

O P I N I O N



Visit Downtown Sisters for the Fourth Friday Artwalk August 23, from 4 to 7 p.m.

Gather your family and friends to visit the galleries for new and unique art, discussions with artists, and light refreshments. See page 5 for information and map.

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Re: "Don't give a pass to false narratives,"
The Nugget editorial by Jim Cornelius, August 14, page 2.

That's right, Jim, facts matter. It is not at all clear from the facts in the shooting of Michael Brown by Officer Wilson in Ferguson five years ago, whether or not a murder occurred.

Legally, two elements must be present to constitute a murder. First there must be an actus reus — a physical act that harms another person — and a mens rea — a guilty mind or criminal intent to commit a crime. The facts in this instance confirm there was a physical act that harmed someone.

It is not as clear as to whether or not Officer Wilson had criminal intent where he shot unarmed black man Michael Brown in the head. One might infer that from the circumstances of the shooting, but it is not known if

Officer Wilson had a guilty mind at the time of the incident.

So, politicians Harris and Warren don't know if a murder occurred. They are just speculating as are you when you suggest a murder did not occur. Speculation is something in which politicians and newsmen ought not to engage.

The findings of the investigation into the killing were based upon the fact the investigators were unwilling to speculate as to the intent of Officer Wilson.

Roger Detweiler



To the Editor:

My closest and dearest friend often sends me cut-outs of articles from *The Nugget*. I'm a

See **LETTERS** on page 31

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
PM Showers 82/52	Mostly Sunny 80/50	Partly Cloudy 87/52	Sunny 84/50	Sunny 84/48	Sunny 84/49

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



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Considering public safety options for Sisters

By Cory Misley

City Manager, City of Sisters

Although Sisters is a safe community, there is always room for improvement. In the 2016 survey conducted by the Deschutes County District Attorney's Office, "Community Attitudes About Public Safety in Deschutes County," Sisters — across the board — reported the lowest level of concerns on public safety topics compared to other communities. However, the focus of the City Council and staff is continuous improvement of the quality of life here in Sisters, especially as we grow and change.

We should acknowledge that, overall, we live in a safe place. Since 1998 we have had Deschutes County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) as our contractual law enforcement partner, with backup help from the Oregon State Police and Black Butte Ranch Police, and our attentive community to thank for that safety. We are also aware that some current public-safety issues need attention, and actions are being taken to lessen those issues.

Our actions are being determined through a sensible, evidence-based policy-making process.

As many of you remember, in 1998, the population sign read 911. Since then, the city has tripled in size to 2,725. It goes without saying, there has been a lot of growth and change in Sisters and Deschutes County. The contract terms between the City and the DCSO have not changed much since 1998. The contracted cost has doubled with inflation, while the number of weekly patrol hours within the city (120) remains the same. The City is doing significant due diligence regarding future law enforcement services, well ahead of the current contract ending June 30, 2020.

In February 2019, the City Council established its goals for this current fiscal year, and a top priority was public safety, specifically evaluating the City's law enforcement options. We take this seriously. Law enforcement (and the public safety it fosters) is essential to our community and a significant component of our budget — this fiscal year the

City is spending \$611,849 (over half of the property tax revenue within the city) on service from the DCSO.

There are effectively two options: Contract with a law enforcement agency or reinstate our own police department. The former requires looking at possible contractual partners and negotiating acceptable terms in that contract. The latter requires a comprehensive analysis of the associated expenses and infrastructure and timing (for a primer, among his opinions, read Craig Rullman's column "Community Policing" published in *The Nugget* on August 28, 2018) and potential long-term, sustainable funding options.

Community policing is predicated on relationships. Sisters is still a small city, somewhat like a small neighborhood in a larger city. We should know the individuals that serve us in a law enforcement capacity on a daily basis — that means full-time staff who work only here. The School Resource Deputy at Sisters High School, who builds relationships with School District employees, students, and parents can leverage that to bolster public safety throughout the entire community. It would make a significant impact if that approach were applied to the City's contracted law enforcement service.

In that 2016 survey, Sisters ranked traffic safety as their top threat (illegal drugs second) while every other community had that flipped. We know traffic is an issue and we are working on that through a multifaceted approach — there is no silver bullet. We will continue to explore our law enforcement options over the next handful of months.

To learn more about your perspective of public safety in our community, we will distribute a public safety survey to utility accounts within the city. If you live outside the city, you can share your opinion by contacting me at cmisley@ci.sisters.or.us. Your input is very valuable to us.

We are being thoughtful about considering public-safety options in the community's best interest as we look to the future of law enforcement in the city.

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