

O P I N I O N

Editorial...

The better angels of our nature

The temperatures are cooling down and the air is growing crisp — but the political season is heating up and the atmosphere is growing heavy and hot.

The Nugget invites and encourages a vigorous discourse on all the issues facing the Sisters community, Central Oregon and the nation in this election cycle. We request that letters address issues and candidates' positions and records and refrain from personal attacks either on candidates or their supporters.

We strive to publish all letters that meet our standards. However, those addressing local, regional and state issues and races will be given precedence.

The national political temper is very raw, and it can easily percolate into local discourse. In these fraught times, Sisters author Larry Len Peterson provides a quote from Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address. Lincoln's words failed to calm the roiled waters in 1861, but perhaps they will resonate here and now:

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Living in Sisters I love how easy it is to get outside; public lands are nearby and opportunities for amazing hikes plentiful. When a day last week dawned smoke-free; skies dark blue, trees touched with the first trace of fall — we naturally set off on a hike.

The Black Crater Trail, newly reopened after last year's burn, was our objective. We found the lower half of the mountain heavily charred; stark black snags offering endless peek-a-boo views of Mount Washington; a monochrome landscape, stunning in its own way. The Forest Service has done a great job of restoring this section of trail; crosscuts have removed fallen snags, the tread has been nicely redone and high quality drainage structures added to prevent erosion. Impressive work.

All in all we had a very nice hike. But, it started me thinking about exactly what the new quota-based, limited-entry, permit system proposed by the Forest Service will cost. No longer will we be able to spontaneously celebrate a gorgeous morning with a walk on our wilderness trails. Permits, accompanied by fees of yet undisclosed amounts, appear likely to soon put

an end to such casual unplanned hikes.

We saw no crowds on the Black Crater Trail. We saw none of the litter, trash, human waste and toilet paper described by the Forest Service in their documents defending the need for a limited-entry permit system. In fact, what we did see was abandoned cable, hundreds of feet of it, from the old lookout. Why after so many years is this still here? Isn't a pack-in-pack-out philosophy now the law of the land?

An earlier hike up Tam MacArthur Rim yielded the same results — no trash, no garbage — though the trail was seriously in need of the efforts of a skilled trail crew. True, these trails are popular and receive a lot of use, but is that so bad? It made me wonder, how do you compare the benefit of reducing use from 120 people on a peak weekend, to say 80, with the cost of denying so many the opportunity to experience these amazing public resources? Will such restrictions really offer a significant payback in protecting environmental quality and wilderness values? Wouldn't better education coupled with much better trail

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Who's at fault for our immigration situation?

By Steve Nugent
Guest Columnist

How did we end up with millions of unregistered immigrants living in the U.S., some that have been here for 20 or 30 years? Why do we need immigrants, even legal? Immigration seems to be a hot button for most Republican candidates, even though illegal southern border crossings are at decades-lows. It is also a convenient enemy for President Donald Trump because they supposedly take all of the good jobs. Lets explore what caused our immigration situation and what the impacts are.

Who is to blame: I put most of the blame on the U.S. Congress who failed to enforce U.S. laws by neglecting to adequately fund border security and immigration courts for decades. They also failed to stop corrupt regimes and help failing economies in South American countries. The vast majority of Mexicans came to the U.S. to find work and live a decent life. It is our own fault that we have so many "Dreamers" in the U.S. now, so we need to find a way to accommodate them. Multiple administrations have failed to deal with this problem head-on in a thoughtful, compassionate way, including the Trump administration. Trump's zero-tolerance policy is neither thoughtful or compassionate, and separating children from their parents is cruel and un-American.

Secondly, I blame illegal drug use in the U.S., which created enormous demand, initially fueling cartels and gangs in Mexico and Colombia and more recently in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. It is our fault that these drug cartels and gangs exist. It is our fault that gangs like MS13 make life unbearable for the residents of these countries. It is our fault that 30,000 Mexicans died in 2017 at the hands of cartels. None of this would have happened if not for the drug users in the U.S.

Are immigrants a security threat?

Gang members from

MS13 should not be allowed into the U.S. The MS13 members already here are getting away with more crimes and getting stronger since Trump's deportation policies have made much of the Hispanic population afraid to call police.

Anyone who might commit a terrorist act should not be allowed into the US. The vast majority of terrorist acts are not committed by illegal immigrants, but instead by U.S. citizens influenced by foreign terrorist groups. We can start by banning guns from anyone on the "do not fly" list. Congress cannot even do that because the NRA lobbies against it.

Trump claims that 63,000 people were killed by illegal immigrants since 9/11. According to Snopes, the number of undocumented people arrested for murder during this period is more like 8,000. The statistics show that illegals have a murder rate almost half of the general population.

Are immigrants helpful and even desirable?

As the U.S. population ages and birth rates among whites decline, we need new immigrants to fill positions in our economy. As the demographic includes more and more retired people, the U.S. is facing serious deficits in the future that will reduce the funding for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. The only way we will meet the employment needs of our growing economy and provide benefits to our growing elderly population is to have significant immigration.

Contrary to what Trump claims, the majority of immigrants from South America do NOT take jobs away from citizens. They do the jobs that no one else wants to do, like picking crops, cleaning hotel rooms and other janitorial work. Without them, we would be hurting. The Trump administration's policies have already caused serious shortages of crop pickers and seasonal fishing workers.

We need to start valuing immigrants more; after all that's who built this country.

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 56/32	Sunny 59/32	Sunny 70/33	Sunny 58/30	Sunny 61/34	Sunny 70/38

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