

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Recently read an article on the divide between those involved politically and those watching from the sidelines, which assumed those not involved politically must not care and will not vote.

Quite the contrary.

Minor example can be seen in a Home Owners Association of over 100 owners one finds there are usually around six who will get involved or run to be on a board and another five will help out in various ways. But if asked, everyone has opinions because they care. Think about how hard it is to get folks to run for office in any town, including Sisters. Are you volunteering to join the various boards and committees? Does that mean you do not care? And is there any doubt, after reading *The Nugget* once a week, that people truly care politically?

The vast majority of U.S. citizens of any party are referred to as the Silent Majority (SM). For decades the SM was and remains the centrist voters. Only since the 1980s have the silent ones gotten so sick of politics that apathy started setting in and they voted less and less and less. Then it all came to a head in the 2016 general election, showing how very bad it can get if we the public do not take our voting rights seriously. Much was wrong with that election but for this letter, note that over 10 million regularly voting voters, did not vote.

For this election, the Silent Majority have been in shock for the treatment of immigrants from around the world, children pulled from families at our borders and have watched the escalating suppressive treatment of BIPOC. Across the nation, the SM (polled over decades) think that there should be single-payer health care, that we should address the climate crises, that marijuana is not a narcotic, that women have the right of choice and equal pay for equal work, that LGBTQ should have rights to marry and also be treated equally, that education should not put a person in debt for life, that prisons and public schools should not be privatized and that separation of church and state is fundamental to any democracy.

The centrists are paying attention. Today, the Silent Majority is revived and they succeeded in quietly breaking voting records in every state.

Susan Cobb

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To the Editor:

I get so frustrated when Trump supporters say that Democrats want Communism in America. Not since the hysteria of the 1950s Red Scare has there been so much misunderstanding about the difference between communism and socialism. Communism is basically anti-capitalism wherein everyone supposedly shares equally in wealth and work, but is usually corrupted by vicious dictators kept in power by violence and favoritism. Under communism the common person is usually poor and deprived of personal self-determination and opportunity.

Under democratic socialism, capitalism flourishes but the needs of the common people are supported by society, to assure quality education, housing, food and health-care are available to all. Individual choice, opportunity, and hard work are prized and equality is one of the highest priorities.

Are there challenges to making all government systems work? Yes, of course, none is perfect, but much of the modern free countries of Europe are socialist democracies. So, get out your high school government texts and re-read the chapter on different models of modern systems of government.

Sharon Booth

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To the Editor:

Veteran's Day originated at the end of hostilities between the Allied nations and Germany that went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918; "the war to end all wars."

The percent of Americans serving on active duty is usually about 1 percent of the

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The homeless: call them by name

Jeannette J. Harding
Guest Columnist

This was their day. Christmas Eve. A day to put the homeless in a spot of light, in their darkened world. All hopes are dashed by their broken lives, cars, and dreams.

The hustle and bustle of the congregation had separated themselves. Some were cooking potatoes, stuffing, and veggies in the kitchen. The smell of turkeys cooking in crock pots all over the church created an tantalizing aroma of foods, just waiting to be devoured. In another room were potato mashers, turkey carvers, and pie cutters. Yet even in another room the decorations were being set up. The vans had been sent out to pick them up. The greeters awaited their arrival.

The people came one by one. Some came in groups. "They are homeless," cried society.

Today, these "people" have become individuals. They have names. We can touch them and their lives, feed them, warm their frozen bones, and give them a few monetary items to give them a little more comfort. But this doesn't make any difference if we don't engage in listening to their stories. More importantly, giving them love, praying with and for them. Yes, they have many addictions, but we are just like them. We just hide them better. But their lives won't change unless we give them love.

Desperate items are sought after. Not looking for electronics, or the newest and the greatest. They are in survival mode! Looking for, and sometimes fighting over: tarps, tents, sleeping bags, blankets, hand warmers, warm sweat-shirts, hats, gloves, coats, warm socks, shoes, and batteries. Their toes are red and sore without socks. Perhaps they haven't had a change of clothes for a month. The car has run out of gas, or broken down, and so they can't get the warmth. These are basic human needs that we perhaps take for granted.

Seeing first-hand the dire poverty and desperate needs of these precious souls who have fallen through the cracks, compassion gripped my heart and my soul. I wanted to give them more, even a warm home, filled with hot water, clean clothes, a clean place to sit, and enjoy a home cooked meal.

There were so many. Some wanted to take more. Others took graciously only their immediate needs. Still others would not take a thing, saying,

"Give to them whose needs are more than mine."

We ran out of hand warmers, gloves, tents, sleeping bags, blankets, shoes, and still had two more hours to go. This prompted a rush to the local stores to empty Walmart, Bi-Mart and Fred Meyer of those supplies.

A gentleman brought an accordion.

"Why don't you play some Christmas songs for us!" someone said. "My hands are so cold; they need to warm up first."

Another gentleman had no teeth. "I can eat pumpkin pie," he laughed with a smile.

There was a lady who only wanted an outfit, to go to an interview.

Just then, Christmas carols flowed through the cafeteria.

So, they were fed a warm turkey/ham dinner, and we sent them back out into the freezing cold world, as darkness came upon them. We returned home to our visions of sugar plums dancing in our heads snuggled in our warm house, warm beds, awaiting the tree filled with Christmas presents.

Christmas Day. Their presents in the morning were: new tarps, blankets, sleeping bags, tents, and warm clothes; without the shoes that didn't fit or we didn't have their size, without the warm leggings we hadn't supplied, and without the backpacks that we hadn't thought of.

It took a congregation to help these souls in need. So many people running to get the help they needed, filling their tanks with gas, hopefully giving the right information for them to get a bed for the night. Everyone, I mean everyone, was vitally important in this occasion. Even down to some who took phone calls for those in need of transportation, or made copies, or gave out our much-needed supplies.

Later, I connected with an elder in charge of the homeless. We went out in low-income housing door to door, leaving notes, inviting them to come out and have a barbecue dinner in the nearby park. Then another time, we were in the cafeteria, putting boxes together for them. It was powerful! Yes, we were changed. We would never be the same.

The people in this congregation really backed up their pastor.

We truly had the ears to hear their cries, the hands to touch their lives, and feet to fill their needs, with many hearts going out to them. They have names. We call them by their names.