

O P I N I O N

**Editorial...**

# Stealthy, insidious virus stokes anxieties

When an invisible, stealthy enemy invades, it's only natural to want to know if there is danger close. Several people have contacted *The Nugget* asking whether there are confirmed COVID-19 cases in Sisters.

The answer isn't very satisfying to them. While there are daily reports on confirmed COVID-19 cases in Deschutes County, medical officials will not confirm the specific locality of those cases. If *The Nugget* were to confirm by other means the existence of COVID-19 cases locally, we would likely report on the fact — but not specifics of who or where. People can do strange things out of fear, and potentially stigmatizing those who have fallen ill will help no one.

The important thing to recognize is that the specific locality of confirmed cases is actually not very important information. The reason Sisters Country is shut down, along with most of the rest of the world, is that people who have no symptoms at all can carry the virus. We don't have the testing capability to identify who is or isn't sick, or who might be.

That's why we have to err on the side of

caution, stay home and avoid contact with others.

We know that COVID-19 is in Deschutes County. We can assume that the number of confirmed cases underreports the actual number, because testing is limited. People who likely have the virus but are suffering only mild or moderate symptoms are recovering at home and are generally not being tested. We should assume that COVID-19 is present in our local community and protect ourselves and our neighbors accordingly — simply by staying home and maintaining physical distance and hygiene protocols when required to go out. Recent guidelines indicate that wearing a cloth mask may provide some benefit.

This is a time for calm, prudent precautions — and also concerted effort to prevent anxiety and fear from overtaking us.



*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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

My mom has always been a strict proponent of hand washing. She should receive some sort of presidential Medal of Honor for her relentless efforts at cleanliness. She's taken some flack through the years and even been teased about it on occasion.

Even now when I'm home from a visit at her house my son will ask me if Granny K made me wash my hands when I got there. You do not under any circumstance get to be in her kitchen, much less touch anything without washing your hands first!

In fact, visitors are mostly banned from her kitchen. When my sisters and I were growing up we had to wash our hands after everything. When we got home from school, from church, from playing outside or from a

friend's house, the first item of business was hand washing. And especially after using the bathroom or picking our nose or scratching ourselves in the yonder regions.

My mom did not hesitate to ask our friends to go wash either when they came over to play. As soon as any meal was ready we had to wash before we could sit at the table. Now my grandkids balk at me when I tell them to wash their hands as soon as they step through my door. I guess we're born lazy. But now we're learning all the more the importance of hand washing. I think we've become a society of quick fixes. We want to rely on medications and remedies to make us well rather than putting out the extra effort to combat it

*See LETTERS on page 18*

# Welcome to the new abnormal

**Karen Keady**  
Guest Columnist

A friend and colleague pointed out that "Social Distancing" is much more difficult for extroverts than introverts. Makes sense. Sisters is a community of huggers. We don't do the Euro thing of the double cheek buss (which always seems to be a little phony and unmeaningful); we hug. A lot. At first it sort of bothered me at social events, all of that hugging. I joined Kiwanis in 2011 and WOW! Talk about huggers! We're great.

So, now here we are, social distancing. I dislike the term, "the new normal." It's more like the new "abnormal."

I sort of agree with the guy who posted a letter to the editor in the April 1 edition of *The Nugget*. It troubled him to see the streets of downtown Sisters crowded with people. He says 75 to 100 people wandering around on Saturday, March 28. I don't drive slow enough to count but in my journal that day I had written, "Sisters looks like a ghost town." I didn't see anywhere near 100 people, even at Sisters Bakery where everyone queues up for their daily bread.

I do agree that many folks are taking the COVID-19 scare too lightly. We do need to limit contact and be mindful of how rapidly this virus is spread once it invades a community.

My best friend just returned from three weeks in Hawaii and I long to see her, hear her news, share a bottle of wine, hug her. But, I won't. At least not for 14 to 18 days and even then probably keep our distance and/or wear a mask. The CDC has now decided that we should be wearing masks in public. A small barrier, but better than

nothing. As a retired nurse I have an N95 mask and have considered volunteering in hard hit areas but at my age I'm probably past my pull date on that.

This virus WILL make its way here. Guaranteed. People are mobile, traveling from Portland, Eugene, Seattle. We can all do our part in keeping our families and ourselves safe and healthy.

I still just do not get it about people hoarding toilet paper! I come from an era of cloth diapers and other sanitary methods of being...clean and sanitary. I once resorted to wrapping a dishtowel around my son's bottom sort of like a loin cloth. It was never used as a dishtowel again, it remained a diaper (just in case you went "ewwww!")

We have neighbors with a pallet of toilet paper on their porch, with a sign saying, "Help yourself if you have a need." (No, you can't have the address.) It's strange how times of crisis bring out the best in some people and the worst in others.







Oh, one final word on last week's *Nugget*: I really enjoyed the commentary by Mitchell Luftig titled, "Emotional survival tools for a pandemic." It was a serious article but I found a bit of humor there as well in the first paragraph. I was reading it to my husband and it went like this: "Our minds are like Velcro for negative experiences. This started with our ancestors, whose survival depended upon paying close attention to the things going on around them (was that the snarl of a saber-toothed tiger?)."

My husband says it was most likely his wife snoring! Now that's funny.

So, we laugh, read *The Nugget*, don't take this pandemic lightly, and yet don't quit finding the humor in our everyday lives.

*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

<b>Wednesday</b> Sunny 63/38 	<b>Thursday</b> Sunny 70/41 	<b>Friday</b> Sunny 67/42 	<b>Saturday</b> Partly Cloudy 58/34 	<b>Sunday</b> Partly Cloudy 52/29 	<b>Monday</b> Partly Cloudy 54/32 
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# The Nugget?

We'd love to hear it!

Send an email to [editor@nuggetnews.com](mailto:editor@nuggetnews.com)