

LETTERS

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death within a system of entrenched practices of police brutality, racialization, and discrimination. While we appreciate the energy of recent protests, we urge Sisters residents to take further action against racist systems and reflect on the existing issues of race within our own community.

After we both went to college, we became aware of the lack of action taken in the Sisters community to protect, respect, and affirm black and brown lives. In college, we experienced solidarity and empathy for our hopes and dreams.

Retrospectively, we realized that more attention was paid to the degradation of our natural surroundings, rather than the systemic struggles of people of color across the country. Unfortunately, we each experienced incidents of direct or indirect racism while attending the Sisters schools. We were often the only people of color in a classroom, which alienated us. None of our teachers were people of color, and while they did their best to enlighten and educate on matters of historical racism and the American experience, there was rarely any discussion articulating lives and stories of people of color. If we were to call out racist systems or racism, in or outside the classroom, we were labeled too political or too angry.

We highlight these experiences not to disparage the hard work of our teachers, but to plead for systematic change to education and community solidarity. Racism is real and alive in Sisters. What has been “good enough” in the past cannot suffice any longer. The Sisters community must acknowledge its lack of diversity and commit to both individual and structural changes that dismantle white supremacy. These anti-racist actions should not be taken solely to achieve diversity, but also to benefit the well-being of community members, regardless of their race, ethnicity, class or gender.

You may think that events like the murders of George Floyd or Trayvon Martin could not happen in Sisters or even Central Oregon. But why would you want to wait and see before making a change? The momentum of the current protests and rallies must be carried forth into the future, grounded in finding equity, justice, and compassion for all, but particularly our community members of color.

Keegan Greaney & Zidane Galant-LaPorte



Letter to the Editor,
The end of the year is typically a time to

celebrate, and there are reasons to celebrate; however, that is not why I write to you today. It is impossible to view the civil unrest that is happening throughout our nation and not reflect on our responsibility to do better.

For some of our students and families, seeing violent footage and unchecked racism is a source of ongoing trauma. This is made worse as it comes after months of anxiety and stress brought on by a global pandemic that has disproportionately affected our underserved families.

Sisters School District is committed to supporting students and families as we navigate the persistent aggression against our friends, family and neighbors in underserved populations.

Diversity and our differences make us stronger. Our schools are committed to opening doors to those who have been historically underserved. While our values are clear, we know we have work to do. It pains me to know that we have not supported all of our students — that we have students that feel as though they are not accepted in our schools. Whether they have different color skin, speak a different language, or identify with a different gender, these are all our children. We are committed to doing better.

It is through this lens that the Sisters School District will continue to focus on our Strategic Plan core values:

1. Investing in relationships that support every student’s growth and sense of belonging
2. Create extraordinary learning experiences that make learning real
3. Empower and support students and staff to become the best versions of themselves
4. Prepare students to be courageous individuals, effective communicators, critical thinkers and problem solvers for life.

Please take the time to take care of yourselves and those that you love. I am thankful that as parents/guardians, teachers, support staff and community we are committed to our learning partnership and supporting all of our students.

Curt Scholl
Superintendent
Sisters School District



To the Editor:

I am a full-time resident of Sisters. In addition, I am over 65, have asthma, and am raising my granddaughters — the youngest 8 years old. I stay at home as much as possible but I have to go out for groceries and

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Oregon High Desert Classics canceled

The Oregon High Desert Classics, Central Oregon’s premier hunter-jumper show and J Bar J Youth Services’ largest fundraiser of the year, is canceled. The organization had been working on plans for months, in coordination with US Equestrian Federation, Deschutes County, and the State of Oregon, to keep staff and participants safe. They were able to address numerous safety concerns and had the space to allow for social distancing on the 40-acre J Bar J Boys Ranch.

The hope was to hold the competition in July without spectators, allowing only staff and riders on the grounds. The guidance laid out in the state’s Phase 2 COVID-19 opening restrictions however, allow only 250 people at an event, regardless of the space available. This has made plans unworkable, and has pushed J Bar J Youth Services into the difficult decision to cancel this year’s events.

This is the second of three annual events J Bar J Youth services will have canceled, and by far the largest. Bowl for Kids’ Sake was also

canceled in May. The program is a primary fundraiser for J Bar J’s Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Oregon. The organization is looking for help from sponsors and the community to bridge those losses.

The Oregon High Desert Classics provides funding not only to the nonprofit organization and their many programs in the region, but brought an estimated \$3 million in revenue to Central Oregon’s tourism industry annually.

With over 600 horses and thousands of participants including trainers, riders, and staff coming from all over the western U.S. and Canada, The Oregon High Desert Classics is one of the largest events in Bend each summer. The Classics were scheduled for July 15 – 19 and 22 – 26 this year. J Bar J Youth Services plans to hold the event again in 2021.

J Bar J Youth Services operates many programs helping youth facing challenges on their path to self-sufficiency. Learn more at www.jbarj.org or www.oregonhighdesertclassics.org.



You Are Awesome!

To Our Hometown Class of 2020:
As you start this next chapter of your lives, please know Sisters Country is so proud of you.

Citizens4Community also wants to offer a big **THANK YOU** to the volunteers—including parents, SHS staff and the City's Public Works Crew—who helped make possible the **Class of 2020 Street Banner & Keepsake Project.***

And special thanks to the 60 local donors—including residents, businesses and organizations—who supported this C4C project. Your generosity helped show our hometown grads how much Sisters cares. **We're grateful for our amazing community!**

**Graduates can pick up their banners 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 1 at the drive-up yearbook distribution event at SHS. A secondary pickup date is 5-6:30 p.m. July 2. For more about the project & banner pickup times, see citizens4community.com.*

Photo courtesy of Jerry Baldock/outlawsphotography.net