

Commentary... Echoes of tumult

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Two months of tumult in Portland echo and reverberate across the mountains to Sisters.

Many folks here have deep ties to the weird and wonderful city along the Willamette River. Many who live here now once lived and worked in Portland. We have friends and family there. We travel there for business and pleasure. What happens in Portland does not stay in Portland.

What people see in the tumult that has rocked the downtown core of the city for most of two months tends to depend on what they choose to see. Cody Rheault of Central Oregon

Daily, who also freelances for *The Nugget*, traveled to Portland to report on the situation. The resulting story depicts distinctly different actions depending on the time of day or night (<https://centraloregondaily.com/rally-to-riot-portland/>).

Rally or riot — you can take your pick.

Things should never have come to this pass. Through weeks of unrest, municipal authorities threw up their hands and abdicated responsibility for the security and livability of their own city, and the governor has refused to act since June 1, so *somebody* was going to take action.

This kind of turmoil has been brewing for some time, long before the killing of



PHOTO BY CODY RHEAULT

Sisters journalist Cody Rheault covered the unrest in Portland last weekend. A rally became a riot as the night wore on — a pattern that has repeated for weeks in the Oregon city.

George Floyd. Portland can't keep a police chief, because it's an impossible job in the face of a mayor and city commissioners who are overtly hostile to law enforcement.

Talk to Portland cops who haven't been able to do the real work of protecting and serving their city because they had to stand still for days in the face of being spat upon in the midst of a pandemic and pelted with everything from urine and feces to ball bearings shot from wrist rockets. They know their elected officials don't have their backs.

With legitimate protest rallies morphing into riot, vandalism, and arson on a nightly basis, and municipal authorities unwilling to allow the Portland Police Bureau to act effectively to quell violent and destructive behavior, is it really any surprise that the feds stepped in?

There is nothing to applaud in the deployment of

federal law enforcement to protect the Mark O. Hatfield Federal Courthouse. Federal snatch teams on the streets of an American city are not something any of us should be happy to see. There is no good outcome from this kind of action, which will be exploited by *everyone* with a dog in the 2020 electoral fight, to grandstand, posture, and promote ideologically-driven narratives.

But we need to be honest about why it's happening.

President Trump may, as his detractors argue, want to flex federal muscle for his own ends — but this really isn't about Donald Trump. Both the President and his most ardent opponents seem to have a hard time seeing anything outside the context of Donald Trump — and this obscures a fundamental truth about the ongoing turmoil in Portland and in other cities across the USA:

Those who are

committing criminal acts of vandalism, assault, and arson are the ones responsible for creating the present tumult. Those who tolerate, excuse, or enable such actions are encouraging more of them — and an escalated response.

Want to de-escalate the situation? Stop the rioting and destruction.

We in Sisters are not as distant from all of this as it might seem. The decline in livability in Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco is affecting us directly already. People are fleeing those cities to move here. We have choices to make about what kind of community they find in Sisters. Will we continue to be the kind of community that looks past differences and bridges ideological divides to support our neighbors? Or will we, like so much of the USA, break up into hostile tribes with little in common but the land we stand on?



PHOTO BY CODY RHEAULT

The late-night action becomes confrontational and destructive.

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328 W. Sisters Park Dr.

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- Rechargeable batteries
- Fuels & thinners
- Pool & spa chemicals
- Fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides
- Aerosols
- Mercury items
- Fluorescent light bulbs/tubes
- Oil filters & antifreeze
- Paints & stains
- Cleaning products & poisons
- Automotive chemicals
- Propane tanks

Items NOT accepted: BUSINESS-GENERATED HAZARDOUS WASTE, explosives, fireworks, ammunition, gas cylinders, drums, radioactive and medical waste.

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 — PLEASE WEAR A MASK.

Deschutes County encourages persons with disabilities to participate in all programs and activities. This event/location is accessible to people with disabilities. If you need accommodations to make participation possible, or to request this information in an alternate format please contact:

Deschutes County Department of Solid Waste
541-317-3163 | www.deschutes.org/sw



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