

LETTERS

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To the Editor:

I'd like to thank Olivia Hougham for her words that were reported in Katy Yoder's informative article "Sisters vigil takes on racial issues," printed in the July 29 issue of *The Nugget*.

Olivia called us all "to take responsibility for the things that still need improvement. Just because you ignore something doesn't make it any less real."

In so many ways it seems like our world's in chaos. The headlines scream this news at every opportunity. I hear this and I read about it, but wonder what does that really mean. My world is made up of family, friends and neighbors. For me life is content. I ask myself, "Why listen to protests? It's their world, not mine. Why must I change?"

It's now becoming apparent that a bubbling boil has been simmering far too long. We hear a lot of yelling and the words, "We've been wronged!" Those of us far away from this chaos wonder, why and where did this anger come from?

It's easy to feel we're not the ones who have caused this unrest. I'm sure, I haven't— my life has been blest. Or, have I? Why should I pay any attention when I hear them cry, "protest — yes, protest."

Yes, it's easy to sit back and reflect on the situation, feeling we're not to blame. But still, I wonder what are they asking for. Could it be respect? Isn't that something we all have? I know I do. How is it denied to them?

What difference does this "chaos" make for me? I hear about it in the news but what does that really mean for me? I live in Sisters, not Portland. As I said before, my life has been blessed which allows me to cruise along with few worries. Why should I care? Can't I just pass them by?

Yes, our world's in chaos, the headlines scream. I hear, I read. But what does that mean?

As Olivia said, "We all have privilege if we're not Black." It is time for all of us to realize our role in the chaos that's no longer a simmer. We must take responsibility to improve all that's gone wrong. Just because our lives are blest and we can cruise along with few worries, we can't just ignore it as if it isn't real.

Thank you, again Olivia. We needed this wake-up call.

Eddie Jones



To the Editor:

In response to T. Lee Brown's column, "Oregon is not a TV show," (*The Nugget*, July 29, page 7):

It's important to note what may have started out as peaceful protests by Americans exercising their First Amendment rights has now been hijacked by criminals unwilling to be peaceful. Stating that "a few protestors...who want to light fires and make big noises" is a GROSS understatement. Footage shows hundreds of these rioters causing damage to businesses and federal buildings resulting in the escalated enforcement of law and order.

Peaceful protestors should consider that their voice is NOT being shut down by the federal

government, but rather by the violent hijacking rioters.

Cheryl Pellerin



To the Editor:

Re: "Fire closed Hwy. 20 east of Sisters," (The Nugget, July 29, page 1):

This type of thing could happen in downtown Sisters. It is way past time for the state and city to get together with a route for Highway 20 using the old Shevlin-Hickson right of way used to bypass town.

The bypass down Barclay Drive is terrible, located between schools and difficult for big trucks.

Blaine McGillicuddy



To the Editor,

I write to applaud, support and affirm three courageous former Sisters' graduates, Keegan, Zidane and Olivia, whose recent editorial and a speech at the Black Lives Vigil illuminated their experiences of discrimination while living in Sisters.

Please know many of us are aware of the "whiteness" of Sisters and Oregon, but keep working in small ways to change things. Having been privileged to become acquainted with numerous members of our Latinx community through a former volunteer English tutoring program, I also know stories and believe you! The question often asked is, "What can we do?"

As a former teacher starting in the 1960s, I learned through the Civil Rights Movement and a very diverse Denver-area student body how to see and behave differently. Yes, I hold teachers and coaches responsible for tuning in to what's happening in their classes and hallways, merely because of their positions of power and influence. When kids get messages, they do impact their families and community. The first lesson is to not assume one person of color speaks for every person of color! Then stop using the word "they" referring to any race, culture, or group; instead choosing "some, one person or a few." Generalities in language propagate stereotypes.

Another error we "well-intentioned" make is becoming "saviors" rather than "allies." We do "for" instead of "with" people different than ourselves. To step outside our own comfort zones we can view or buy art, listen to music, attend lectures, discussions, watch educational programs, shop in ethnic stores, try different foods, travel, learn 10 words of another language, read books by other-culture-race authors or settings, tutor non-English speakers, bring "other" holidays into your family, look or smile at someone directly, instead of away. When you hear racial slurs, speak up gently, stating that the words are hurtful and make you uncomfortable. Don't expect everyone to accept your words but feel empowered inside for being true to your own values.

Much of our inherent racism stems from fear of differentness, of not knowing, so we cling to the comfort of those like us. Take the risk of stepping out! Paulina Books has a wide choice of materials;

COCC sponsors the Nancy Chandler Visiting Scholar programs and the multicultural lectures and discussions; the Bend Latino Organization needs tutors; volunteer in Sisters' schools at any level; host a dialogue with Latinx folks in your church; invite your cleaning woman or landscaper for a potluck to SHARE each other's foods; attend a protest! Learn!

Don't give up, just show up, stand up, speak up! Wendie Vermillion



To the Editor:

Regarding your editorial "Echoes of tumult" and the continuing civil unrest in Portland, Oregon (*The Nugget*, July 29, pg. 6):

Upon graduation from Portland State University I entered the behavioral health field. I have lived downtown, near PSU, since 2006. What was once a vibrant, intermingling community of race, culture, ideologies, gender, and remarkable interaction is no more.

COVID-19 has driven us behind masks and indoors. Unbridled violence has ruptured what was once the wonderful weirdness of Portland.

Sixty-plus days of peaceful protest followed by rioting has shuttered businesses and run others, some here for decades, out. Those who live downtown, particularly those over 60, must be extra cautious when we go out. The police are not supported by the city leadership and certainly not respected. Their hands are tied and in return we are put at great risk.

Worse is the growing atmosphere of hopelessness, vulnerability, and increasing anger among those who live downtown. The sights, sounds, smells, destruction of buildings and landmarks, along with the closure of schools, museums, and places of worship echoes the same witnessed during my multiple tours in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2003/2004.

I understand, after now years of meeting with refugees and working with service members and veterans, how an entire population becomes "shell-shocked" under such conditions.

In Portland's case the one-two punch of unending pandemic and politically condoned violence by all levels of leadership are to blame. It seems as if Kate Brown, Ted Wheeler, and the federales have all taken the position that "in order to save the village we have to destroy it."

For any person, faction, or side involved to claim the moral high ground is blasphemy.

Gregory Walker



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.

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