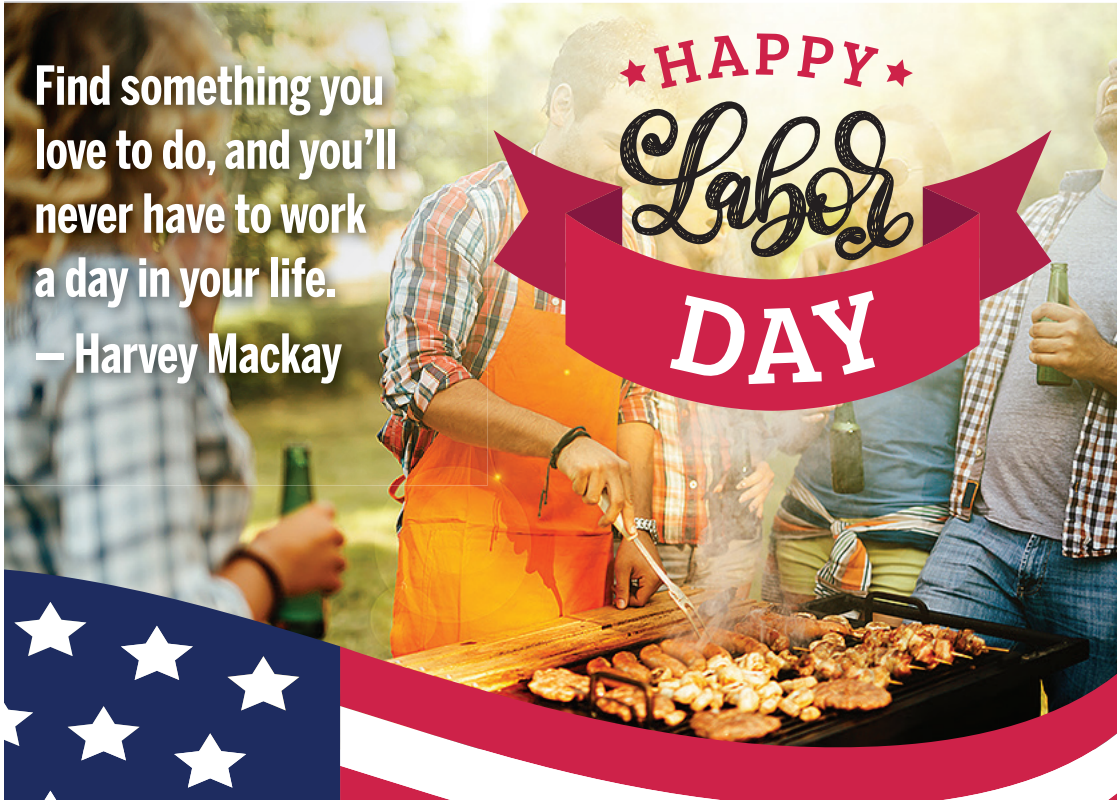


O P I N I O N

Find something you love to do, and you'll never have to work a day in your life.
— Harvey Mackay



The Nugget will be open Monday, September 2. All Monday deadlines remain unchanged.

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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 those of you who live in our great community,

Recently there has been a lot of talk about the amount of crime and/or vandalism in our town. Unfortunately the tone is one that suggests that Sisters has changed. Well of course communities do change as they grow, and we certainly have been growing.

I'd like to share a recent personal experience. My wife and I own a long-time business here in Sisters, and on a recent Saturday night when we closed up we inadvertently neglected to lock the front door. We are closed on Sunday but a customer came to our door unaware that we were not open. When she opened the door she saw the lights out and quickly realized we were closed. She then looked around for some way to let us know our door was not locked. There was a flyer posted on the front door for an upcoming event in the store. There was a

phone number for the person putting on the event on the flyer. She called that number and left a message that our door was open. The person she called was on the pass and did not receive the message till she got closer to Sisters.

The person who received the message went to the store and tried to find a home phone number for me. She found a number but when she called I did not have my phone so it went to voicemail. At that time another customer showed up who knows me and realized what was going on. He helped her find a key to the door here in the store and the two of them locked the front door. Then he also called me and left a message. Later that afternoon I checked my messages and saw what was going on. I went to the store and found

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Mostly Sunny 97/64	Partly Cloudy 88/56	Mostly Sunny 89/57	Mostly Sunny 87/54	Sunny 82/51	Sunny 80/49

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Jonah Goldberg

Last week there was a sharp uptick in speculation that President Trump is a few fries shy of a Happy Meal.

Whether it was his tweet declaring that American companies “are hereby ordered to immediately start looking for an alternative” to doing business in China, or his decision to cancel a trip to Denmark because the Danish prime minister didn’t have a “nice” reaction to his desire to buy Greenland, or his suggestion that Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell might be a greater enemy than China’s premier-for-life, it did seem as if the West Wing’s nurse might have accidentally switched Trump’s meds for M&Ms.

“This is not normal. And I don’t mean that as in, ‘Trump is violating the shibboleths of the Washington establishment,’” wrote the Washington Post’s Megan McArdle. “I mean that as in, ‘This is not normal for a functioning adult.’”

CNN media correspondent Brian Stelter said over the weekend: “He’s getting worse. We can see it. It’s happening in public but it’s still a very hard, very sensitive story to cover. I’m talking of course about President Trump, about his behavior, about his instability.”

I’ve long thought that Trump was a perfect illustration of the old observation that rich people are never crazy; they’re just “eccentric.” But I am skeptical that the president’s mental state has gotten worse.

Instead, his situation is getting more precarious and that is making Trump’s Trumpiness more obvious. Specifically, I think the fizzle of the Mueller probe was a grievous blow to the president, for the simple reason that it removed an extremely useful political and psychological bogeyman.

Robert Mueller’s investigation allowed Trump to give voice to his persecution complex. In his mind, at least, the “witch hunt” was an all-purpose excuse to whine about “fake news” and distract from other controversies. But it also served the same function for much of the right-wing media, giving them a ratings-and-clicks-rich topic to focus on.

In a sense, Mueller was a substitute for Hillary Clinton. Trump’s 2016 opponent was such a reviled figure on the right, she gave many Trump-skeptical voters the excuse they needed to overlook his shortcomings. After the election, Mueller and his “angry Dems” of the Deep State served as a serviceable alternative to imposing cohesion and message discipline on the right.

With Mueller gone, Trump is left scrambling to find a replacement. The “squad” — the four left-wing Democratic first-term congresswomen — are, collectively and individually, candidates. And they certainly have their political uses, given their radicalism, hostility to Israel, etc. His base is happy to go all-in against them. But attacking four women of color has its limits as a political strategy, especially given that Trump’s electoral Achilles’ heel is suburban moderate women.

Also, they pose no serious threat to Trump’s presidency the way Mueller seemed to, so they do not focus Trump’s mind the way the special prosecutor did.

Right now, the leading candidate for Trump’s Mueller replacement is Powell. And that dog won’t hunt. Trump is clearly convinced that the Fed chair is trying to destroy his re-election chances by not lowering interest rates to goose the economy past the 2020 finish line. Some will think this is bat-guano bonkers, others won’t, but the political reality is that this storyline is just too complicated to replace the Mueller narrative. It doesn’t attract allies the same way, and the talking points required to sustain it are just too convoluted.

Whether or not he’s a stable genius, the Trump on display now is the same one we’ve always seen. What’s changed are the circumstances. Like an unsteady man long held upright by pushing on a locked door, he’s tumbling now that the path is suddenly open. He needs some new enemy to brace against, and he’s flailing around in search of one.

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