

O P I N I O N

EARLY HOLIDAY DEADLINES FOR THE NUGGET



The Nugget will be closed on Tuesday, January 1.

Early deadline for display advertising and the events calendar for *the issue of January 2* is **Thursday, December 27 at 5 p.m.**

Deadline for classified advertising, announcements, letters to the editor and press releases for *the issue of January 2* is **Friday, December 28 at 12 p.m.**

Happy New Year!

Sisters is poised for change

Soon, the art installation will be in place in the Barclay Roundabout, completing the westwork of the grand cathedral that is Central Oregon. And the pilgrims will come in their thousands, as they always do. A great proportion of this host will long to make this place their home — just as almost all of us did at some point along our life’s trail. Some will find a way.

Sisters will grow. Sisters will change.

It’s always tempting to try to throw up a bulwark to resist change, especially when we feel that what we love is at stake. But change is water — it seeps around, under and through any barrier. It finds a way.

So... Sisters will grow. Sisters will change.

Laird Superfood has announced a major expansion. Hayden Homes plans to build nearly 200 new dwellings at McKenzie Meadows. New commercial developments are in the wind.

Growth and change mean prosperity. New jobs, more school enrollment, a more diverse and therefore more robust economy. It also has negative impact: More traffic and congestion — and the potential to lose the small-town charm that attracted so many in the first place.

When my wife and I moved to Sisters in 1993, there were fewer than 800 people living inside the city limits. For years, it was actually

possible to know just about everybody in town, at least to say howdy. When a population grows to several thousand, that’s just not possible anymore.

It’s harder to hit the woods and find solitude away from the crowd. Conflicts of values and uses — from activities in the forest to live music downtown — get more frequent and more acute.

So, then, is it possible to reap the rewards of growth without losing our character, our soul? We’re about to find out. 2019 is likely to be a watershed year for Sisters as it tries to navigate into a new era in its history.

There’s reason to be optimistic. Sisters is still a community that leaps up to fill the shelves of the food bank or an auditorium for a community display of talent. It’s still a place where people hold the door for each other at the post office. Even as we move into the new year, there’s a whole lot of people who are working hard to figure out how Sisters can venture into the future and still stay Sisters.

Just knowing that this is going to take some mindful effort is an important step. And maybe it just comes down to being neighborly.

So, neighbors — here’s wishing you all a happy new year.

Jim Cornelius, Editor in Chief

See Letters to the Editor on page 15.

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
PM Showers 40/29	Partly Cloudy 38/21	Partly Cloudy 37/24	Partly Cloudy 45/30	Rain/Snow 37/26	Partly Cloudy 36/19

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

Editor in Chief: Jim Cornelius
Production Manager: Leith Easterling
Graphic Design: Jess Draper
Community Marketing Partners: Patti Jo Beal & Vicki Curlett
Classifieds & Circulation: Lisa May
Proofreader: Pete Rathbun
Owner: J. Louis Mullen



Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Nugget Newspaper,
P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759.
Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

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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Jonah Goldberg

America is often described as a constitutional democracy or constitutional republic. That’s not really true. The best you could say is that our system is constitutional-ish.

Consider the bizarre controversy over President Donald Trump’s decision to pull out of Syria. As a matter of policy, I think it’s a terrible decision he will live to regret. Nearly every foreign policy expert feels the same way, including — if reports are true — military leadership and the president’s own National Security Council.

Outside of a few negligible but reliable boosters such as perennially dovish Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), everyone thinks this amounts to a reprieve for ISIS and a betrayal of the Kurds, who’ve done much of the heavy fighting for us. Of course, the Iranian mullahs, Russian dictator Vladimir Putin, Turkish president for life Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Syrian butcher Bashar al-Assad are all gleeful.

But as unfathomable as the president’s policy decision may be, the constitutional context in which he made it is far weirder.

On both sides of the aisle, congressional leaders are denouncing the president’s decision, largely for the reasons stated above. But take a step back and consider the fact that all of these outraged senators and congressmen are furious about the president retreating from a war they did not authorize.

The Constitution is very clear: Congress — and only Congress — has the power to declare war. It hasn’t formally declared war since World War II (1942, to be exact, when it declared war on German-allied Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania). Since then, it has sometimes used phrases like the “authorization of military force,” and other times presidents have acted unilaterally, invoking U.N. resolutions or really almost nothing at all. To the extent that Congress has complained, the outrage has usually been partisan.

The so-called war on terror, well into its 18th year, is a sprawling enterprise around the globe (one I largely support as a matter of policy), tenuously justified by constitutionally flimsy pronouncements by Congress.

The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists passed after 9/11 doesn’t cover ISIS in Syria (or Africa, or the Philippines, or cyberspace).

The president basically has carte blanche to wage war — and retreat from it — without any real congressional sanction. President Obama invaded Syria without congressional authorization. President Trump ramped up that war without congressional authorization. And now he wants to pull out without congressional authorization.

War is just the most grave and appalling example of bipartisan congressional cowardice. Congress gave the president almost unilateral authority over trade decades ago, even though the Commerce Clause gives Congress total authority over trade, both foreign and domestic.

Congress has been surrendering vast swaths of its constitutional authority to the president, to the courts and to a permanent bureaucracy for a century.

The Founders never imagined that Congress would just give away so much of its power. James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 48 that Congress would always be “extending the sphere of its activity and drawing all power into its impetuous vortex.”

While the problem has been worsening for generations, the era of cable television and social media has put the trend into overdrive. The legislative branch is often little more than a peanut gallery — a parliament of pundits, as I’ve often called it — full of people who use their office as a way to get on TV or as a stepping stone to a presidential bid.

Schools often teach that we have three “co-equal” branches of government. But that’s not what the Constitution established. Congress is the first and supreme branch of government, with the power to declare war, write laws, create all of the courts save the Supreme Court, and raise taxes.

We don’t live in that Constitutional system. We live in a constitutional-ish one.

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