

OPINION



The flag of the United States represents FREEDOM and has been an enduring symbol of our country's ideals since its early days.

FLAG DAY is June 14

Queen Riann Cornett carries the Stars and Stripes at the 2019 Sisters Rodeo.

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

This is in response to T.Lee Brown's column in the June 5 issue ("In the Pines," page 18). Her reminiscence of Sisters Coffee Company a few years back hit a chord with this long-time patron of the business.

However, when she "commenced eavesdropping" on a nearby conversation, my hackles went up and alarm bells started ringing. It's bad enough that Facebook invades our privacy and Alexa butts into conversations, but for someone to actually admit that she is listening to a private conversation, and is now getting paid to admit that, is pretty low.

She also laments that the gentlemen, old-timers who've seen Sisters through thick and thin, didn't respond to her smile as she walked

by. She thereby made the assumption that they were the "unwelcoming, closed-off core of Sisters." Did it occur to her that they were engrossed in the conversation and were focused on one another and didn't even notice her?

It must have been a good chat, since she soon became engrossed in it as well.

The rest of her rambling column, much of which I skipped over because I didn't want to also eavesdrop on a private conversation, concluded with the thought that some of the old ways aren't worth preserving. All because a crusty older bloke wouldn't smile at her and she listened to a conversation that was none of her business.

It's kind of sad.  
Allan Godsiff

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 89/59	Mostly Sunny 86/51	Partly Cloudy 80/48	Sunny 83/51	Mostly Sunny 81/51	Mostly Sunny 81/51

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## Jonah Goldberg

The intellectual right is in the middle of a huge brouhaha, as some prominent right-wing commentators celebrate what they believe is the end of the "conservative consensus" around classical liberalism — free markets, limited government, the sovereignty of the individual and even in some cases free expression. Fox News' Tucker Carlson recently lauded progressive Sen. Elizabeth Warren's economic program, to the cheers of a host of conservatives who now consider themselves advocates for something called "economic nationalism."

This argument really isn't new, and there's no reason to think it's going away anytime soon, particularly so long as Donald Trump is in office and conservative intellectuals feel the need to bend their ideas to his actions or exploit his popularity (on the right) for the ideas they've long held.

Instead, it's worth thinking about how to think about such things.

Ideas are supremely important. As the late Irving Kristol said, "What rules the world is ideas, because ideas define the way reality is perceived."

I believe that. But reality — i.e., the physical realm we live in — is often what brings new ideas to the fore. We certainly understand this in the world of science. Newton, Einstein and Edison had ideas, and those ideas changed reality in ways that changed our ideas.

Ever since the word "conservative" has had any meaning, conservatives have complained about moral licentiousness. Where they once complained about rising hemlines, they now complain about widespread pornography. But what's often left out of the conversation is the role technology plays in changing how we think about such things.

In the 1920s, conservatives complained about foreign ideas corrupting the youth, as if licentiousness was some virus that escaped a lab in Paris and was brought home by returning soldiers. Left out of the conversation, for the most part, was the fact that one of the great drivers of the rise in

out-of-wedlock births (and shotgun weddings) in the 1920s was the widespread introduction of the automobile. Suddenly, teenagers had a much easier time escaping the prying eyes of parents and neighbors.

I have no objection to the claim that ideas played an important role in changing attitudes about sex. The problem is when you think the idea is the sum of the problem. Intellectuals tend to think this way because it's fun to argue with Voltaire or Simone de Beavoir. It's more difficult to argue with a Buick. These intellectuals become like the drunk who only looks for his lost car keys under the street lamp because the light is better there.

The birth control pill has surely done more to create a culture of recreational sex than all of the writings of Alfred Kinsey and feminist intellectuals combined. Good luck trying to get rid of the pill.

Of course, this isn't just a dynamic on the right. One of the vexing problems for supporters of unalloyed abortion rights is that technology — from in-utero MRI to miraculous innovations in neonatal care — is making the claim that late-stage fetuses are merely "uterine contents" or some other dehumanizing euphemism less plausible to millions of Americans.

Many of the promoters of "economic nationalism" on the left and right, including Trump, cling to outdated ideas about how industry works. Manufacturing in the United States isn't in decline; manufacturing jobs are, because technology replaces human labor with machine labor. Even if tariffs brought our factories home from Mexico and China (a dubious proposition), most of the jobs "brought back" will go to machines.

Among the myriad dangers in all of this is that intellectuals think they can somehow plan and direct the consequences of technological innovation to achieve a society that fits their theories about how everyone should live. That's not easy in an authoritarian society. It's not possible in a free one.

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