

O P I N I O N



It's springtime in Sisters...

PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:  
Save Sisters' trees!

It was shocking to learn that what I thought was simply the limbing up of a monumental ponderosa pine by the City or C.E.C., was actually a majestic ponderosa pine being felled by a Redmond company, with no City permit to do so, hired by a property owner who wrongly believed the tree was his.

On the morning the magnitude of this majestic tree claimed its final resting place along Larch Street, our entire house and those of my neighbors reverberated from its now dead weight. I cried. This corpse lies witness to the decision-making of one overzealous resident. Its neighbors await the City's response.

We are a "Tree City." So why is it that Sisters residents are cutting down huge, shelter-giving ponderosas? Because they're messy? Inconveniently located?

Unless the illegally-felled 150-year-old ponderosa on Larch Street was your neighborhood tree, you would likely have no idea of the shelter and beauty this elder pine provided. I'm sure the folks who live and walk on Pine Street, where a similar extermination took place last year, share our collective, sobering grief.

At this historic time in history, when nature affords most of us the single most restorative antidote to the craziness, why are some

Sisters residents interested in turning our tree-lined streets into treeless, urban walkways? If these huge ponderosas are such an inconvenience, please consider living elsewhere and leave Sisters trees standing tall for future generations.

Kay Grady

To the Editor:

A gentleman passed last week, alone in his truck in the Deschutes National Forest; we believe he was approximately 86 years old. Bill was a proud man. He spoke often of his service to our country as a U.S. Marine for 25 years, and of his three daughters. What we know about his past is only what he told us; we cannot attest to his accounts. We are, however, comfortable in describing Bill as a good man, at times a little difficult and a bit loud but a man who was sensitive and wanted friendship. We met Bill last year while hiking the Deschutes. My dog came upon him, startled him for a moment, and then this strong Marine revealed a gentle and loving nature as he interacted with Cassy. I need to believe that Bill passed peacefully and that he has other friends in Sisters who will pray for him and remember him. We certainly will.

Lt. Chris Salisbury, USMC Foundation

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## A time for good neighbors

By Jim Cornelius  
Editor in Chief

Sisters is "reopening" along with the rest of Deschutes County as restrictions imposed to slow the spread of COVID-19 are eased. We're a long way from a return to "normal," but it feels good to see some of the traditional vibrancy of the community return.

It's been a long, sad couple of months, as local residents confront the lingering fear of disease, the loss of livelihoods, the cancellation of cherished events and activities. At the same time, it's been a time of innovation: Local businesses find ways to improvise and stay in the fight; citizens find ways to support each other, even at a "social distance"; and Sisters' key nonprofits continue to pursue their missions of community support and enhancement.

Local citizens have been magnificent in their efforts to sustain local businesses — buying gift cards and take-out meals, and supporting a GoFundMe drive to save our local independent book store. They've contributed to the Kiwanis Food Bank and to local nonprofits. Some citizens have made a point of donating to businesses that have not been able to stay open during the lockdown.

It seems that Sisters has generally avoided wading into the Big Muddy of politicizing a pandemic. It's hard to believe that so many Americans have found a way to make pandemic disease a front in our ongoing Culture War; it just goes to show how deep pervasive division and discord has become.

Apparently, there's nothing that won't send folks running for their ideological corners these days, even a virus, which, let's face it, doesn't care who you voted for.

Here's hoping that Sisters folks can continue to stay focused on simply being good neighbors to each other.

Our outlook on this terrible scourge that has wounded our lives doesn't have to be partisan — or political at all. It is entirely possible — indeed, completely reasonable — to simultaneously fear a new and potentially devastating

disease, while also caring deeply about the serious economic dislocation and the potential for authoritarian governmental overreach associated with the lockdown.

This is a complex situation, unprecedented in our lifetimes, and the path forward isn't clear. For some, especially those at particular risk from this kind of illness, it may feel like we're "opening up" too soon. The pandemic is far from over, and there is a risk that increased interaction will bring on a "second wave" or a spike in cases.

Others, whose livelihoods are on the line, may feel that we stayed locked down too long, especially in a region that is far from being a hot spot; that "flattening the curve" has risked flattening our future.

We should not judge each other harshly on our individual take on a situation that has offered only fraught alternatives at every turn.

People who fear COVID-19 are not cowards; people who fear economic devastation and the erosion of liberty are not heartless.

Perhaps as we move forward into a future shadowed by the lingering cloud of COVID-19, we can act with compassion, understanding and a dose of humility. None of us has any answers. We can only do our best to face adversity each day, and help one another as best we can.

We can inoculate ourselves against cultural contagions spread by blackguards working agendas that have nothing at all to do with bettering our lives and everything to do with their own aggrandizement.

We can decide that we are not going to allow ourselves to be pulled into inane conflicts that turn facemasks into battle flags.

A mask need not be flaunted as a badge of civic virtue, nor scorned as emblematic of a knee bended to a tyrannical state. A mask is simply an implement, one that may have some utility in inhibiting the spread of disease. If a Sisters business encourages wearing of masks and asks their employees to do so, I'll wear one.

It's the neighborly thing to do.

*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
Partly Cloudy 56/40	AM Clouds/PM Sun 52/34	Partly Cloudy 55/33	Partly Cloudy 67/41	Partly Cloudy 68/46	Partly Cloudy 70/43

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