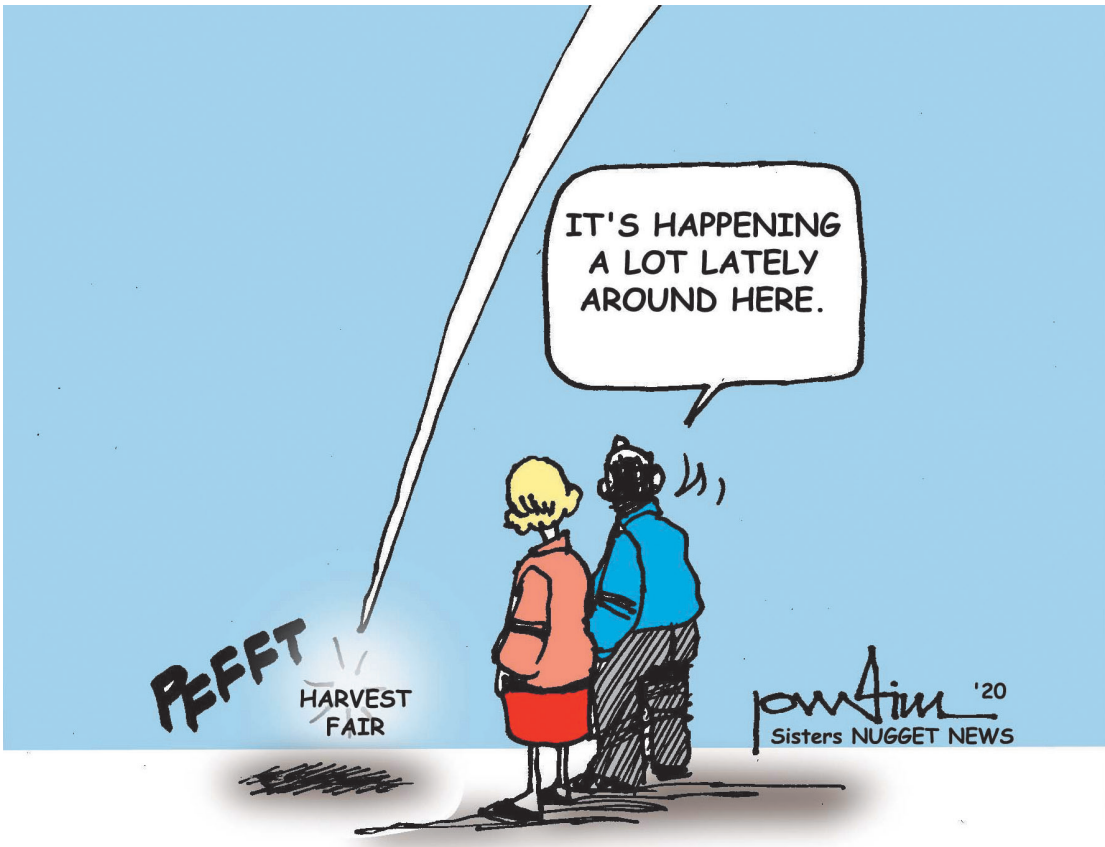


O P I N I O N



## 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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Hey, it isn't easy to come up with something everyone can agree on these days, but I think I have one: Inasmuch as Jim Anderson (The Sisters Naturalist) has probably had more to do with the edification of the entire population of this region than anybody ever has, the next time a name is needed for a new school here it should be the Jim Anderson Elementary, Middle School or whatever, right?

Go golden eagles! Or horned owls! Or bats!  
Don Wilt



To the Editor:

Since I was awakened very early yet again (4:54 a.m.!) by tractor engines, banging dump trucks, and beepers from the nearby rock and gravel yard, it got me thinking about the current — and coming — conflicts over zoning and development here in Sisters.

Perhaps it's time to address a different angle of the "this is not our town" sentiments — that being the issue that current zoning

laws, building codes, and city codes are not consistently enforced, thus creating issues in our current reality.

When we built our new home in the ClearPine development (off of Northwest Pine Street north of Barclay Avenue) we knew that there would be home construction noise here for several years to come. We knew that the development abutted a "light industrial" zone along Barclay. We also knew that this sort of mixed-use zoning arrangement could work next to residential areas if, and *only if*, everybody obeyed the rules.

Well, we were simply not prepared for the pre-dawn roar of tractor engines, back-up beepers, and loud banging of dump trucks (in the sand and gravel yard at the end of North Curtis Street), nor were we prepared for the ceaseless drone of diesel generators of multiple refrigerator trailers (parked at Laird Superfoods on Lundgren Mill Drive).

We have a pretty good working relationship

*See LETTERS on page 17*

# Preparedness is critical in Sisters Country

By **Jim Cornelius**  
Editor in Chief

If 2020 has shown us anything, it's that unexpected — even unthinkable — things can, do, and *will* happen.

It's a pretty safe assumption that none of us had a global pandemic, lockdowns, economic dislocation, and serious, widespread civil unrest on our dance card on New Year's Day. Who among us predicted that people would be fighting in store aisles over packages of toilet paper?

Folks in Sisters know from bitter experience that wildfire is always a threat, but the scope and scale and human tragedy of the massive 2020 conflagrations exceeded anything we've come to accept as "normal."

Suddenly, preparedness has climbed to the top of the list of personal and civic virtues.

A few years back, a friend of mine opened a store for "preppers," carrying all kinds of supplies and gear for people who prioritize preparedness and resilience. Freeze-dried food, hand-crank radios, water purification filters and the like. Another friend looked askance at all that, thinking it was a symptom of paranoia. "What is he preparing *for*?" he asked.

I thought it was a strange question.

"Well... anything," I responded.

It took a minute to recognize that my skeptical friend had been conditioned to think of "prepping" as a fringe activity indulged in by "survivalist" types who couldn't wait for a doomsday scenario to unfold, sitting in their bunker loaded up for the zombie apocalypse. He'd also been conditioned to think the water always runs when you turn the faucet and grocery store shelves are always full.

I think he knows better now, on both counts.

The pandemic — and consumers' responses to it — have shown us first-hand that the store shelves can empty out in a hurry — and maybe they won't get restocked right away. That point was reinforced by the fire-related closures of Highway 22 and Highway 126, which made it harder to ship goods from the Willamette Valley to Sisters. It doesn't take much imagination to consider what happens if such closures are even more widespread, due to damage from, say, a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake.

Given the events of this terrible year, that abstract threat doesn't seem quite so

abstract. Getting hit with the "full rip" shaker would be so 2020...

The catastrophic wildfires of September should make us all reflect on how prepared we are. Sisters neighborhoods have evacuated under threat of wildfire many times over the past two decades or so. But those evacuations are almost always well in advance of the threat. There have been exceptions. Residents were forced to flee from a fast-moving blaze in the sagebrush east of town in August of 2018, and it was only quick action by firefighters, supported by fortuitously available air power, that prevented a dire situation from turning catastrophic. Evacuation was immediate.

Nothing could save the communities in Santiam Canyon and in the McKenzie River canyon last month. The firestorm that destroyed whole towns gave people virtually no time to prepare. It was go now or die. Some people did not make it.

The City of Sisters and the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District are working to "harden" the community's infrastructure and enhance response capabilities in the event of disaster — be it fire, winter storm, flooding or earthquake. Or pandemic.

But it really is up to us to make ourselves ready.

It's on us to create defensible space around our homes to give firefighters a fighting chance to save them. It's on us to have a stock of food, water and essential supplies in the event that the trucks can't get to Bi-Mart and Ray's and the other shops in town. It's on us to have a plan to shelter in place — and a plan to evacuate at a moment's notice.

As Jack McGowan notes in the centerfold piece you'll find in this week's *Nugget*, preparedness is a journey of many steps. Most of us couldn't afford to stock a bunker, even if we wanted to. But we can all lay in some extra food, some potable water, and first aid supplies; keep the gas tank topped up and find ourselves an alternative way to heat the house and cook our food. A lot of our "preparedness" gear can double as camping gear.

And we can all benefit from learning skills from first aid to camp cooking. There's nothing onerous about being prepared. In fact, it can be fun and gratifying. And capacity to be just a little bit more self-reliant brings a lot of peace of mind — a commodity we could all use a lot more of in 2020.

### Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly Cloudy 57/34	Sunny 62/40	Mostly Sunny 76/44	Mostly Sunny 67/35	Partly Cloudy 61/32	Mostly Sunny 62/36

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