

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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.

Hospice House needs expansion to keep pace with area growth

To the Editor:

Access to quality medical care is critical, and most of us plan carefully to ensure that we have resources in place in the event of accident or illness. In Central Oregon we are

fortunate to be able to quickly access a broad range of these services.

For those of us who have experienced the loss of a loved one, we know that end-of-life care goes well beyond the acute care services available to us. It also involves profound

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday
PM Showers
50/32



Thursday
Mostly Cloudy
46/28



Friday
Sunny
57/32



Saturday
Mostly Sunny
65/34



Sunday
Mostly Sunny
61/29



Monday
Partly Cloudy
53/30



Tuesday
Sunny
62/34



It's all about the little things

By Gretchen Matos
Guest Columnist

The “Cruelest Miles,” by Gay Salisbury and Laney Salisbury, is a well-researched, and superbly written history of the epic diphtheria anti-toxin dog-sled relay run from Nanana to Nome, Alaska in 1925. The authors do a wonderful job of researching and relating detailed background information on the Eskimo and Athabaskan peoples, the use of and breeds of dogs and dogsleds, the establishment of Nome, and the advent of air travel in Alaska, all while weaving in the characters and drama of a deadly diphtheria epidemic in Nome after freeze-up.

In the midst of this compelling story this description of Nome stood out: “Nome relied on a spirit of cooperation and good citizenship, a surprising transformation in light of the town’s recent and sordid history. It seemed as if every citizen has an unofficial duty, and each took it very seriously. The trails were maintained in part by volunteers who made sure wooden stakes marking the route were kept in place, and the widow Rattenburg sewed the red cotton pennants that marked the trail for miners heading out ... and shopkeepers kept their stove stoked in case a traveler needed to warm up.”

This spirit was true outside of Nome as well, and led to common men and women being ready to step up to do uncommonly heroic acts. Harry Pika, an Athabaskan musher, learning of the relay, hooked up his team without a moment’s hesitation and moved to his assigned spot. He was severely short on money but did not think twice about this volunteer mission. His community needed him. Another musher, Edgar Kallands, was settling in to rest after a long haul in cold conditions. But, “before the sweat on his gloves had dried, he was up again and ready for the call.”

Person after person made an effort to find anti-toxin, carefully package it, communicate logistics, and offer up their skills to ensure the effort to get anti-toxin to Nome as quickly as possible was successful.

These men would not have braved 30-to-50-plus mph winds and minus-60-degree weather, risking

life and limb and dogs (many of which died) if they had not regularly done the small things for others.

It struck me then that community starts — and, one could argue, ends — with the small things.

If doing the small neighborly things is not part of my character, it is not likely I’ll be “ready for the call” when the big thing comes. The wisdom of Jesus’ words came to mind, “treat others (or more actively ‘do’ for others) as you’d like them to treat you (as you’d like them to ‘do’ for you).” Simple and profound.

There’s lots like that going on in Sisters Country. Kiwanis Club and Wellhouse Church have food banks where you can work or donate to supply food to families in the area; they have other volunteer opportunities as well. The Council on Aging of Central Oregon provides lunches for seniors; check out their donation and volunteer opportunities. A group of women at Sisters Community Church gathers twice a month to sew beautiful quilts that are given to men and women in shelters, to children and to families. Who knows how such a simple gift of warmth might save a life or comfort a soul who thought no one cared? Sisters Trails Alliance accepts donations and volunteers to help maintain our local trail system. Did I mention volunteers with Deschutes National Forest, Homeless Leadership Coalition, and Circle of Friends? If you aren’t involved, there are a myriad of ways to get involved.

These examples are the tip of the iceberg (to stick to my Alaska theme) of others displaying a spirit of cooperation and good citizenship here in Sisters Country. I’d like to challenge us all to do the same thing. Do something small but helpful for your community regularly. If volunteering isn’t your thing, you can still cooperate by holding a door open, taking in a neighbor’s trash can, talking to a neighbor (safely of course), calling or sending a note checking in on someone in your circle. Notice what someone might need and do something helpful. Realizing this is our community and the little things we do are what make us ready to answer the call should the big thing ever come.

Views expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Nugget Newspaper,
P.O. Box 698, Sisters, OR 97759.

Third Class Postage Paid at Sisters, Oregon.

The Nugget is mailed to residents within the Sisters School District; subscriptions are available outside delivery area. Third-class postage: one year, \$55; six months (or less), \$30. First-class postage: one year, \$95; six months, \$65.

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Night training...



Sisters Fire District firefighters strive to get as much realistic training as possible to respond to any type of incident. The district continues to actively recruit volunteers.

PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Got a great photo of life in Sisters Country?

Send your high-resolution photo to editor@nuggetnews.com.