

# O P I N I O N

## Editorial...

### A time to pull together

Just as a wildfire can create its own wind, whipping up a firestorm of destruction, the public health crisis surrounding the COVID-19 virus has the potential to have far-reaching and long-lasting effects on the Sisters community.

And just as Sisters has weathered the impacts of wildfire, we will weather this crisis, too. Hopefully, the aggressive measures being taken now will mean the crisis will fade and Sisters, the nation and the world can return to our normal lives. But it will require pulling together to get there.

It's natural in the face of fear and uncertainty to withdraw into the safety of hearth and home; in fact, it's a prudent safety precaution. But there are things we can — and should — do to support our local community even while we're protecting ourselves.

Local businesses are going to be hit hard by a severe contraction in economic activity. Every little bit of support will help them. If a lot of us do a little, we can together weather this crisis. Quarantining yourself? Stock up on a bunch of good books (the bookstore will

deliver). Don't want to go out to a restaurant? Order a meal or two a week to go from a local restaurant (some offer curbside pickup). Call a local shop and buy a gift card to use after the crisis has passed.

Local families with children are going to be under duress due to the three-week closure of Sisters' schools. Perhaps, if your circumstances allow, you can reach out and help them with childcare — or maybe just keep an eye on your neighbor's kids while they stay at home.

This crisis is also likely to increase the need at the Sisters Kiwanis Food Bank; donations, especially of cash, are welcome there.

Sisters prides itself on being a tight-knit, resilient community. There is no time like the present to demonstrate that to the world.



*Jim Cornelius, Editor in Chief*

## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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 10 a.m. Monday.*

To the Editor:

Indivisible Sisters had our first Get to Know the Candidate meeting of 2020 at Sisters Public Library the evening of March 4. About a dozen Sisters citizens met Carina Miller, who hails from Warm Springs, graduated from the University of Oregon, and is running for Oregon's District 30 Senate seat. That is the seat that Senator Cliff Bonham vacated to run for Representative Greg Walden's seat in U.S. House for District 2. It is currently occupied by Lynn Findley.

Carina (or any candidate, for that matter) has courage because campaigning for a public seat in this political world is very difficult to say the least. Just ponder running for office yourself and what that would put you and your loved ones through. On the campaign trail, some people can be very uncivil; it is no longer uncommon. Yet, there she was in her

first "get to know" meeting, sharing her experiences, motivations, fielding questions and building a following.

Carina is an impressive individual.

There is little room in a Letter to the Editor to share her many specific qualifications, substantial experience, or the brilliance of what she's already accomplished. I do encourage you to take the time to read through her website, [www.carinamiller.com](http://www.carinamiller.com).

My impression, after our two hours together, is she will work to address concerns of all Oregonians for the greater good, will hit the floor running, educate herself in any areas she does not already have knowledge or expertise, will work in a multi-partisan way, will be dedicated to her job and will NEVER walk out because things did not go her way.

Susan Cobb

*See LETTERS on page 10*

## Age Friendly Sisters Country brings vision to life

By Janel Ruehl  
Guest Columnist

Before becoming a non-profit organization, the founding members of Age Friendly Sisters Country (AFSC) listened to local seniors, heard their concerns, and compiled data about their needs. What they learned in those early days was that the same issues facing aging adults affected people of all ages.

Thus, AFSC was born with the guiding principle: "good for everyone, 8-80!" When the 2018 Sisters Country Vision surfaced many of the same issues and needs, AFSC realized there was real synergy between their mission and the vision goals. Since securing non-profit status in 2018, AFSC has taken a lead on several vision strategies. With the support of the City, they helped Sisters officially join the worldwide network of Age-Friendly Communities, a project of the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP. This month, they are launching a new, free local transportation initiative, dubbed Sisters Transportation and Ride Share, or STARS.

STARS was designed to meet the needs of local community members who are struggling to access medical services because they don't drive.

"We realized that many folks in our community were simply not availing themselves of medical services and becoming increasingly isolated," shares AFSC Board President Toni Landis.

Before STARS, getting to the dentist in Sisters, or to Bend for a test, was a daunting task. Working with Landis under the AFSC umbrella, a team of volunteers created a FREE ride-sharing program grounded in person-to-person connection. On the surface, STARS looks similar to Lyft or Uber: users schedule a ride aided by software. But in practice, every contact point connects human to human and relies on an all-volunteer team. Passengers schedule a ride by calling a volunteer dispatcher. After the dispatcher enters their information into the software program, an email is sent to a pool of volunteer drivers. The available driver then calls the passenger to make a one-on-one connection ahead of their ride.

For now, the free service is only focused on medical rides, but AFSC hopes to see it expand over time, to help community members participate in local events, shop for groceries, or meet other needs as they arise. STARS officially launched on March 1, and they currently have 20 trained volunteers. Landis estimates they will need a pool of at least 25 drivers and 7-10 dispatchers to be able to provide consistent service.

Looking ahead, AFSC would like to expand their outreach to be more diverse and inclusive, with a focus on collaboration with younger community members and business owners.

"What's good for a senior crossing the road also works for a young mom with a stroller!" says Landis, emphasizing AFSC's commitment to finding solutions that make Sisters Country more livable for all ages. AFSC's seven board members each share this commitment but have different passions and areas of focus. Defined under the 8 domains of the Age Friendly framework, these include outdoor spaces and buildings, social participation, respect and social inclusion, work and civic engagement, communication and information, community and health services, and housing — in addition to transportation.

"We're working to expand our outreach via social media, and would love to have help with how to do this better. We would also like to hear from the community: How are we doing? Do you see a need that needs to be met?" asks Landis.

AFSC is also working collaboratively with other local organizations on additional vision strategies. Landis says they are especially excited about participating in the development of a multi-purpose community center where all ages can gather together.

"Turns out, our mission fits really well with the vision!" says Landis, "If you give people an opportunity to help, they will find a way."

If you'd like to help AFSC or STARS, check out the AFSC facebook page or email [agefriendlysisters@gmail.com](mailto:agefriendlysisters@gmail.com) for more information.

To learn more about Sisters Country Vision, visit [sistersvision.org](http://sistersvision.org)

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 46/25	Mostly Sunny 52/29	Partly Cloudy 52/29	Mostly Sunny 55/30	Partly Cloudy 56/31	Showers 53/30

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