and activists everywhere demanded action to honor the lives lost to gun violence.

That morning, to show support for the families of the survivors and victims of the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School last month, a national school walkout took place. The walkout generated conflict between pro-gun and gun reform activists, including individuals on the middle ground of the protest.

In Sisters, the student demonstration was no less controversial.

So why did we choose to walk out? To honor the lives lost to gun violence with action, not silence. If there is anything we students and individuals can do to prevent something like this from happening again, we have an obligation to take action. It's not going to be by sending thoughts and prayers or accepting donations from the NRA.

We walked out saying

we've had enough, to add our voices to the millions of youth who demand that gun violence in schools end. We walked out not to call for a total banning of guns, but to demand tighter gun control and limited access to assault weapons and assault-style rifles: like the ones school shooters have too easily obtained.

There is a process of regulation when it comes to people getting things for which they must be responsible: a gun should be one of those things. That means mandatory training, safety tests, licensing, background checks and mental-health screenings for semi-automatic gun buyers. If people want to purchase something that can continuously shoot 45 rounds per minute or a weapon used by the military (which you have access to in several states), the current process is not working and needs to be augmented.

It's absolutely true that gun reform would affect law-abiding citizens by thoroughly clarifying that they are eligible, trained, and responsible; but this is an honorable sacrifice to make. In Florida, a handgun buyer must wait three days, but there is no waiting period to buy an AR-15. Under existing gun laws, the Parkland shooter lawfully walked

in and walked out with the weapon used to claim so many lives without pause.

Not once has the thought crossed my mind to ban all arms, but rather to implement responsibility alongside the rights. This is something we can do, and it would make a difference.

Young people like Malala and Emma Gonzalez were caught in events in which they must choose life or death. The Parkland students explicitly pursued change, and as a result chose life. As the adage goes, "those who do what they have always done will get what they have always gotten." We are choosing life.

Some have been saying that kids should keep their noses out of politics. We have been told since birth to be afraid, to be quiet, and to shelter in place. But we cannot just do that, we must respond to the world we are inheriting from you. We won't be kids forever, and soon we will have the vote.

Now, more than ever, we deserve a more equal opportunity for creating a way toward change, not just for us, but for future generations. Our lives depend upon it. And that is why we walked out.

Hana Schultz and Mia Burton are students at Sisters High School.



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Sisters High School students participated in a walkout on Wednesday, March 14, to "honor the lives lost to gun violence with action, not silence."

BLUES FEST: Event is set at two venues in August

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August 3, 5 p.m. to midnight; and Saturday, August 4, noon to midnight.

Sisters residents Jennifer and Joe Rambo are excited about adding another event to the summer season that showcases Sisters and helps to stimulate the local economy. In addition, they will be working closely with Sisters Habitat for Humanity and the Heart of Oregon Youthbuild to help demonstrate their positive impact upon our community. A portion of all ticket sales will be donated to these two organizations.

According to Jennifer, "ticket-holders will have the unique ability to catch all 10 main acts, as each act will be playing one set both nights."

Coupled with

and a variety of regional craft breweries, will be a selection of carefully curated food offerings.

"We have about seven years of direct festival experience all around Oregon and are inviting our favorite food vendors," said Jennifer.

Early-bird ticket pricing and more information can be found at www.sistersrhythmndbrews.com.



PHOTO BY DAVID GOMEZ

Legendary bluesman John Mayall is coming to Sisters this summer.

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Holy Thursday, March 29:
Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, March 30: Stations of the Cross, 3:00 p.m.
Celebration of the Lord's Passion, 7:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, March 31: Easter Vigil, 8:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 1: Mass 10:00 a.m.

Saint Edward the Martyr Roman Catholic Church
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