

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone in Sisters Country who wished me a speedy recovery after my health crisis last spring.

From the huge get well card (that the Chamber of Commerce circulated for the businesses in Sisters to sign) to the many personal messages from friends, I had no choice but to get better.

To the City of Sisters, Sisters Chamber of Commerce and my many friends and business associates, I want you to know that your messages encouraged me. Your help with maintaining my home, business and support for my wife, Tove, will always be remembered.

My special thanks to the members of Sisters

Rodeo and our board of directors for setting their sights on making the 79th rodeo a huge success without me. It is rewarding to learn that everyone understands what it takes to bring the rodeo to fruition and then get it done to give our fans and contestants a great experience.

For the first time ever, I attended the rodeo on Sunday as a spectator. Even there, I was greeted by long-time rodeo friends and our great contract help. It sure has been a time of warm reflection on my life in this community.

My future is looking positive. I keep getting great reports from my physicians about my improvement. For all of you who cared and stepped up, my gratitude and appreciation for helping me get here.

Glenn Miller

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Mostly Sunny 72/47	Mostly Sunny 81/49	Sunny 83/49	Mostly Sunny 81/49	Partly Cloudy 77/48	Partly Cloudy 80/50

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Faith and the pursuit of happiness

By Jim Cornelius

Editor in Chief

"Show a little faith, there's magic in the night..."

— Bruce Springsteen, "Thunder Road"

A friend gave a nice chiropractic adjustment to my thinking last week. It was so gently and skillfully administered that I wasn't even aware that it had happened for a couple of hours.

We were having coffee and talking about Important Things, and I made a reference to members of "the faith community." My friend pointed out something that should be self-evident, but that I often forget: We're ALL living on faith. Whether we are religious or secular and whether we recognize it or not, we're all operating in structures of faith and belief and seeking meaning and purpose.

Segregating those who profess a particular formal belief into a loosely defined "community" of their very own merely builds another wall where we need a bridge.

This week we celebrate one of the most remarkable leaps of faith in history. On July 2, 1776, a congress of men representing 13 small colonies clinging to the Atlantic shore of a vast, rich continent declared their independence from their Mother Country. Two days later, on July 4, 1776, they ratified a document that made their case before the world — the Declaration of Independence.

The act itself was breathtakingly bold. The colonies — with feeble military capabilities — had been in rebellion for a little over a year against the greatest power in the world. The signers of the Declaration knew that they might well be touching the quill to their own death warrant, pledging their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor on a principle and a gamble.

The key passage of the Declaration of Independence is the American declaration of faith in self-government:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by

their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

The men who declared our independence from Great Britain, who fought and won the Revolutionary War and framed the Republic that still stands against the odds 243 years on from that signal date in 1776, were men of faith. They came out of a Judeo-Christian tradition that had been in a state of struggle and flux since the 16th century, and out of which had come many of the concepts of liberty and freedom of conscience that they brought to bear in their present struggle.

They were also men of the Enlightenment and they put great faith in Reason and the ability of mankind to improve and to reconcile private interests and the commonweal.

They were not utopians — their faith in mankind's perfectibility was tempered by a deep skepticism about the corrosive influence of power. They were unlike the revolutionaries in France who radicalized their example. Those revolutionaries made a god of Reason, and enacted unholy slaughter in its name.

We all carry the faith of our fathers, whether we actively acknowledge it or not. Many among us are convinced that our beliefs are simply rational understanding, well-thought out and correct — which means, of course, that those who disagree with us must be irrational. Obviously.

Ironically, the most rational of disciplines, scientific inquiry, has done a pretty good job of demonstrating that our vaunted rationality is actually often a rationalization of our pre-existing cognitive biases.

Perhaps the founders' approach is best — seeking to bring both faith and reason to bear on the challenges of our day. I feel fortunate that I can have faith in the ability and willingness of my wise friends to adjust my outlook when it is out of whack. And that's worth celebrating on that strange and winding path that makes up the pursuit of happiness.