

O P I N I O N

The 23rd Annual  
**COUNTRY FAIR  
& ART SHOW**

Artists' Reception  
Fri., Aug. 10, 5 to 8 p.m.



Country Fair & Art Show  
Sat., Aug. 11, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At The Episcopal Church of  
the Transfiguration  
Just west of Sisters on the McKenzie Highway



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

I share Paula Surmann's concerns about climate change and the need to influence Congress. Every year, the extreme heat, weather disasters and fire disasters are getting exponentially worse across the U.S. and the world. Trying to talk to your Congressmen about this is a lot like talking to your doctor without an appointment and a four-week wait. You cannot just call them up or send them an email.

I don't want to appear cynical, but do you believe that these Congressmen actually read your emails? I have sent Walden emails in the past, requiring a response. I never heard back. I even sent emails to Wyden and Merkeley. No response, even from Democrats. I suspect that even if a Walden staffer (if he has any) read one of these emails from a progressive, that they would be "black-listed" so that future

emails would not even be opened. It would likely go immediately to the "round-file."

I don't believe that any of these Congressmen can afford sufficient staff or time to go through what must be hundreds or even thousands of emails every day, particularly during these unsettling political times. They want to make a comfortable living as public servants, after all. It's not a fun job much of the time, but can be rewarding.

It's clear from the bills that Walden helped to craft that he only cares about the big oil and pharma business and his own job security, instead of the planet or his Central Oregonian constituents. I think the only tactic that will work is to vote Walden out of office, assuming that we have a reasonable opposing candidate.

It's important that our Congressmen know

See **LETTERS** on page 28

**Sisters Weather Forecast**

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 103/66	Sunny 103/62	Sunny 88/48	Sunny 81/47	Sunny 87/51	Sunny 91/52

The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

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Why do we do what we do?

By Michael Wells

Guest Columnist

On the occasions when I have contemplated what motivates human behavior, I have done so mostly within the framework of "nature/nurture." Are we motivated mostly by our genetics or by how our life experiences have formed us? Maybe they interact. Science tells us that certain environmental factors may cause mutations in our genes that could be carried through to our children. Maybe it's not either/or.

As a young man, I tried to test the nature/nurture paradigm when I visited my absent father to see what in him was common to me without any influence of "nurture." (Yes, I realize that it is anecdotal evidence.) Aside from the expected and obvious general physical similarities, I discovered to my dismay that I shared with him an unfortunate propensity to use sarcasm as a form of humor. This is a trait that I have tried to suppress much of my adult life. On the other hand, we can readily see the effects on our behavior from our upbringing, including the influences of communities of family, church, peers and guidance from teachers and mentors. But if we remain intellectually curious, much of this influence might be transitory.

The nature/nurture framework does not provide a full explanation for our behavior. Much of what I have seen recently confirms that we are subject to what psychologists call "motivated reasoning." In shorthand, it is a cognitive process that is driven unconsciously by our emotional framework or what is termed "motivations" or "goals." We accept as valid only that which we find emotionally satisfying or at least neutral ("confirmation bias") and reject immediately what, if accepted, would cause us anxiety ("identity protective cognition").

And of course, the way we think affects what we do. I suggest that this

explains why those who call themselves "law-and-order" people, who after successfully lobbying for mandatory minimum sentencing laws (I had called it, "another dumb idea whose time has come") don't want it applied to those who have committed crimes but with whom they share a common ideology or a feeling of tribal identity. I believe it applies to the publicly religious who lecture us that "character matters," except regarding those public officials who do their bidding on legislative and other legal matters. I believe that it explains the justification from avowed Christians for a governmental policy that rips children from their parents who have brought them here in an attempt to avoid violence in their own country and cage those children in places where they are vulnerable to predators.

I fear that we will also see that same process at work when some of my fellow Americans who see themselves as patriots will seek to justify the Russian interference in our 2016 election on the basis that it at least prevented "that woman" from becoming president. And I don't doubt that many of those same people will refuse to acknowledge the evidence when fully revealed, that might show our current president not only was a beneficiary of that interference, but a willing participant.

I sincerely hope that my essay will initiate a conversation on these issues, but I will ignore responses that are essentially "But what about...?" That is exactly the same as the young child who, when confronted with his misbehavior, exclaims: "But Johnny, did it first" in the belief that it justifies or excuses his bad behavior. It doesn't. It also doesn't excuse a refusal to examine ones behavior where strong feelings encase the thought process.

Facts matter. Observing them clearly is a predicate to correct decision-making and action.

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