

O P I N I O N

Happy Holidays from The Nugget!

During the holiday season, please be mindful of our deadlines and special closings that allow our staff time with family (while still delivering *The Nugget* to each of you every week).

Thursday, December 12 ... Closing at 3 p.m.

Tuesday, December 24 ... Closing Early

Thursday, December 26 ... Closed

Tuesday, December 31 ... Closing Early

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Due to adjusted press times in December, we are unable to accept advertising or content past deadline.

Display Advertising, Announcements, Events, Meeting Calendar ... 5 p.m. on Friday

Classifieds, Letters to the Editor ... 12 noon on Monday

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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 reasons I purchased property in Sisters in the fall of 2005 was because of the fresh, crisp air. It was great to be able to walk outside and breath. My wife and I used to like to get up on the weekend with a blanket and nice cup of "Joe" and sit outside on the porch on winter mornings.

Pine-needle burning appeared to be an accepted practice in spring and fall, and for the most part, folks burned small controllable piles that didn't give rise to much smoke. I have noticed a huge change in the way people burn, and in the air quality in the last five years. Not only have we been subject to massive forest fires, but we have been inundated with large pine-needle burns (sometimes very wet needles), for extended periods of time after the big fires were out.

Unfortunately, some folks who just don't care appear to burn pine needles all year long. Some of these pine needle fires are not monitored by those who start them. Some cities, such as Sisters, have outlawed burning within

city limits, but that doesn't prevent those outside those limits from burning not only needles, but trash from their businesses, continuously. Some of these burn piles just plain stink.

There are solutions to all the smoke, but it would take action by Deschutes County:

- Burning could be eliminated altogether, and folks would have to use free dump days.
- Burning could be limited to a two- to three-week window in the spring and fall. This would give asthmatics a chance to saddle up and get out of town during these periods.
- Burning could be eliminated in the summer months so all our Sisters events can be smoke-free.

Whatever the solutions, the current situation is toxic. Smoke is permeating inside sensitive people's homes all year long. Sisters kind of smells like Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when the steel mills were running full blast when I was growing up!

See LETTERS on page 34

Get behind the mule

By Jim Cornelius, Editor in Chief

*You got to get behind the mule
 In the morning and plow...*

— Tom Waits

A friend told me the other day that her daughter was complaining that none of her teachers or classes inspired her. My friend and I were both a little bemused; we couldn't recall that we ever thought we were supposed to be inspired in high school.

Inspiration is overrated, anyway.

Any creative person will tell you that if you wait around to be inspired, you're not going to get a whole lot of work done. Oh, inspiration can strike — and when it does it's a glorious feeling. Trouble is, it tends to last long enough to get you started, but not long enough to help you finish. At some point, you just have to get behind the mule and plow.

Inspiration is to creativity a lot like what infatuation is to love. Feels great; doesn't last — and you can't rely on it in the long run.

Trouble is, we're bombarded with social and cultural messages crafted to make us think we're supposed to be living in a state of constant inspiration. Buy this product, take this class, use this app and you'll be inspired to do great things. You'll be "living your best life." When, in spite of it all, we *don't* feel inspired, we feel like there's something wrong with us. Why is everybody else so inspired and "living their best life" and I'm stuck here behind this damn mule?

It's not hard to see how the gap between our "best life" expectations and aspirations and our often-uninspiring reality can be downright harmful. Despite living amid the greatest plentitude and material ease, comfort, and convenience in human history, rates of depression and suicide are alarming, especially among young people who one might expect to be in the prime of life.

Could the "inspiration gap" be a factor?

Maybe we should stop chasing inspiration and instead seek something else: Satisfaction, perhaps? There can be a lot of

satisfaction in looking back at that field you plowed today.

A friend of mine hits the gym three times a week. It's safe to say she's never once felt inspired by the prospect. In fact, she often spends the morning almost sick with dread of what she's going to put herself through. But she does it — she works hard and she comes back from her ordeal feeling a great deal of satisfaction. It's a triumph of discipline, not of inspiration — a quality we tend to underrate these days.

Steve Earle, one of America's great songwriters, described the difference between his two mentors, Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark, comparing them to the Beat writers Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg:

"One [was] not particularly disciplined, didn't live very long, didn't work that much, the last few years of his life, and then Allen and Guy were incredibly disciplined and left huge bodies of work," Earle says. "Guy had cancer the last 10 years of his life, and he still worked till the very end. ... And I learned from him that these things that artists do, they call them disciplines for a reason."

And there's a strange — and somewhat ironic — phenomenon that occurs when we discipline ourselves to just get down to the work: Inspiration grows out of the process. It's a slow burn, not the lightning flash of "pure" inspiration — the song that comes complete to us in our dreams. That lightning flash comes rarely, if ever, and is a gift beyond our control. That slow burn is a fire we can build and tend for ourselves. It's got staying power. Perhaps that's a better message to be sending to our kids.

It's not glamorous, and it probably won't impress anyone on Instagram, but there's satisfaction to be found out there in the field. And maybe that's better for us than inspiration. Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to go hitch up the mule.

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

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Light rain 45/40	Rain 46/35	Rain/snow 43/27	Snow showers 39/24	Partly cloudy 41/25	Partly cloudy 43/27

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