

Commentary...

Every person in our family is worth saving

By **Katy Yoder**
Columnist

Navigating life during a pandemic and social unrest is challenging but full of opportunities. Tumultuous times demand new thinking that breaks free from unjust institutions. Some traditions intentionally or inadvertently maintain old systems designed to divide and degrade segments of the population. As a white woman who has had a blessed life, I now see the many ways that system stepped on the backs of marginalized populations to maintain my comfort.

From our country's beginning, colonists lived on lands taken from Indigenous people. Across the nation, petroglyphs and pictographs reveal lives, hearts, and hands of the first ones to call this place home. I have learned after hearing words of wisdom from an Indigenous man, Wilson Wewa, that when I found arrowheads made by his ancestors and took them home, I was erasing their history.

Listening to past and present stories of Indigenous people, I see the land differently. It was taken from one group and given to another — all part of a concerted effort to take control of land and make it part of the expanding territories of the United States government. These actions came down to economics and the myth of superiority based on religion and skin color.

I'm reading a book, "Caste" which offers a new

perspective on how our government was formed and why. People were divided by skin color. Those with the darkest pigment, and brought against their will, were at the bottom of the caste system. They're still in that position. Some have made their way through thick barriers erected to stop their upward mobility. Their success is a feat worth admiring. But many are still imprisoned in a system established long ago to keep them from escaping the fate of their skin color.

I'm shedding the lessons I received in school, from family, books, television, and movie screens. Just as I'm seeing my home as a place built on stolen lands, I'm also accepting that I unknowingly played a part in perpetuating an unjust system.

Last year, I read Eli Saslow's book about Derek Black called "Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist." It tells the story of Black's childhood in white supremacy culture. Black was responsible for retooling the language and messaging used to further his organization's white supremacy views. When he went to college, he met his first Jewish person, first person of color and first progressive-minded woman. Those people took him in, even

after they realized who he was and what he was saying on podcasts to his followers. Eventually, he transformed himself, by opening his mind and heart to the fact that white supremacy was illogical and immoral.

In his youth, Black used his intellect to expand the infiltration of white supremacy into mainstream politics. After his epiphany, he felt a moral obligation to undo the damage he'd done. I respect him for his courage and resolve to admit his mistakes and recognize his family's role in indoctrinating him into a philosophy that is heartless and just plain ridiculous.

The philosophy he was taught and then followed is why people are protesting. It's why some people are rioting. When people reach their breaking point, it's not pretty, it's not comfortable and it's not easy to watch. What we see on the news, and many biased social media outlets, is often simplistic and one-sided. An image of BLM protesters standing by broken windows seemed to tell a story. But later, footage showed white supremacists walking down that street before the BLM folks arrived and smashing windows to make it look like BLM protesters were at fault.

During trying times, the truth is complicated and

often not what's visible on the surface. It's up to us to dig deeper and investigate, and not believe what we read or see until we've taken the time to verify the facts. I've been guilty of reading something, believing it, getting mad and passing it along. That hasn't been the best course of action. Now, I take time to research, fact-check and move a little slower to ensure I'm sharing accurate information that is enlightening and I hope, thought-provoking.

I'm also struck by how folks are accusing each other of being unpatriotic when they question our government, our traditions, and our past. I always come back to the analogy of our country as a family. We have a sometimes proud and sometimes hurtful past. Our present was marinated in 400 years of racism. That is a fact. It's hard to stomach for some, but for those on

the receiving end of ongoing injustices, it's a matter of life or death. I love my country. But I don't love some of its past and present policies that protect unjust behavior.

It's time we began embodying the words of visionary Frederick Douglass who said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men," and the wisdom of Indigenous elder Black Elk, "Any man who is attached to things of this world is one who lives in ignorance and is being consumed by the snakes of his own passions."

Loving each other regardless of our exterior and respecting the planet and environment that sustains us is a matter of life and death for future generations. Every person in our family is worth saving, and it's up to us to make it happen.

CLOSURES: Highways 22 and 126 may be closed into winter

Continued from page 1

to remain closed for a considerable period — perhaps into winter — due to the danger of falling trees and rock. OregonLive reported last week that hundreds of thousands of trees will have to be removed along those routes.

ODOT spokesman Peter Murphy told *The Nugget* on Monday that the agency is discussing whether Highway 242 will be reopened to the portion of Highway 126 unaffected by the fire, so that motorists can drive the loop through the scenic mountain area during fall. Murphy said that that call will be made in collaboration with the Forest Service and with ODOT officials on the west side (watch for updates at www.nuggetnews.com).



Ways you can support Thelma's Place:

- Vehicle donations
- Cash donations
- Sponsorships
- Volunteer

Your support makes a difference!
Redmond: 541-548-3049 | www.thelmasplace.org
Day Respite and Support Groups

CUSTOM FENCES, DECKS & PAVERS



Sisters Fence Company
541-588-2062
CCB#288388

Locally Owned, Craftsman Built

Residential & Commercial
Custom Ranch & Domestic Privacy Fencing
Decks • Pavers • Gates | Stain & Paint • Repair

FREE ESTIMATES & COMPETITIVE PRICING

www.SistersFenceCompany.com

Excellence With Compassion When You Need It Most

SERVING ALL OF SISTERS COUNTRY FOR ESTATE PLANNING NEEDS!

TWO SPRUCE LAW, P.C.
Patricia Nelson & John Myers
— Attorneys At Law —
220 S. Pine St., Suite 207

541-549-2221
www.twosprucelaw.com




STOMP-OUT THE FLU with **Your Care** your health

and the Sisters & Black Butte Ranch fire departments!

We're going on the road to make it even easier for you!

COMMUNITY FLU SHOT CLINICS
Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire & Rescue
Thursday, Oct. 1 • 10 a.m. to noon, 3 to 6 p.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 6 • 2:30 to 6 p.m.

Black Butte Ranch Fire & Rescue
Tuesday, Oct. 6 • 7:30 to 11 a.m.

All you need is your ID and insurance card. Most insurance plans will cover 100% of your flu shot. Discounted cash-pay price of only \$20.

541-548-2899 yourcaremedical.com
3818 SW 21st Pl., Ste. 100, Redmond • Open every day

WALK-IN • URGENT CARE • OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE • X-RAY

