

**DEMONSTRATION:**  
Gathering was orderly and peaceful

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but I wanted to stand with my friends here and help out and be a voice for the community.”

Community member Pete Shepherd was one of the many demonstrators out on Saturday. He said he was out in support to memorialize George Floyd.

“I hope also to stimulate my own thinking about what I and we can do to make this situation better,” he said. He hopes that this can be an occasion for everyone to think about what they can actively do to help. It was the first time in 50-plus years that Shepherd has held up a sign.

“The last time I held up a sign at a demonstration was 50 years ago since the Vietnam War,” he said

Sisters High School graduate Margo Bruguier was also amongst demonstrators and she was there in hopes to represent the Sisters community to marginalized groups.

“I want to let the marginalized groups of people know that our community supports them and that their voices will no longer remain unheard,” said Bruguier.

Bruguier thought the location was a good place to reach a broad audience as it is heavily traveled.

“It will hopefully start the conversation with family members as they see us when they drive by,” she said.

One of Bruguier’s biggest hopes from these demonstrations is that more education will come out of it.

“I think we need to be more proactive in teaching about racism within the schools and with each other. It is a privilege to be able to learn about it and I think it’s important to teach about it and understand that it is real and present, everyone has to talk about it,” she said.

Two Sisters High School graduates — sisters Mary and Liz Stewart — were also out. Mary was out there “because I want to stand in solidarity with our black brothers and sisters and demonstrate against the unfair treatment of them in our country,” she



PHOTO BY CEILI CORNELIUS

Art teacher Bethany Gunnarson made signs for demonstrators in Sisters.

said. Liz said, “I want to help normalize people changing their views and that it is totally OK to learn and change your views on something, especially in this time.”

Mary Stewart also said that she hopes that at least, it will get families and community members talking about racism in the United States, no matter what you believe.

“I hope at least doing this will get people starting those important conversations with their kids,” she said.

Cheryl Stewart, Mary and Liz’s mother, was among demonstrators.

“I am here because my Christian faith calls upon me to do this,” said Stewart.

She believes that the Black Lives Matter movement is not a political, partisan or religious issue, but a humanity issue.

“I hope that this time is a watershed moment for our

country to get this right; it isn’t about Christian views versus non-Christian, it is an issue of humanity,” she said. She hopes that the audience of drivers see this as a necessary movement.

“We are not here to dilute the message of Black Lives Matter and make it about something else. In order for all lives to matter, black lives have to matter too,” she said.

Sisters High School teacher, Gail Greaney and her family held signs.

“I think the time of not doing anything is well passed — it is important that people that were silent now step up,” she said.

She expressed that every car honk is another ally in the fight for justice. Greaney also hopes that since it is 2020, and racism is still in communities and around the world, that people can acknowledge the problem and speak up.

“I hope all of this at least starts the conversation again, keeping the issue an actual problem, opposed to just focusing on one part of it when something happens; it all becomes cyclical,” she said.

Greaney strongly believes in the community figuring out their own role in actually doing something, whether it be demonstrating, documenting, or just having the tough conversations.

“Pick one thing or way and do something,” she said.

“I want to let the marginalized groups of people know that our community supports them and that their voices will no longer remain unheard.”  
— Margo Bruguier

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**VAN DER LOON:**  
Sisters man lives outdoor lifestyle

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where cooperation is required to avoid getting voted off the island. The History Channel’s offering places each contestant in solitude. With no camera crews and fellow contestants to distract them, they grapple not only with surviving the elements but facing their own selves.

“It’s unusual in that you’re alone for a long period of time,” said van der Loon. “The psychological aspect of being alone, which brings challenges. Being away from family.”

He described himself as more solitary and introverted naturally. Being away from his two-year-old son was his psychological challenge. “Otherwise I enjoyed the time alone,” he said. He appreciated “the deep level of connection that you form with the natural world when you don’t have any distraction, where all you have to worry about is the essentials: staying warm, feeding yourself, staying creative.”

The physical challenge was considerable as well. He listed the obstacles: dealing with not eating very much, weight loss, and lack of nutrients, “with a sort of high workload.” He noted, “It takes a lot of work to feed yourself and build a shelter and pick berries and keep warm.”

The van der Loon family moved to Sisters Country about two years ago. Joel and his wife Leah first met when they were both employed on yachts, out at sea. “I was a chief engineer, and she was a

hostess,” he explained. They settled in California for a few years, where van der Loon started his Bush Survival Training school.

In addition to direct bushcraft experience, van der Loon’s bio states that his certifications and education include STSC survival instructor, WMA wilderness first responder, ASHI wilderness first aid, and MCA advanced fire fighting. He is a kick boxer, hunter, fisherman and diver, and is qualified in advanced sea survival under the British Coastguard.

After having a baby, the couple wanted a more rural lifestyle. “We sought out a place that would provide a compromise for myself, what I desire, and my family,” van der Loon said. “My wife wanted a sense of community whereas I’m more introverted. Sisters, we felt, was the perfect size.” Since moving here, he too has become fond of the community.

The van der Loons live north of city limits, bordering public lands.

“We have everything we need in town,” van der Loon enthused. “It’s a great lifestyle. The access to the outdoor activities is what does it for me. I’m not as off-grid as I’d like — but it’s all on our doorstep.”

He enjoys mushroom foraging, hunting, the mountains and getting his son out in nature (*see story, page 31*).

Learn more about Joel van der Loon at [www.bushsurvivaltraining.com](http://www.bushsurvivaltraining.com). Info about Alone is available at [www.history.com/shows/alone](http://www.history.com/shows/alone).

“It’s going to be a great season,” said his wife, Leah van der Loon. “We hope our community will be stoked to see one of its locals out there!”

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— Ivan and Gena B.

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