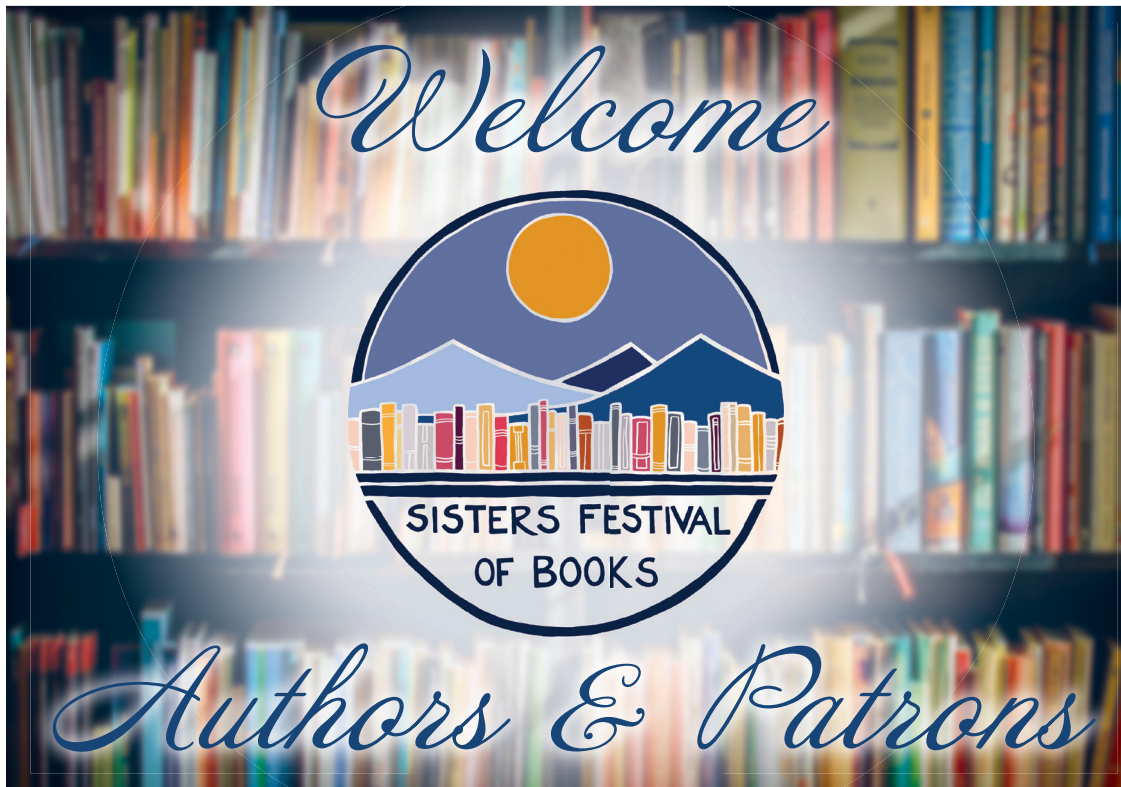


O P I N I O N



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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

One of the things I enjoy when visiting Sisters and the wonderful hikes is to read the latest *Nugget*. In the October 9 issue I just read the letter from Paula Surmann. It's amazing how many new climatologists have popped out of the woodwork since 2017 when Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez announced the end of the world coming in 12 years. Yes, Eric Knirk was right, climate change is highly politicized.

Paula refers to a graph on a NASA site going back 800,000 years. So who and what instruments were used for "scientific" measurements 800,000 years ago? She mentions 97 percent of scientists agree; and especially those employed by our government agencies. That same type of assumption could have been made at one point less than 100,000 years ago when 97 percent of scientists thought the earth was flat and the sun orbited around the earth.

When I was in grade school our science books taught all oil came from dead dinosaurs

and that some thing crawled out of the ocean and developed into humans; just add a couple million years to your theory to make it valid. I can still see in my mind the profile drawing of the different stages from chimp to ape to cave man, to *Homo erectus*. I wonder if it's still used to indoctrinate children.

Of course climate change occurs and yes humans can have an effect on it, but how much? Paula did not even mention China, one of the worst polluters in the world. We live 93 million miles from our planetary source of life, the sun. Is anyone talking about changes the sun may be going through or even changes in our orbit around the sun? Lots of theories; and not everyone at NASA is in agreement on all issues. (<https://coldclimatechange.com/carbon-dioxide-is-a-cooling-gas-according-to-nasa/>)

Tom Lawrence

See **LETTERS** on page 22

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
PM Showers 64/40	Showers 52/39	Showers 52/40	Rain 46/39	Showers 51/42	AM Showers 60/44

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Jonah Goldberg

In one sense, the Syria debacle is a singular moment in the Trump presidency, and arguably in American history. I can't think of another momentous decision by a commander in chief that was instantly recognizable as a disaster for which the president was entirely to blame.

Even if you think the Iraq war was a catastrophic blunder, it wasn't immediately and universally recognizable as such. And President Bush could point to support from both parties in Congress, his advisers, the intelligence community and even his predecessor. The Bay of Pigs was backed by the Pentagon and CIA. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed Congress, unanimously in the House and 88-2 in the Senate.

But here the cheese stands alone.

Trump and the handful of surrogates willing to defend this grotesquerie are quite comfortable arguing about "endless wars" and "Trump's mandate" as an abstract matter. Talk of "realism," "America First" and "endless war" is a rhetorical safe harbor that works well on Twitter and cable news because it gives the impression that this is a serious conflict of philosophical perspectives. Even if you agree with all of that stuff, the fact remains that this was a scandalously incompetent and reckless action.

Trump may indeed have campaigned on getting out of Syria. He didn't campaign on potentially freeing thousands of Islamic State fighters, greenlighting ethnic cleansing or empowering Syrian President Bashar Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

A serious policy of disengagement from the Middle East would require working with our allies in the region and elsewhere. It would involve intense planning by the Pentagon and State Department. And, most importantly, it would necessitate tough negotiations with the Turks to minimize our betrayal of a people who lost some 11,000 troops fighting at our side.

Trump went a different way. According to reporting by Jennifer Griffin of Fox News — not normally a target of Trump's "fake news" broadsides — Trump "went

off script from what his national [security] team gave him as talking points for his phone conversation with the Turkish president."

In an instant, Trump blew up months of negotiations with Turkey to establish a Kurdish safe zone that would satisfy both Turkey's concerns and make sure that Islamic State wasn't given a lifeline.

Whether Trump was trying to ingratiate himself with Erdogan — he does like strongmen — or was intimidated by the Turkish despot remains unknown. Either way, in a phone call last week he in effect encouraged Erdogan to go for it. Within days, the Turks rolled across the border. Arab militias began the initial stages of what could turn into ethnic cleansing. When the Kurds begged for air cover, Trump ordered our planes to stay on the tarmac. Already, there are videos — authenticated by U.S. officials — of roadside executions of Kurds. The Turks have even rained artillery around an American outpost, requiring a full U.S. retreat from northern Syria and forcing Kurdish forces to ally themselves with the Syrian government.

After the call, Trump claimed that Erdogan promised to take responsibility for guarding Islamic State prisoners. The Turkish government quickly announced there was no such commitment. The Turks might be lying, though Trump's silence suggests they aren't. Either way, they put one over on the self-proclaimed world's greatest negotiator.

The cycle wouldn't be complete without Trump doing his best to humiliate his defenders, desperately trying to squeeze square facts into the round holes of some theory. The same week he said we must disengage from the Middle East and its conflicts, he sent thousands more American troops to Saudi Arabia. He said he opposed Turkey's incursion, but he instructed his United Nations ambassador to vote with Russia to block condemnation of it. And now, he's approving sanctions on Turkey for the "destabilizing actions in northeast Syria" he greenlit. He might as well put the sanctions on himself.

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