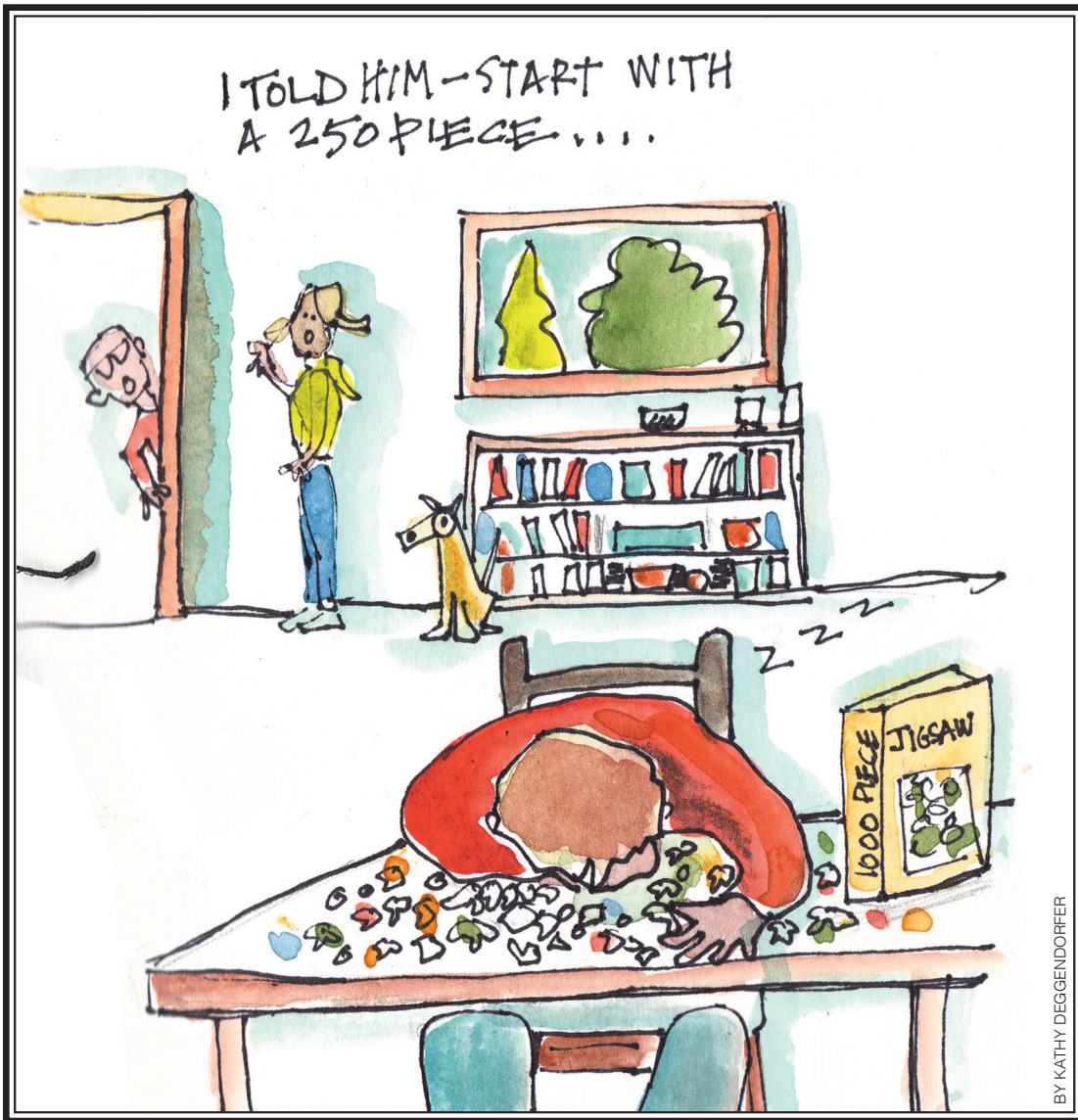


## O P I N I O N



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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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

To the Editor:

As the district continues to navigate the COVID-19 crisis, I want to give an update from our last school board meeting.

Sisters School District grew by 8 students as reported in the April board meeting. Bond work continues as our new transportation center construction moves forward and the walls are starting to go up. Additionally, the board approved the 2020-2021 school calendar with some modifications. As soon as those modifications are completed, we will post the calendar on the district webpage and send it out. Additionally, you can access my

messages and those of our building principals from our district website, [www.ssd6.org](http://www.ssd6.org).

The district submitted the Student Investment Account application to the Oregon Department of Education and we had our first official budget meeting. With the uncertainty of the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, the Sisters School District is especially grateful for our community's continued support of our local option.

We continue to support students with grab-and-go breakfast and lunches that can

See **LETTERS** on page 14

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Cloudy 72/46	AM Clouds/PM Sun 57/36	Mostly Sunny 67/41	PM Showers 65/38	Showers 50/33	Partly Cloudy 56/33

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## What will survive the virus?

By Erik Dolson  
Columnist

The coronavirus is a once-in-a-generation event. As it has ended many lives, going forward it will define many others. It will perhaps define our country, what we have become and who we will be.

The virus is an insidious enemy, spreading among people who do not appear to be sick. It can attack in terrifying ways, causing blood clots and strokes in young and seemingly healthy people, invading the lungs in a way that does not cause shortness of breath until there is too little oxygen for life.

But the damage is not suffered just by individuals with the virus, and their families. Our economy teeters on the edge as we try to limit a death toll that reached 50,000 in this country alone in about one month. We have had to change how we live. The coronavirus and its aftermath are threats to the whole country, a threat to the whole world.

Diseases like this are wars between species, and ours is under threat. It's the type of threat that requires us to come together as a people, as *humanity*. It is a threat that should unite us in a battle where our collective will can overcome an alien species that takes individual lives and may destroy whole nations.

Others here know history far better than I, but phrases from past crises come to mind. "A house divided against itself cannot stand," "United we stand, divided we fall."

America has excelled when faced with this type of challenge. Acknowledging Winston Churchill's backhanded compliment, "You can always count on Americans to do the right thing — after they've tried everything else," we have done the right thing, and we prevailed. We saved countless lives, we saved democracy, we saved freedom.

But we did it together. Trump's strategy of spreading fear and loathing, divide and conquer, winning is all that matters, has been shockingly

successful in this Age of Facebook where ideologies are reinforced and common interests buried. The strategy helped Trump take over the Republican Party and helped Republicans capture the debate of what it means to be an American.

But over the last several weeks, it's been obvious that strategy is the wrong way to fight the coronavirus. The virus is not contained in New York. The Midwest is not a separate world. Louisiana is not south of the border. We can't shrug and let each state take care of their own. We are in this together.

We can't let urban states go bankrupt, as if they didn't support rural states with money and expertise, as they do. We can't let rural states suffer as if their culture wasn't a crucial strength of America, as we have in the past. We can't turn our backs on anyone. If the virus hides out in a pocket in Kentucky, or in Africa, it *will* escape and come for the rest of us.

I am not advocating action as a liberal. There are many liberal agendas I do not support, and there are left wing interests I feel are destructive. But now is not the time to take sides. Despite two generations of depletion by liberals and deconstruction by conservatives, America united still has the ability to lead the world in this fight against an enemy that could kill any of us, and destroy all of us.

But only if we stand shoulder to shoulder.

If we can own our individual responsibility to America, and to humanity, we will defeat the coronavirus and future generations will look upon America with appreciation, and perhaps incorporate the principles on which she was built of value to each of us.

If our efforts are driven by selfishness, pettiness, and discord, if divided, we will fail. The great American experiment will have been nothing more than a great American Dream unfulfilled, American exceptionalism will have been an exception we never meant it to be.

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