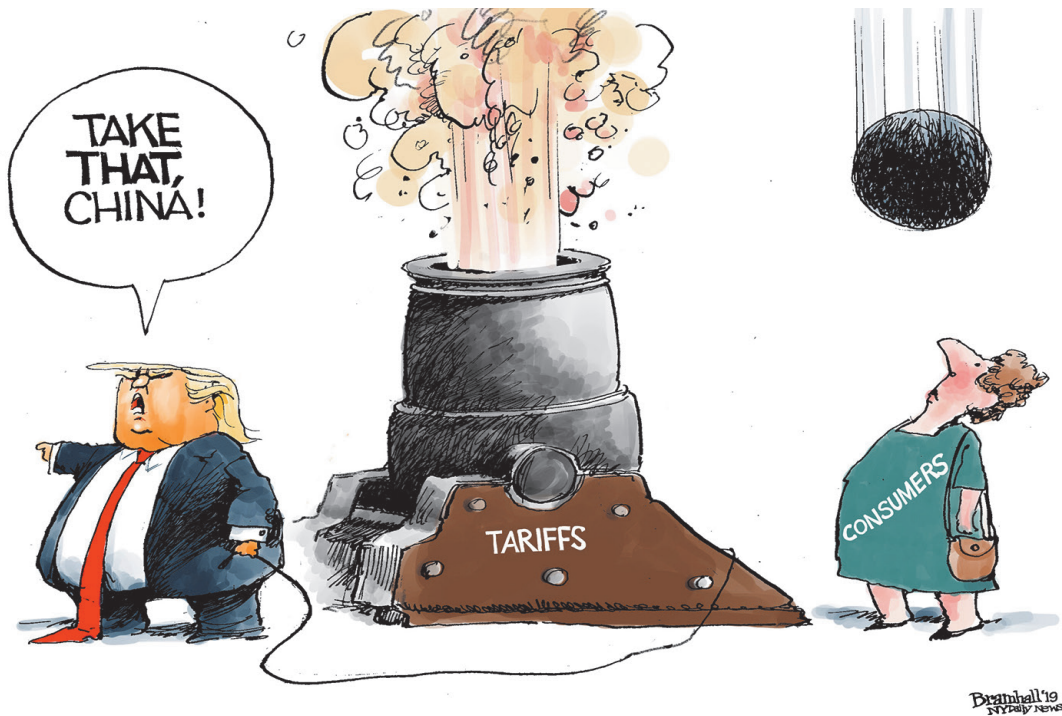


O P I N I O N



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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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 must express my disagreement with the contention that rifle bullets pose a fire threat to our community (letter to the editor May 1). Wild fires may be started by: power lines, mufflers, cigarettes, camp fires, lightning, arsonists and "controlled burns."

However, I have been shooting for over 50 years and aside from the type of ammunition used on military reservations I have never known of a fire started by a bullet.

But anything that could be hung around the necks of shooters or gun owners can only be a win for our progressive friends.

Larry Benson

To the Editor:

I wish to express my thoughts about the 2,000 noble, beautiful trees that made the west-to-east drive into Sisters a scenic delight, and the hundreds of years that these trees needed to obtain their majesty.

I would like to explore a definition of professionals: Professionals always consider all

outcomes, and ramifications of their decisions. If killing 2,000 ponderosas is not in your job description, then you ought to do the research to know what you are doing. Ignorance about product and effect is not an excuse. Incompetence is not, either.

Seeing these trees lying down in big rows is heart sickening. Let's hire professionals and avoid this tragedy in the future.

Tom Egan

To the Editor:

We are writing to share our support for Jeff Smith for the Sisters School Board, Position 3.

Jeff Smith embraces the educational values of the Sisters School District. He has worked hard to build the trust of the community and listens to what the community values educationally. He believes that smaller classes are good for children, both in terms of improving academic skills and maintaining the social-emotional wellness of our children.

See **LETTERS** on page 15

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Showers 60/46	Showers 60/41	Cloudy 55/36	PM Light Rain 62/39	Showers 56/36	AM Showers 56/37

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

Graphic Design: Jess Draper

Community Marketing Partners:

Vicki Curlett & Patti Jo Beal

Classifieds & Circulation: Lisa May

Proofreader: Pete Rathbun

Owner: J. Louis Mullen

Safe Space

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

I'm a big believer in "safe spaces."

I will stipulate that my definition is non-standard. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a safe space thus: "a place (as on a college campus) intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations."

I may be tilting at a windmill here, but that's wrong. At least it *should* be wrong.

A while back, I was invited to talk story at Paulina Springs Books around my collection of frontier biographies, "Warriors of the Wildlands: True Tales of the Frontier Partisans." The book is intended mostly to be a set of ripping yarns about men living lives of hardship and adventure from the 18th through early 20th centuries. But you can't walk down the trail of frontier history without encountering the giant boulder of race, and that's what we addressed in what turned into a lively — and sometimes fraught — discussion.

Afterwards, a woman approached me to have her book signed and said, "I've been working on becoming more comfortable with being uncomfortable. This helped with that."

That was a big win.

That's what a safe space should be: a place where you can learn to *handle* "bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations." Where you can learn to be comfortable feeling uncomfortable. Because no matter how hard we might try to purge the scary stuff, or to flee from it, it remains. In fact, the things that scare us become monsters that feed upon fear and avoidance and grow ever more strong and threatening.

Safety comes from creating a culture that *values* dissent instead of trying to eliminate it, and acknowledges that there is a difference between vigorously arguing your corner and being a jerk and a bully. A safe space is a place where you may be called upon to

support your case with evidence — and where you can learn that this is not the same thing as being "attacked."

And it's a place where you can decide that you've changed your mind or modified your position without finding your identity melting like that cake left out in the rain.

It is gratifying to see some such safe spaces cropping up around town. Sisters Community Church has been hosting discussions of weighty films and talks with authors and other creative types. The new owner of Paulina Springs Books is all about creating a "safe space" for real dialogue. I met with some folks recently who are looking to create a "First Amendment" event to educate folks in town on the origins, nature and practical application of said amendment. Commendable.

This is critical, for safe spaces are where we train; where we can fall and fail without dire consequences. A band works out in its rehearsal space so that it can push and make mistakes and sound terrible — and be ready to soar on stage. Mistakes and failures in the dojo (if properly corrected) can save a martial artist some pain on the street.

Hit the wrong chord; sing off-key. Walk right into a spinning back fist with no real damage (because you wore your mouthpiece). Say the wrong thing, or the right thing clumsily.

That's the kind of failure you want to have happen in your "safe space" — on the training grounds. Of course that sort of thing is frustrating, embarrassing, humiliating even. That's why you remember it vividly and why you (hopefully) learn your lesson.

If you're training with the right people, they've all experienced that sense of frustration, embarrassment and humiliation, too, and they're never going to hold it over you. In fact, you're probably going to share a good laugh over it — and try again.

There are a lot of folks like that here in Sisters, creating authentic safe spaces. Hats off to 'em.

Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the The Nugget Newspaper.