

## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

T. Lee Brown's column of June 5 entitled "The Old Ways" leaves her hoisted by her own petard.

Her anger, discomfort, and judgment stemming from a conversation she overheard a few years ago at Sisters Coffee hinges on a word or phrase, redacted for publication, that readers are led to conclude was an ethnic pejorative. Ms. Brown is quick to establish that the conversation was among "white men" and is equally quick to speculate unkindly about them. I wonder, would the remark have been less offensive had it been spoken by an Asian teen? A Middle Eastern woman? An African-American child? If not, why even mention the race and age of the speakers?

Camo, guns, the Great Emboldening — through a chance encounter in a coffeehouse, Ms. Brown evokes stereotypical negative imagery to paint these men with a broad and ugly brush.

The column brought to mind my own very

different experience at Sisters Coffee a few years back.

During the summer of 2015, my husband and I spent several weeks in Central Oregon. We're native Midwesterners and had lived the past 10 years in St. Louis. For reasons that intrigue social scientists, St. Louis has remained one of the most segregated, racially volatile cities in the U.S. During summer and early autumn of 2014, the city garnered national attention when, in separate incidents less than 90 days apart, two black teenagers were shot and killed by police officers. Riots erupted throughout the city, including our neighborhood, and violent unrest continued until winter. As the anniversary of the first shooting approached and additional violence was anticipated, we were more than happy to be elsewhere.

One morning in early August, we snagged a table near the (much-missed) upright piano.

See **LETTERS** on page 21

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 73/42	Mostly Sunny 62/39	Mostly Sunny 70/42	Mostly Sunny 76/45	Partly Cloudy 72/43	Partly Cloudy 68/42

## The Nugget Newspaper, LLC

Website: [www.nuggetnews.com](http://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](mailto: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:**

Patti Jo Beal & Vicki Curlett

**Classifieds & Circulation:** Lisa May

**Proofreader:** Pete Rathbun

**Owner:** J. Louis Mullen

## The blast crater of Watergate

By Jim Cornelius

Editor in Chief

The House Judiciary Committee indulged in some bizarre (and lame) theatrics in bringing Watergate co-conspirator-turned-star-witness John Dean to "testify" on the "historical context" of the Mueller Report earlier this month.

The mere fact that — 47 years after the break-in at the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate Hotel in Washington, DC — we reflexively attach the suffix "gate" to scandals of every stripe is sufficient evidence that we are living in the long shadow of the events of 1972-74.

Dean's appearance was a bit of personal synchronicity for me, because I had just spent about six hours of travel time on a deep dive into Watergate with a variety of podcasts and documentaries. Why? Can't really say — except that I was nagged by a sense that the faultlines which have become a chasm in our political culture were first ripped open by the interrelated calamities of the Vietnam War and Watergate. And I didn't feel like I knew enough about it.

Watergate loomed like a toxic grey shadow in my childhood. I was too young to have any grasp of the events, but I remember Nixon's resignation, which happened when I was eight years old. I remember my parents — particularly my mother — being utterly dismayed. For about a decade after Watergate, she insisted that Lyndon Johnson had done worse (probably true) and that Nixon had been persecuted by "the liberals" and the press. Well...

It wasn't until a tranche of Oval Office tapes were released in 1987 that showed Nixon in his own words to be foul-mouthed, petty, antisemitic, a crook and a liar, that she acknowledged that pushing him out of office was the right and necessary thing.

The tragedy is that Nixon was probably the best-prepared and most qualified man to ever hold the office. He'd served in the military, had practiced law, served as a congressman, a senator,

a governor of a major state and as Vice President of the United States. He was, by all accounts, truly brilliant in his ability to suss out geopolitical and strategic trends, and his "opening to China" and détente with the Soviet Union were significant and lasting triumphs.

He also carried around a super-sized chip on his shoulder because he wasn't cool like Kennedy, was mean as a rick of rattlesnakes, and had a paranoid streak as wide as a California interstate. His morose self-pity wasn't just grotesque — it was a major character flaw and it helped to bring him down.

At every turn in the Watergate scandal, he chose to do the wrong thing. Character is fate.

The Watergate paradigm is all over the current circus in Washington, DC. Trumpster Roger Stone has a tattoo of Nixon's face on his back. Seriously. The President himself has Twitter instead of tapes, and a Nixonian tangle of character flaws without the compensating brilliance. For their part, the Democratic Party wanted so badly for the Mueller Report to set the table for a Watergate-style takedown of Donald Trump that they were gobsmacked when they discovered that the special counsel wasn't going to hand them a "smoking gun."

Many in the media would love nothing more than to be in on the kill, but they lack the journalistic chops of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein — and they don't understand that bloviating in cable TV panel discussions isn't the same thing as the careful, unglamorous work Woodward and Bernstein and other reporters did back in the '70s.

The spectacle gives credence to Karl Marx's old saw that history repeats itself "first as tragedy, then as farce."

Watergate looms gigantic — yet it is little understood. It's well worth taking some time to dig into the story, because we're living in the blast crater of that third-rate burglary and shabby coverup right now, and will likely be for decades to come.

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