

O P I N I O N



CURTIS SALGADO PHOTO BY BOB HAKINS

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Our home in Sun Mountain burned on Thursday, July 26. We want to thank the firefighters from all the districts who worked so hard in the fight. Thanks to the Sheriff's Department personnel, and to those neighbors who were so supportive in offering their homes, food, water and friendship. Thanks also to the Red Cross who arrived to help.

Carolyn and Hurshel Russell

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

This past Saturday, July 28, Naomi Smith was laid to rest in her family plot at Camp Polk Cemetery.

She was a true Oregon Pioneer.

As a young girl, Naomi came to Sisters as a Carroll. She went to school and graduated from Sisters High School and soon married Raymond Smith, a good-looking man, husband and provider. Together, they raised three boys and three girls. Michael, Jan, Sonny,

Laurie, Jeffery and Cecil. And they helped many young men in their lives, all from a small home on Larch Street. Ray died in an auto accident in his early 40s, leaving Naomi with his strength and courage. She transformed that courage into her children. So we wonder, what makes Naomi someone who is special, who stands out above the crowd. Someone who makes the news and catches the eye. She doesn't. If you look at Naomi Smith at 98 years old, you may ask, "How can this frail, small woman have done so much in her life?" Simply put, Naomi Smith had the spirit of a giant, the will of Hannibal, and the strength of Sampson. Her kindness and pleasant manner were her attractive quality. She made you feel welcome and right at home. God was looking after her when her daughter Jan and family took her in for care and attention in her elder years.

So you may ask, "What does Naomi's life have to do with me?" Just to let you know,

See **LETTERS** on page 32

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 90/53	Sunny 82/47	Sunny 78/47	Sunny 81/48	Mostly Sunny 79/50	Partly Cloudy 74/48

The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

Website: www.nuggetnews.com

442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, Oregon 97759

Tel: 541-549-9941 | Fax: 541-549-9940 | editor@nuggetnews.com



Member

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

Graphic Design: Jess Draper

Community Marketing Partners:

Patti Jo Beal & Vicki Curlett

Accounting: Erin Bordonaro

Proofreader: Pete Rathbun

Owner: J. Louis Mullen

Going to extremes

By Jim Cornelius

Editor in Chief

The French philosopher Voltaire noted that "common sense is not so common" in the 18th century. He found agreement from American philosophers from Mark Twain to Will Rogers. And his observation seems to be confirmed and reconfirmed every day in America culture and politics.

More and more, it seems, we dash for the margins on any issue and throw good sense, common or otherwise, into the ditch. The result is ever-greater cultural churn and polarization.

The now-defunct Oregon Initiative Petition 43 purported to be a "common sense" effort to curb violence — by criminalizing thousands of law-abiding gun owners through a ban on "assault rifles" and "high-capacity magazines." The initiative served only to further polarize and intensify an already intensely polarizing issue.

Last week, the City of Santa Barbara, California, set off a firestorm with a proposed ordinance banning plastic straws, to which the city council in its wisdom attached a potential jail sentence for violators. The ensuing kerfuffle got so heated that Visit Santa Barbara hired a crisis consultant to help deal with the fallout.

Reducing our society's obscene use of plastic is a laudable goal, but a ham-fisted top-down approach is likely to do more harm than good. Many companies are — due to increased consumer awareness — already enacting voluntary reductions, including alternatives to plastic straws. Consumers can — and should — eschew the use of plastic bags and straws and packaging, and retailers and manufacturers would do well to stop using plastic to the degree possible. Voluntarily.

Cultural and market forces can reduce the impact of plastic — but that would rob politicians of an opportunity to flamboyantly display their virtue.

Immigration is an inherently challenging issue made more intractable by cleaving to extreme "solutions" that aren't. If your choices are "Build The Wall!" or "Abolish ICE!" you're not really working the problem.

San Francisco — California again — has decided to allow illegal immigrants to vote in school board elections. Seriously. Even for San Francisco, the notion that the

vote should belong to anybody other than a citizen is nutty and pernicious. The vote is an honor, privilege and responsibility of citizenship — see the commentary on page 16 to understand how significant that is.

It's hard to solve a problem as big and complex as illegal immigration along a 2,000-mile border. It's impossible when nobody wants to be honest about the myriad impacts of generations-long migration across that border.

President Donald Trump hinged his improbable campaign on the issue, kicking it off with a flamethrower: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best... They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us (sic). They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

The specter face-tattooed MS-13 gangbangers flooding across an open border is red meat for the activist base on the political right. The moral panic is impervious to challenge on the data — which doesn't correlate increased crime with immigration, legal or illegal. It is also impervious to the cruel impact on children of a "zero-tolerance" policy.

The right also tends to forget that it is the business community in the U.S. that creates the demand for cheap labor that drives most (but not all) of the migration.

Meanwhile, the political left tends to ignore or downplay the very real negative impacts of illegal immigration. Trump painted with a broad brush dipped in nativist bile, but one doesn't have to be "anti-immigrant" or racist to acknowledge that there are people coming to this country illegally it would be better to keep out.

The "good people" who surely make up the vast majority of those coming here from Mexico and Central America seeking life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness create a significant burden on the social safety net in high-immigration states. There are impacts in emergency rooms, in schools, and on highways where uninsured illegal immigrants create a cost burden on the rest of us. Those impacts are real, and they are significant.

But fixing the problem — inevitably imperfectly — would cost both sides a wedge issue, and that just isn't good politics these days.