

# O P I N I O N

## Editorial...

### Living up to what we put on paper

No words committed to paper have ever had greater impact than those we celebrate this Saturday, on Independence Day:

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

That radical clarion cry of the sovereign rights of the individual sounded the death knell for the rule of kings in the 19th Century and stood in defiance of totalitarian tyranny across the 20th Century.

The fact that those words were written by a slaveholding Virginian, a man committed to the expansion of an "Empire of Liberty" across the continent (pushing aside, absorbing or destroying the indigenous inhabitants of that continent) reflects an ugly and brutal paradox that continues to haunt America.

On April 3, 1968, just hours before his murder, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke to a congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, in what has come to be called the "I've Been To The Mountaintop Speech." Amid his eloquent evocation of a vision of the Promised Land, earned in a toilsome climb up a steep and rugged slope, he made a simple plea:

*"All we say to America is, 'Be true to what you said on paper.'"*

King was speaking specifically of the guarantees of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America — but his words cut fundamentally down to the bedrock profession of the American faith:

that all men are created equal.

We must not forget that have come a long way toward fulfilling the promise of those words: A birthright that was, in 1776, confined to white men of property (almost exclusively Protestant Christian in creed) has been expanded — imperfectly, in fits and starts — to include women as well as men, people of all colors and creeds.

While cultural fissures and wounds are deep and lasting, the United States is not the same nation it was even 50 years ago. Legally, culturally and economically we are a far more just and equitable place than we were on April 4, 1968, when King was slain.

We remain an imperfect work-in-progress. We will probably always carry the burden of the twin original sins into which our nation was born; we cannot erase or elide a heritage of slavery and conquest that clashes so profoundly with our founding principles. But neither can we abase ourselves in expiation of those sins, not without destroying the civic faith that has allowed the United States of America — for all of its flaws — to be a beacon of liberty and opportunity in an often dark world for the past 244 years.

Our task is *not* to fundamentally transform the United States of America. It is something far simpler, more profound — and more challenging — than that:

It is to be true to what we put down on paper.

*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:

Maybe you have read in some of my previous Letters to the Editor and determined that I have considerable dislike for our two party system of government.

I carry this aversion after years of witnessing the ineptness of our so called Congressional representatives and their

inability to compromise on relevant issues. Congress needs to understand that no one side can possibly be 100 percent right on any issue. This is why race relations, immigration, gun control, police reform and so many other issues remain unresolved.

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## Facts matter

By Quay Richerson  
Guest Columnist

Like many, my heart is heavy as I watch our beloved America undergo a transition into a country with which I am not familiar.

Simple pleasures such as Facebook, going to church, watching the news, weekly grandpa/granddaughter Sisters Bakery outings and poker with friends have become a thing of the past. Directed by local and state government orders, churches closed, non-essential businesses shut down, schools closed, sporting events canceled, grandparents separated from grandchildren, payments were made to individuals and businesses, \$2,400-per-month incentives for not working, facemasks became a wardrobe accessory and healthy families self-quarantined. In addition, cities have allowed rioting, burning, looting, murder, defunding of police departments and a complete occupation of a downtown area.

What happened? Did we incur a nuclear attack, a foreign invasion, or did some other threat occur that has never occurred in American history? No, it was a virus and a horrific incident of police brutality that led to an assault on our freedoms, liberties, and rights.

As society analyzes our responses to the life-threatening virus, I'd like to share a personal account that has shaped my worldview. In 1941, my father was a poor, young, hillbilly from the boondocks of Missouri, who became the first in his family to leave the farm for college. As an ambitious freshman on December 7, his future of hope and opportunity was suddenly shattered when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and threatened the freedoms and liberties which defined his country. He gathered his buddies and headed for the nearest recruitment center. Like millions of other young men of his generation, my dad believed protecting freedom and liberty was worth the sacrifice of their own ambitions, and even their life.

Although the virus and war are incomparable, the

threat to our freedom and liberties is not, and it is disheartening how easily we have surrendered them.

During a recent conversation, my friend said that "For every 'fact' there are 'facts' to the contrary." That led me to quote Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the late Democratic senator from New York, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not his own facts." Andrew McCarthy of the *National Review* added, "Real progress is only possible, and real cohesion is only stable, if a society can agree that there are objective facts, and that they can be gotten at through reason and common sense. Only with that in place is it possible for us to work out our differences, or at least disagree in peace. You don't get to have your own facts."

So let's review some facts regarding issues of the past four months.

COVID-19. USA has 128,000 deaths or .04 percent of the population (43 percent were in nursing homes, 94 percent had pre-existing health conditions). Oregon has 204 deaths or .0049 percent of the population. Deschutes County has zero deaths. In comparison, with less than half the current population, the 1957-58 Asian flu had 116,000 deaths and the 1968-69 Hong Kong flu had 100,000 deaths in the USA. No government mandated lockdowns or shutdowns occurred.

Police targeting Black men. According to the *Washington Post*, in 2019 there were 10 unarmed Black men killed by police. In six of those incidents, the officer was under physical assault by the victim. Of the 1,004 people killed by officers, 236 were Black and 371 were white. In respect to all homicides, 93 percent of Black murders are committed by Black people and 84 percent of white murders are committed by white people.

Statistical facts are void of interpretation, ideology, and prejudices, yet they form the foundation from which we base our decisions and actions. My encouragement is that we all delve into the facts before we rush to the protest line.

*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         |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Sunny<br>69/42 | Sunny<br>78/45 | Mostly Sunny<br>80/46 | Mostly Sunny<br>81/49 | Mostly Sunny<br>78/47 | Sunny<br>77/48 |

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442 E. Main Ave., P.O. Box 698, Sisters, Oregon 97759  
Tel: 541-549-9941 | Email: [editor@nuggetnews.com](mailto:editor@nuggetnews.com)



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**Creative Director:** Jess Draper  
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Send an email to [editor@nuggetnews.com](mailto:editor@nuggetnews.com)